

LECTURES ON
BUDDHA
AND
BUDDHISM

RADHAGOVINDA BASAK

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BUDDHA AND BUDDHISM

RADHAGOVINDA BASAK



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Radhagovinda Basak

A renowned historian and epigraphist, Dr. Radhagovinda Basak was formerly Head of the Department of Sanskrit at the Presidency College, Calcutta, and a Lecturer in the Departments of Sanskrit and Ancient Indian History and culture at the University of Calcutta as well. He also worked as a Lecturer in Sanskrit at the University of Dacca in the early part of his life. He is at present Chairman, Board of Editors for publication of Research books and bulletins of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

An eminent writer on Indological subjects, Dr. Radhagovinda Basak has to his credit a number of books which include : *History of North-Eastern India*, *Aśokan Inscriptions*, and *Indian Life as Revealed in the Buddhist Sanskrit work, Mahāvastu-Avadāna*. He has edited and rendered into Bengali *Rāmcharitam* and *Gāthā-Saptaśatī* and published the Bengali version of the entire *Arthaśāstra*. He has recently edited the *Rāvaṇavaho* or the *Setubandha* with a newly discovered Sanskrit commentary. The *Mahāvastu Avadāna*, edited and translated into Bengali by Dr. Basak will be shortly published by the Sanskrit College.

Preface

Since my retirement more than twenty years ago from the educational service as a Professor, I have devoted myself, among other studies, to an intensive study of some Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit works. The *Mahāvastu-avadāna* on which I based some of my lectures published in this book had given me a very great impetus to my study on the various episodes of Buddha's life and many aspects of his religion (Buddhism). The seven lectures which are published in the present book are all on Buddhist topics and they were delivered in meetings held by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta on different dates and were published in its *Bulletins*. Only the first lecture was published in the *Prabuddha-Bhārata*. Lectures 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 were respectively published in the July and August issues of 1956, the November issue of 1953, the February issue of 1953, the June issue of 1960 and the April and May issues of 1957 in the *Bulletins* of the Institute. Lecture 1 was published in the May and June issues of 1952 in the *Prabuddha-Bhārata* of Mayavati, Almora. Lecture 6 will be published in an issue of the Institute's *Bulletin*.

I cannot adequately express my thankful delight in getting the approval of Swami Nityaswarupananda, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, who has always encouraged me in carrying on my study of Buddha and Buddhism and who has appreciated such a publication in book-form of the lectures delivered by me in the Institute's meetings.

I also owe a deep sense of gratitude to the proprietors of the newly established 'Sambodhi Publications Private Limited', 22 Strand Road, Calcutta-1, specially to my friend and pupil Professor Bratindra Nath Mukherjee M. A. and to his brother Sri Ramendra Nath Mukherjee B. Sc. (Tech), who are both connected with that firm, for their kindly arranging the publication of these lectures in a book-form. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my great thankfulness to another friend and pupil of mine, Professor Kalyan Kumar Das Gupta M.A. for helping me by reading the proof of this book and seeing it through the Press.

I shall deem my labour amply rewarded, if scholars and readers here in India and abroad benefit even in a small measure to understand the Great Teacher (Buddha) and any aspect of Buddhism by reading the lectures published in this book.

69, Ballygunge Gardens,
Calcutta-19 ; February, 1961.

Radhagovinda Basak

BUDDHA AND BUDDHISM

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

We are indeed passing, all over the world, through most troublous and fearful times when our very culture and civilization seem to be at stake. A most devastating world war has only formally been over just a few years ago. Its all-devouring nature has, as it were, engulfed all the moral force that was prevalent on earth before its commencement. We are facing a moral crisis and eagerly expecting a new stream of moral force to flow not only in our social life but also in our political and spiritual. The leaders of thought in the modern world are anxious to see the end of the play of passion, anger, hatred, violence, malice, hostility, distrust, and suspicion which divide the nations in different countries, and they pray for the reappearance of peace, love, friendship, and service among human societies. We often feel shuddered to hear of the 'cold' war that is in progress and live in utter fear lest a major conflict in the shape of a more horrible third 'hot' war should break out for the annihilation of the human race. Only the observance of right and good, and suppression of wrong and evil, can help us in achieving a peaceful and tranquil life in society

and for this we need cultivate amity, friendship, compassion, love, devotion, service to fellow men, and such other higher human sentiments and qualities, which have been so eloquently spoken of in Buddhism.

Gautama Buddha was Universal Love and Perfect Wisdom personified. His was a dynamic personality. His reason in analysing all human venture in search for the ultimate Truth and his skill of wisdom in understanding the workings of human mind were unique. A discussion, though short, of the life and teachings of such a great person—a veritable *avatāra* or a prophet, as we say—may bring about a sense of solace to our distressed mind. I have intentionally avoided raising here the complicated questions of Buddhist philosophy. The great teachers preached the truths in a simple way before the people of their own times for the uplift of their moral and spiritual life and for the achievement of their ultimate salvation. These were often interpreted, after their demise, by their immediate disciples and their later line of successors, who read into them many a philosophical trend of thoughts and thus brought about complexities of thought which kept away from human vision the general and simple teachings that were quite potent in themselves to create tranquility and peace, and to make it easy for humanity to taste the happiness of emancipation or *nirvāṇa*.

The invocation of the Buddha as is found in the *Lalita Vistara* written in the *gāthā* language, in the famous verse, runs as follows :

Cirāture jīvaloke kleśavyādhiprapīḥite,

Vaidyarāṭ tvam samutpannaḥ sarvavyādhipramocakaḥ.

‘(O Buddha !) the human world has long been sick and it has suffered from the disease of passions and torments,—but you have appeared (on earth) as the supreme physician to heal all these diseases’.

We intend here to discuss the mode of treatment which this great physician—the son of Śuddhodana and Māyādevī, Gautama Buddha, born about 2514-15 years ago in the Lumbini village

of Kapilavastu in the noble and kingly Śākya country—successfully adopted to cure the ills of the people of his times and make them free from the various shackles of their earthly life. The Brāhminic Upaniṣads held the view that only those persons who are fortunately guided by great teachers can know the truth or the ultimate Reality (*ācāryavān puruṣo veda*); and the Buddha was one such teacher, who, with his searching mental eye, discovered a system of spiritual training, and preached the same for people's knowledge and for the good and welfare of humanity at large.

A brief reference to Buddha's contemporaneous religious sects in India will not be out of place here as it may help us to understand the particular spiritual atmosphere in which the Buddha found himself enveloped. Generally speaking, the chief religious and philosophical system that prevailed in pre-Buddhistic age was that of the Upaniṣads. In that system emphasis was laid more on knowledge (*jñāna*) than on works (*karma*). In Buddha's time also the influence of priesthood and Vedic ritualistic institutions (*karma-kāṇḍa*) did not fully cease to work on the people's mind, though the first impact on them by the Upaniṣads commenced to be felt somewhat earlier. This impact, however, began to be asserted on the people's mind when the Buddha preached his first sermon (*dharmacakra-pravartana*) at Sarnath after his attainment of perfect knowledge (*sambodhi*) at his thirty-fifth year. But in this hostility against the Brāhmanic cult of ritualistic Karma, the Ājīvika, the Jaina, and the Lokāyata schools of Buddha's time also joined their hands to some extent. The founder of the Ājīvika sect, which believed in the doctrine of *niyati* (predestination or fate)—according to which all phenomena, physical or mental, are unalterably fixed and which cherished no faith in *puruṣakāra* (human efforts or exertions) was Gośāla Maṅkhali-putra. The founder of the Jaina sect which accepted harmlessness or abstinence from giving pain to others in thought, word, or deed, as its chief tenet, was the great ascetic Mahāvīra, the Nirgrantha-nāthaputra. The third chief leader of philosophical thought of

Buddha's time was Keśakambalin, a materialist and unbeliever in soul or God, and probably inclined to the tenets of the Lokāyatas who had not even a scanty leaning towards the Vedic lore and indulged in the common view 'Eat, drink, and be merry'.

There were three other prominent names of religious leaders of Buddha's time. A Brahmin preacher of the name of Sañjaya was the teacher of the two most famous and devoted disciples of Buddha, viz. Śāriputra and Maudgalāyana, before their ordination to Buddhism. This Sañjaya was rather a sceptic and he cherished doubt in the solution of the philosophical problems, e.g. whether the world is permanent or impermanent, whether there is continuity of life or self after a man's death, whether the world has beginning or it is beginningless, etc. He was ever against supporting the arguments (assumed as false by him) in the so-called decision regarding these enigmatic problems. The name of the second Brāhminic leader was Pūrṇa-Kāśyapa and this name Pūrṇa was justified because of his claim to all-knowingness. He conquered the feeling of shame and so always remained nude. The third teacher's name was Kakuda-Kātyāyana, This contemporary of Buddha believed that the origination of the universe depended on the four (not the usual five) elements—earth, water, fire, and air, and on the other three things, viz. pleasure, pain, and the individual self, i.e. altogether on these seven principles. To Gautama Buddha, all the various sectarian tenets and doctrines referred to above, appeared quite unsatisfactory and also unappealing to his own mind.

Here a brief reference may be made to some of the special features in the life's events of the Buddha and the doctrines of the *saddharma* (Buddhism) as propounded, preached, and taught by him. It should be remembered that to be a believer in this Dharma of Buddha one need not be a Brahmin, or a high or a rich person alone. In the matter of religious observances and performances there can be no distinction between a Brahmin or a non-Brahmin, high or low, rich or poor. Two *gāthās* of the

Dhammapada (Brāhmaṇa-varga, 11-12) bear recital in this connection :

Na jaṭāhi na gottena na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo.

Yamhi saccañca dhammo ca so sucī so ca brāhmaṇo.

Kiṃ te jaṭāhi dummedha kiṃ te ajinasāṭṭiyā ?

Abbhantaram te gahaṇam bāhiraṃ parimajjasi.

'A man cannot be a Brahmin by his platted hair, by his family, or by his birth (alone). He is (regarded as) pure and he is a Brahmin, in whom reside truth and righteousness. O fool ! of what use is thy platted hair and what does thy garment of a black antelope's skin avail ? Thy interior (mind) is an abyss (of impurities), but thou cleanseest thy exterior (outer form) only'.

However, after the birth of Gautama, the Rīṣis headed by Asita and other Brahminic astrologers prophesied to his father Śuddhodana that his newly-born son may in future become a supreme sovereign or a Buddha (i.e. the Enlightened One) and in the latter event he may have to renounce the world and become homeless (*anāgārika*). As the boy was growing into age, his father's determination to guard against this last eventuality (of his son's renunciation by becoming a mendicant or monk, a *śramaṇa*) began to grow also. So he arranged to keep the son attached to worldly pleasures and strove his utmost to ward off all sights from his son's eyes, that might cause mental disgust and despondency, rather self-disparagement. The father gave his son in marriage with an exquisitely beautiful royal princess, Yaśodharā by name at the commencement of his youth and Gautama begot a son who was named Rāhula.

Renunciation came to Gautama in the same manner as it does to all supermen and Avatāras (incarnations). When, in his twenty-ninth year, the young Gautama could not bear the poignant pain arising from the three kinds of human miseries—those which come from the self (*ādhyātmika*), those from the gods (*ādhidaivika*), and those from the elements (*ālhibhautika*), he renounced the world in search of that agency or way by which human sufferings can be put an end to and for the attainment of eternal bliss. He thought

that it was not possible for any one to lead a completely pure or holy life by residing at home. He, therefore, made his determination stronger to adopt the life of a mendicant by leaving his home and thus pave the way to extirpate all worldly miseries by resorting to meditation and contemplation, easy to be attained in lonely forest-life. Father Śuddhodana, on hearing of his son's resolve, felt thunder-struck, and he hurried to send a request to Gautama through his ministers to defer renunciation at least during his (father's) lifetime. There came the son's reply that he would accede to this request of his father and postpone his renunciation if he (the father) could stand surety for four things. These four things have been mentioned in a famous *gāthā*-verse in the *Mahāvastu-Avadāna* which reads thus :

Yauvane vartamānasmim jarā me mā khu āgame,

Ārogye vartamānasmim vyādhi me mā khu āgame.

Jīvite vartamānasmim maraṇam me mā khu āgame,

Sampattīsu ramiyāsu vipatti me mā khu āgame.

In other words, Gautama wanted assurance from his father that no decrepitude or old age will attack him, but perpetual youth will prevail instead ; that no disease will befall him, but permanent good health will remain ; that no death will occur to him, but this life will continuously proceed ; and that no adversity will disturb him, but pleasure-giving prosperity will flow on. His father's natural reply was that no man was immune from the assaults of decrepitude, disease, death, and adversity in life. So stiffer became Gautama's final resolve to strive for the attainment of that object (*nirvāṇa*) which is permanent, blissful, and holy. The father, on the other hand, surrounded him with all sorts of worldly pleasures such as dancing and music performed by beautiful damsels brought into the palace. But the son began to find fault with these scenes which appeared loathsome to his mind. Meanwhile the three visions of an old man, a sick man, and a dead man touched his heart very sorrowfully, but the fourth vision of a serene and tranquil-minded holy ascetic (*śramaṇa*) clad in his yellow garment, impressed him with the idea that it was such a person alone who

could rise superior to all the ills of the world and become worthy of attainment of the highest beatitude. He thought, moreover, that the three fires of attachment, hatred, and delusion must have to be extinguished before one could realize and enjoy the bliss of emancipation or *nirvāṇa*. He, therefore, resolved to forsake his home on the very *Puṣyā-nakṣatra* day on which his father wanted him to be anointed as the crown-prince. When his father brought to Gautama the happy news of the birth of a son to his wife, Yaśodharā, he exclaimed saying, 'Rāhula is born—the chain of bondage is strengthened'. Before renunciation, he at first thought of having a last sight and touch of his newly-born son, but having entered the sleeping-chamber of his wife, he stopped doing so, lest his wife should awake and create impediment in the way of his resolve to leave the world, and so he silently left his paternal home. That man can never give up his resolve to follow the path of resignation (*nivṛtti*), once his mind is seriously bent on shunning the course of worldly activities (*pravṛtti*). On finding Gautama renouncing the world, Māra (the Tempter or the Evil One), who is the embodiment of all hankerings and cravings, attained a sad plight and his realm became gloomy, as it were.

After having left home at the age of twenty-nine, Gautama (the *Bodhisattva*) wandered in many a place and performed the severest kinds of penances—without food or sleep, and in the trying hot and cold seasons of the year, with rains and thunder overhead—and in the course of these austerities his body reached the stage of extreme emaciation ; but having passed such a hard life for six years, he could not realize the desired state of enlightenment which he was seeking so ardently. He then felt that self-mortification was not the way to achieve the perfect state of knowledge, and he, therefore, re-entered his former mode of life as a mendicant. In this predicament he proceeded to the bank of the Nairāñjanā river under the pipal tree at (present-day) Bodh-Gayā, thenceforth called the Bodhi-druma,—the tree of enlightenment, and took his seat there, firmly declaring that 'he should not leave it before he succeeded in attaining perfect knowledge,

although his skin, bones, and flesh wasted away and his body dried up'. He remained absolutely steadfast and immovable in that position, never being daunted by the onslaught of Māra, the Tempter, and his army of workers who tried their level best to deflect the Bodhisattva from his purpose. But Māra was vanquished and victory was won by Gautama (who is, therefore, called Māra-vijayī, the defeater of the Tempter). Gautama became *sambuddha* (perfectly enlightened) during a night-time. It is said in Pāli works that in the first watch of that particular night he obtained the knowledge of his own previous existences ; in the second, of all the present states of beings ; in the third, of the chain of causes and effects ; and at the dawn of day, he came to know of all things, i.e. he became omniscient.

The Buddhists of India believe that after having attained *sambodhi*, the Bodhisattva gave forth a joyful utterance (*udāna*) which finds its place in the Jarā-varga of the *Dhammapada*, (*gāthās* 8-9) in the following words :

*Anekajātisaṃsāraṃ sandhāvissaṃ anibbisaṃ,
Gahakārakaṃ gavesanto dukkhā jāti punappunaṃ.
Gahakāraka ! diṭṭho'si puna gehaṃ na kāhasi,
Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā gahakūṭaṃ visaṅkhataṃ,
Visaṅkhāragataṃ citṭaṃ taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā.*

'Looking for the builder of this tabernacle (i.e. this my body, the prison-house of the senses) I should have to traverse a cycle of many births, but without (probably) succeeding to find him (out) ;— but painful it is to go through births again and again. But now, O you maker of the tabernacle ! you have been found out (by me) and you will not (be able to) build this tabernacle again. All your rafters are broken and your ridge-poles is sundered. (My) mind being free from predispositions (i.e. approaching the Eternal, *nirvāṇa*) has attained the extinction of all desires'.

Metaphorically speaking, we may, therefore, regard this destruction of all cravings and desires as victory over the Tempter. It is Desire which leads to the building of the body, binding it to the wheel of existences. Once desires are dead in us, we

become free from future births. It is after his victory over Māra or the Tempter that Gautama assumed for himself the favourite name of Tathāgata, which is interpreted in one way, by the Buddhists, as the person who has attained *tathā* or the real cause of our existences.

The Buddhists, like the followers of the other Indian Brāhminic systems of philosophy, believed in the doctrine of pain (*duḥkḥavāda*). They had also firm faith in the doctrine of works (*karmavāda*) according to which humanity bears the consequences of good or evil acts in life and shapes future existences. They also had firm belief in the doctrine of rebirths (*janmāntaravāda*). The Ego, or the *pudgala* as the Buddhists call it, i.e. the individual being, is always subject to feeling pleasure and pain in accordance with the good or evil deeds done by him. But it is indeed very difficult to be above the antithetical pair of virtue and vice. Human beings always strive for attaining to the state of happiness and tranquility by being released from the hard fetters of birth, old age, disease, and death. They seek for the path of deliverance from the hands of *saṃsāra*, revolution or cycle of repeated existences. Different systems of philosophy came into being in the course of the teachers' attempt to discover and determine the ways by which the cause of pain in the world can be ascertained and extinguished and men can succeed in ending their rebirths. Complete and everlasting extinction of sufferings and miseries of the world is the aim of all Indian philosophers. The Brahma-vādins (or the Vedantists) acknowledge the existence of only one entity (the Brahman) and they own that the knowledge of that absolute Soul or Self leads to *mukti* or release from the bondage of births and rebirths. The materialist philosophers, the Lokāyatikas, once referred to above, believed that the universe is *akāraṇasambhūta*, i. e. never born of any super-cause. The followers of the Patañjala system again regard everything as being ordained by God, the highest cause. But Gautama Buddha seems to have considered such views of the different schools of philosophical thought as extremely unhelpful in bringing about libera-

tion, rather they lead to greater distress and bondage. The Buddhists really believe that if the egos or individual beings can achieve cessation of all miseries, they will be able to attain tranquility and eventually the immortal state of *nirvāṇa* by extinguishing themselves like fire or a lamp. Their earthly existence becomes extinct and attains the state of *śūnya* (absolute non-existence). So they think that there is, in a way, no individual, no universe, and no cause of them both. But we also find in Buddhist canons this *nirvāṇa* being called as *a-kata* (*akṛta*)—‘the uncreated’, and *a-mata* (*amṛta*)—‘the immortal’, i. e. it is neither created, nor does it ever die. Hence it may be presumed that it is a *siddha-vastu* or eternally existing thing, and hence it may be equated with the Brāhminic idea of the Brahman.

Let us now form an idea of what was the nature of the chain of causes and effects (technically called the *pratītya-samutpāda*, i.e. the law of happening by way of a cause, or, the law of origination of a thing or phenomenon depending on another as its cause)—which the Bodhisattva revolved within his mind during the third watch of the night on which he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Gayā. The basic principle in this law of *Paṭicca-samuppāda* (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is laid down in the following formulary, viz. :

Imasmiṃ sati, idaṃ hoti ; imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati ;

Imasmiṃ asati, idaṃ na hoti ; imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.

‘This having been, *that* comes to be ; from the appearance of *this*, *that* arises. This having not been, *that* does not come into existence ; from the cessation of *this*, *that* ceases to be’.

Through his eye of knowledge Gautama, during his enlightenment, observed that the twelve *nidāna(s)*, *hetu(s)*, *samudaya(s)*, or *paccaya(s)* (as they are also called by the Buddhists) are the following, and they are arranged, as it were, to form as links in a chain of dependent origination. He grasped the idea that (1) *dukkha*, human pain or sorrow (i.e. due to decay, death, etc.) is causally determined by *jāti* (birth) ; (2) *jāti* by *bhava* (action,

good or bad); (3) *bhava* by *upādāna* (clinging to existence); (4) *upādāna* by *trṣṇā* desire or craving for worldly objects); (5) *trṣṇā* by *vedanā* (feeling or sensation of pleasure and pain); (6) *vedanā* by *sparśa* (touch or contact); (7) *sparśa* by *ṣaḍāyatana* (the six organs of sense); (8) *ṣaḍāyatana* by *nāmā-rūpa* (name and form, i.e. individual being; according to some, mind and body); (9) *nāmā-rūpa* by *viññāna* (consciousness); (10) *viññāna* by *saṃskāra* (conformations left from actions in former births), and (11) *saṃskāra* by (12) *avidyā* (ignorance).

By the cessation of the following one amongst these *nidāna(s)* the preceding one ceases to be. Hence ignorance becomes responsible ultimately for all human sorrows.

In this connection we refer to the four noble truths—*ārya-satya (s)*—which the Bodhisattva realized during his enlightenment, viz. (1) the existence of pain as an entity, (2) the origin of pain, (3) the cessation of pain, and (4) the eightfold path (*aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*) that leads to the cessation of pain. The Buddha described this eightfold path as the *majjhima-paṭipadā* (*madhyama-pratipadā*), the middle course, which, according to him, creates true insight and intelligence and which leads to tranquility of mind (*upaśama*), intuitive knowledge or supernatural faculty (*abhijñā*), supreme wisdom (*sambodhi*) and eternal happiness (*nirvāṇa*). When the Buddha delivered his first sermon (*dharmacakra-pravartana*, i.e. setting in motion the wheel of the Law, as they say) at the Deer-Park (*mṛgadāva*) at Isipatana (Sarnath, near Banaras) before the five rebelling comrades of his, he exhorted them to shun the two extremes in life's conduct, viz. (1) the pursuit of worldly and sensual pleasures on the one hand, and (2) the practice of useless and worthless austerities or self-mortification on the other, and adopt the eightfold middle path which he himself discovered. We should all do well to remember these eight principles, viz (1) *sammā-diṭṭhi* (*samyag-dṛṣṭi*), i.e. right view or belief; (2) *sammā-saṅkappa* (*samyak-saṅkalpa*), right resolve or aspiration, (3) *sammā-vācā* (*samyag-vācā*), right speech; (4) *sammā-kammanta*

(*samyak-karmānta*) right work or action ; (5) *sammā-ajīva* (*samyagājīva*), right living or profession ; (6) *sammā-vāyāma* (*samyag-vyāyāma*), right endeavour (7) *sammā-sati* (*samyak-smṛti*), right thought or recollection ; and (8) *sammā-samādhi* (*samyak-samādhī*), right meditation or self-concentration. In that famous discourse at Sarnath, the Buddha further explained clearly the nature of pain, its origin, and its cessation. The first noble truth, pain, is thus defined by him : birth is a pain, decay is a pain, disease is a pain ; and death is a pain. It is a pain to be associated with an unpleasant object and it is again a pain to be alienated from a pleasant object. It is also a pain to fail to get a thing that a person wants to possess. In short, it is a pain to cling to the five elements, *pañcopādāna-skandha(s)*, of which a man's body-cum-spirit state of being consists, viz. *rūpa* (corporal form), *vedanā* (sensations), *saññā* (perceptions), *saṃskāra* (conformations or predispositions), and *viññāna* (consciousness). The second noble truth is the origination of pain, and it is thus defined ; *Taṇhā*, desire or thirst or craving for worldly objects, (i.e. *kāmanā*) which is mostly the cause of pain, leads to new births ; and being accompanied by pleasure and lust, it sometimes finds its delight here and there. This desire may be of three kinds : *kāma-trṣṇā* (the thirst for pleasure), *bhava-trṣṇā* (the thirst for being or existence), and *vibhava-trṣṇā* (the thirst for not-being, or prosperity and power). The third noble truth, the cessation of pain, is thus defined : Desire is to be eliminated or destroyed completely so as to leave no trace of it ; it is to be abandoned and done away with ; and one should seek deliverance from it, and it should not be given any quarter at any moment in the mind. The fourth noble truth, the eightfold path, has just been dealt with above. Acceptance and true following of this path will surely lead to the release of all men from the twelve-fold fetters of cause and effect (called *pratītyasamutpāda* or the chain of causation, as it is also called), save them from the ills of life, viz. birth, decay, disease, death, and rebirth, and bring about their ultimate emancipation (*nirvāṇa*).

So the exposition of these doctrines leads us to think that the Buddha's system of teaching is greatly based on ethical principles of life. A man's life of purity with the possession of the higher sentiments of love and service to all beings may be helpful to the attainment of eternal bliss. The Buddhists are enjoined to contemplate whether the four noble truths are realities or not, and whether everything that has a birth is or is not impermanent on earth. The Buddha was only thirty-five when he attained enlightenment or Buddhahood, and he spent the remaining forty-five years of his life in preaching the profound and subtle truths he himself discovered and made innumerable converts to his faith from the members of royal families and ordinary people, young and old, rich and poor, male and female, by journeying from place to place in Magadha and elsewhere.

The Buddhists believed in the Buddha's precept that the composite thing—the human body with its life-principle—arises out of the combination of the five *skandhas*—*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *saṃskāra*, and *viññāna*; and whatever phenomenon, cosmical, physical, or mental, which is originated from the process of working of the law of causation (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is wholly unreal, and without any soul or Spirit to preside over it. They interpret the *rūpa-skandha* to mean the gross elements—earth, water, fire, etc., the objects or the senses and the sense-organs. By *vedanā-skandha* they refer to the feelings of pleasure and pain, and gladness and dejectedness. To realize the outward form of objects is *saṃjñā-skandha*. In *saṃskāra-skandha* are included love, energy, religious belief or faith, compassion, joyousness etc., left from actions in former births. The word *viññāna-skandha* means the power of becoming conscious of the real nature of things.

God and soul have found no place in Buddhism. The Buddhists do not believe in the presence of any soul in human body which (soul) is imperishable and invariable according to some other systems of philosophy. What is generally and popularly called the individual self, a living being or ego (*mudgala*, *jīva*, or

ātman) is nothing but a flowing stream of bodily and mental phenomena, ever changing and transitory; and even its real existence is totally denied by some of their schools. Now the question arises in this connection as to whether the same individual continues in the next birth and if so, how? In trying to solve this problem the Buddhists hold the view that *pudgala* (individual being) remains the same, and at the same time it becomes somewhat different. After death which is, in their opinion, nothing but the breaking up of the combination of 'faculties and characters', the personality of a man, under the pressure of a force by which those life-elements, faculties, and characters—viz. the five *skandhas*, tend to recombine, is again brought into being, and a new life is the result. This force, according to them, is nothing but the force of *karma* (action) and it is this aggregate of the results of good or bad actions which causes the recombination. Man goes to a new condition according to 'the total or resultant force of all the actions of the particular series of lives', and is thus born again. No soul, no spirit, nor anything like it, has passed on to the next creation or birth except, according to them, the force of *karma* which has compelled the new combination of the elements of the former individual who has only got a new life from a new birth. It has been mentioned before that Buddhism lays the greatest stress on *karma*; and the doctrine of *karma* is the cardinal feature of it. This powerful force of *karma* of a man is the main cause of his rebirth.

In order to form an idea of the Buddhist term, *nirvāṇa*, we may at first refer to its definition as propounded by the later *Mahāyānin* Buddhists. They hold the view that the *dkarmacakra* or *nirvāṇa*, as taught by the Buddha, is characterized by the words *niṣprapañca* (free from diffuseness and diversity, i.e. non-phenomenal), *anutpāda* (not liable to come into existence), *asambhava* (without origin), and *anālaya* (being above longing or desires). They also describe it as *vivikta* (lonely and detached), *prakṛtiśūnya* (super-natural) and *alakṣaṇa* (devoid of attributes

or indescribable). A Buddhist poet has described it as '*Ākāśena sadā tulyaṃ nirvikalpaṃ prabhāsvaram*'—i.e. it is similar to the sky or space, beyond distinctiveness and extremely shining. The followers of Buddha believed the *śūnya* or *nirvāṇa* as beyond existence and non-existence (*asti-nāsti-vinirmukta* or *catuṣkoṭi-vinirmukta*) and not partaking of the nature of any soul or non-soul (*ātma-nairātmya-vivarjita*). Every object or phenomenon except this *śūnya* is unreal and is as delusive as a magic, a mirage, a dream, a moon in the water, and an echo (*māyā-marīcat-svapnābhaṃ jalendu-pratinādat*). In the dialogue between Nāgasena, the Buddhist monk and the Indo-Greek king Menander (c. 125-95 B.C.) which is embodied in the Buddhist Pali work, the *Milinda-pañho* (the Questions of Menander), we find the king questioning the monk regarding the precise nature, form, and measure or extent of what is so much talked of in Buddhist literature by the term *nirvāṇa*. The monk-teacher's reply to it may briefly be put in these words. Nāgasena asked Menander to say what his reply to an interrogator should be if the latter put him the question : 'Do you know an ocean, and if so, how much water does it contain and how many lives live therein?' The king said that he would tell the interrogator that that question was out of order and almost an impossible one, as it was not at all possible to be precise in calculating the measure of the ocean's waters, nor to count the number of beings that live in it. After this Nāgasena told the king that in the same manner it is not possible to explain by means of any comparison or logical argument the nature, form, or measure of that great entity, *nirvāṇa*. What the teacher then said to the king regarding the good quality of *nirvāṇa* was that it remains untainted by all passions and torments, just as a lotus-leaf cannot be besmeared by water ; and it is the extinguisher of the fire of all passions and torments, just as water extinguishes fire by its coldness ; and again it quenches the three kinds of human thirsts or desires viz. *kāma-trṣṇā*, *bhava-trṣṇā* and *vibhava-trṣṇā* (already referred to) just as water slakes the ordinary thirst of all men, beasts, birds,

etc. *Nirvāṇa* is the healer of the various poisonous ills of worldly life which all beings suffer from. If a man can establish himself in the path of virtuous deeds he can certainly expect the attainment of the blissful and tranquil state of *nirvāṇa*.

According to the Buddhist works like the *Viśuddhimārga*, etc. *nirvāṇa* means a total annihilation of all the constituent elements of being, viz. the five *skandhas*, and people who seek after such annihilation should strive to attain it by meditation, knowledge, and display of virtue. The *Arthaśālinī* and some other works define *nirvāṇa* as the quieting of all desires and evil deeds. But the great philosopher and commentator of Buddhist works, Buddhaghosa, has applied the word *nirvāṇa* to mean *śūnya* or absolute non-entity or non-existence, the first stage of which is attained by an Arhat who has reached the highest state of sanctification and the last stage of which is attained by a Buddha alone who succeeds in bringing about release from every conceivable attribute of being and thus enjoying eternal bliss. To us it appears plain that what the Brāhminic seers (Rṣis) have, by their deep contemplation, attained as invariable and non-dual absolute entity, and what they have expressed by the terms Brahman, Paramātmā, or Bhagavat as *pūrṇa* or full, in which we find a unity of all existences, is non-different from the *śūnya* or void of the Buddhists in which they speak of the absence of all existences. Intrinsically the two may be treated as identical. *Nirvāṇa* has been equated by the later Buddhist philosophers with the ultimate Truth or Reality—*tathatā* ('thatness')—i.e. the state of permanent and invariable existence. That Reality is *pūrṇatattva* or *śūnya-tattva* by realizing which one becomes completely still, silent or dumb as it were, being unable to express in words its nature. This description reminds us of what the great saint Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa himself said about his own realization of *Brahmanirvāṇa* as an inexpressible phenomenon. He told his disciples that he often thought of expressing to them his experience of the peculiar bliss of *nirvāṇa*. But he said that he felt himself every time unable to express the same in words,

for, his mouth became as it were gagged and he was dumb-founded during his vision in a trance.

It is generally known that the Buddha either remained silent, or refused to answer, when, queries were put to him by his disciples as to whether after death even the Tathāgata's own existence will continue in any form or condition, and whether there is any soul of a man as different from his body. All he used to say in reply was that such queries were unnecessary or they were unanswerable. In his opinion the discussions of these mysterious questions could not further the attainment of knowledge of the ultimate Reality. He rather felt that there was not at all any necessity of prolonged discussions on these problems. His own view on these might rather be expressed by the following *gāthā* of the *Dhammapada* (369) which reads thus :

*Siñca bhikkhu ! imaṃ nāvaṃ sitta te lahumessati,
Chetvā rāgañca dosañca tato nibbānamehisi.*

'O Bhikshu ! empty this boat (of existence, of all waters of false discussions or guesses) ; when emptied, the boat will proceed quickly. Having cut off all attachment and hatred, you will reach *nirvāṇa*'. The Bhikṣus are exhorted to give up all false conjectures and reasonings on such problems. They are rather asked to conform themselves to the precepts of the Master and the *nirvāṇa* shall be within their easy reach. The Buddha took a great pleasure in explaining metaphysical queries to the members of both the laity and the congregation with the help of easily understandable and apt parables. We know from the *Majjhima-nikāya* of a parable which the Master narrated to Mālunkāputtra, when the latter questioned him on the real existence or non-existence of man and matter, and other such metaphysical topics. He replied advising him not to spend away much of his life's time in dialectics, for such long discussions and debates would not spare for him much time to strive for release from the sufferings and torments of life and for the study and adoption of easy and true methods for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. In this connection the Master narrated to him a very beautiful and instructive parable

which may briefly be noted here : A man was struck by a hunter with a poison-barbed arrow which could not be extracted from his body. His friends and relatives took him to a surgeon who at once set himself to begin an operation on the affected part of his body. But the man hurt by the arrow strongly opposed the doctor's operation, crying aloud : 'Stay, doctor, stay ; I will not allow myself to be operated upon until I know of the name, lineage, caste, form of body—small or large, of the man who discharged the arrow from his bow against me, and also the class of weapons to which the particular arrow belonged'. If the surgical operation was thus stayed till all his queries were fully answered, the fate of the man could be easily comprehended and the end of his life was inevitable. So also, if a seeker of truth waits till all his queries on such problems as the soul, the hereafter etc. are fully debated and answered, he will not be able to realize the Four Noble Truths during the short tenure of his life. Hence, to be delivered from worldly sufferings one should not forget the verses of the *Dhammapada* in which it is stated that 'one should take refuge with Buddha (the Teacher), Dharma (the Law), and Saṅgha (the Congregation or the Church) and realize with clear understanding the Four Noble or holy Truths, viz. pain, the origination of pain, the cessation or destruction of pain, and the Eightfold holy Path that leads to the quieting of pain. (For,) that is the safe refuge, that is the best refuge ; (and) having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain'.

In many other systems of religious beliefs, ethics finds a place only incidentally and secondarily, but in the Buddhist system its place is held very high. The essential virtues, according to it, are good conduct and its basic qualities, viz. friendship, compassion, non-violence etc. Good and evil, virtue and vice, well-being and adversity—these constitute the chief topics in this system. Perfection of human life cannot be achieved without adoption of moral virtues and repulsion from vices. As the *Dhammapada* (183) says :

*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa upasampadā
Sacittapariyodapanam etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*

‘Not to commit any sin, to take to doing good, and to purify one’s own mind (i.e. to cleanse one’s inmost thoughts)—that is the teaching of (all) the Buddhas—the Awakened and Enlightened Ones’.

In order to remove hatred, conflict, and injury prevalent everywhere on earth and bring about real freedom, tolerance, amity, and conciliation, our means must be righteous. No good objective is ever attained without good means. Hence one of the highest precepts of Buddhism is laid down in the famous couplet :

*Akkodhena jine kodhaṃ asādhunā sādhanā jine,
Jine kadariyaṃ dānena saccena alikavādināṃ.*

‘Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good, let him overcome the greedy by liberality or gift, and the speaker of falsehood by truth’. (*Dhammapada*, 223).

The Buddhists also believed in the Eternal Law preached by all the Buddhas, viz.,

*Na hi verena verāni sammantūha kudācanaṃ,
Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo sanantano.*

‘Never does hatred cease by hatred, but it does cease by love (alone)—this is an old or eternal law’. (*Dhammapada*, 5). If this lesson could be made the motto of life by all people of the world, there would certainly be an entire cessation of all quarrels and conflicts.

We read in the *Suttanipāta* that the Buddha on being asked by his dear disciple Śariputta as to what is to be regarded as the greatest danger for a Bhikṣu, proceeding on the path of the immortal *nirvāṇa*, replied saying that he should never be afraid of the doctrines of other sects (*paradhammikanāṃ na santaseyya*). So bigotry is to be eschewed and toleration in religious matters is to be practised as a policy of life ; and the Master said, moreover, that one should not utter a harsh word to any man even if he be enraged by the latter (*rasito’pi vicaṃ pharusāṃ na vajjā*), and one should never mind what others say of him (*janavādadharmāya na cetaṃcyya*).

Lord Buddha himself was devoted to a life of earnestness and

strenuousness (*apramāda* and *utthāna*) and by his self-control, renunciation, non-violence, love, friendship, compassion, and service to people he rose to the highest pinnacle of moral virtues. It may be supposed that it was the ethics of this system which must have been the cause of the propagation of this faith (Buddhism) not only in India of the day, but also in many far distant countries of Asia wherein its influence spread. It may be noted that the great Maurya emperor, Aśoka, was successful in unifying the whole of India : only after his conversion to and promulgation of the cardinal teachings of Buddhism and in sending missionaries to countries situated even on the Eastern Mediterranean. All historians are aware of the fact that in still later days this religion crossed over to Ceylon in the south, to Burma, Siam, and Indo-China in the east, and to the present day United States of Indonesia, viz. Java, Sumatra, and other islands there in the south-east, to Khotan, Eastern Turkistan, China, Manchuria, and Mongolia and even to parts of far-off Siberia in the north and also to the islands of the Japanese Empire. Let us hope that the magnificent Buddhist shrine of Boro-Budur in Java, built there in the form of a terraced pyramid, with its richly decorated walls, possessing not less than four hundred figures of the Buddha, will remind the world of the powerful integrating influence that Buddhism exerted on the minds of people so distantly situated from the land of its birth (India).

We may now conclude with a reference to the ten *veramanis*, prohibitions or abstinences (also called *daśaśīla* or *daśaśikṣāpada* in the *Prātimokṣa*) which the novices in the path of Buddhism had to utter in these words :

‘I take upon myself the abstinence—from destroying life ; from taking what is not given ; from leading an unchaste life ; from speaking the untruth ; from giving myself to intoxicating drugs ; from eating at irregular hours ; from seeing musical and dancing performances and other shows and pageants ; from wearing garlands, perfumes, unguents and other bodily decorations ; from using high couches and seats ; and from accepting gifts of gold and silver’.

May we never forget the last verbal message which Lord Buddha gave to Ānanda and other dear disciples just on the eve of his demise, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* :

‘Vayadhammā saṁkhārā, appamādena sampādettha’

‘All the constituent elements of being are liable to destruction ; strive (therefore) after salvation with diligence or earnestness’.

THE LIFE OF BUDDHA AS DEPICTED BY ASVAGHOSA

Aśvaghoṣa's epic, the *Buddhacarita*, is a famous *mahākāvya* or *sargabandha* in Sanskrit. Its value and importance are very great indeed. There is ample evidence, in this book, of the poet's detailed knowledge of the *Rāmāyaṇa* by Vālmīki who is regarded as the first epic writer. This poet undoubtedly flourished during the pre-Kālidāsa age. According to scholars, both oriental and occidental, Aśvaghoṣa was a contemporary of the Kuṣāṇa emperor, Kaniṣka, whose spiritual preceptor, according to some, he was.

AŚVAGHOṢA AND HIS WORKS

Aśvaghoṣa was born in a Brāhmaṇa family in Sāketa (Oudh), his mother's name being Suvarṇākṣī. His title was Ācārya and later he was also called Bhadanta. He was proficient in various branches of Brāhmaṇical lore and the Śāstras of the heretics. This brāhmaṇa scholar later became converted to Buddhism. It is said that he was at first a Sarvāstivādin Buddhist of the Hīnayāna sect, but later became one of the greatest of the Mahāyāna writers and philosophers, believing firmly in the dogma that

devotion to, and worship of, Buddha can bring about the salvation of humanity from the distresses of the world, including rebirths.

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who stayed in India from c. A.D. 630 to 644, described Aśvaghoṣa as one of the four suns illuminating the world, the other three being Āryadeva, Nāgārjuna, and Kumāralabdha, all famous exponents of Mahāyānism. Then, later, in 673, the other famous Chinese traveller, I-tsing, wrote that Aśvaghoṣa had composed a treatise on Alaṅkāra-śāstra, the epic *Buddhacarita*, and also some hymns (*stotras*) in honour of some Bodhisattvas; and the people of his age knew him to be a great Buddhist teacher. Ample evidence can be adduced to show that this poet-philosopher was well acquainted with the two great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, the tenets of the Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika systems of philosophy, and even the doctrines of Jainism. In addition to the *Buddhacarita*, another Sanskrit epic, the *Saundarānanda*, was also composed by him. He was also the author of a drama entitled *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*, only fragments of which have been discovered, and these have been printed and published in Germany with the zinc-photographs of its manuscript. The *Gaṇḍī-stotra* was a lyric of our poet's own composition. The two Mahāyāna treatises, the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-Sūtra* and *Vajrasūci*, are attributed to Aśvaghoṣa, the latter, however, with some doubt.

In the Buddhist world, Aśvaghoṣa was spoken of as a great *śramaṇa* (monk) and philosopher. He himself, in a passage in his *Saundarānanda*, explained why he had resorted to writing poems and dramas. He was of opinion that the generality of people remained ever engrossed in the enjoyment of worldly objects, and did not care much for the attainment of that knowledge that brings about deliverance from the miseries of the world; hence he decided to preach the truths of religion through the composition of poetry and drama, so that people, specially non-Buddhist hearers, might learn them for their own good and accept Buddha's doctrine, by keeping them in mind for meditative purposes. There seems to be no doubt that Aśvaghoṣa utilized in his *Buddhacarita*

much of what he learnt on poetics and metrics from *Nāṭya-śāstra* of Bharata, an earlier work.

THE BUDDHACARITA

The *Buddhacarita*, as the name indicates, depicts the events of the life of Gautama Buddha. The Chinese traveller I-tsing remarked that in this voluminous epic, containing originally twenty-eight cantos, Aśvaghoṣa dealt with the chief episodes of Buddha's life, from his childhood and early life in the king's palace to his demise at Kuśinagara under the *śāla* tree and the distribution of his mortal remains amongst the different claimants, and also with the Master's religious views. But to our greatest regret and misfortune, we find in print only seventeen cantos of the book. Of these, again, scholars are of opinion that excepting certain interpolations, only the first thirteen cantos and the first thirty-one verses of the fourteenth canto are genuine. The remaining verses of the fourteenth canto and the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth cantos were composed not by Aśvaghoṣa, but by one Amṛtānanda, a Nepalese poet. The latter wrote, in 1830, his portion containing at its end the episode of the *dharmacakrapravartana*, the first sermon of Buddha preached at the Deer-park (Sarnath) near Banaras, where he succeeded in converting the five ascetics, who duly received ordination from him and became the first members of the Buddhist Order (Saṅgha) of *śramanas*. The Nepalese poet added that he wrote supplementary cantos only after feeling frustrated due to failure, in spite of a long and strenuous search, to find any manuscript containing the genuine latter half of Aśvaghoṣa's book, which seems to be lost to the world.

It is, indeed, a matter of pleasure and pride to know that this valuable Sanskrit epic of India was rendered into Chinese in the fifth century by a Buddhist monk, named Dharmarakṣita, and that it was also translated into Tibetan in the seventh-eighth century. From these Chinese and Tibetan versions, it was known that the original work consisted of twenty-eight cantos.

There were, later on, editions of this book published in the German and Italian languages. E. B. Cowell's edition of the Sanskrit text was published in Oxford in 1893 and later, his English translation of it formed a volume in the series of the *Sacred Books of the East*. In 1935 came another learned edition from Lahore by E. H. Johnston. It is very sad indeed to learn that no good edition of the whole of this invaluable *mahākāvya* has yet been prepared and published by any Indian scholar, and there are no proper arrangements to teach this work in any of the Indian universities.

It appears to us that the great poet Kālidāsa was fully conversant with the Sanskrit works of Aśvaghoṣa, and he drew much inspiration therefrom and used many similar thoughts and expressions in his own famous books of poetry and drama. Of course, there are some Indian scholars who are of the opinion that it was Aśvaghoṣa who was probably indebted to Kālidāsa for many of his thoughts and expression ; but this is a controversial subject, and we do not think this is a proper place for a discussion on that question. There is no doubt about the fact that Aśvaghoṣa is a great literary figure.

Let us now narrate the contents of the book, canto by canto, and lastly state, very briefly, how far Aśvaghoṣa introduced elements of Mahāyānism into this poetic composition.

THE BIRTH OF THE LORD

In the first canto, styled *Bhagavatprasūti* (The Birth of the Lord), Aśvaghoṣa describes how Māyādevī was delivered of her son, in the Lumbinī forest, and how he broke open and came out of the right side of her womb, without in any way hurting his mother. Immediately after his birth, this golden-coloured child walked seven steps and, in the manner of a lion, gazed at the four quarters and uttered a pronouncement, in a blessed voice, declaring : '*Bodhāya jāto'smi jagaddhitārtham-antyaḥ bhavotpattir-iyam mameti*'—I am born to acquire supreme knowledge for the good of the world : and this is my last birth (I.15).

There occurred an earthquake and shower of flowers from the horizon at the time of his birth ; and in the sky of the Lumbinī forest where he was born, the gods assembled. It is sometimes seen, remarks the poet, that lineal successors succeed in performing such great works as could never be done by their predecessors in the family. The mind of Śuddhodana, the father, became fearful of evils that might befall the newly born child. But he became somewhat consoled to hear of the likely fate of his son from the Brāhmaṇas and he prayed : '*Bhūyādayam bhūmipatir-yathokto yāyāj-jaram-etya vanāni ceti*'—May this (son) become a ruler of the earth, as declared by them, and may (he) retire to forests (for religious purpose) after attaining old age (I. 48).

Having heard of the news of the birth of the prince, the great seer (*maharṣi*) Asita came to the royal palace and said to the Śākya king : '*Divyā mayāditya-pathe śrutā vāg bodhāya jātatanayas-taveti*'—I have heard a divine voice in the heavenly path, proclaiming that your son was born to attain supreme knowledge (I. 57). On seeing the prince, Asita was found to have his eyes full of tears, and this caused a tremble in the affectionate heart of the king, who began to wonder whether, his son would be long-lived or not ; whether he was born to cause sorrow to himself, or whether he would soon, by destiny, be carried away from the world. The king expressed such thoughts to the old seer who addressed the anxious king thus : 'My prediction will come true. I am only sorry that my days are numbered now, and I may not see your son renounce the kingdom and, becoming averse to worldly objects, acquire by strenuous efforts the knowledge of the highest truths, and shine in the world as the sun of knowledge to disperse the darkness of ignorance.'

The seer also declared about the newly born prince thus : '*Duḥkhārṇavād vyādhi-vikīrṇa-phenāj-tarā-taraṅgān maraṇogra-vegāt uttārayiṣyatyayam-ukhyamānam-ārtam jagajjñāna-mahāpla-vena*'—By means of the boat of knowledge, borne along, this (prince) will deliver the distressed world from the ocean of misery which throws up disease as its foam, which has decrepitude

as its (tossing) waves, and which possesses a dreadful onflow of deaths (I. 70). He meant to say that Prince Gautama would be most competent to save people from the miseries of the disease, old age, and death, by showing the way of salvation to those who had lost the right path and were led astray by wrong religious teachings. The poet also suggested, through Asita's address, that the people of the world would be able to quench their thirst for knowledge of the truths by drinking from the river of Dharma (or Law, i.e. his religious doctrines), as preached by him whose flowing stream would be knowledge; its strand, a strong series of moral laws; its coolness, contemplation; and its ruddy geese, religious vows. He would moreover, be able to delight, by means of a rain-shower of law, the men of the world scorched by the confusing fire of desires, which is fuelled by the contact of worldly objects. People would find out a means of escape through the door which, at first, was bolted by desires (*trṣṇā*), and which was strongly built by panels of ignorance and delusion, but which this prince (as the future Buddha) would be able to break open by the blows of the good law (*saddharma*). He would certainly be able to bring about people's release from bondage, and save them from all ensnaring ignorance, all miseries and helplessness. Asita lastly told Śuddhodana that he felt very much grieved to think that he, being so old, would not have the chance of attending the Law to be preached later on by his son, and that (because of this) he thought it to be a kind of misery to reside even in heaven by attainment of virtues through meditation. After thus addressing the king, Asita departed into the sky, but the king began to ponder over the likelihood of his son's renunciation from the world.

The king, however, on account of the great joy at the prince's birth, observed various religious rites, such as muttering of prayers, sacrifices to, and worship of, gods and goddesses, and offered rich presents to Brāhmaṇas. The baby and his mother were brought to the palace from Lumbinī, and the whole of Kapilavastu, the capital, put on an appearance of great joy.

RESIDENCE IN THE ROYAL HAREM

The second canto of the *Buddhacarita* is called *Antahpuravi-hāra* (Residence in the Royal Harem). After Gautama's birth, the kingdom of the Śākya king flourished all the more. Because of the sudden development of all kinds of resources in the kingdom after the prince's birth, the king gave the son the name Sarvārthasiddha. On seeing the unusual and miraculous power of her son, Māyā-devī, unable to bear her excessive joy, succumbed to its onslaught and passed away to the other world. The prince was, therefore, tended by his mother's sister, Gautamī, who took every motherly care of the child, who began to grow in her custody.

After having passed his childhood, the prince acquired within a few days all sciences, suitable to his own family, which could only be mastered by others in many years—*alpair-ahobhir-bahuvārṣagamyā jagrāha vidyāḥ sva-kulānurūpāḥ*. (II. 24).

The king strove to keep the prince, devoted to worldly objects of desires (*kāmeṣu saṅgam janayāmbabhūva*), out of fear of Asita's prediction that he was destined to attain the final beatitude. At the age of sixteen, he married the prince to a noble girl of exquisite beauty, endowed with high mental qualities, Yaśodharā by name (a princess of the Koliya race), and arranged to keep his son in a secluded environment in the interior of the palace, in order to ward off all sights from his eyes that might cause him mental perturbation. The king appointed youthful women to attract the mind of Gautama by their artful devices, such as sweet smiles, modest talk, and other charming and amorous movements and gestures. Always remembering what the seer had told him of his son's future, the king, disengaging himself from all royal enjoyments, began to worship the fire and perform all acts of charity. The people of his kingdom also remained devoted to the performance of all acts believed to be leading the prince to peace and happiness.

In the course of time, Gautama had a son by Yaśodharā, Rāhula by name. Śuddhodana now prayed that his son might

not leave home and become a recluse in the forest, after having seen the beautiful face of the newly born baby (Rāhula). Kings generally protect their sons from all the calamities and dangers arising from vices, so that they might enjoy the blessings of kingship ; but contrary was the act of King Śuddhodana. Himself a virtuous man, he wanted to keep his son away from religious practices, so that the son should enjoy all sorts of sense pleasures. It is said in the Mahāyāna legends that all Bodhisattvas enjoy the pleasure of wordly objects till they are blessed with sons, and that after the birth of their sons they become homeless and renounce the world for forest life. Gautama also, though with the root of attainment of *sambodhi* (perfect wisdom) planted in him, enjoyed all worldly objects till a son was born to him.

THE RISE OF VIOLENT MENTAL AGITATION

In the third canto, called *Sanvegotpatti* (The Rise of Violent Mental Agitation), Aśvaghōṣa describes the agitation which arose in Gautama's mind after he had seen an old man, a sick man, a corpse, and a monk on different days—sights which gradually induced him to renounce the world. The prince expressed a desire to go out for a drive in the royal gardens on the outskirts of the capital city. The king's command to the persons concerned was that they should keep from the prince's eyes the sight of any miserably sick or old man. Hearing the news that the prince was going out, the women of the city hurried to the windows of their houses to catch a glimpse of him, and seeing his exquisite physical charm, as of god Madana (Cupid), some women exclaimed, saying, '*dhanyāsyā bhāryā*'—how blessed was his wife ! But most of them showed him great honour and veneration, when they heard that the prince would forsake his royal prosperity and leave home to seek religious salvation.

In order to induce the prince to take to the path of religion, the gods presented before him one day, on the royal road of the city, the vision of an old man, with white hair, a staff in hand, his eyes covered over by eye-brows, and with slackened limbs.

The prince inquired of the charioteer about this man's condition ; '*Kim vikriyaiṣā prakṛtir-yadṛcchā*'—Whether it was a (bodily) change in him, or his natural state, or an accident (III. 28)). In reply, he was told that the man was attacked by *jarā*, i.e. decrepitude, which destroys human beauty, and that he (the prince) himself would also attain such a state in life. The prince ordered the charioteer to return to the palace, thinking how men did not feel any agitation in their minds on observing how old age acted on their bodies bringing about a gradual decay of memory, form and strength.

On a second occasion, by the influence of the gods who created a vision of a sick man, the prince learnt from the charioteer that sickness or disease was a common misery befalling all men, and he therefore deplored that all men did not feel much affected by the raging of disease. That day also the prince ordered a return to the palace. King Śuddhodana made the guards alert against any such sight and arranged to keep his son in great enjoyment of worldly pleasures, but the prince began to be more averse to those in the harem.

On the third excursion, the gods created the vision of a dead man, and, on inquiry, the prince learned from the charioteer that every human being was bound to arrive at such a state, wherein the body would be bereft of all the powers of its various organs and senses, and of all intelligence, and the dead man would appear asleep and remain like a log of wood. The prince then thought ; '*Iyam ca niṣṭhā niyatā prajñānāṃ pramādyati tyaktābhayaśca lokāḥ, manūṃsi śaṅke kaṭhināni nṛṇāṃ svasthās-tathā hyadhvani vartamānāḥ*'—If such is the end that appertains to all creatures, how is it that people, becoming bereft of any fear, are (thus) infatuated ? I am afraid, the minds of men are very hard in this that, though on a trek to such a path (of death), they feel thus self-composed (III. 61). The prince wanted to go back to the palace, but the charioteer, finding him much depressed by such human calamities, forcibly, as it were took him to the lotus-beds.

HURTING THE WOMEN

The fourth canto is called *Strī-vighātana* (Hurting the Women). The women were doing their best to keep the prince engaged in all kinds of earthly pleasures, such as touches, embraces, shooting eye-glances towards him, gestures, etc. They, however, failed to attract the prince's mind. His comrade, the son of the royal priest, Udāyī by name, exhorted the women to continue their efforts to induce the prince to enjoy all attractive objects of the world, saying: 'You are all conversant with all arts and are quite competent to bring under your lustful control, with the help of your physical beauty and mental cunning, even gods and dispassionate ascetics; and you are quite able to enrap-
ture even women, not to speak of men (*Strīṇāmapi ca śaktāḥ stha-
samrāge kiṃ punarṇṇām*': IV. 12). Thus encouraged, the women accompanied the prince to the pleasure-garden, but all their seductive art failed to cause any change in the mental resolve of the prince, who remained fully unaffected by their allurements, as his mind was full of thoughts about death, the ultimate end of human life.

Gautama developed a contemplative mood and became desire-
less for worldly objects, as he could not comprehend how any wise and intelligent man could in an equanimous manner sit, stand, lie down, or smile, after having known that all men are subject to disease, decrepitude, and death. Udayī, his friend, versed in political and moral sciences, reproved the prince saying that it was unbecoming of him to have treated the women in that ignoble way, as even Indra, Agastya, Bṛhaspati, Candrar and other gods and ascetics enjoyed worldly objects and sexual love, and that he himself being so handsome and strong a youth was scornfully rejecting the enjoyment of their persons. To this the reply of Gautama was: '*Anityam tu jagat-matrā nātra me ramate manah*' —My mind does not feel pleasure in the world (or in any worldly object), which seems to me to be ephemeral (IV. 85). He said moreover: '*Jarā vyādhiśca mṛtyuśca yadi na syūddham trayam,*

mamāpi hi manojñeṣu viṣayeṣu ratirbhavet'—If there did not exist the triad, viz. old age, disease, and death, there would have been attraction in my mind for all objects pleasing the senses (IV. 86).

The prince also remarked that the youthful beauty of women, too, was transitory. So, all men should rather feel perturbed by thought of enjoyment of wordly objects, and he rebuked his friend, saying that he should not have tried to drag him into wordly affairs. The women returned to the city in deep disappointment, and the prince also went back home brooding over the transitoriness of everything. Hearing these incidents, the king discussed the prince's mental proclivity with his counsellors, and they decided that there was no other way than to arrange for the prince to indulge in the enjoyment of worldly objects, in order to keep his mind attracted towards the prosperity of royalty.

THE RENUNCIATION

The fifth canto, called *Abhiniṣkramaṇa* (The Renunciation), describes how the prince again went out of the palace with his associates at the behest of the king. Strangely enough, asking his associates not to follow him, the prince entered a solitary forest and seated himself under a *jambu* tree, and there performed his first tranquil meditation thinking about the origin and dissolution of the world. His intelligence, at the time, became pure and hereft of the tinge of any defilement.

The gods availed themselves of this opportunity to present before him the vision of a monk, and, on being asked by the prince, the latter told him that he had left home and become a *śramaṇa* in order to be free from the fear of birth and death and to attain salvation, and that he would reach that auspicious eternal bliss by giving up all thought of worldly possessions and begging his meals from others. Thus addressing the prince, the monk vanished into the sky. After this vision, the prince's mind became firmer in his purpose of renunciation. But, before finally leaving home to conquer future births and deaths, Gautama wanted once again to go back to the city and the palace to see the

members of his family for the last time. While he was entering the city, he was seen on the way by a princess who exclaimed thus : *Sukhitā vata nirvṛtā ca sā strī patir-īdṛkṣa ih-āyatākṣo yasyāḥ*—How happy and pleased in this world is that lady whose husband is this person possessing such large eyes (V. 24). The word '*nirvṛtā*' here, which also means 'one happy by the attainment of *nirvāṇa* or the bliss of emancipation', brought about a turning point in his determination ; and the prince resolved in his mind to obtain the final beatitude (*parinirvāṇa-vidhau matim cakāra*, V. 25).

Returning to the palace, he begged permission of his father to enter the path of renunciation, saying, '*Parivrajiṣyāmi mokṣa-hetor-niyato hyasya janasya viprayogaḥ*'—I shall leave the world for the sake of liberation, because separation (or estrangement) of men (from each other) is a certainty (V. 28).

King Śuddhodana tried to persuade his son with many an argument to give up the desire for renunciation. The prince, in reply, said that he would discard the idea of renunciation, if only he (his father) could stand surety for four things : '*Na bhaven-maraṇāya jīvitaṁ me, vihareṭ svāsthyamidaṁ ca me na rogaḥ ; na ca yauvanam-ākṣipej-jarā me, na ca sampattim-imāṁ hareṭ vipattiḥ*'—(1) my life shall not be subject to death, (2) no disease shall impair this health of mine, (3) no old age shall attack my youth, and (4) no adversity shall carry away my prosperity (V. 35). The father replied that such an assurance could not be given by any one to anybody, it being so contrary to natural law. The son argued that, as men have to leave the world with their objects unfulfilled and in an unsatisfied condition, it is better to bring about a deliberate separation from all associates for the sake of the attainment of Truth.

The father arranged for music and dancing to be performed by beautiful courtesans to distract his son's mind, but the gods, having understood the firm attitude of the prince in the matter of renunciation, caused untimely sleepiness to overcome those women, and they fell into deep sleep in all kinds of uncomely

postures, the repulsive sight of which strengthened his resolution for renunciation all the more. According to the will of the gods, on that very night, the door of the palace spontaneously opened, and the prince went out from the palace and ordered his groom Chandaka to saddle his dear steed Kanthaka (or Kanṭhaka elsewhere), because he thought that was the proper time to leave home (*niyataṁ yātum-ato mamādyā kālaḥ*), as the sight of those women was repulsive and the palace gate opened suddenly and spontaneously.

Strangely enough, the royal steed that night made no sound of neighing which would have awakened the people of the palace, and he made no noise as his hoofs were borne up by the palms of the gods. The prince rode out of the palace, leaving behind his father, his dear wife, his newly born son Rāhula, and all the subjects of Kapilavastu, towards which he turned and cast his last look saying in a lion's voice ; '*Jananamaraṇayor-adṛṣṭa-pāro na puramaham Kapilavastuṁ praveṣṭā*'—I shall never again enter the city of Kapilavastu, before I have seen the shore of the ocean of birth and death (V. 84).

THE RETURN OF CHANDAKA

The sixth canto is called *Chandakanivartana* (The Return of Chandaka) and describes the return of Chandaka to the palace with the horse no more ridden by the prince.

With sunrise next morning, Gautama reached the hermitage of the ascetic Bhārgava and, after alighting from horse-back, he praised the valour and devotion of his groom and ordered him to go back to the city, after having made over to him all the ornaments from his person. He asked Chandaka to carry the following message to his father : 'Not on account of any disaffection towards you, or any fault on your part, or any displeasure or anger, have I left home ; I have done so only with the intent of destroying births and deaths. I know I cannot be an object of sorrow to you, as only those who remain attached to worldly desires which cause sorrow are to be pitied. I have gone from home to evade the path

of sorrow.' He asked the groom to see that his father did not remember him much.

At this moment, the devoted groom hesitated to go back to the city without the prince on his horse and requested him not to forsake his devoted attendant (himself), although he so easily forsook his father, his affectionate step mother, his beloved wife and his child, just as a non-believer forsakes the *saddharma*, the good law of truth. He (Chandaka) refused to go back alone to the city, just as had done the honourable charioteer, Sumantra, after leaving Rāma in the forest. Gautama consoled Chandaka saying that death would one day bring about a sure estrangement from his dear ones, though he might not leave them now. Association and dissociation of all beings were but temporary. So, according to his view, it was quite proper that one should give up such dream-like egoistic union. He asked the groom to tell all the people in the city : '*Kṣipram-eṣyati vā kṛtvā janma-mṛtyu-kṣayaṁ kila, akṛtārtho nirārambho nidhanaṁ yāsyatīti vā*' —The prince will either return quickly after having destroyed birth and death, or, failing in his purpose, will attain annihilation by not undertaking any work at all (VI. 52). The pet horse took adieu of his master by licking his feet and shedding warm tears.

Gautama, at this stage, cut away all the hair from his head by means of his sword and cast it away with his diadem into the air, and the gods took possession of them for worship. A god in the garb of a hunter appeared before the prince and presented to him a monk's robe. Having thus dismissed his groom and the horse, Gautama entered the hermitage. And Chandaka only bodily moved towards the city, having kept his mind centred on the prince in the forest (*yayau śarīreṇa puram, na cetasā*, VI. 67).

THE ENTRY INTO THE HERMITAGE

It is learnt from the seventh canto, called *Tapovanapraveśa* (The Entry into the Hermitage), that Gautama, having entered the hermitage, asked an ascetic there as to the nature of the place. and was told, in reply, that the ascetics there, by those

performances, desired to go either to heaven or to earth for the enjoyment of happiness. The prince, then, uttered the following words : '*Duḥkhātmakam naikavidham tapaśca svarga-phalam ca ; lokāśca sarve pariṇāmaśāntaḥ svalpe śramaḥ khalvayam-āśramā-ṇām*'—These various austerities are full of hardships, and the result of austerities is the best if it can lead to heaven. But all people are subject to change and decline ; there is only the effort for a small object on the part of (the inmates of) these hermitages (VII. 20).

It appeared to Gautama that the performance of all religious observances resulted in great bondage. It was a kind of search for pain by means of pain. A wise man's effort should be directed towards *naiṣkarmya*, i.e. abstraction from all works. Control of the mind is the most desired purpose, for the body moves towards activity or abstraction only by the influence of the mind. The body without the mind is like a log of wood.

Gautama entered that evening into that serene forest and seated himself under a tree. He was asked by an old ascetic to stay in the hermitage, because many a *brahmarṣi*, *rājaraṣi*, and *devarṣi* resided there and performed austerities, and because there were very many holy places of pilgrimage there. And Gautama told him that it would pain him much to leave them ; but he criticized their religious performances in these terms : '*Svargāya yuṣmākam-ayaṁ tu dharmāḥ mamābhilāṣas-tv-apunarbhavāya ; asmin vane yena na me vivatsā bhinnāḥ pravṛtṭyā hi nivṛttidharmāḥ*'—Your (religious) disposition is for the attainment of heaven, but my desire is the elimination of a fresh birth. For this reason, I have no wish to dwell in this forest of yours. And, again, the path of abstraction is different from (that of) activity or attachment to worldly business. (VII. 48).

At this, the ascetics were very pleased with this newcomer, and one of them, a Brāhmaṇa lying down on ashes, praised his noble resolve to prefer emancipation to residence in heaven, as he understood rightly the evils of the cycle of births or existences. According to this ascetic, it is only those attached to worldly

pleasures who strive to go to heaven by the performance of penances, but those who are possessed of true essence desire to attain emancipation by fighting with the greatest enemy, namely, attachment towards worldly objects. He then directed Gautama to proceed towards the Vindhyan region to the hermitage of Arāḍa, who was reported to have properly comprehended the right path of truth, and Gautama left that locality for Arāḍa's hermitage.

THE LAMENTATION OF THE PALACE PEOPLE

The eighth canto is called *Antaḥpuravilāpa* (The Lamentation of the Palace People). On finding Chandaka and Kaṇṭaka returning without the prince, the people of the suburbs of Kapilavastu forbade the groom to enter the city and asked him where he had forsaken the prince. He replied that it was the prince who forsook them and not they, him.

The plaintive utterances of the city women were heard as they found the horse without the prince on it. The queen, Gautamī, fell to the ground out of sorrow, on account of separation from her darling, the prince. The sorrowful wife of Gautama, Yaśodharā, bewailed in a rage, saying that her heart was trembling on finding that the groom and the steed had returned alone, though the three had left the palace together. Yaśodharā could not reconcile the tears of sorrow now in the eyes of the groom with his cruel deed then. She said that a wise enemy was much better than a foolish friend like him, who stole her husband away at night, like a thief stealing the jewels. She said, moreover, that had the worthless steed neighed that night and produced sounds by his hoof-strokes, the people of the palace would have awakened and her husband's departure would have been prevented, and they all would not have come to grief. She could not, she said, understand how a husband could perform religious duties without being accompanied by his wife, nor how he could desert his infant son.

Chandaka implored the princess not to rebuke him or the horse, both of whom were innocent. The episode of the steed being brought from the stable, the horse's silence, and the automatic

opening of the gate of the palace at the time must be attributed to divine agency. The other ladies wept bitterly for the prince on hearing the following pathetic words of his foster-mother, Gautami: '*Kulena sattvena balena varcasā śrutena lakṣmyā vayasā ca garvitaḥ ; pradātum-evābhyucito na yācitum katham sa bhikṣām parataś-carīṣyati*'—How would that person (the prince) beg alms from others, as he was ever used to giving (everything to others) and not asking for anything (of them), because he was proud of his lineage, goodness, strength, energy, learning of the sacred lore, prosperity, and youth ? (VIII. 51)

King Śuddhodana, while coming out of the temple, where he went to pray with hymns and to perform sacrifices for the welfare of the prince, heard the bewailings of his people, and he dropped to the ground on finding the condition of the groom and the steed, and on realizing the firm resolve of his son for renunciation. To him, life became a heavy burden to bear, just as it had become to King Daśaratha of old for the sake of his son, Rāma. His chief counsellor and the royal priest consoled the king by recalling the words of the seer Asita, who had predicted that no body would be able to make the prince strive for the attainment of heaven or for universal sovereignty, as he would only make efforts to attain final emancipation. They, however, sought the king's permission to go out in search of the prince.

THE SEARCH FOR THE PRINCE

The ninth canto is called *Kumārānveṣaṇa* (The Search for the Prince). The king's minister and the royal priest, during their search for the prince, arrived at the hermitage of Bhārgava, but the inmates of that hermitage gave them the information of the prince's departure from there for the hermitage of Arāḍa. They went to the latter place and met the prince there. First the royal priest addressed the prince, saying : "Your father wishes you to go back to the city and enjoy all royal property, and then, when you are older, come to the forest in accordance with scriptural direction. You should be kind to him (*sarveṣu bhūteṣu dayā hi*

dharmaḥ) and accept his advice. Men can achieve perfect knowledge not only by residing in forests, but also by living at home. Many a house-holder obtained liberating faith (*prāpto gṛhasthairapi mokṣa-dharmaḥ*). You should try, like Bhīṣma, Rāma, and Paraśurāma, to do beneficial work for your father, and you should go back to the palace to assuage the grief of separation of the queen Gautamī, the princess Yaśodharā, the infant son Rāhula, and the other inmates of the palace and the city."

The prince gave the priest the following reply : "I left behind my near and dear ones out of fear of disease, decrepitude, death, and other distresses of the world. All union ends in separation. Death may come at any moment of a man's career. But there should not be any discrimination between this moment and that in the matter of one's attempt to reach the bliss of emancipation. I do not want to enjoy sovereignty, which will be like the taking of unwholesome food by a sick person. Kingship is the abode of infatuation, and administration of a kingdom is full of calamities and catastrophes. After having once renounced the world for the sake of the highest truth, I cannot shamelessly change my brown-red robe of a monk for that of a householder. I do not believe in your argument that householder kings attained emancipation, for 'Where is the religion of liberation which depends on tranquility ; and where is the path of kingship which depends on punishment or violence ?'—*Śama-pradhānaḥ kva ca mokṣadharmo, daṇḍa-pradhānaḥ kva ca rājamārgaḥ* (IX, 48). One bent on tranquillity must slacken his desire for sovereignty ; and one bent on rulership must revolt from tranquillity or quietism."

On hearing these views of Gautama, the minister then spoke, and tried to offer another set of arguments to distract the mind of the prince from his religious life. He said : "A resolve for religious practices is never unreasonable, but a son should not adopt such a course by leaving behind his old father in a sorrowful state. You say that you are afraid of rebirths, but by cherishing such a fear you seem to throw away perceptible objects of enjoyment for the sake of unseen results of religious practices. But '*Punarbhavo*' stīti

ca kecidāhurnāstīti kecin-niyata-pratijñāḥ ; evaṁ yadā saṁśayito' yam-arthas-tasmāt kṣamam bhoktum-upasthitā śrīḥ—Some (philosophers) say that there is rebirth, others confidently assert that there is no such thing. Thus, this matter being doubtful, it is quite right that one should enjoy (royal) fortune, when it presents itself before one's hand (IX. 55).

All the activity of man flows from his own nature, and the different bodily elements being harmonized produce a show of the external world. Some people think that God is the creator of everything in the universe, but in such a view there is no opportunity for human efforts. The Being, who might be the cause of the world's activity, may also be regarded as the cause of its abstraction from works. If you have any regard for emancipation, you should lawfully perform all kinds of religious practices. There will therefore be no fault on your part if you go back home for the sake of religious performances."

This good discourse of the minister made no impression on the prince's mind, and the prince declared to him that the doubt about the existence or non-existence of rebirths was other people's opinions or views. So, he wanted to find out the truth himself through his own personal penances and mental equanimity, for no wise man should allow himself to be led to the abyss of darkness like a blind man being led by another blind man. So he refused to go back home without knowing the truth. The minister and the priest, having found the prince firm in his resolve, went back to Kapilavastu with disappointed hearts.

THE APPROACH OF THE ŚREṆYA KING

The tenth canto is called *Śreṇyābhigamana* (The Approach of the Śreṇya King). Herein we get a description of the offer of half of his kingdom of Rājagṛha made by King Bimbisāra to Gautama. The prince, after crossing the Gaṅgā, proceeded towards the south to Rājagṛha, the capital of Magadha. The king, Śreṇya or Śreṇika (Bimbisāra), observed from his outer palace a great concourse of people anxiously striving to have a sight of the Śākya prince in a

monk's dress. An officer of his told the Magadhan king that Śuddhodana's son, Gautama, was passing by that locality, and that the Brāhmaṇas had made a prophecy about him that he would attain either the highest knowledge or sovereignty on earth (*Jñānaṃ paraṃ vā pṛthivī-śriyaṃ vā viprair-ya ukto'dhigamiṣyatīti*. X. 11). Attended by some faithful servants, the king approached the new ascetic and found him seated cross-legged, in a monk's dress, on the Pāṇḍava hill near by. The king addressed the prince thus : *Āditya-pūrvam vipulam kalam te, navam vayo dīptam-idam vapuṣca ; kasmād-iyam te matir-akramena bhaikṣāka evābhiratā na rōjye*'—Your race, sprung from the sun, is noble ; your youth is fresh ; and this your physique is brilliant. How is it (then) that this your mind, contrary to the proper order (of the race), delights in the mendicant's life and not in the enjoyment of the kingdom ? (X. 23).

If he was averse to the enjoyment of the paternal kingdom, King Bimbisāra told the prince, he might enjoy half of his Magadhan kingdom, or if, out of pride for his own race, he was not willing to accept this offer, he might accompany him to war against his enemies. The king also advised him to enjoy earthly possessions till he attained old age, when only he should undertake religious practices. And he reminded him of such a course by referring to the scriptures : '*Śaknoti jīrṇaḥ khalu dharmam-āptuṃ kāmopabhogeṣvapatir-jarāyāḥ ; ataś-ca yūnaḥ kathayante kāmān madhyasy vittaṃ sthavirasya dkarmam*'—It is only an old man that can go in for a religious life, when, on account of decrepitude, he is unable to enjoy (earthly) pleasures. Hence (they) say that objects of earthly desire are for youth ; wealth (or property), for the middle-aged ; and religion, for old people (X. 34). The Magadhan king then exhorted the prince to perform religious sacrifices, for many *rājarṣis* and *maharṣis* had attained heaven by such sacrifices. But these words of the Magadhan king could not move the prince's mind at all.

THE REPROACH OF EARTHLY ENJOYMENTS

The eleventh canto is called *Kāmaṇḍikā* (The Reproach of Earthly Enjoyments). Having heard the Magadhan king speak as stated above, Gautama explained to him the cause of his renunciation in these words : "After having realized the fear of old age and death, first of all, I gave up my desire for earthly objects ; then I deserted my own near and dear ones in a sorrowful state ; and then I left the world for religious performances for the sake of liberation. To me, it appears that desire is a transitory thing which is a stealer of a man's good or well-being. No man can attain perfect happiness and tranquillity to go even to heaven after having enjoyed worldly objects, for 'There is no sense of satiety (of a man) with pleasurable objects, just as there is no satiety of fire, the wind's friend, by an offer of fuel' (*Kāmaiḥ satṛṣṇasya hi nāsti tṛptir-yathendhanāir-vāta-sakhasya vahneḥ.*' XI. 10),

I can refer to the want of satiety on the part of Indra, Nahuṣa, Aila (Purūravas) and other kings after their enjoyment of worldly objects. Many an ascetic, clad in rags, ultimately met with a breach of vow by desire for objects of the senses. No self-possessed king should hanker after worldly objects. Everybody knows how the sovereignty of the Kuru, Vṛṣṇi, and Andhaka races came to ruin, because they fell a prey to worldly desires. For the sake of satisfaction of their desires, many ignorant persons suffer from corporal punishment, imprisonment, or even death. Objects of the senses often produce reverses or evils, as we see that 'Antelopes are lured to destruction by means of music ; insects rush into fire being attracted by its brightness ; and fish swallow the iron hook by being greedy of flesh. So, worldly objects produce misery as their consequence.' (XI. 35).

I do not, moreover, consider objects of desire as enjoyable, for what is pleasant at one moment may turn to be unpleasant at the next. No one enjoys exclusive happiness, rather all people suffer from misery. '*Dṛṣṭvā vimiśrāṁ sukha-duḥkhatāṁ me rājyaṁ ca dāsyāṁ ca matāṁ samānam ; nityāṁ hasatyeva hi naiva*

rājā na cāpi santapyata eva dāsaḥ—Having realized that all happenings contain a mixture of happiness and misery, I treat both royalty and slavery as equal, for a king does not always enjoy smiles, nor does a slave always feel agony (XI. 47). ‘A king has always to work hard for his people’—*śramaḥ parārthe nanu rāja-bhāvaḥ* (XI. 47) Again, we find : ‘*Rājñō’pi vāso yugam-ekameva kṣut-samnirodhāya tathānnamātrā ; śayyā tathāikāsanam-eka-meva śeṣā viśeṣā nṛpatermadāya*’—Even royal clothing (like others) consists of a pair of garments ; (the king’s) food (as other people’s) is just enough to keep off hunger ; his bed is one and his seat is one ; and the remaining distinctions of the king are for his (royal) pride only” (XI. 48).

The prince then told the Magadhan king that he enjoyed mental peace without the thought of a kingdom (*ṛte’pi rājyān mama tuṣṭir-asti*). He asked for the latter’s benediction in fulfilling his resolve to attain real peace of mind, for which he had resorted to a homeless state. He was not willing to accept a kingdom in heaven, not to speak of one on earth. To work for the attainment of the *trivarga*, the three ends of life, viz. religion, wealth, and sensual enjoyment, he regarded as evil. He regarded that to be the chief end of life in which fear, birth, old age, disease, death, and mental pain were all absent, and in which no action for attachment to desired objects was necessary. Again, he said to the king thus : “I have no desire even for a long life. I bow down in horror to sacrifices in which other beings’ lives are at stake. No injury to others can ever bring happiness in this life or the next.” The prince thus remarked on sacrifices ; ‘*Namo makhebhya na hi kāmāye sukham, parasya duḥkha-kriyayā yad-iṣyate*’—All honour to sacrifices ! I do not seek happiness (therefrom), for this is sought (by people) by causing pain to others (XI. 64).

He was never desirous of entering into the cycle of rebirths. He then said to King Bimbisāra that he was there on his way to the hermitage of Arāḍa, who believed in the doctrine of final emancipation. He prayed for the king’s welfare and wished him well in the performance of his royal duties. The king, at last,

requested the mendicant prince to do him the honour of revisiting his realm after he (the prince) had fulfilled, without any impediment, the desire of his heart (i.e. attainment of enlightenment). Gautama promised to do so, and he left that place for the hermitage named Vaiśvantara ; and the Magadhan king repaired in a mood of wonder to Girivrajapura, casting his last glance on the prince.

THE MEETING WITH ARĀḌA AND OTHERS

Gautama's first acquaintance with Arāḍa and their conversation on the supreme Truth are described by Aśvaghoṣa in the twelfth canto, called *Arāḍa-darśana* (The Meeting with Arāḍa). This seer of the Kālama family welcomed Gautama there with great honour and expressed his joy, saying : 'I am quite aware of your renunciation after tearing asunder the snare of affection, and also of your resort to forest life by quitting royal fortune. You will very soon be able to cross the ocean of miseries by means of the raft of knowledge.'

The prince, though not yet in full achievement of his desire, hoped, from this blessing of Arāḍa, for his perfect success, and he expressed his desire to the seer to learn from him of that right path which would lead him to the goal of liberation from old age, disease, and death. On being thus questioned, Arāḍa expressed to Gautama the views and doctrines of his own (sectarian) scriptures. In doing so, the seer told him how, in his view, the cycle of rebirths took place and how it could be eluded. While discussing this subject, the seer also made reference to what was Prakṛti (the primordial subtlest matter) and what was *vikṛti* (the modifications thereof) as well as to what was regarded as the *kṣetrajñā* or soul, or self, according to the believers of the doctrine of soul or spirit. He told him that ignorance (*ajñāna*), work (*karma*), and desire (*tṛṣṇā*) were at the root of rebirths (mundane existence). The latter three again were caused by *vipratyaya* (wrong fundamental notion), *ahaṅkāra* (egoism), *sandeha* (confusion), *abhisamplava* (great fluctua-

tion), *aviśeṣa* (indiscrimination), *anupāya* (false means), *abhiṣvaṅga* (inordinate attachment), and *abhyavapṛta* (jumping down on things of attachment). The five-pronged *avidyā* (ignorance or illusion), viz. *tamas*, *moha*, *mahāmoha*, *tāmisra*, and *andhatāmisra* created newer existences. The Brahmavādins take resort to *brahmacarya* (life of chastity) to qualify themselves to know *akṣara* (the imperishable supreme Soul), by realizing as to who was enlightened and who was not so, and as to what was manifest and what was unmanifest.

The prince inquired of the seer about the highest and final end (*naiṣṭhika-pada*) and the best means (*abhyupāya*) of attaining the same. Arāḍa mentioned, according to his own scriptures, that a person desirous of liberation, should at first renounce the world, take up the mendicant's bowl, and cultivate moral virtues, and, becoming free from the pairs of opposites, should repair to a state of loneliness and believe that the highest good may be obtained by passionlessness. Then would that aspirant for liberation gradually enjoy happiness and tranquillity through the first, second, third, and fourth stages of meditation. Some wise people would realize the Self (Brahman) as identical with *ākāśa* (ether); others, again, who would think of the non-existence of anything, should be designated *ākiñcanya*, i.e. taking the whole universe as an abode of nothingness or asserting absolute want of any existence, and such men might be called *mukta* (liberated), after they went out of the body like a bird from its cage. According to Arāḍa, *mokṣa* or final emancipation was to be defined thus: '*Etat tat paramam Brahma nirliṅgam dhruvamakaram; yasmokṣa iti tattvajñāḥ kathayanti manīṣiṇaḥ*'—Wise men, who know Reality, define *mokṣa* as that which is called the supreme Brahman, the eternal, the imperishable, and without distinctive signs (XII. 65).

Having heard all these important Brāhmanical views from the seer, Gautama declared that, though he might be freed from the evolutes and evolvants, he would regard the *ketrajñā* (the individual self or spirit) to be *prasavadharmin*, subject to the condition of birth, and *bījadharman*, having the condition of the seed

with latent power to germinate. He thought that men were subject to repeated existences through *pratyaya*, an operative cause or the chain of causation. He did not believe that from the mere abandonment of ignorance, work, and desire, any final release was possible, for total extinction of these was not feasible, because wherever one thinks of the existence of the Ātman or self, or soul, these three would remain in a subtle form : '*Ātmanaśca sthitir yatra tatra sūkṣmam-idaṁ trayam.*' (XII. 74).

In this way, Gautama found fault with the conception of *mokṣa* etc. as found in the Brāhmaṇical system, which was referred to by Arāḍa. He argued, moreover, that, if there were a soul, there could not be any real abandonment of egoism (*satyātmani parityāgo nāhaṅkārasya vidyate*, XII. 76), and that, if the soul were a knower, there must be a thing to be known (*jñeya*) ; and such being the case, there cannot be release or salvation of such a sentient soul (*jñeye sati na mucyate*, XII. 80).

Gautama's own view, however, was : '*Parataḥ paratastyāgo yasmāttu guṇavān smṛtaḥ ; tasmāt sarva-parityāgan-manye kṛts-nām kṛtārthatām*'—As such successive abandonment is accompanied with (strand-like) qualities, absolute attainment of the end consists, in my opinion, of total abandonment of everything (XII. 82).

Considering the view of truth as propounded by Arāḍa to be incomplete or imperfect, Gautama left his hermitage, and went to that of another ascetic, named Udraka. Here also he could not accept the latter's teachings about the existence of soul. And, because the Bodhisattva was desirous of attaining the highest Reality and not realization of the Ātman, he left the seer Udraka also (*Bodhisattvaḥ param prepsus-tasmād-Udrakam-atyajat*, XII. 88).

Gautama then pursued his way towards a hermitage near the city of Gayā, and there, on the banks of the Nairāñjanā river, he met five mendicants who were striving after final emancipation. They welcomed him with respect, and with them he spent there six years in the act of severest penances, gradually giving

up even a morsel of food. The Bodhisattva, in his pursuit of tranquillity became greatly emaciated in body, and he could not, however, reach the fulfilment of his aim in life. His marrow, flesh, and blood dried up, and he realized : '*Nāyaṁ dharmo virāgāya na bodhāya na muktaye ; jambu-mūle mayā prāpto yas-tadā sa vidhir-dhruvaḥ*'—That way of religious performance, i.e. mortification of the flesh, could not lead to passionlessness, nor to enlightenment, nor to liberation ; and certainly the true way lay in what I had obtained (formerly) under the *jambu* tree (XII. 101).

So, he wanted to return to his former mode of a medicant's life, and became eager to have food to eat. And, lo ! while slowly proceeding along the bank of the Nairāñjanā river, he was offered, at the instance of the gods, milk-rice (*pāyasa*) by a cowherd-girl named Nandabālā (elsewhere mentioned as Sujātā). After having slowly partaken of that food, he began to acquire bodily strength to strive for the attainment of perfect knowledge, i.e. enlightenment. Having seen Gautama give up penances, his five comrades left him. Gautama then became steadfast in his resolve to obtain enlightenment and went beneath an *aśvattha* tree (the Bodhi-tree, as it was later called). At that time, there took place an earthquake and Gautama's bodily lustre shone forth like that of the sun ; and a very old serpent, called Kāla, having seen the bright features of the Bodhisattva, declared, after a prayer to him, that he would surely become the Buddha, the Enlightened, on that very day (*tvam-adya Buddho niyataṁ bhaviṣyasi*, XII. 128). Hearing these encouraging words of the lord of the serpents, the Bodhisattva took his seat under that famous tree in the hope of attaining perfect enlightenment. Seated there crosslegged, he declared aloud that he would never leave that seat before he succeeded in attaining perfect knowledge.

THE CONQUEST OF MARA

Aśvaghoṣa, in the thirteenth canto, called *Māra-vijaya* (The Conquest of Māra), has described the Bodhisattva's victory over Māra, the evil one, the great destroyer. Knowing that Gautama

was bent on destroying his dominion on earth, Māra stated the cause of his sorrow before his three sons, personifying *vibhrama* (confusion or perturbation or mistake), *harṣa* (joyfulness), and *darpa* (pride or conceit), and his three daughters, personifying *arati* (disgust, rather *āraṭi*, extreme pleasure), *priti* (gladness or affection), and *tṛṣṇā* (thirst or desire). He told them that, if Gautama were to defeat him and present before men the way of salvation or liberation, his own *viṣaya* (dominion) would vanish from the earth. Therefore Māra engaged himself to rout his opponent. He proceeded to the Bodhi-tree and advised Gautama to perform his own religious practices and give up the attempt to attain perfect release from worldly bondage. He also urged him to train his own subject people to do likewise. He should himself attain perfection in military science and in the performance of sacrifices, and thus attain the rank of Indra. He told Gautama to give up the beggar's vow ; otherwise, he (Māra) would make him lament or fall unconscious by striking him with his flower-shafts.

Even after hearing such threats, Gautama did not leave his seat. Māra then took his sons and daughters with him and struck the Bodhisattva with his arrows, but without success, as Gautama did not swerve from his firmness. Throwing aside his flower-shafts Māra resorted to applying threats and menaces, and to strikings by goblins or evil spirits masked with the appearance of various beasts and birds. At this terrible scene, the gods became agitated with sorrow for Gautama ; but he, like a lion among cows, remained unperturbed by all these disturbances, which stood as the greatest impediment in the way of his religious work. He was not in the least affected or moved by Māra's overtures. Firm as a rock, Gautama was not frightened by the hideous sounds and yellings of Māra's hosts. At this, Māra became extremely sad and angry. Just at that moment, an invisible being from the air addressed Māra : '*Moghaṃ śramaṃ nārhasi Māra kartum, hiṃsrātmatām-utsrja gaccha śarma ; naiṣa tvayā kampayitum hi śakyo, mahāgirir-Merur-ivānilena*'—O Māra, you need not take any fatigue on yourself ; throw aside your malevolent nature and retire to peace,

for you will not be able to shake this person, just as the great Mount Meru cannot be shaken by the wind (XIII. 57)..

The invisible being also said to Māra that the great ascetic would never give up his resolve to attain enlightenment in consequence of the pious works done by him in many past *kalpas*, and added : '*Hṛte ca loke bahubhiḥ kumārgaiḥ sanmārgam-icchatī yaḥ śrameṇa ; sa daiśikāḥ kṣobhayitum na yuktān sudeśikāḥ sārtha iva pranaṣṭe*'—The guiding person who, with great efforts, seeks for the good (and right) path (of religion), when people are led astray in devious (erratic) or wrong paths, should not be disturbed, just as a guide (who is familiar with the locality) should not be so disturbed when the caravan has lost its way (XIII. 62).

He also asked Māra to give up his plan of hurting the man whose intelligence would be applied to the work to releasing people from the snare of illusion. Hearing these words of the invisible being in the sky, Māra became sad, discomfited, and powerless, and went away with all his shafts ; and his army also took to flight. When Māra with his hosts fled away, the gods began to shower flowers from the moonlit sky, smiling, as it were, on account of the Bodhisattva's victory over Māra.

THE ATTAINMENT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

In the fragmentary portion of the fourteenth canto, which seems to have been called *Sambodhi-lābha* (The Attainment of Enlightenment), we read that, after having vanquished Māra by means of his steadfastness and mental tranquility, Gautama entered into deep meditation under the Bodhi-tree, and during the first watch of that night, he obtained supreme power, which made him remember all the events of his previous existences. The poet writes : '*Sarveṣu dhyānavidhiṣu prāpya caśvaryam-uttamam ; sasmāra prathame yāme pūrva-janma-paramparām*'—After having acquired supreme power in all the practices of contemplation, he came to remember, in the first watch (of that night), the continuous series of all his former births (XIV. 2).

During the second watch, he attained a divine eye and

visualized the present states of all people. He could also observe how people were suffering from or enjoying the evil or good effects of their evil or good works in hell or heaven.

Of this canto, only this much of the episode of Gautama's attainment of enlightenment (Buddhahood) is available to us.

THE EXTINCT PORTION OF THE BUDDHACARITA

In the fourteen cantos of the *Buddhacarita* so far discussed, out of the original twenty-eight cantos, we have only 1,033 verses, composed in various metres. Āśvaghoṣa must have undoubtedly described in the, now lost, remaining portion of the original book the other chief episodes of Buddha's life, such as a full story of his enlightenment and his realization of various kinds of knowledge and omniscience ; his first proclamation of the gospel at the Deer-park (Mṛgadāva) near Banaras (Sarnath) ; the conversion to his faith of his chief disciples, Kāśyapa, Sāriputra, and Maudgalyāyana ; his ceremonial visits to the kings of Kosala, Magadha, and other places ; his acceptance of the many gifts of gardens and monasteries, like Jetavana, Āmravana, and Veṇuvana, etc. ; the conversion, by him, of his wicked cousin, Devadatta ; his promised visit to his father, Śuddhodana, at Kapilavastu ; his ordination of Aniruddha, Bhadrīka, and others ; the performance of the greatest of his miracles before the confused leaders of heretical sects, namely, Gośāla, Mahāvīra, and others ; the event of his absence from the earth when he went to Trāyastriṃśa heaven to expound the Abhidharma to his late mother (Māyādevī ; his *mahāparinirvāṇa* at Kuśinagara after his last sermon to Ānanda and others ; the distribution of his mortal remains to the different claimants ; and so on.

THE INFLUENCE OF MAHĀYĀNA ON ĀŚVAGHOṢA

A few remarks on the nature of the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism on the poet-philosopher Āśvaghoṣa, in depicting the life and career of Gautama Buddha in the *Buddhacarita*, may now be made. Āśvaghoṣa is generally regarded by scholars as one of the

earliest exponents of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and, as already mentioned, he was a contemporary of Kaniṣka, who flourished in the first century A.D. From the above narrative of the chief contents of the *Buddhacarita*, it may be said that herein can be observed a preliminary stage in the evolution of Mahāyāna thought in Buddhism. The following are some of the Mahāyānic ideas that can be traced in Aśvaghoṣa's book, referred to either explicitly or implicitly :

(1) The stress on Buddha-*bhakti*, the Master being an object of devotion and worship to the devotee.

(2) The deification of Buddha, who should be regarded as a god above all gods. His assumption of the *sambhoga-kāya*, a refulgent form or body with the signs of great men, is only in conformity with the world, and this body is apparently subject to all human frailties, such as fatherhood, and so on. We may remember that, according to the Mahāyānists, Gautama Buddha is the *rūpa-kāya*, material body, or *nirmāṇa-kāya*, created body, of the real Buddha.

(3) The Bodhisattva's glory was almost too difficult to be borne. His mother Māyādevī died soon after Gautama's birth, being unable to bear the excess of joy on account of the glory of her son.

(4) The excessive use of the miraculous element in the legends and episodes of the Bodhisattva's career. Gautama's walking seven steps soon after his birth ; the gods' creating the four particular visions ; the silence of Gautama's horse and the holding up of his hoofs by the hands of the gods ; the spontaneous opening of the gate of the palace at the time of his departure ; the offer of the milk-rice by Nandabālā at the instance of the gods ; and the address of the invisible being in the sky to Māra about his sure failure to shake Gautama from his resolve to attain enlightenment, are some examples of this point.

(5) The importance of thinking about the vanity of existence. Gautama's renunciation of worldly life and his discourses on the abandonment of desires are examples in this connection. He

regarded the world as *anitya* (transient or impermanent), and hence he resolved to attain *parinirvāṇa* (emancipation from individual existence) by causing extinction of all rebirths.

(6) The dedication of the Bodhisattva's life, in his several existences, to the service and welfare of humanity. The Bodhisattva was born to attain perfect knowledge for *jagaddhitārtha* (the well-being of the world). He is expected to deliver the distressed world from the sea of misery by means of his raft of knowledge.

(7) The refutation of some of the Brāhmaṇical religious thoughts and practices as being heretical. Gautama told the inmates of the hermitages he visited that austerities performed by them might lead them to heaven, but that was a small result as it could not bring about *vairāgya* (dispassion) or *bodha* (knowledge) or *mukti* (emancipation). According to him, *nivṛttidharma* was quite different from *pravṛttidharma*. The Brāhmaṇical teachers were not right in thinking that old age only was the proper time for acquiring *dharma* (religion) and that *mokṣa-dharma* could also be practised by householders. Sacrifices advocated in Brāhmaṇical scriptures were desecrated by the slaughter of animals and the infliction of pain on others.

(8) The gradual development of the *anātmavāda* and *śūnyatā* (i.e. not only of *pudgala-śūnyatā*, but also of *dharmaśūnyatā*, that is to say, the non-existence not only of any *Ātman* or *pudgala*, or individuality, but also of the objective world). Gautama, as we have seen above, criticized the views of Arāḍa and Udraka on the theory of the existence of *Ātman*, which, if conceded, could not lead to the attainment of absolute Reality, as the *kṣetrajñā* or the individual soul, according to Gautama, remained *prasavadharman* and *bījadharman*, and could not totally discard the triad of *ajñāna*, *karma*, and *tṛṣṇā* and attain the state of *ākiñcanya*.

THREE

BUDDHA, THE CONQUEROR OF MARA

The conflict between good and evil, represented in Indian religious thought in various ways, such as the war between the *suras*, gods and the *asuras*, demons, the battle between the Universal Mother and the Mahiṣāsurā, the buffalo-demon, and the fight between Śiva and Mādana, is an eternal one. In Buddhist literature this conflict is represented allegorically in a battle fought between Bodhisattva Gautama and Māra. Every Bodhisattva, every Pratyekabuddha, and, as a matter of fact, every individual human being on earth, daily experiences such a conflict with *Māra*, *the Devil, the Evil One, the great Destroyer*; and each of them has to strive hard to be victorious over the latter. Believing in the doctrine of rebirths, *janmāntaravāda*, Indians think that it may take a very long time in the cycle of existences for a man to attain complete victory over Māra, Kāma or desire, before he can qualify himself to achieve liberation from worldly bondage. This desire pertains to all kinds of human cravings including love-lust i.e. all passions for the objects of the senses and all attachments, of various nature, to the clinging to life and the world itself. This

struggle of man with Māra or Kāma is not a new theme in Buddhism. This perpetual hard contest between the two forces of good and evil has found mention even in the Upaniṣads and *Bhagavad-Gītā*. In a still later age poets, like the Buddhist Aśvaghoṣa and the Śaiva Kālidāsa, took up this theme and described the conflict as an allegorical scene in their own Sanskrit epic poems, the former in the *Buddhacarita* (Canto XIII) and the latter in the *Kumārasambhava* (Canto IV).

MĀRA, A MENTAL FOE

This Māra is an internal foe of man, and his fighting units or armies are the immoral and evil mental states or proclivities in man. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says ; 'As soon as Brahman (the higher and the lower one) is realized (by a man), all his mental bonds, (*hrdayagranthis*), i.e. his desires, are rent in twain, all his doubts are dispelled, and all his actions are destroyed.' (II. 2. 8). While this verse states that the knowledge of Brahman, the Self, leads to the elimination of all mundane desires, the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* declares in a different way thus : 'When all the desires (*Kāmāḥ*) which occupy the mind of a man are renounced, then a mortal being becomes immortal and he then realizes Brahman even in this (his present life). (II. 3. 14-15) And also : 'When (in the present life) all the mental bonds (*hrdayasya granthyaḥ*), i.e. desires of a man, are torn away, then does a mortal being become immortal—this is the teaching or law (in the scriptures).' Here the advice is that demolition of desires should precede the knowledge of Brahman.

The teaching of the *Gītā* also on the abandonment of desires is proverbially forceful. It says : 'By desire, the insatiable fire, this constant enemy of a wise man, is enveloped his wisdom.' (III. 39). So we are instructed to declare a fight against *kāma*, desire, which is personified as the all-consuming and all-polluting foe on earth, and slay it, the sinful one, the destroyer of wisdom and knowledge. Though difficult to overcome, this enemy must be slain if we are to realize the knowledge of Brahman, rejoice in the Self,

and be content with the Self (III. 17). The scriptural advice is that we must make our *kāmas*, or desires and cravings, submerge into ourselves ; we must remain unmoved by them and thus only can we hope to attain peace, but never by desiring desires (II. 70). The best precept seems to be inlaid in the famous verse (II. 71) of the *Gītā* which says : 'Whoso forsakes all his desires and being free from yearnings goes onwards by discarding selfishness ('my'-ness) and egoism ('I'-ness) attains peace.'

Bodhisattva Gautama was very steadfast in his contemplation and, having found out what constituted the binding forces of all longings and cravings, moved forward towards the eternal blissful state of peace, called *nirvāṇa*, by extinguishing all such desires. It is curious that the great Śaṅkara also interpreted such a peace as the cessation of all miseries of existences, *sarva-saṃsāra-duḥkha-parama-lakṣaṇā nirvāṇākhya*. The withdrawal of the mind from desires is allegorically described as the conquest of Māra. The Buddhists believe that after having defeated Māra (i.e. having conquered all desires) and attained perfect enlightenment, Sambodhi, under the Bodhi-tree, Bodhisattva Gautama gave forth an udāna, joyful utterance which finds its place in the Jarāvagga of the *Dhammapada* (gāthās 8-9) in the following words : "Looking for the builder of this tabernacle (i.e. this my body, the prison-house of the senses) I should have to traverse a cycle of many births, but without (probably) succeeding in finding him out ; and painful it is to go through rounds of births again and again. But now, O you, the maker of the tabernacle ! You have been found out by me, and you will not be able to build this house again. All your rafters are broken and your ridge-pole is sundered. My mind being free from predispositions has attained the extinction of all desires (*taṇhā*)."
Metaphorically speaking, we may regard this destruction or abandonment of all desires and cravings as victory over Māra, the Tempter. It is desire which leads to the building of the body, binding it to the wheel of existences. Once desires are dead in us, we become free from future births. So it appears to be a patent fact that without victory over Kāma or Māra, the Evil One, the

creator of all desires, no one can expect to attain the highest knowledge of the Brahman of the Brahmanic scriptures, or the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddhist ones. Hence Gautama strove so hard to conquer that great foe and succeeded in doing so.

MĀRA'S ONSLAUGHT ON GAUTAMA AS IN
THE MAHĀVASTU-AVADĀNA

Let me now relate some of the Buddhist narratives (as culled during my study of the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* and the *Divyāvadāna*) on this fascinating and important topic of the conquest of Māra by the Buddha. Bodhisattva Gautama left home at the age of twenty-nine and wandered through many places performing the severest kinds of austerities ; he reached the stage of extreme emaciation of the body on account of his having undertaken penances. But although he lived such a hard life for six or seven years, he could not realize the longed-for state of enlightenment which he was seeking so ardently. Having, however, at last, felt that self-mortification was not the way to the attainment of perfect knowledge, he proceeded to the forest of penance near Uruvilvā on the banks of the river Nairāñjanā (near modern Bodh-Gaya) for the performance of meditation.

The *Mahāvastu* states that at that time Māra, the Tempter, approached the Bodhisattva and addressed him thus : "What will you gain by this meditation ? Go and live at home. You will become a universal king. Perform the great sacrifices, such as the horse-sacrifice, *aśvamedha*, the human sacrifice, *puruṣamedha*, the drinking of the soma-juice, *somaprāśa*, the *nirargaṇa*, (the unbarred house where any man can enter and receive asked-for gifts), the red lotus, *paduma*, and the white lotus, *puṇḍarīka*, sacrifices, or *yajña*. If you perform these *yajñas* you will rejoice in heavenly regions and beget great merit, Meditation, however, is very difficult to perform and hard to attain. To live a life of chastity means the loss of blameless merit." Some more words of commiseration did Māra (Nāmuci) add saying that the Bodhisattva should stop this striving for meditation, or else he would have no

hope of life, and that life was the greatest good for him, for by living a life he would be able to achieve unending merits.

On hearing of such a view of life from Māra, the Bodhisattva replied to him thus : “O You, the Dark and Wicked One ! I have not come here in quest of merit. I have no use for the smallest of merits. You should rather address such words to those who have use for merits. As to your reference to my living a life, I do not think that I am immortal, for life has death for its end. But, relying on my holy life, I shall go (to that place) from where there is no return. (*Anivartam gamiṣyāmi brahmacariya-parāyaṇaḥ*, II. 238). He also said : “Let my body with its gall, phlegm, and humours dry up, but I know that while the flesh is failing, the mind becomes more tranquil, and then appear greater mindfulness, zeal, and concentration. I have will, zeal, and wisdom. I see none in the world who could keep me away from meditation. As I am free from attachment (*nirupādhi*), I shall advance to the fight against Māra. From under the Bodhi-tree I have seen Māra’s mailed hosts advancing with their banners flying. But though I have not yet won my immortal state, *amṛta pada*, I shall be able to repel this host by and by.’ Then Gautama again spoke to Māra thus : “O Māra, I know all your armies. Your first army is desire, *kāma*, the second, extreme pleasure, *ārati* (III, 240, not *arati*, i.e. disgust, which should not logically be an army of Māra), the third, hunger and thirst, *kṣutpipāsā*, the fourth, craving, *tṛṣṇā*, the fifth, sloth and torpor, *styāna-middha*, the sixth, fear, *bhīru*, the seventh, doubt, *vicikitsā*, and the eighth, pride, *māna*. There are also greed, *lobha*, falsely won praise, *śloka*, esteem, *satkāra*, and renown, *yaśa*. All these also form part of Māra’s mailed and bannered host. Many a recluse and Brāhmaṇa are seen in the thick of this perpetual fight with Māra. But a cowardly person cannot overcome it and even if he does he will rue it. But I will destroy this host by my wisdom, as one can destroy an unbaked vessel (of clay) by water. I shall indeed win over and convert many disciples with an excess of zeal. Foolish and stupid people give themselves up to remissness, but I will go, in spite of you,

to the place where ill ceases." On hearing the Bodhisattva speak thus, Māra, aggrieved, disconsolate, unhappy, discomfited, remorseful, and tortured by the sting within him, vanished from sight,

During all these six or seven years that Gautama lived his life of hardship, Māra was ever at his back, seeking and watching for a landing-place, i.e. an opportunity to assault him, but he (the Tempter) failed to get access to him and every time he had to go away with drooping spirit. At no time could Māra overcome the Bodhisattva, as the winds cannot overcome the Himalayas. The adorable Gautama, the repeller of death, *mṛtyurāja-praṇuda*, used to tell the monks that he lived a life of hardship from a desire for liberation or release from bondage, *mokṣābhiprāyeṇa Bhagavatā duṣkaram cīrṇam* (II. 240). This struggle of Siddhārtha with Māra as described in the *Mahāvastu* may profitably be compared with that described in the Pali *Padhānasutta* (in the *Mahāvagga* of the *Suttanipāta*) many verses of which seem to be the Pali rendering of most of the *Mahāvastu* verses (II. 237-41) written in a mixed form of language at so early a period of Indian history.

It is stated in the *Mahāvastu* that Kāla, the Mahānāga, the great serpent, came out of his lair and found the supreme person, the Bodhisattva, approaching along the banks of the Nairāñjanā river towards the Bodhi-tree, and observed that he was just like the previous Lokanāthas, saviours of the world, as seen by him of yore. From the various omens at the time he concluded that the great hero would undoubtedly become Buddha, enlightened, that very day, ' *niḥsaṁśayam Mahāvīra adya Buddho bhaviṣyasi*' (II. 398). According to the Mahānāga, Bodhisattva Gautama was treading the same way as was trodden by the former Buddhas, Krakucchanda, Konākamuni, and Kāśyapa ; he was sure to destroy the army of Māra, the Evil One, and after having crushed his host he would shine forth eminently. He said to Gautama : "O destroyers of passions and intoxication, you, having by means of knowledge eradicated your *aśrava*(=tainted mind) i.e. all your mental intoxicants, will today gain enlightenment and be awakened." The Bodhisattva acquiesced in the view of Kāla (the Mahānāga)

and said that it was quite true that he would attain the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment, *anuttara samyaksambodhi*, that very day and expressed the opinion that mountains might disappear, the moon might fall down from the sky, the wind might blow away the summit of Mount Meru, and the earth and the horizon might meet together, but persons like him, while thus seated under the Bodhi-tree, would never fail to attain immortality. He felt sure that at the end of that night he would be able to destroy totally the roots of existence.

As the Bodhisattva was seated under the Bodhi-tree he attained the five *saṃjñās*, awarenesses, viz. the awareness of the past, *atīta-saṃjñā*, that of well-being, *kṣamasamjñā*, that of happiness, *sukha-samjñā*, that of the impossible, *aśakya-samjñā*, and the supreme awareness, *para-samjñā*, that he would that very day awaken to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment.

MARA'S VAUNT

Māra, the Evil One, flew through the sky to where the Bodhi-tree was and, standing in the air, saluted the Bodhisattva with folded hands and addressed him vauntingly in some verses purporting that he (Māra) was the almighty sovereign, the discernor of all creatures, the knower of what consists of happiness and misery, and expert in ascertaining different views on the philosophy of life. He also, in that address, advised the Bodhisattva to enjoy all the pleasures of men and dwell in his father's palace as long as he possessed youth and health, and to rule his prosperous kingdom by offering the various great sacrifices which, if performed, would make him an immortal god. But the Bodhisattva replied to him by pointing out that with whatever purpose he (Māra) might have come thither, he was neither an almighty king, nor Brahmā nor Prajāpati, and asked him to remember that he (Bodhisattva) had no delight in birth, high, low, or of the middle kind, nor in the pleasures of worldly prosperity, as he was indifferent to them all. He said, moreover, that just as an elephant in chains, bound to a tying post, breaks asunder the chains

and tears out the post and flies away so he would also split asunder all shackles of family life and become homeless. Māra then fled away—but he stood in mid air. The Bodhisattva marked him to be there and asked him as to who he was. Māra replied saying that he was the lord who intoxicated gods and men while they enjoyed the objects of the senses under his influence, and, thus enjoying, they would be able to elude the grasp of death. But the Bodhisattva who had succeeded in understanding the highest reality, *paramārthadarśin*, and who had been an embodiment of all kinds of blessings earned through millions of *kalpas* replied to Māra saying that if he were the controller of his own mind then only could he vaunt of his lordship, '*Cittaśūrosi yadi taveśvaratvam*' (II. 407), but if he was master of desires, then clearly he was non-lord, '*Kāmeśvarosi yadi vyaktamanīśvarosi*' (II. 407). Even kings who succumb to the temptation of women on account of Māra's influence become slaves of Yama, the god of destruction, the moment wanton women fall on their backs. The Bodhisattva then also spoke to Māra thus : "Do you who have fallen under the thraldom of women vaunt of sovereignty ? But see how you are under self-delusion. I firmly affirm that there was in the past no such thing as the powerfulness of a man who was affected by lustful desires, nor will there be such a thing in future. So in this fight I shall forcibly vanquish you and become Buddha just as dawn sets in, for, O Dark One, a person who is seated on such a throne and who is in his last existence will never rise up from it without becoming Buddha, i.e. he will never remain non-Buddha."

Māra reminded the Bodhisattva of his vast army of Piśācas, Rākṣasas, and Yaksas. But the Bodhisattva assured Māra that millions of Māras had no power to cause even a hair of his body to move and he asked him not to prate to no purpose, but to leave the place at once. Having been thus rebuffed, Māra went back to his home and announced to the members of his family Gautama's attempt to be awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment, and he told them also that Gautama must be removed from the seat lest the multitude should desert his dominion.

THE ADVICE OF MĀRA'S SON AND MINISTER

Māra's son, whose name was Janīsuta, requested his father not to hinder the Bodhisattva in his desire to attain *sambodhi*, as, in his opinion, he was sure to achieve the highest, enlightenment that very day. He advised his father not to assault this mighty and supreme person and not to proffer any annoyance or insult to him. He should rather remember that 'no one should fall into a trench of burning coals ; no one should touch a snake with his hand ; a man, blind since birth unseeing, will surely fall into a hidden well when frightened by dogs behind him.'

Māra's minister, *Kāla by name, the Devil's advocate*, spoke, however, to his master in approval his action, saying that his son had fallen into folly and given him improper advice, having himself lost his power of judgement. After hearing his minister, Māra approached the Bodhisattva, but he was routed by the mere sound of the latter's cough. He again made a second attempt in the company of his vast army of four arms, hideous-looking and carrying various weapons. But not a hair of the Budhisattva moved, nor was there visible any change of his mind. Māra cried out, 'Kill, kill the man or get hold of him soon'. The soldiers tried their best to do so but without success. The Bodhisattva, endowed as he was with the roots of virtue acquired during several *koṭis* of *kalpas*, thrice stroked his head and his bent knee in the meditative posture, and then struck the earth with his right hand. The earth thus struck reverberated and quaked with a terrible sound, and Māra's army was split, torn, broken up, and turned away. *There was a total collapse of the power of Māra and his men.* The gods rained down flowers and incense from above on the Bodhisattva and acclaimed his victory over Māra.

GAUTAMA'S ATTAINMENT OF SAMBODHI

When Mara was thus routed and his power utterly broken, the Bodhisattva, in the first watch of the night, purified his sight, i.e. attained insight, (*pariśodhaye cakṣum*) ; in the second

watch of the night he, the vanquisher of Māra, *Māranighātin*, brought to mind all the events of his previous existences, *pūrvēnī-vāsacaritas* ; and in the last watch of the night, in the flush of dawn, he, the Saviour of the world, *Lokanātha*, the destroyer of the passion for existence attained the noble enlightenment, *varabuddhiṃ*, to which the former Buddhas had awakened, and he himself awakened to all that the true man, the great man, the real man has, at all times and in all places, to know, understand, and fully comprehend ; and to all these the Bodhisattva awakened through insight in a momentary flash of thought. The Lord, on knowing of doubt, *kāṃkṣā*, in the minds of the *devas* in the matter of Bodhisattva's attainment of *sambodhi*, uttered a solemn utterance thus : "Having cut off craving or desire, I have got rid of all mental dirt or defilements, (therefore) the dried up *āśravas*, mental intoxicants, do not flow, and the road (of craving) having (once) been cut off is no longer there. This is the end of all affections."

The Bodhisattva taught the world the law of causation of all phenomena, i.e. all processes of formation, whether cosmical, physical, or mental. He uttered two *udānas* at the time, which say that 'when all these things (*dharma*s, phenomena) become manifest to a zealous and contemplative Brāhmaṇa, all his doubts disappear, since he understands things and their causes', '*yadā prajānāti sahetu-dharmā*' (II. 416) ; and that 'when all these things become manifest to a zealous and contemplative Brāhmaṇa, all his doubts disappear, for he understands the decay of causes', '*kṣayam pratyayānāṃ avaiti*' (II. 417). The former refers to the formula of the arising of things from a cause given in direct order. '*ayam anulomo pratītya-samutpādaḥ*' (II. 416), i.e. '*imasmini sati idaṃ hoti*' and the latter to the formula of the arising of things from a cause given in the reverse order, '*ayam pratilomaḥ pratītya-samutpādaḥ*' (II. 417) i.e. '*imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti*'.

Even then Māra created vicious-minded creatures to break up the throne of the Bodhisattva under the Bodhi-tree, but they all melted away when the sky became irradiated by the morning sun.

A man of little merit cannot possess mental strength, and only that man is strong who is given to meditation, *samādhi*. Māra's hosts cannot thwart a virtuous man. *Samādhi* is possible only for those who are the performers of good works. A virtuous and good man who seeks *nirvāṇa* which is the immovable griefless state, can, with little difficulty, attain the way that ends ill. But where there is becoming, there is ill, '*bhavo yatra bhavati, duḥkham bhavati*' (II. 418) and the arising of ill is consequent on there being a substrate (i.e. passion or affection, *upadhi*) of existence and with the entire destruction of *upadhi*, there is no arising of ill, '*sarvopadhikṣayatto bhikṣavo nāsti duḥkhasya sambhavo*' (II. 418). The truth as ascertained by perfect wisdom is that all becomings are impermanent, liable to ill and to change, '*sarve te bhavā anityā duḥkha-dharmāḥ pariṇāma-dharmāḥ*' (II. 418). As soon as the thirst for existence or becoming is destroyed, there remains no longer any delight in it, and the utter cessation of craving is *nirvāṇa*, '*sarvaśo tṛṣṇākṣayo nirvāṇo*' (II. 418). There is no more existence (through newer births) for the man who passed unto *nirvāṇa*, '*tasya nirvṛtasya bhikṣavaḥ punar-bhavo na bhavati*' (II. 418). It is only with regard to such a man that we can say that Māra has been conquered by him, that he has won the battle against him, that all his foes are defeated, and that he has escaped from all becoming.

Having thus conquered Māra, attained perfect enlightenment, set rolling the wheel of law, gathered together a great following of monks and laity, given a bounteous share of ambrosia or the nectar of immortality to gods and men, converted many people from all lands of the famous sixteen *janapadas* (countries), the Bodhisattva raised them up from the rounds of rebirth and established them in *nirvāṇa*, the state of repose, bliss, tranquility, steadfastness, and fearlessness. This self-becoming One, the Buddha, the Conqueror, the Expert, and the Omniscient, abode in all states which he desired as appropriate to himself.

It is described in the *Mahāvastu* how the Lord, having attained perfect enlightenment, rose up from his seat after one

week and, having cast a pleasant unwinking look at the Bodhi-tree, remained in that posture for a second week and passed the third week by taking a walk up and down in that region for a long while in a delighted mood. Just then, Māra, the Evil One, took a seat not far away from the Lord in a sorrowful, despondent, and remorseful posture and declared twice that Śramaṇa Gautama had transcended the range of his influence.

MĀRA'S DAUGHTERS, TANTRĪ AND ĀRATI

At the moment Māra's two daughters, Tantrī and Ārati (Arati in Pali books, evidently a mistake) promised to bring Lord Buddha to their father by binding him with the sling of attachment. But Māra said to his daughters that as the Buddha had already passed beyond the sphere of his own influence, it would not be possible for them to bring him back to worldly attachments. Having, however, disregarded their father's warning, the two daughters of Māra approached the Lord and prayed to be allowed to offer their own service at his feet ; and by their own power fashioned by hundreds young damsels for the enchantment of the Lord ; but the latter paid not the least heed to their overtures, as he was then feeling his mind perfectly liberated on account of the fullest extinction of all attachments and passions. Tantrī enquired of the Lord as to what course of conduct a *bhikṣu* can adopt to cross over the flood that drifts a man away from emancipation and what mode of meditation can he follow to ward off all kinds of desire-consciousness. The Lord told her in reply that a person who discards sloth and, after fully understanding *dharma*, resorts to contemplativeness without discussion and doubt can cross over the torrent of passions and ward off all desires which can no longer get a foothold in him. The other daughter of Māra, Ārati, also asked the Lord as to why he, being pierced by sorrow, went to the wilderness for contemplation, but did not exhibit to ordinary people the path of realization of the highest truth. The Lord told her that he had been able to dig out the root of sorrow and, having renounced everything, he had attained his object and

peace of mind ; hence he could not make all people, who are generally attached to worldly objects, do the same, and therefore he could not teach all of them the path of realization. Ārati then acknowledged that as he himself had cut off all avidity for worldly objects of enjoyment and hence had gone beyond the powerful influence of the Death-king, he would surely be able to lead all people to the sorrowless path of eternal peace.

The Lord then addressed the Māra-daughters (who now felt convinced that they had been found out by him) in the following terms : "Why do you follow me, the Buddha, out of envy towards myself ? Your attempt will fail totally, as none can dig out a hill by means of the nails, none can eat up iron by means of the teeth, none can strike against a mountain by means of the head, and none can seek to take a plunge in a place not deep." On hearing this address of the Buddha the Māra-daughters became sad, disconsolate, and remorseful and told their father of their failure to bring the Lord within their control, as Gautama was worthy and bereft of attachment and detachment and also of delusion. Māra then vanished from the place, after saying that the Lord had been able to drive away both Tantrī and Ārati as the wind sweeps away cotton-fibres.

The *Mahāvastu* refers (III. 415-18) to the vain temptation by Māra even when the Bodhisattva, after his enlightenment, became anxious to deliver sermons to the five Bhadravargīyas at R̥ṣivadana, Mṛgadāva of Vārāṇasī. He also thought at that time of proceeding from there to Senāpatigrāmika of Uruvilva to favour the Jaṭilas there with his religious sermon. But Māra, having come to know of this, did not forget to follow the Lord to dissuade him from doing such a good deed to them. He approached the Buddha to tell him that he was not free, but was chained with firm bonds yet. But the Buddha refuted the remark by declaring that he was free, and Māra would soon be killed. On finding himself recognized Māra left the place. The Buddha became Śāstī, the preacher, and he preached there at R̥ṣivadana (modern Sarnath) on the transitory, painful, and changing nature

of all desires, *kāmas*. Māra tried his best to bewilder the Buddha and wanted to apply his own strong strap to ensnare him. But the Buddha was at that time free from all the five *kāmaguṇas*. He got rid of all desire for the objects of the five senses ; it was thoroughly extinguished and submerged. Thinking that his own end was near, Māra left the scene.

Again arose in the Buddha's mind at *Mṛgadāva* the thought that all *upādhis*, affections and passions, were impermanent, full of ills, and liable to change. But Māra wanted to cause perplexity in the Buddha's mind by addressing him thus : 'One having sons delights in them, and an owner of cows so delights in them (cows) and a man delights in *upādhis*, i.e. various attachments to the objects of passions ; but the man (like one who is above *upādhis* never feels delighted', '*na hi so mandati yo nirupadhi*' (III. 417).

But the Buddha replied to Māra in an opposite vein saying : "A father feels sorrow because of his sons, a herdsman does so because of his cows, and a man does so if he be hindered or afflicted by *upādhis* ; but the man who is above *upādhis* never becomes sorrowful."

The holy Buddha led all beings to places free from darkness and made them attain liberation by performance of good deeds. The *Mahāvastu* mentions in this connection a joyful utterance, *udāna*, of the Lord which states ; 'That person is a (true) Brāhmaṇa, a (true) Śramaṇa, and a (true) Bhikṣu in whom neither delusion nor pride dwells, who is above attractions and is sinless, and who relinquishes all hopes and repels anger, but who possesses a tranquil mind.'

UPAGUPTA AND HIS CONVERSION OF MĀRA

There is a historical tradition that the Buddhist saint, Upagupta, acted as the preceptor to the Maurya emperor, Aśoka, (c. 273-232 B. C.) whom he probably converted to Buddhism and guided while the monarch visited holy spots connected with the Buddha's life. It is stated in the famous Buddhist Sanskrit work, the *Divyāvadāna* (written probably prior to the third century

A.D.) that a tradition ran that after one hundred years (evidently a wrong calculation of time) of the demise of the Buddha, Upagupta would be ordained to Arhatship and play the part of the Buddha himself on earth and preach his teachings to the people (especially of Mathurā). There is a narrative in this book which relates how Upagupta also was encountered by Māra, and the work has dealt with the extremely bold idea that this Buddhist monk (of the third century B.C.) was able to convert Māra, the Evil One, to his own faith (Buddhism) although the Buddha himself had to face his onslaught without trying to bring him under his own religion. We have the still bolder idea in the same book that the monk Upagupta having longed to see face to face the figure of the Buddha, who had attained *nirvāṇa* more than two centuries before, besought Māra (already converted by himself) to appear before him in the guise of the Lord, and like a skilful actor Māra represented the Buddha in a lifelike manner. The whole of this interesting story (XXVI), so dramatic in nature, may be briefly related.

One day, just when Upagupta began to address an assembly in Mathurā on religious truths, Māra, the Tempter, showered on the prospective converts pearl necklaces to disconcert them, and consequently no member of the assembly was affected by the monk's sermon. On the second day Māra showered gold on the visiting people, and thus threw obstacles in the way of the intending converts to the Buddhist code of monastic discipline, *vaiṇeyas*. On the third day when Upagupta engaged himself in giving a religious discourse before a large concourse of people, he found Māra, not far off, enacting a drama with divine music, in which heavenly damsels were taking part. People were attracted by these divine scenes created by Māra's device. Māra placed a garland on the head of Upagupta because of his own success in attracting his assemblage. The monk could easily ascertain the cause of the people's distraction of mind, which he attributed to Māra's working. Upagupta then thus reflected : 'Why has this Māra not been converted to religious discipline (*vinīta*) by

the Lord himself, when he creates such a great distraction in the way of our discoursing on the teachings of the Lord? I am sure I shall have to convert him, and by his conversion people would feel relief. To do this work I have been appointed to act the part of the Buddha himself, though I am bereft of the Lord's own characteristics.' Upagupta then approached Māra with flowery garlands and three corpses—one of a snake, the second of a dog, and the third of a human being. Māra was delighted to see Upagupta coming towards him. Upagupta, however, threw the three corpses on the head, neck, and ear respectively of Māra who could not remove them from his body, though he strove hard to do so. Māra's invocation for aid from the gods, Brahmā and others, was of no avail. Brahmā advised Māra to seek for protection from the very person (i.e. Upagupta) whose supernatural influence had robbed him of his own power, fame, and happiness. Māra repentantly thought that formerly, when he caused the greatest affliction to the Buddha himself by several wrong and sinful acts, the Lord, though so powerful, did not use even harsh words towards him in retaliation, so kind and friendly was he to all. Māra, the master of the world of desire, *kāmadhātavadhipati*, now thought of lying prostrate before Upagupta, an ardent follower of the teachings of the Buddha, whose discourse was respected even by Brahmā himself. Upagupta then spoke to Māra of the unbounded kindness of the Lord which had prevented him from doing him (Māra) any wrong, although he was himself so very much wronged by him. He reminded Māra that a very little devotion, *bhakti*, towards such a kind seer might bring about the highest benefit of bliss, *nīrvāṇa-phaladā bhaktiḥ*, and that a small amount of faith, *śraddhā*, in him could wash away the sins of one whose mind was blinded by delusions. Māra now realized that the Buddha tolerated his misdeeds, just as a father does those of his wrong-doing son.

Māra then fell at the feet of Upagupta and thanked the monk for his kindly discoursing on the greatness of the Buddha, and wanted to be made free from his sins by means of his

friendliness. The monk agreed to comply with Māra's entreaty on two conditions, first that he should no longer trouble Buddhist monks, *bhikṣus*, and, secondly, that he should exhibit before him the corporal form of the Buddha himself, as he himself, had seen only his *dharmakāya*, the norm of his *dharma*, having renounced the world at this distant age some hundreds of years after the blissful demise, *nirvāṇa*, of the Lord, and could not, therefore, have the good fortune of having a direct vision of his *rūpakāya*, his bodily form. Māra, on his part, agreed to Upagupta's proposal by entering into a pact with him that on seeing him (Māra) appear in the guise of Lord Buddha, the monk should never bow down before him, for he would not be able to bear the forceful impact of the obeisance of one like him.

Upagupta then removed the three corpses from the person of Māra and remained curiously anxious to see the form and features of Tathāgata himself to be assumed by Māra. Having entered a deep forest near by with the monk's approval, Māra assumed the costume and the beautiful form of Tathāgata and appeared, like an actor on a stage, before Upagupta, accompanied by other actors who took up the role of the great monks, Sāradvatīputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa, Aniruddha, Subhūti, and others and also by a following of 6,500 *bhikṣus*. Upagupta, on thus seeing the Buddha with his favourite disciples and worshippers, became overwhelmed with intense joy, and he expressed harsh words on the cruel impermanence, *niṣkaruṇām anityatām*, which destroyed for even such beautiful figures as those of the Buddha himself and his immediate devotees and followers. The saint forgetfully saw as if the real, original figure of Lord Buddha appeared before him.

So, having lost the consciousness that it was Māra who had assumed the Buddha's role, Upagupta took the acting Māra as the real Buddha himself, and fell flat in devotion at his feet. Māra reminded the saint of his promise not to bow down before him, which he was now breaking. Upagupta then addressed Māra saying: 'Just as people pay obeisance to earthen images of gods by

discarding the earthen material (of the images), but with the knowledge of the gods' presence in them, *mṛtsamjñāmanādṛtya namaty-amarasamjñayā*, 'so also I looking at you (Māra) assuming the form of the Lokanātha (Buddha), have made obeisance to you by discarding the idea of your being Māra, but with the knowledge that I was so doing to Sugata himself, 'Mārasamjñān-anādṛtya nataḥ Sugatasamjñayā'. So this was Upagupta's interpretation of the salutation he made to Māra acting in the guise of the Buddha. He said, moreover, to Māra that he quite knew that the Buddha, the noblest of the view-holders, *vāḍipradhāna*, had long before attained *nirvāṇa*, but the sight of the charming beauty of his form, as assumed by Māra, made him bow down before that seer (the Buddha) and not before him (Māra) as an object of worship, 'tanṛṣimābhinatoham tvān tu n-ābhycayāmi'. So he could not be accused of breaking his promise.

Māra then, removed his Buddha-costume and himself proclaimed in Mathurā (the place of this occurrence) that those who wished to enjoy the heavenly bliss of liberation should attend discourses on *dharma* as given by Upagupta, and those who wanted to see what Buddha was like should see this elderly monk, Upagupta himself, for the Lord.

The news spread everywhere in Mathurā that Māra had been converted to Buddhism by *sthavira* Upagupta. It is indeed a very bold idea of the writer of the narrative to say that the Evil One (Māra) with whom even the Buddha had to fight of yore, but who could never be converted by the Lord himself, remained to be converted by the Buddhist monk, Upagupta, who flourished some centuries after the demise of the Lord.

According to this bold conception in later Buddhistic thought, it is understood that evil could be overcome by good, nay, it could be converted to good. We have, however, seen that Māra's devilry does not forego troubling a man, though the latter succeeds in attaining true knowledge and becomes worthy of achieving desired end of life, the final beatitude.

THE CONVERSION OF ŚĀRIPUTRA AND MAUDGALYĀYANA

The *Mahāvastu-avadāna* is a Buddhist work belonging to the *Vinayapiṭaka* according to the text of the Lokottaravādins of the Mahāsāṅghikas of Madhyadeśa. The Lokottaravādins of the Mahāsāṅghikas were the earliest schismatics of the Buddhist Council of the fourth century B.C. and the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* was compiled, according to oriental scholars, in the third or second century B.C. It was written in a mixed language—a conglomeration of Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Pali. This work is almost a biography of the Buddha and it is here that we find (the story of his two foremost disciples, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, told in greater detail than in the stories in the Pali books, from which it differs somewhat. In view of the recent re-enshrinement of the holy relics of these two disciples in a newly-built *vihāra* at Sanchi, it is fitting that we should today re-read this story. In these days of world-wide fear and turmoil we may gain mental peace and tranquillity by studying and discussing the religious and serene conduct of these two saintly disciples of the Buddha, who was the supreme physician.

This, then, is the story as given in the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* : Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana (in Pali Sāriputta and Moggallāna) belonged to two separate, rich Brāhmaṇa families of Magadha. Śāriputra was born in a prosperous village called *Nālanda-grāmaka*, while Maudgalyāyana was born in a village, equally prosperous, called *Kolita-grāmaka* ; both villages were near the capital, Rājagṛha (this is the modern Rajgir in Bihar). Their surnames were respectively *Upatiṣya* and *Kolita*. They both received their first education in Vedic lore residing in the same *gurukula*, preceptor's residence.

The time came when the two friends went together to see the festival called the *Giriyagra-samāja* at Rājagṛha. Both of them had by then acquired all the attributes entitling them to initiation into the doctrines of all the previous Samyak-sambuddhas and they were fit for the performance of all the Āryadharma injunctions in this their last birth. They therefore became disgusted with the scenes created at the festival and with the demonstrations shown by all sorts of fickle-minded people who attended it. Hence, by watching the festival, there arose in the mind of Śāriputra the conception of the impermanence of all things, *anitya-samjñā* ; while in the mind of Maudgalyāyana there arose the conception of all things being nothing but bones, *asthi-samjñā*.

Maudgalyāyana remarked to his intimate friend, Śāriputra, that he should not be so sad by looking at these scenes ; whereupon Śāriputra replied that those foolish people who were making themselves so merry in the festival were simply attached to worldly objects of enjoyment which were very fleeting. These people forgot that they would very soon depart from the world without their desires being satiated. So, said Śāriputra, he thought that that was the time for performing *dharma* by being unaffected by pleasure and pain, attachment and detachment. Hence he wanted to resort to *pravrajyā*, renunciation. His dear associate, Maudgalyāyana, promised to adopt the same path as was to be traversed by Śāriputra, for without him his life would be desolate.

They, together, then approached the *parivrājaka*, wandering mendicant, *Vairaṭīputra Sañjayin*, who then resided at *Pari-vrājaka*-grove at *Rājagṛha*, and received from him the vow of renunciation, and within a few days they learnt from him all the lore of that sect. But they very soon discovered the futility of the *parivrājakadharmā* which could not, according to them, lead to final beatitude and therefore they wanted to acquire independently *dharma-vinaya*, disciplinary rules for performing *dharma*, whereby all miseries could be totally destroyed. So they then stipulated between themselves that whoever would be the first to attain *dharma-vinaya* would communicate it to the other. They then parted and each went to the capital city by different ways.

HEARING THE DOCTRINE

At that time Lord Gautama was residing with his followers at *Kalandaka-nivāpa* in the bamboo-grove. One of the Buddha's followers, *Upasena* by name, was seen in his yellow robe with the begging bowl in his hand by Śāriputra who thought of this monk's renunciation as a blessed thing and greeted him by enquiring about his Master's doctrine and the way of his exhortation. *Upasena* told him that his Master taught people of all *dharma*s or phenomena as depending on a law of causation, and instructed them in the abandonment of all desired objects. Śāriputra, on hearing this, felt highly delighted and he attained true insight into *dharma* that would lead to the eternal state of *nirvāṇa*. *Upasena* directed Śāriputra to *Kalandaka-nivāpa* where the Buddha was living. *Maudgalyāyana*, seeing Śāriputra coming in a calm and serene mood, cried out that he must have attained *amṛta*, the eternal state of bliss, and that he must have discovered also the path that leads to it. Śāriputra replied in the affirmative and referred to the doctrine taught by the Buddha, the great Light of the world. He then uttered the famous formula :

Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetun teshāṃ Tathāgato āha

Teshāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃvādī Mahā-Śramaṇaḥ

'All those phenomena which are born of causes, Tathāgata has

preached of those causes, and he has also preached of their cessation. The Great Śramaṇa is the holder of such a doctrine.'

On hearing this Maudgalyāyana also attained his spiritual eye and became fit to realize *nirvāṇa*. They both went back to take farewell of their former preceptor, Sañjayin, who, according to their present views, had taught them a false doctrine, and then they proceeded towards the Lord Buddha for permission to be ordained by him. The Lord intuitively knew of their approach towards his camp and asked his followers to prepare seats in advance not only for Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana but also for their followers, five hundred in number. The Lord also declared before his other disciples that Śāriputra would become the leading monk among the great intellectuals, and Maudgalyāyana the leading monk among those who possess supernatural powers.

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE MASTER

The two new comers, having arrived with their followers, approached the Lord, touched his feet, and stood aside. Then Śāriputra, addressing the Master, said that those wise and faithful persons who receded from the wrong path and came over to him by crossing over the wilderness of worldly life had become unattached to it. They both wanted to renounce the world and they had come to receive ordination from him. Thereupon the Buddha granted it to them by uttering the formal call, 'Come ye, O Bhikṣus'. At once all the marks of their former sect disappeared and there appeared before them the three robes of the Buddhist monks and their bowls ; they adopted the ascetic's hair and wandering method of life. This was the story of their *pravrajyā*, renunciation, *upasampadā*, ordination, and entry into *bhikṣubhāva*, the monks' status.

After this formal ordination Śāriputra put forward some metaphysical queries in reply to which the Master said that four *dhātus*, constituent parts of a being, are predicated about ; they, exist, disappear, and reappear by a new birth. In reply to further queries the Lord said that *avidyā*, ignorance, *trṣṇā*, desire or

craving, and *karma*, action, are the causes of birth ; *āyus*, time, *karma*, work, and *āhāra*, food, are the causes of existence. Disappearance or death is caused by the termination of time, the end of actions, and the elimination of food ; *a being's rebirth is caused by non-escape from ignorance*, and by domination exercised by desire which leads actions to ripen. The cessation of rebirths takes place only when a being escapes from nescience, and succeeds in totally annihilating his desires.

The Master also explained to Śāriputra how pleasurable sensations are produced in the sense organs by the so-called attractive appearance of object-forms. He again referred to the law of causation as producing all phenomena which cause mental pleasure and happiness and which are then said to be born, to exist, to develop, and to become cognizable. But they are, according to him, all *non-soul*, nor do they partake of anything belonging to any soul ; rather they are bereft of any soul, or anything belonging to any soul.

On hearing this discourse by the Master, the two great converts and their followers became absolutely free from all miseries, i.e. sins, passions, and desires. Maudgalyāyana acquired within a week of his ordination all supernatural powers and the four *pratisamvidā*, the four kinds of logical dexterities, i.e. expertness in the Buddhist theory and practice, etymology, and dialectics. Śāriputra also acquired, within a fortnight of his ordination, the power of intuitive knowledge and perfection of wisdom, and the four logical dexterities. Thus the two saints and their followers, after ordination by the Buddha, succeeded in crossing over the deep forest of birth, decay, death, and rebirth.

SOME ASPECTS OF BUDDHISM AS IN THE MAHAVASTU-AVADANA

The time has now come when scholars should pay more attention to the intensive study of original works, Brāhmaṇic, Buddhistic, or Jaina, and try to unravel the immense mass of material that they contain. Such a study will enable us to form an adequate idea of our glorious past, and, by filling in the gaps in our knowledge, to understand better our modern national culture. With such a view in mind I have been, for the last few years, studying the *Mahāvastu-avadāna*, a Buddhist Sanskrit work in three volumes. It is written in the Gāthā dialect which seems to be a conglomerative language consisting of Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Pali forms.

The *Mahāvastu-avadāna*, as said before, belongs to the *Vinaya-piṭaka* of the Buddhist canonical literature prepared according to the text of the Lokottaravādins of the Mahāsāṅghikas of Madhya deśa who were the earliest schismatics, having been formed at the time of the second Buddhist Council of the fourth century B.C. The Lokottaravādins believed in the doctrine of all the Buddhas being '*lokottara*' i.e. uncommon, extraordinary, and superhuman,

adapting themselves to worldly life only to the external view. The date of the composition or compilation of this treatise which is partly in prose and partly in verse falls, according to scholars, within the period from the third or second century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. The chief contents of the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* relate to the biography of Gautama Buddha, adorned profusely with stories and miracles accompanying his conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment, his conversion of some great and small men to his faith, and his demise. This book also contains some old and new Jātaka stories (i.e. the stories of previous births of the Buddha). The eulogy of this work is mentioned in the book itself (III,250) in the following words: 'O revered Sirs, the great *Mahāvastu* which is a repository of dharma, which is full of great knowledge, which can bring welfare to the great mass (of people), has been revealed by Sugata, the perfect *Buddha*, for the good of all living beings. Those who preach the *saddharma* (the true faith i.e. Buddhism) and those who hear it preached, all attain the immovable or immortal *nirvāṇa* (the blissful state).'

THE INFLUENCE OF MAHĀYĀNA ON AŚVAGHOṢA

One cannot expect to deal exhaustively in one lecture with all the religious topics treated in this book. Here we shall take up only a few topics. In our view the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* is by itself a prominently religious treatise of the initial stage of Mahāyāna Buddhism. So I wish firstly to give you briefly an impression of the nature of the influence that Mahāyāna had on the mind of the poet-philosopher Aśvaghoṣa. Aśvaghoṣa belonged to a Brāhmaṇa family before his conversion to Buddhism and was a contemporary of Kaniṣka in the first century A.D. He was one of the earliest exponents of Mahāyānism. To facilitate comprehension of the *Mahāvastu* tenets, I now give some of the Mahāyāna ideas that can be traced in the works of Aśvaghoṣa. We find there explicit and implicit reference to (i) the stress laid on *Buddha-bhakti*, the Master now being an ob-

ject of devotion and worship to his disciples and devotees ; (ii) the deification of the Buddha who began to be regarded as a god above all gods ; (iii) difficulty in bearing the effulgent glory of the *Bodhisattva* ; (iv) the excessive use of the miraculous element in the legends and episodes of his career ; (v) the importance of thinking about the vanity of existence, about renunciation, and about the abandonment of all desires and cravings ; (vi) the firm resolve of the *Bodhisattva* to attain *parinirvāṇa* (emancipation from individual existence) by causing extinction of all rebirths and regarding the world as *anitya* (transient or impermanent) ; (vii) the dedication of the *Bodhisattava's* life in his several existences to the service and welfare of humanity, He being anxious to deliver the distressed world from the sea of misery by means of the raft of his knowledge ; (viii) the refutation of some of the Brahmaincal religious thoughts and practices (especially the performance of severe austerities and sacrifices of different kinds) ; and (ix) the gradual development of the *anātmavāda* (non-existence of any soul) and *śūnyatā* (real non-existence of the objective world), as the Master's idea, according to Aśvaghōṣa, was that the *Kṣetrajñā* or the individual soul always remains *prasavadharmā* (having a creative nature) and *bījadharmā* (having capability to germinate) and that it cannot totally discard the triad of *ajñāna* (nescience), *karma* (action) and *tṛṣṇā* (desire) and attain the state of *ākincanya* (nothingness or absence of any possession). These Māhāyānic ideas can be well illustrated by comparing them to similar ideas in the *Mahāvastu-avadāna*.

CONTEMPORARY SCHOOLS

Gautama Buddha, a unique and dynamic personality in the religious world, was trained in Vedic lore, including knowledge of the Upaniṣads. But this 'rebel child of Hinduism', as Swāmī Vivekānanda called him, rebelled against Brāhmaṇic Hinduism especially regarding its ritualistic institutions, including the offering of sacrifices of various kinds. The Buddha was a great rationalist in philosophical thoughts and conceptions. The whole

world yet regards him as a great master of moral force, a great renouncer, and the supreme physician in healing the human diseases of passion and torment. His revolt against the Vedic *Karma-kāṇḍa* produced a powerful influence on men's minds when he began to preach after he had attained perfect enlightenment, or *saṃyak-saṃbodhi*, in his thirtyfifth year. Other contemporary schools of philosophical and religious thought, such as the Ājīvika, the Nirgrantha (the Jaina) and the Lokāyata also showed hostility towards the Brahmanic cult of ritualistic *karma*. Another leading philosopher of the time was Keśakambalin. He was a materialist and did not believe in God or Soul. He defied the authority of the Vedas and refrained from performing the Brāhmanic ceremonials and sacrifices, but, unlike the Buddha, he denied the doctrines of transmigration, rebirth, and salvation. Another prominent religious leader at that time was a Brāhmaṇa preacher named Sañjayin, the head of the Parivrājaka sect (to whom I shall refer later on in my lecture), who was rather a sceptic for he cherished doubts about the solution of philosophical problems, such as whether the world is permanent or impermanent, whether there is continuity of life or self after death, whether the world had a beginning or it is beginningless, and so on. To the Buddha the sectarian tenets and doctrines of these different contemporary schools were unappealing for they seemed to be unsatisfactory, and unreasonable, though they severally made a strong impress on his mind in certain respects,

REPUDIATION OF BRAHMANIC SACRIFICES

Let us now discuss some particular religious topics which are described, discussed, or referred to in the *Mahāvastu-avadāna*. First let us take the subject of repudiation of Brahmanic fire-sacrifice, austerities, and penances. In connection with the conversion by the Buddha of Śreṇya King Bimbisāra, who ruled both in Magadha and Aṅga (jointly) from his capital at Rājagṛha (modern Rajgir) we read (III.436 ff.) that once when the Master, after his perfect enlightenment, was staying at Uruvilva on the

banks of the Nairañjanā river, Uruvilva-Kāśyapa was asked by the Lord as to why he had abandoned the sacred fire-sacrifice, austerities, and penances. Kāśyapa said in reply that in a sacrifice men speak of food and drink, and the sweets of sensual pleasures, and even of women, but he knew what was gross among attachments and he, therefore took no delight in sacrifice and offering. Then on the Buddha's enquiry as to what better thing in the world of devas and men his heart was set upon, Kāśyapa replied saying that when he had seen the Lord (Sage) calm, free from all substratum of rebirth, possessing nothing, rid of all attachments to existence, unchanging and not led by others, he lost all delight in sacrifice and offering. He then repented that he had previously offered the fire-sacrifice and made penance in vain and had foolishly believed that man could be freed by fire-sacrifice and offerings and that he, being unable to see the perfect immovable state, had blindly followed after birth and death. He then added now that the Lord had clearly revealed to him the pure, perfect, and complete state, he was able to escape from the rounds of birth and death. He also stated that so long he had been bound in the chains of wrong belief, but the Exalted One had now set him free. Many men, he said, were lost through the performance of diverse austerities as they could not pass beyond doubt. The Brāhmaṇas and householders of Magadha then realized that Uruvilva-Kāśyapa really was living the *brahmacarya* life under the Recluse, Gautama Buddha.

This repudiation of Vedic sacrifices, which commenced so strongly from the time of the Buddha, later found an echo in some of the edicts of Aśoka in which he showed abundant respect for the sanctity of life and made a strong indictment against the slaughter of animals for sacrifice (*anālabha* of *prāṇas*). The *Mahāvastu-avadāna* expressed such a repudiation of sacrifices in a story (II.95 ff.) which briefly runs thus: There was a king named Sucandrima ruling at Simhapura (perhaps in the Punjab) and he was very friendly with his neighbouring king, named Subāhu of Hastināpura. Sucandrima

once prepared for the performance of a great sacrifice (*mahā-yajña*) in which he wanted to offer every kind of animal living on land and in water. At his command the hunters and fishermen of his kingdom brought all sorts of living beings, the land animals being shut up in a large enclosure (*yājñavāṭa*) and the fishes confined in a tank. The King also managed to obtain a beautiful *kinnarī* named Manoharā, who was the daughter of Druma, the king of *kinnaras*, from the Kailāsa mount, and had been caught by a hunter and brought to Simhapura, a city of Brāhmaṇas, and put in the sacrificial enclosure. Invitation to the sacrifice was issued to King Subāhu of Hastināpura and several hundred other kings. King Subāhu sent to the sacrifice his only son, named Sudhanu, as his representative. This Prince (Sudhanu) saw in the sacrificial enclosures many thousands of living beings, both land and water animals, and he also saw the *kinnarī*, Manoharā. On the Prince's asking for the reason for confining so many living beings in the sacrificial enclosure, King Sucandrima answered, "With these animals I shall perform a sacrifice and there will thus be plenty of solid and soft food". In reply Sudhanu pronounced a harsh criticism of sacrifice. He sharply asked Sucandrima as to whether any good and profit would accrue from such a sacrifice which consisted in slaughtering all those living beings. The Brāhmaṇic way of reply given by King Sucandrima in praise of such a sacrifice was this, "All these living beings that will be slaughtered in the sacrifice will attain heaven. As regards myself, I shall be re-born in heaven as many times as are equal to the number of animals slaughtered." But Prince Sudhanu replied in a Buddhistic mood saying, "Your Majesty, this is not so, this is wrong view (*mithyādr̥ṣṭi*), for *ahiṃsā* (not to cause harm or injury) is the highest rule. To take life is not *dharma*, but to abstain from taking life is *dharma*.... Wrong belief is not *dharma*, but right belief is *dharma*." The Prince then added, "Your Majesty, those who take to the path of the ten right actions (*kuśalakarma*) are re-born in heaven. In the matter (of the great sacrifice), the path followed by your Majesty is not

the path to heaven, but it is the path that leads to hell.' Sucandrima, the other kings, and the great mass of people present in the function were pleased to hear this exposition of the *dharma* by Prince Sudhanu. The result was that the King of Siṃhapura let out all the living beings, both the land and the water animals. Such was the Buddhist diatribe against sacrifices in the *Mahāvastu-avadāna*. As instructed by Prince Sudhanu, King Sucandrima of Siṃhapura offered an unimpeded and flawless sacrifice in which thousands of Śramaṇas, Brāhmaṇas, poor people and supplicants were fully given food and drink and were clothed in good garments. Doing so he proved that such service was the proper sacrifice (or *yajña*).

The *Mahāvastu-avadāna* has gone so far as to say that rituals and sacrifices belong to the domain of Māra and not to the actual religious life of men. We find Māra (II.405) trying to entice Gautama away from his path of renunciation and appealing to him to rule his father's realm and offer the great sacrifices, such as the *aśvamedha* (horse-sacrifice), the *puruṣa-medha* (man-sacrifice), the *punḍarika* (the white-lotus sacrifice), and the *nirargaḍa* (the sacrifice of the unbarred household), and tempting him by adding that if he were to offer these sacrifices he would become an immortal god. But the *Bodhisattva* rejected all his deceitful and tempting words, as he had already broken the bonds of home life, with all its prosperity and attractions, and he was on his way to the city of Nirvāṇa. Buddhist treatises are replete with expressions of abhorrence of the performance of rituals and sacrifices.

ORDINATION PROCESS

Let us now turn to the topic of the ordination process adopted by the Buddha and his great disciples and try to illustrate this from the stories of the conversion to Buddhism of the two chief and favourite disciples of the Buddha, Śārīputra and Maudgalyāyana, and also of Mahākāśyapa and of Buddha's own son, Rāhula. Upatiṣya Śārīputra and Kolita Maudgalyāyana were

born in very rich and affluent Brāhmaṇa families in Nālandā-grāma and Kolitagrāma respectively, situated within half a *yojana* of Rājagṛha. They both lived in the *gurukula* (preceptor's house), their teacher's name being Vairātīputra Sañjayin, belonging to the Brāhmaṇic Parivrājaka sect. These two students were close friends and were vastly learned in the Vedic scriptures. They had both acquired all the attributes entitling them to initiation into the doctrine of all the previous *samyak-sambuddhas* (perfectly enlightened ones) and were fit to perform all *Āryadharmā* injunctions in their last birth. They felt disgusted with the sights they saw at the convivial festivities of the locality, and there arose in Śārīputra's mind the conception of all men being nothing but bones. The two friends then discussed between themselves thus : 'This *dharma* (of the Parivrājakas) cannot lead us to emancipation or the cessation of all ills. So we should independently try to acquire *dharma-vinaya* (well-preached discipline of the *dharma*) that may conduce to the end of all miseries.' They then stipulated between themselves that of the two the first to attain *dharma-vinaya* should communicate it to the other, so that they would together renounce the world by being initiated into *Āryadharmā-vinaya*.

At that time the Buddha was residing with five hundred *bhikṣus* in the Bamboo Grove at Rājagṛha. While intending to proceed thither, Śārīputra met by chance the Buddha's disciple, Upasena, who told the former that his Master taught that all *dharmas* or phenomena depended on a Law of Causation (i.e. the *pratītya-samutpāda* doctrine) and that he taught everyone to abandon all desired objects. On hearing this, Śārīputra's mind at once became clear of all impurities and his pure spiritual eye opened. He at once attained *dharma*, threw off false views, overcame all doubts, discontinued questionings, came to possess an upright, kind, and diligent mind, and acquired proneness to *nirvāṇa*, the eternal blissful state, and the aim to achieve it.

Then Śārīputra went first to Maudgalyāyana who, on seeing his friend coming towards him with a calm and serene countenance,

cried out, "O Śārīputra, it appears you have attained *amṛta*, the immortal state of bliss and also the path that leads to it (*amṛta-madhigatam amṛta-gāminī cha mārgaḥ* III.61) and this is why you look so doubly bright and effulgent." Śārīputra replied, "You are right in your guess ; I have really attained *amṛta* and the path that leads to it. There has arisen the light of the world (*Loka-pradyota*)." Maudgalyāyana then enquired from his friend what his teacher had taught. Śārīputra answered, "The Tathāgata has proclaimed the cause, and also the cessation of all things or phenomena which are born of causes. The great Śramaṇa is the holder of such a doctrine." On hearing this uttered by his comrade, Maudgalyāyana also had his spiritual eye (*dharma-cakṣu*) opened and felt himself fit for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*.

They then both went to their preceptor, Sañjayin, to take leave of him and informed him that they wanted to take ordination from Lord Gautama who had already witnessed directly what might be called *dharmavinaya* and propagated the same in all quarters. They also told him that, as seekers after true faith, they could not disbelieve this. Sañjayin's five hundred followers also left him and went away with Śārīputra and Maudgalyāyana. The Buddha intuitively came to know that the two were approaching him for initiation, and the Lord declared that Śārīputra would be the leading monk among the great intellectuals, and Maudgalyāyana the leading monk among those who possess supernatural powers. Śārīputra saw Lord Buddha from a distance teaching the pure and perfect *dharma* to a large crowd. The Lord was seen by Śārīputra in a glorified state. Then the two great new-comers accompanied by the five hundred followers, approached the Buddha and bowed their heads at his feet. Śārīputra addressed the Lord thus : "O Ascetic, we have so long dwelt (as it were) in waters of the ocean, in caves of hills, and in glades in the woods. Through lack of the sight of yourself in person, we have long lived among false heretics. O great Caravan-leader, now having receded from the wrong path, we have

crossed over in faith to your way, and having traversed the wilderness of worldly life we have become wise and passionless and are no longer moved by attachment." Both Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana then begged of the Lord to admit them as recluses and ordain them. The Lord then ordained them both and the five hundred other wanderers by uttering the simple formula 'Come, monks' and also 'Come, monks, live the religious life under the Tathāgata.' Then a miracle took place. All their marks, badges, emblems, and the signs of wanderers, disappeared, and there appeared the three robes and bowls, while their hair turned to the natural state of recluses; and their deportment then became so established that it seemed they were all monks ordained a hundred years. This is the special form of renunciation (*pravrajyā*), ordination (*upasampadā*) and entry into the monks' status (*bhikṣu-bhāva*) of these two great men and their company of five hundred wanderers. Such is the tradition, and the two saints and their followers after ordination by the Buddha, succeeded in crossing over the deep forest of birth, decay, death and re-birth.

A few words may be said in this connection about the ordination of Mahākāśyapa. Once there was an exchange of hot words between Ānanda, the favourite disciple of the Buddha, and Mahākāśyapa. In the course of this talk between the two great *theras*, Mahākāśyapa made the pungent remark that Ānanda acted like a youngster, knowing no moderation and, like one destroying a good harvest, he went the rounds of families for alms taking with him a big body of young and fresh fellow-students who were newly ordained and had no guard on the doors of their senses; they were not vigilant and they were irresponsible. Ānanda resented the remark, and said that even though there were grey hairs growing on his head, yet Mahākāśyapa thought fit to address him as if he were addressing a youngster. At that time a nun, Sthūlanandā by name, championed Ānanda against Mahākāśyapa who, she remarked, had formerly belonged to another sect. Mahākāśyapa told Ānanda that this sister nun spoke out of

thoughtlessness. Ānanda begged pardon of the sage, for woman-kind was witless and lacking in knowledge of the proper occasion to speak. Mahākāśyapa then reminded Ānanda in protest that he had never acknowledged, before embracing the religious life, any master other than the Lord Tathāgata, the perfect Buddha. He referred to his renouncing his home with its rich material properties of high earthly value which he regarded as defilements. He said, moreover, that he left home taking with him only one patched cotton cloak and had wandered out in quest of *Arhans* in the world, and at that time there was no other *Arhan* anywhere except the perfect Buddha, and after one year of his leaving home he saw the Lord in Rājagṛha at the Bahuputraka shrine (*chetiya*) and the thought crossed his mind that he was looking on the Lord who was all-seeing, all-knowing, and possessed of absolute and perfect knowledge. Then he told Ānanda, briefly, the story of his own ordination by the Buddha himself. He said that approaching the Lord in reverence he addressed him in these words, "Lord, you are my master and I am your disciple, Sugata." The Lord, he told Ānanda, had said to him in reply, "O Kāśyapa, I am your master and you are my disciple." Then the Tathāgata gave Mahākāśyapa an exhortation on how to train himself to abide by the restraint of the disciplinary rules. The Lord in this exhortation referred to the fact of the body being not permanently assembled. He also asked Mahākāśyapa to train himself in discerning the uprising and the cessation of the five *skandhas* on which existence thrives, and gave him a lesson on the *pratītya-samutpāda* doctrine.

Mahākāśyapa then told the venerable Ānanda that after he had been given the exhortation, he was a probationery student (*śiṣya*) for only eight days, having yet to act before attainment of perfection, but on the ninth day he attained perfect knowledge. Then he reported to Ānanda how his patched cotton under-robe was exchanged for the under-robe of hempen rags of the Tathāgata. Thus did he become a genuine son of the Lord, born of the *dharma*, created by the *dharma*, and heir

as to the *dharma* and not as to the flesh. His three kinds of knowledge, his six kinds of super-knowledge, and mastery of the powers could no longer be hidden. After this the five hundred monks in Ānanda's charge harboured no more doubt or mistrust regarding Mahākāśyapa to whom their obedience became greater and better than before. The depraved nun, Sthūlanandā, remained, however, unreconciled and she uncovered herself before Mahākāśyapa and died immediately. On account of her hard-heartedness towards the sage, she was reborn in a great hell—such was the tradition.

RĀHULA'S CONVERSION

I wish now to give you briefly an account of Rāhula's conversion. Gautama, the Exalted One, according to his promise to his father Śuddhodhana to visit his capital city after his attainment of perfect enlightenment, fulfilled that promise and gladly visited Kapilavastu accompanied by some disciples. The King, his wife Mahāprajāvatī Gautamī, Yaśodharā (Gautama's wife) all were glad to invite separately the Lord to meals in their apartments and the Buddha accepted their invitations. During the course of this visit, one day the shadow of the Lord happened to fall on his son, Rāhula, then seven or eight years old, and Rāhula's whole body thrilled. The King issued a proclamation that nobody, under penalty of death, was to inform Rāhula that he was the son of the Lord. This was, as you will understand, to prevent Rāhula's conversion to the faith of the Great Recluse, now residing in the palace. Rāhula, however, asked his mother, Yaśodharā, whether the Recluse was in any way related to him, as his heart was possessed by love for him. His mother fell into a dilemma—there was her son's insistence on knowing the identity of the great Guest, and there was the King's proclamation of the penalty of death for anybody disclosing the same to Rāhula. 'Come what may', Yaśodharā thought, 'I shall tell my noble son that the Recluse is his own father, though I stand the risk of the declared penalty'.

So she told her son that the Recluse was his father. As soon as this was done, Rāhula clung to a corner of the Lord's yellow robe and said to his mother, that he (Rāhula) would go forth from home to the homeless state and follow his father's way. Seeing this, all the women in the harem cried, and Śuddhodhana became aware of the event and he sighed, wept, and lamented. The King requested the Lord saying that it was enough that He himself had renounced his sovereignty and left his home and family, but He should order Prince Rāhula not to go, so that the royal Śākya family be not made extinct. The Lord told his father that this boy retained the impressions of his lives under other previous Buddhas and was destined never to live with a wife at home. Therefore he must now be completely emancipated from the *skandhas* (the aggregates conditioning the appearance of life).

On account of Gautama's renunciation, nobody in the palace had taken proper care of Rāhula ; even his horoscope had not been taken and the ceremony of braiding his hair and providing him with ear-rings remained unfulfilled. So the king begged of his son, the Buddha, to allow Rāhula's going forth to take place after a week. The Lord ordered his son, still holding the corner of his recluse father's yellow robe, to do as his grandfather bade him. Yaśodharā, taking her son in her lap, tried to present to him all the hardships of a homeless state and asked her son to enjoy at home all the pleasures of a prince's life. Rāhula told his mother in reply that he was ready to give up those pleasures and go forth from home into a homeless state and inevitably he would attain *nirvāṇa*, the immortal bliss, like his father. The Buddha then blessed his son, gently touching his head.

The Lord then spoke to Śārīputra and asked him to ordain Rāhula and to share his hut with the boy. The sage asked the Lord, "How, Lord, shall I ordain Rāhula ?" The Lord replied, "O Śārīputra, with the ordination of one who is a young man, a novice, into the Aryan *dharma* and discipline. He is to say,

"I, Rāhula, am coming to the refuge of the Buddha, of the Dharma, and the Saṅgha'. Secondly he is to say, 'I am Rāhula. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha, and nothing else will be my refuge. As long as I live, I, Rāhula, will abstain from murder, theft, wrong sensual behaviour, falsehood, and the state of indolence induced by indulgence in toddy and spirits. Establish me as an *upāsaka* (a lay disciple) on the basis of these five *śikṣāpadas* (moral precepts). I, Rāhula, will follow into the religious life of the Buddha (said three times)'. "Śārīputra after having cut Rāhula's hair, took Rāhula's right hand and Maudgalyāyana took his left hand and they led him to his bed of straw. The Lord said, "Let him be ordained into the *dharma* and let him be a follower of mine". This in short is the episode of Rāhula's conversion.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DAŚA-BHŪMIS (TEN STAGES)

I now pass on to the topic of the Daśabhūmis.

After the demise of the Buddha, Mahākāśyapa feared that a schism in the *saṅgha* might arise and that sectarians and heretics might cause harm to the peerless doctrine of the Lord. He therefore busied himself, with other faithful disciples of the Master, in collecting his teachings. In that connection he asked the venerable Mahākātyāyana to speak to them of the conduct and career of great-hearted kings of *dharma*. In the course of his reply Mahākātyāyana told Mahākāśyapa of the famous Daśabhūmi principles, so much advocated in the *Mahāvastu* (1.76 ff.) as related by him. These *bhūmis* are the various stages of development of the qualities of a *bodhisattva* towards which he progressively advances, gradually ascending from one *bhūmi* to to the next, up to the tenth stage.

The treatise names the different *bhūmis* thus : the first is called *dūrārohī* (difficult to ascend), the second *baddhamānā* (fastening), the third *puṣpamaṇḍitā* (adorned with flowers), the fourth *rucirā* (fascinating), the fifth *cittavistārā* (expanding the mind), the sixth *rūpavatī* (lovely), the seventh *durjayā* (hard to

conquer), the eighth *janmanideśā* (ascertaining the birth), the ninth deriving its name from *yauvarājya* (anointment or installation like a Crown Prince) and the tenth from *abhiṣeka* (coronation),

In the first stage the *bodhisattvas* develop eight rules of conduct ; liberality, compassion, indefatigability, humility, study of all scriptures, heroism, approval of the people, and fortitude. Living in this stage, they conceive the idea of attainment of perfect wisdom by the accumulation of merits. In the second stage, the *bodhisattvas* feel undoubtedly an aversion to all forms of existence and their dispositions are good, amiable, sweet, keen, bountiful, charming, profound, controlled, imperturbable, extraordinary, lofty, noble, never miserable, resolute, sincere, pure, steadfast, free, contented, and so on. On account of lapses they may fail to reach the third stage.

In the third stage the minds of the *bodhisattvas* become set on renunciation. They want to make all creatures happy and they do so, but not for their own well-being, and not even for the sake of attaining their own enlightenment. In order to qualify themselves to reach the fourth *bhūmi* or stage, the *bodhisattvas* do not create schisms in the *saṅgha*, nor do they raze *stūpas* to the ground, nor harbour any evil thought against a *tathāgata*. Herein they bring their career to maturity and evolve the idea of enlightenment. In expounding and illustrating the merits and demerits of *bodhisattva* in the fifth stage, the *Mahāvastu* mentions the names of some of the *buddhas* or *jinas* worshipped by Lord Gautama when He himself passed through this stage, and also by other past great kings and other great personalities. These kings and others offered great gifts to those *buddhas* and prayed to them so that they might themselves become perfect *buddhas* and safely lead across all men fallen into the great flood of recurrent births, and that they might live in peace by dragging their minds away from all sorts of attachments. With reference to dispositions in the sixth stage, we learn from the *Mahāvastu* that many fields are not empty of *buddhas*, while certain others

are. Sometimes two *tathāgatas* might appear on earth, if one *buddha* were not equal to the conditions of Buddhahood. Otherwise no two such valiant *buddhas* are born in one and the same field. In the seventh stage the *bodhisattvas* apply their minds to self-control, and preach and commend abstention from killing. They herein possess the good qualities of mastery over *karma* (action), resoluteness, endurance, trustworthiness, uprightness and sincerity. They are full of civility towards elderly people and persuasive in speech. They even love their enemies. In the eighth stage the hearts of the *bodhisattvas* become full of compassion. The *Mahāvastu* then recounts hundreds of the host of Aryan *buddhas* in the ninth *bhūmi*. Mahākātyāyana then told Mahākāśyapa about those *bodhisattvas* who passed through the ninth *bhūmi* and encompassed the tenth after having attained the Tuṣita heaven ; they thence descend to a mother's womb to lead to their last human extraordinary existence. This, in short, is an account of the *Daśa-bhūmis* in the *Mahāvastu*.

THE PRATYeka-BUDDHAS

The concept of the Pratyeka-buddhas is found to have developed to a great extent during the period represented by the *Mahāvastu*. These are self-controlled and self-posessed ascetics who attain enlightenment without proclaiming it to the world. In Buddhist dogmatics the Pratyeka-buddhas attain enlightenment for themselves, by themselves without the aid of any teacher, and they do not even propose to act as teachers to others. They arise whenever *buddhas* do not appear in the world (III. 27). These individually enlightened saintly persons may be countless. They are splendid in their silence, possessing great power, remaining almost in loneliness, like the rhinoceros, taming and calming only their own selves, and passing away almost finally after winning enlightenment. They however, do not possess to a high degree the five essential eyes, viz. the eye of the flesh, the *deva* eye, the eye of wisdom, the eye of *dharma* and the eye of a *buddha*, all of which can only be possessed by the *buddhas* (1.158).

They function to constitute a field for winning merit. They are objects of offerings received from other people. Their deportment and demeanour are described in the *Mahāvastu* in many a context. They have courteous manners with regard to their coming and going ; they look forward and around ; they extend and withdraw their hands and they carry with them their cloaks, bowls, and robes. They look like *nāgas* (elephants). They appear to have accomplished their task. Their organs of sense are turned inwards and their minds do not turn outwards. They do not look in any way disturbed, because of their achievement of harmony with the *dharma*. They never look forward beyond a plough's length. Such is their auspicious deportment.

WORSHIP OF THE BUDDHA

Lastly, I shall concisely refer to a peculiar subject. The *Mahāvastu* puts some verses (II,362) into the mouth of Lord Buddha about the efficacy of the worship of the Buddha. They may be interpreted thus : 'The person (called a son of the Buddha) who, having turned his thoughts towards attainment of enlightenment (only) for the sake of welfare of all living beings, goes round (saluting reverentially) a *tope* of the saviour of the world, becomes, in all places in all his lives, mindful, thoughtful, virtuous and assured as he fares on the way to enlightenment.' It is also said that such beings shall themselves become saviours with their lusts destroyed, and they are destined to become peerless *buddhas* in the world after having for a long time pursued the good in their various lives. Then we find in this book (in the *Avalokitasūtra*) an enumeration of the simple methods of *Buddha-pūjā*, which, if resorted to with devotion, will lead to accumulation of incalculable merits as a result of which they will never become confounded by appearances and will be able to perceive the unsubstantiality or soullessness and emptiness or non-existence of all *dharmas* (the things or appearances in the objective world).

Briefly speaking, the methods are the following : (i) Saluta-

tion of a *tope* and monuments erected in the Buddha's honour ; (ii) placing a garland or a festoon of fine silk on a *tope* or a monument containing the relics of the Buddha ; (iii) offering flowers, burning even a pinch of incense in Buddhist shrines ; (iv) putting a flag on the Lord's shrines ; (v) holding a single light over the *tope* ; (vi) placing therein a sunshade ; (vii) honouring the Buddha by playing an instrument of music in shrines ; (viii) putting adornments on the shrines ; (ix) cleansing the *topes* and washing away dust therein ; (x) offering dried cow-dung cakes in shrines for preparing fire there ; (xi) offering even a drop of oil at a *tope* ; (xii) taking bricks and carrying them to shrines ; (xiii) anointing shrines with perfumes ; (xiv) placing a necklace of gems on them ; (xv) giving one trustful thought to the Buddha ; (xvi) bringing net-work coverings to shrines ; (xvii) taking and throwing away faded flowers from shrines ; (xviii) sprinkling sandal-wood powder thereon ; (xix) making a reverential bow before a *tope* ; (xx) offering a bowl in the Buddha's name for his acceptance, and (xxi) forming a resolution in the mind that they (these worshippers) may set free the unfree and in their own emancipated state may become an eye to the blind and dispel their gloom and darkness, and may lead across the beings who have not crossed, may fare without a tremor through the whole world, and release those in misery.

We are told that such benefactors and worshippers of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha never feel troubled by any ills of the world and they may become distinguished wealthy merchants, householders possessing wonderful treasures, king's sons, ministers, and even powerful universal rulers.

BUDDHIST EMPEROR ASOKA'S LIBERALITY

Emperor Aśoka seems to have been good in conduct, wise and virtuous according to the teaching of the *Dhammapada* which says (VI. 9) :

*Na attahetu na parassa hetu
na puttam-icche na dhanam na ratṭham ;
na iccheyya adhammena samiddhim-attano
sa paññavā dhammiko sīlavā siyā*

“If, for his own sake or for the sake of others, a man wishes neither for a son, nor for wealth, nor for sovereignty, and also if he does not wish for his own prosperity by unfair means, then that man is sure to be good in conduct, wise and virtuous.”

Buddhism is based specially on ethical principles. It always wants to teach people to cultivate the noble sentiments of friendship, compassion, detachment from worldly attractions and mental joyousness and also extensive liberality, sacrifice of selfish interests and a life of austerities.

In this lecture I wish to tell you as to how the Buddhist Emperor Aśoka favoured all people specially the members of the

Buddhist congregation (*Saṅgha*) by offering lavish liberality to it after having abandoned all attachments towards everything he possessed, namely, his men, money and monarchy. In many of his edicts engraved on rocks and pillars Aśoka applauded the good virtue of liberality towards Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas. It is quite believable that during the last illness of the emperor before his demise there was a full depletion of the royal coffers due to his giving excessive gifts to the Buddhist monks and other Buddhist institutions in India.

I shall illustrate this particular virtue of liberality in Aśoka's character by relating the whole story of his noble deeds as we read in the ancient Buddhist Sanskrit treatise, the *Divyāvadāna* containing among others a section (No. 29) called *Aśokāvadāna* which has yet remained, so far as I know, untranslated in the English language. The episode of liberality in Aśoka's life will be related here through my own translation in English of the whole of the *Aśokāvadāna*.

The story in translation runs thus :

While by king Aśoka faith in the Lord's teaching was established (fully) by making a gift of the half of an *āmalaka* (Emblic myrobalan), he addressed the monks asking thus—"By whom have abundant gifts been given for the (propagation of) the teachings of the Lord?" The monks replied, "By the householder Anāthapiṇḍada." The king asked, "How much of gifts has been given by him for (the propagation of) the teachings of the Lord? The monks said—"By him a gift of one hundred *Koṭis* of (gold) coins was given for the teaching-service of the Lord". Hearing this the king thought, 'By him who is (only) a house-holder has been given a gift of one hundred *Koṭis* of gold-pieces in the Lord's teaching-service.' He said, "I too shall give a gift of one hundred *Koṭis* of gold-pieces in the teaching-service of the Lord." When by him were erected eighty-four thousands of *Dharmarājikā* topes, he gave hundred-thousand pieces (of gold) everywhere, and in the places of (the Lord's) birth (in Lumbinī garden or village), of his enlightenment

(in Gayā), of his turning of the wheel of Dharma (in Mṛgadāva in Vārāṇasī) and of his attainment of *parinirvāṇa* (at Kuśīnagara)—in all these places one hundred thousand were given (in each case). (This gift) is to be a recurring one every five years. Out of these four hundred thousands given, three hundred thousands were meant for the feeding of the Bhikṣus (monks) thus—one (hundred thousand) for the Arhans and two (hundred thousands) for the novices (*Śaikṣas*) and also for meritorious works for the mass (or people in general). Placing this treasure (or money) and making a gift of the great earth (i.e. his own vast dominion), of the ladies in the harem, of the multitude of ministers, on his own self and of his (son), Kuṇāla, to the (Buddhist) Congregation or Assembly of Āryas, he redeemed them (all) by paying a price of four hundred thousands. (In this way) a gift of ninety-six *Koṭis* (of gold pieces) was given by him in the Lord's service. Meanwhile he (the king) fell ill. The king then felt afflicted by thinking that he might not now live (any longer). He had a minister, Rādhagupta by name, with whom he threw (in early life) dust (on each other) i.e. who was his play-mate in boyhood. At that time he, on seeing king Aśoka thus afflicted, fell at his feet and addressed him with folded palms thus :

"O king, for what reason does your face appear bedewed with tears—the face which has fully drunk (i.e. has been endowed with) the manifold beauty of the look of hundreds of lotuses, and which, possessing the glare of a hot sun, could not be gazed at by strong multitudes of your enemies approaching (towards you) jointly ?" (Verse 1).

The king said—"Rādhagupta, I do not feel sorry for any loss of my wealth (or property), of my own kingdom, or for my separation from my house (or residence), but I feel sad because I shall have to be separated from the Āryas (i.e. the Buddhists)."

"Again, my shedding of tears is due to my thought that I shall not (be able to) worship personally the *saiṅha* (the Buddhist congregation), endowed with all virtues and revered by men and gods, by supporting the same with excellent food and drink" (V.2).

“And, moreover, O Rādhagupta, this was my wish that I would make a gift of a hundred *Koṭis* (of gold pieces) in the service of the Lord. That desire of mine has not been fulfilled.”

Then king Aśoka began to send to Kukkuṭārāma (monastery) four *Koṭis* of gold coins (in cash) for the fulfilment of his desire.

At that time, Kuṇāla's, son, Saṃpadi by name was enjoying the rank of the Crown-prince. His ministers said—“Prince, king Aśoka will (now) live for a short while. This wealth is being sent to the Kukkuṭārāma. Kings (as you know) are strong (only) by possession of treasures. (This king) must be interdicted.”

Immediately the (royal) treasurer was forbidden by the prince. So long as it (such expense) was not prevented, king Aśoka's meal was served on a golden plate. After finishing his meal the kings used to send the golden plates to Kukkuṭārāma use by him of a golden plate was banned. (Then) his meal was supplied on a silver plate and those platters also he sent to Kukkuṭārāma. Then the use of silver plates was stopped. And when his meal was served on iron plates, those also king Aśoka sent to Kukkuṭārāma. Then his meal was presented on earthen plates. At that time there remained in the hand of king Aśoka half an *āmalaka* (Emblic myrobalan).

Then king Aśoka, in anxiety, having called together the ministers and the citizens asked them thus—“Who is now the sovereign on earth?” Then the minister (Rādhagupta?) rose up from his seat and having approached towards the king said to him after bowing with folded hands—“Your Majesty is the sovereign on earth”. Then king Aśoka with his eyes and face wet with flooding tears told the ministers thus :

“Why are you speaking an untrue thing out of courtesy (or kindness)? We are deprived of our lord paramountcy. But the residue of half an *āmalaka* yet remains, and my ownership lies only on this thing. Fie on Sovereignty which is ignoble and which can compare itself with the gorge of the water of a turbu-

lent river ! A terrible poverty has caught hold of me, the king of men" (V.3)

"Or, who can alter the words of the Lord. That 'All prosperity ends in adversity' has been declared by the truth-telling Gautama and this can never prove false."

"As whatever order (is passed) from me, that is without delay revoked by my mind, that (order) is turned away now-a-days like a river obstructed by a rock-slab of a great mountain". (V.4)

"Having had command over the unrivalled earth, with its affrays and revolts crushed, and having uprooted the haughty multitudes of enemies and also having given comfort to the poor and the afflicted, the miserable king Aśoka does not at present shine with his residence lost, like the Aśoka tree drying up with its leaves and flowers shrivelled and quite withered and fallen." (V.5)

Then king Aśoka told an officer who came near in these words—"Gentle sir, would you please do a last act on behalf of myself, one who has lost his sovereign power on account of his attachment to his previous characteristics. Please take this half of an *āmalaka*, go to the Kukkuṭārāma monastery and give the same to the Congregation. You should, after worshipping the feet of the (members of) the Congregation, tell them in my own words thus—"This thing (only) is the treasure now of the king whose sovereignty prevails over the Jambudvīpa. This (my) last gift is to be so distributed (for food) that my donation made for the *Saṅgha* may be participated (by all)". He also added (thus) :

"On this day is my last gift. My Sovereignty and this (donation) have attained their (innate) disposition (or end). For myself bereft of wealth, physician and medicine, there is no protector outside the multitude of the Āryas (i. e. the Buddhists)." (V.6)

"Because this gift is my last one, you please partake of this in such a manner that the donation made to the congregation may today be spread out to all its members." (V.7)

That (royal) servant promising to king Aśoka by saying 'So be it, your Majesty', proceeded to Kukkuṭārāma taking the half of the *āmalaka* and stopping before the elders with folded palms addressed them, by giving the half of the *āmalaka* thus—

"That king who, having ruled over the earth endowed with the height of unrivalled supremacy, tormented the people like the sun reaching the midday height, is at present deprived of his own (good) deeds, realises the loop-holes of destiny and stands forlorn of his majestic power like the sun when the day wanes." (V.8)

"By him has this half of an *āmalaka* as a mark of the unsteadiness of (royal) fortune been given to Congregation after greeting the members of it with his head bent low in devotion." Then the Elder of the *Saṅgha* addressed the monks thus—

"O venerable ones, now you may demonstrate your perturbation. Why? Thus has been declared by the Lord—'The adversity of others is a matter of (deep) perturbation. In which good-hearted men is (mental) perturbation not produced? Why?'"

"This most liberal and great Maurya king Aśoka is now reduced to the position of half an *āmalaka*'s ownership, though he is the sovereign of Jambudvīpa." (V.9)

"This lord of the earth being deprived of his (kingly) office by his servants (officers) gives really this half an *āmalaka*, disregarding the mental conditions of the ordinary people who are proud on account of their passion for sufficiency of their enjoyments of fortune." (V.10)

Meanwhile the half of the *āmalaka* was pounded to powders and mixed up with the soup and thus served to the (monks of the) *saṅgha*. Then king Aśoka asked Rādhagupta—"Tell me, Rādhagupta, who is at present the sovereign on earth." Then Rādhagupta fell at the feet of Aśoka and said to him with folded palms thus—"Your Majesty is the sovereign on earth." Then king Aśoka raising himself up a little and looking on all the four quarters and folding his palms (in salutation) towards the *saṅgha* said (thus)—"Now I, placing a large treasure, am offering

a gift of the whole earth upto its sea-(boundaries) to the community of the disciples of the Lord", and he also said—

"To the *saṅgha* I give this earth with the Mandara mountain—the earth which wears the blue cloak of the greatest oceans with its face decorated with mines of many a jewel. For this (act of making a gift) the fruit will be enjoyed (by me)." (V. 11)

"Moreover—

By this gift I do not long for the abode of Indra (i.e. the heaven), nor the fruit (of possession) of the world of Brahmā. I have already not desired to have royal fortune which is as fickle as the current of rapid-flowing water, but on account of the fruit of this gift which accrued to me who am great in devotion, I shall acquire lordship over my (own) mind, which is (so much) valued by the Āryas and which never attains change or reverse." (V. 12)

By that time (the gift) was put in a written form (document) and sealed by an ivory-seal. Then the king giving away the great earth to the *saṅgha* passed away (to eternity i.e. died). When the ministers bore away (the body) in blue and yellow litter (or bier) and worshipped his body with the intent of laying it down (for cremation purpose), Rādhagupta said thus—"By king Aśoka was made a gift of the great earth to the congregation." Then the ministers enquired—"Why so?" Rādhagupta replied—"The desire arose in the mind of king Aśoka, viz—'I shall give a gift of one hundred *Koṭis* (of gold pieces) in the service of the Lord.' When ninety-six *Koṭis* were given by him, the Queen intercepted the act (of gift). In fulfilment of his purpose the king made a gift of the great earth." Then the minister by giving the remaining four *Koṭis* in the service of the Lord redeemed the earth and established Saṃpadi in royalty. Brhaspati was the son of Saṃpadi and Vṛṣasena was Brhaspati's son, Puṣyadharman was Vṛṣasena's son and Puṣyamitra was Puṣyadharman's son.

He (Saṃpadi) sent for the ministers (and said—) "What may the way be by which our name (renown) may last long?" They

replied—"There was the king named Aśoka who was born in your Majesty's family. By him were established eighty-four thousands of religious *stūpas* (*Dharmarājikās*). As long as the Lord's teaching will prevail, so long his fame will last. Your Majesty should also construct eighty-four thousands of *Dharmarājikās*. The king said—"King Aśoka was highly powerful. Is there any other way (for on fame to last long)?" His Brāhmaṇa priest was an ordinary man, not faithful (i.e. not believing in Buddhism). By him was said thus—"Your Majesty, name (fame) will last for (these) two reasons. Meanwhile king Puṣyamitra by equipping his army of four-fold troops proceeded towards the Kukkuṭārāma (monastery) with the purpose of destroying the religious teaching of the Lord. At its door a lion's roar (war-cry) was raised (by the monks?). Then the king being afraid entered Pāṭaliputra. This happened twice and thrice. Then calling for the *bhikṣus* (monks) and the congregation, he said—"I shall destroy the Lord's teaching. Do you wish to have *stūpas* and monasteries?" The *bhikṣus* accepted the (offer). Then Puṣyamitra, having (destroyed) the monasteries and killed the *bhikṣus*, went away. He reached the Śākala country. By him was said—"Whoever will bring me the head of a (Buddhist) Śramaṇa will be given by me a hundred pieces of *dīnāra* (gold) coins. Then they (the people) began to offer such heads on account of the idea of *Dharmarājikās* being out of the pale (of the king's favour). Hearing this the king began to bring about the slaughter of the Arhats. (But) he attained cessation of consciousness. His attack on others did not succeed. Leaving aside his effort (to do evil) he entered into a place of concealment. There (in the place called) Daṁṣṭrā a *yakṣa* lived and (he) thought thus—"This teaching of the Lord will be lost. I have (myself) entered into the discipline (i.e. the condition of a novice in Buddhism). I cannot do any evil or unpleasant deed to any one."

His daughter was asked (for marriage) by the *yakṣa* Kṛmiśa. But he (the other *yakṣa*) did not give her to him, because he was an evil-doer. Then the said daughter was given by him to

Kṛmiśa for the protection of the teaching of the Lord and for the security of the belonging (i.e. the *stūpas* and the monasteries given in the Lord's honour). The great *yakṣa* applied himself to following the king Puṣyamitra at his back. The king (however) could not be killed on account of his power. Then the *Damṣṭrā-nivāsī yakṣa* caught hold of the *yakṣa* (his son-in-law) who followed Puṣyamitra (for the latter's) protection, and went away to move in a mountain. He (then) went towards the southern direction. The *yakṣa* Kṛmiśa then brought a big mountain and obstructed king Puṣyamitra accompanied by all his army and conveyances. His designation of *munihata* (i.e. one who killed the ascetics) was established. The Maurya lineage (or dynasty) then came to an end, when king Puṣyamitra was killed.

As you have observed from the above translation of the *Aśokāvadāna*, there are certain references to some matters on politics and persecution of the monks after the emperor's death—but they may form some topics for historians to deal with and I have refrained from any discussion on them in this lecture. Only this is evident that the *Divyāvadāna* was composed before the end of Puṣyamitra's reign.

THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM

In dealing with the question of the interrelation between the Brāhmaṇic or Hindu and Buddhist systems of philosophy and religion, we may first state what are the most salient and cardinal features of the so-called orthodox Hinduism.

CARDINAL BELIEFS OF HINDUISM

Broadly speaking, Hinduism is a theistic religion. The Hindus of the Vedic, Upaniṣadic, Purāṇic, and other important periods of the history of Indian religions, all believed in God, the highest Self, regarded as the all-pervading, infinite, absolute, eternal, and singular Brahman, who is also manifested in the form of the universe (in His immanent aspect), and who yet remains in excess over it (in His transcendental aspect), as something incomprehensible.

They also believed in human beings having individual souls (Jivātmans) which, in their very nature, are identical with the highest Self, God or Brahman. So they believed in the past, and they yet believe now, in the existence of God, individual souls,

and the universe, of which God is regarded as both the material and the efficient cause.

In regard to the particular forms of creeds or cults, like Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śāktism, etc., which the different followers of Hinduism embrace, the central object of the act of worship, thought and meditation is the attainment and realization of the same ultimate Reality, supreme Brahman.

The Hindus also hold that the individual souls (embodied as they are) suffer all kinds of miseries and privations, and they are subject to birth, decay, disease, decrepitude, death and rebirth in consequence of the deeds, good or bad, done by them in this life or in the previous ones. They also fervently believe that they can, by their own efforts in the form of acquiring *jñāna* (knowledge), or doing *karma* (work or action), or practising *bhakti* (devotion), or *yoga* (the practice of contemplation and meditation), hope for release from worldly bondage, by having realized their own unity with the universal Self.

It must be said that without a knowledge, to some extent, of the Vedic lore, which certainly includes that of Upaniṣadic doctrines, it is not at all possible to understand properly the doctrine of the Buddha, whom great Swamī Vivekānanda called 'a rebel child of Hinduism'.

BUDDHA—A DYNAMIC PERSONALITY

Why did the Buddha rebel against Hinduism, and how far did he differ from the tenets and doctrines of the Vedic religion and the Upaniṣadic philosophy? In the following pages, we shall make an attempt to answer this question by referring to certain actions in the Buddha's own life, his teachings and preachings, and also to some later interpretation of them by certain groups of Buddhist philosophers (of the Mahāyāna school).

At the outset, it may be remarked that the Buddha was a dynamic personality. He was universal love, kindness, and perfect wisdom personified. He always appealed to reason (*yukti*) with analysing human ventures in search for the ultimate Truth or

Reality, without any bias towards particular views, as if he always said, as we find in the *Jñānsārasamuccaya*, 'O ye Bhikṣus, you must accept my view after a fully critical examination and not out of deference to me as your Master'. He was also of the opinion that only the words of that person are to be accepted who speaks with reason. He was a great rationalist in philosophical thoughts and conceptions, a great master of moral force, a great renouncer, and a supreme physician for healing human diseases, passions and torments.

PHILOSOPHICAL ATMOSPHERE IN BUDDHA'S TIME

What was the philosophical atmosphere which the Buddha found himself in? The chief religious and philosophical system that prevailed in pre-Buddhist age was that of the Upaniṣads. We find in it more emphasis being laid on *jñāna* (knowledge) than on *karma* (action or work). But even in the Buddha's own time, the influence of priesthood and Vedic ritualistic institutions, such as *yajñas* (sacrifices), did not fully cease to work on people's mind, though the first impact on it inflicted by the Upaniṣadic spiritual teachings had commenced to be felt somewhat earlier. The revolt against *karma*, however, came to have a powerful influence on men's mind when the Buddha preached his first sermon (*dharmacakra-pravartana*) at Sārnath (near Banaras), after his attainment of perfect enlightenment or knowledge (*sambodhi*), in his thirty-fifth year, at Bodh-Gaya.

But in this hostility against the Brāhmanic cult of ritualistic *karma* (Vedic sacrifices and other ceremonials), the Ājīvika, Nirgrantha (or the Jaina), and Lokāyata schools of philosophy and religion, which were current in the Buddha's time, also joined their hands to some extent. We know that Gośāla Maṅkhaliputra was the founder of the Ājīvika sect, which believed in the doctrine of *niyati* (predestination or fate), according to which all phenomena, physical or mental, are unalterably fixed or ordained, and which had no faith in human efforts or exertion (*puruṣakāra*). The founder of the Jaina sect, which accepted

harmlessness or abstinence from violence or doing injury to others, alike in thought, word, or deed, as its chief tenet, was the great ascetic Mahāvīra, the Nirgranthanātha-putra. The third chief leader was Keśakambalin, a materialist and unbeliever in soul or God, and probably inclined to the tenets of the Lokāyata system, of which Cārvāka was the greatest exponent, perhaps its founder.

This Lokāyata—meaning ‘directed to the world of sense’—system is also named along with Sāṃkhya and Yoga by Kauṭilya (fourth century B.C.) as the prevailing *ānvīkṣikī* or metaphysical schools in India. It was, however, a heretical system according to the Brāhmaṇic Hindus, as it rejected the authority of the Vedas and refrained from performing all the Brāhmaṇic ceremonials and sacrifices, and also denied the doctrines of transmigration accepted by the Brāhmaṇic systems. Its followers did not believe in any other means of knowledge than direct perception (*pratyakṣa*). To them, who were Dehātmavādins, matter was the only reality, soul being no other than the body with only the attribute of intelligence. They also denied the existence of all that transcends the senses, and, according to them, salvation was only the dissolution of the body which was nothing but a combination of the gross elements. According to them, sensual pleasure was the only end of man to indulge in. Orthodox Hindum received a severe handling from the Lokāyatas, as from the early Buddhists. Probably the *Gītā* refers to the adherents of this system (called *asuras*, demoniacal men) when it asserts that ‘they regard the universe as without a basis, and without a ruler’ (XVI. 8) and that they take ‘the gratification of desires as the highest thing, feeling sure that this is all’ (XVI, 11), without any respect towards spiritual ordinances (*śāstravidhis*).

There was another prominent religious leader in the Buddha’s time, a Brāhmaṇa preacher named Sañjaya, who had for his students, before their ordination to Buddhism, Śārīputra and Maudgalyāyana, who later became the two most famous, beloved, and devoted disciples of the Buddha. This teacher Sañjaya

was rather a sceptic who cherished doubt in the solution of the philosophical problems namely, whether the world is permanent or impermanent, whether there is continuity of life or self even after a man's death, whether the world has its beginning or it is beginningless, etc. To the Buddha, these sectarian tenets and doctrines seemed to be unsatisfactory and unappealing, though they severally made strong impress on his mind in some respects.

BUDDHISTIC AND BRĀHMANIC DOCTRINES COMPARED

AND CONTRASTED

We shall now try to show as to how far the Buddha's religion and philosophy agreed with, and differed from, those of the Brāhmaṇic Śāstras.

We do not find much stress being given in Buddhism on the Hindu *varṇa* and *āśrama* duties ordained for the different castes. The Hindus gave the right of priesthood and leadership in religion to the Brāhmaṇas alone, but to be believer in Buddhism, one need not be a Brāhmaṇa, or a high or a rich person. In the matter of religious observances and performances, there could be no distinction between a Brāhmaṇa and a non-Brāhmaṇa, between high and low, or rich and poor. According to *Dhammapada*, 'A man does not become a Brāhmaṇa by his platted hair, by his family, or by his birth (alone). He is (regarded as) pure, and he is a Brāhmaṇa, in whom reside truth and righteousness.

There appears to be good agreement between the two systems of Hinduism and Buddhism in so far as the attempt to bring about an extinction of all mental desires and cravings is concerned. In order to free himself from the assaults of disease, decrepitude, death, and all adversity in life, Gautama, the Bodhisattva, renounced the world in search of that agency or way by which these sufferings might be put an end to, and for the attainment of eternal bliss (*nirvāṇa*, the highest beatitude) by means of meditation and contemplation (*samādhi*), which is only possible to be attained in lonely forest life. He resolved to extinguish the three fires, *kāmāgni* (fire of attachment), *dveṣāgni* (fire of hatred)

and *mohāgni* (fire of delusion or ignorance), and make himself worthy (*arhat*) of realizing and enjoying the bliss of emancipation. In this matter, the Buddha, accepted the Upaniṣadic view that, unless one can dispense with all human desires (*kāma*) or hankerings and cravings, which even latently work within the mind, one cannot expect to attain the highest stage of immortality (cf. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. 3, 14, 15, and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II. 2. 8).

The Buddhists believe that, after having attained *sambodhi*, Gautama uttered an *udāna* (joyful utterance), which finds its place in the *Jarāvarga* of the *Dhammapada* (*gāthās*, 8, 9). Translated into English, it runs thus : 'Looking for the builder of the tabernacle (i.e. this my body, the prison-house of the senses), I have traversed a cycle of many births, but without succeeding to find him (out) ; painful it is to go through births again and again. But now, O you, maker of the tabernacle, you have been found out (by me), and you will not (be able to) build this tabernacle again. All your rafters are broken, and your ridge-pole is sundered. (My) mind, being free from predispositions (i.e. approaching *nirvāṇa*), has attained the extinction of all desires.'

Metaphorically speaking, we may therefore regard this destruction of all cravings and desires as victory over Māra, the Tempter. It is desire which leads to the building of the body and binds it to the wheel of existences. Once desire becomes dead in us, we become free from future births. It is said that, after his victory over Māra, Gautama assumed for himself the favourite name of Tathāgata which, according to some Buddhists, is interpreted as the person who attained *tathā* or the real cause of our existences.

Buddhism borrowed many an idea and theory from the Sāṅkhya and also from the practical Yoga philosophy of the Hindus. Ecstatic abstraction and trance were held in high esteem by the Buddhists from the very beginning. They also accepted many philosophical concepts from these systems. The Buddhists, like the followers of the other Indian Brāhmaṇic systems of philosophy, believed in the doctrine of suffering or pain (*duḥkhavāda*). They also had firm faith in the doctrine of work or

or action (*karmavāda*), according to which human beings bear the consequences of their 'good or evil acts in life, and their future existence is shaped accordingly.

They also cherished a firm belief in the doctrine of rebirth (*janmāntaravāda*). The ego, *pudgala* or *sattva* as the Buddhists call it, i.e. the individual being called as *Jīva* by the Hindus, is always subject to pleasure or pain as the result of good or evil deeds by him. Human beings, however, always strive to attain the state of unmixed happiness and tranquillity, being released from the hard fetters of birth, age, disease, death and rebirth (*saṃsāra* or revolution of repeated existences). In India, different systems of philosophy came into being in the course of the different teachers' attempts to discover and determine the ways by which the cause of pain or suffering in the world could be ascertained, assuaged, and finally extinguished, and by the knowledge of which (ways) man could succeed in ending his rebirths. Complete and everlasting extinction of suffering and misery in the world is the aim of all Indian philosophers.

The Brahmvādins (or Vedāntins) acknowledge the existence of only one entity (Brahman) and own that the knowledge of that absolute Soul or Self leads to *mukti*, i.e. release from the bondage of births and rebirths. On the contrary, the materialist philosophers, the Lokāyatikas mentioned before, believe that the universe is *akāraṇa-sambhūta*, i.e. never born of any super-cause. The followers of the Pātañjala system, again, regard everything as being ordained by a personal God who is the highest cause. But Gautama Buddha seems to have considered all these views extremely unhelpful in bringing about liberation; rather, according to him, they lead one to greater distress and bondage, and so he rebelled against them.

The early Buddhists believe that, if the individual beings can achieve by true knowledge a total cessation of all miseries, they thereby attain tranquillity and eventually the immortal state of *nirvāṇa* by extinguishing themselves like fire or a lamp. Their earthly existence becomes extinct, and it attains the state of *śūnya*

(absolute nothingness, void, or emptiness). So they think that there is, in a way, no individual, no universe, and no cause of them both. It is, indeed, very interesting to find in the Buddhist canons this *nirvāṇa* described as *a-kata* (*akṛta*, the uncreated) and *a-mata* (*amṛta*, the immortal), i.e. it is neither created, nor does it ever die. Hence, it may be presumed that it is a *siddha-vastu*, eternally existing thing, and it may be equated with the Brāhmanic idea of Brahman.

THE BUDDHIST LAW OF CAUSATION

Next, let us consider what is the nature of the chain of causes and effects, technically called the *pratītya-samutpāda*, i.e. the law of happening by way of a cause (or the law of origination of a thing or phenomenon depending on another as its cause), which the Bodhisattva revolved within his mind during the third watch of the night on which he attained perfect enlightenment. The basic principle in this law of *paticca-samuppāda* (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is laid down in the following formulary : "This having been, that comes to be ; from the appearance of this, that arises. This having not been, that does not come into existence ; from the cessation of this, that ceases to be."

Through his penetrating eye of knowledge, Gautama, during his enlightenment, observed that the twelve *nidānas* (*hetu*, *samudaya*, or *paccya*, as they are also called by the Buddhists) are arranged, as it were, to form links in a chain of dependent origination. He grasped the idea thus : (1) *duḥkha* (human suffering due to disease, decay, death, etc.) is causally determined by *jāti* (birth), (2) *jāti* by *bhava* (action, good or bad), (3) *bhava* by *upādāna* (clinging to existence), (4) *upādāna* by *trṣṇā* (5) *trṣṇā* by *vedanā* (feeling of pleasure or pain), (6) *vedanā* by *sparśa* (touch or contact), (7) *sparśa* by *ṣaḍāyatana* (the six organs of sense), (8) *ṣaḍāyatana* by *nāma-rūpa* (name and form, i.e. individual being ; according to some others, mind and body), (9) *nāmarūpa* by *viññāna* (consciousness), (10) *viññāna* by *saṃskāra* (conformations left from actions in former births or in the passed

part of the present life), and (11) *saṃskāra* by (12) *avidyā* (ignorance, nescience).

By the cessation (*nirodha*) of the following one, amongst these *nidānas*, the preceding one ceases to be. Hence, ignorance or nescience, becomes responsible ultimately for all human miseries.

THE EIGHTFOLD ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

We may refer, in this connection, to the four noble truths (*ārya-satyas*) which Bodhisattva Gautama realized during his enlightenment, namely, (1) the existence of pain as an entity, (2) the origin of pain, (3) the cessation of pain, (4) the eight-fold path that leads to the cessation of pain. The Buddha described this path as the *majjhimā paṭipadā*, the middle course which, according to him, creates true insight and intelligence and leads to tranquillity of mind (*upaśama*), intuitive knowledge or supernatural faculty (*abhijñā*), supreme wisdom (*sambodhi*), and eternal bliss (*nirvāṇa*).

The eightfold principles are : (1) *sammādiṭṭhi*, right view or belief ; (2) *sammāsaṅkappa*, right resolve or aspiration ; (3) *sammā-vācā*, right speech ; (4) *sammā-kammanta*, right work or action ; (5) *sammā-ājīva*, right living or profession or calling ; (6) *sammā-vāyāma*, right endeavour ; (7) *sammā-sati*, right thought or recollection ; and (8) *sammā-samādhi*, right meditation or concentration. Acceptance and right following of this noble middle path will surely lead to the release of all men from the twelvefold fetters of cause and effect (*pratītya-samutpāda*), save them from all the ills of life, and bring about their ultimate emancipation (*nirvāṇa*). This is the essence of the early Buddhist thought.

These doctrines indicate clearly that the Buddha's original teachings are largely based on the ethical principles of life. The essential virtues, according to them, are good conduct and its basic qualities of friendliness, compassion, tolerance, and mental joy (all four forming the *Brahma-vihāra*), and also non-violence towards

all beings. Good and evil, virtue and vice, well-being and adversity, these constitute the chief topics in this system. A life of purity, possessing the higher sentiments of love and service to all beings, is certainly helpful in the attainment of eternal bliss. The Buddhists are enjoined to contemplate whether the four noble truths are realities or not, and whether everything that appears to have a birth is, or is not, impermanent on earth. The Buddhists believe in the Buddha's precept that the composite thing—the human body with its life principle—arises out of the combination of the five *skandhas* (categories), namely, *rūpa* (the gross elements or objects of the senses), *vedanā* (the feeling of pleasure and pain), *saṃjñā* (realization of the outward form of objects), *saṃskāra* (conformations or predispositions) and *viññāna* (consciousness).

Even before Gautama's attainment of enlightenment, he expressed his opinion about the Ātman or *kṣetrajñā* to Arāḍa, when he met him on his way to Bodh-Gaya. In reply to the sage's view that ignorance (*ajñāna*), action (*karma*), and desire (*trṣṇā*) are at the root of rebirths, Gautama retorted by saying that wherever one thinks of the existence of the Ātman (self or soul), these three remain (latently) in a subtle form. He also argued that, if there were soul as a knower, there must be a thing to be known ; and such being the case, there cannot be any *mokṣa* or salvation of such a sentient soul, and there could not be a real abandonment of egoism. He therefore thought that absolute attainment of the end consists in total abandonment of everything. Another sage, Udraka, also believed in the existence of the Ātman. Because of this, Gautama could not accept his view too. Gautama regarded *kṣetrajñā* (individual soul) as *prasavadharmā* (subject to the condition of taking a birth) and *bījadharmā* (having the condition of a seed with latent power to germinate).

According to the Buddhists, death is nothing but the breaking up of the 'combination of faculties and characters' ; and the personality of a man, under the pressure of a force by which those life-elements, faculties, and characters, namely, the *skandhas*, tend

to recombine, is again brought into being, and a new life is the result. This force, according to them, is the force of *karma* (action), and it is the aggregate of the results of good or bad actions which causes the recombination. Man goes to a new condition according to 'the total or resultant force of all the actions of the particular series of lives,' and is thus born again. No soul, no spirit, nor anything like it, as the Brāhmanic Hindus think, has passed on to the next creation or birth, except, according to the Buddhists, the force of *karma*, which has compelled the new combination of the elements of the former individual who has only got a new life from a new birth. Buddhism, it has been mentioned before, lays the greatest stress on *karma*; and the doctrine of Karma is the cardinal feature of it. This powerful force of *karma* of a man is the main cause of his rebirth. Hence it is that the Buddha laid so much stress on the eight-fold ethical principles.

THE BUDDHIST VIEW OF NIRVĀṆA AND

THE BRĀHMANIC IDEA OF MUKTI

What is the conception of *nirvāṇa* according to the Buddhists, and how does it stand when compared with *mukti* or *mokṣa* of the of the Brāhmanic system? According to the Buddhist works like the *Viśuddhimārga* etc., the term means a total annihilation of all the constituent elements of being, viz. the five *skandhas*, and people who seek after such annihilation should strive to attain it by meditation, knowledge, and practice of virtue. The *Arthaśālinī* and some other works, again, define *nirvāṇa* as the quieting of all desires and evil deeds. But Buddhaghosa, the great philosopher and commentator of Buddhist works, applied the term to mean *śūnya*, absolute non-entity or non-existence. The first stage of *śūnya* is attained by an *arhat* who has reached the highest state of sanctification, and the last stage by a *buddha* alone who succeeds in bringing about release from every conceivable attribute of being and thus enjoying eternal bliss.

The later Mahāyāna Buddhists, headed by the great philosopher-poet Aśvaghoṣa, held the view that the *dharmacakra* or *nirvāṇa*, as taught by the Buddha, is to be characterized by the

words *niṣprapañca* (free from diffuseness and diversity, i.e., non-phenomenal), *anutpāda* (not liable to come into existence), *asambhava* (without origin), and *anālaya* (being above attachments or longings or desires). They also describe it as *vivikta* (lonely and detached), *prakṛti-śūnya* (void or empty by nature, rather, supernatural), and *alakṣaṇa* (devoid of attributes, indefinable or indescribable). Aśvaghoṣa has described it as '*Ākāśena sadā tulyaṁ nirvikalpaṁ prabhāsvaram*' (It is always similar to the sky or space, beyond distinctiveness, and extremely shining). Do not some of these epithets remind us of words like *alkṣaṇa*, *prapañcopaśama*, and *praviviktabhuk* of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*? The word '*nirvikalpa*', as used by the Buddhist poet, may be compared with a verse in the *Gauḍa-pāda-kārikā* (II. 18), where it is said that just as *vikalpa* (of a serpent) ceases to trouble us as soon as the rope is determined, so also the non-dual Soul or Self is determined to the exclusion of all other objects.

The followers of the Buddha believe that *śūnya* or *nirvāṇa* is beyond existence and non-existence (*asti-nāsti-vinirmukta*), viz. it is, it is not, it is both, and it is not both. And it does not partake of the nature of any soul or non-soul (*ātma-nairātma-varjita*). Every object or phenomenon, i.e. the whole *prapañca*, except this *śūnya*, is unreal, and is as delusive as a magic, a mirage, a dream, a moon in the water, and an echo (*māyā-marīci-svapnābhaṁ jalendu-pratinādat*). To us, therefore, it appears plain that what the Brāhmaṇic seers (*ṛṣis*) have, by their deep contemplation, realized as invariable and non-dual absolute entity, and what they have expressed by the several terms such as Brahman, Paramātman, or Bhagavat, as *pūrṇa* or full in which we may find a unity of all existences, is the same as the *śūnya* (void) or *nirvāṇa* of the Buddhists, in which, they say, there is the nonexistence or absence of all existences.

In spite of mutual controversy, conflict, and opposition between Hinduism and Buddhism, and their reactions on each other in the different periods of Indian history, the two may intrinsically be treated as identical. *Nirvāṇa* has been equated by some later

Buddhist philosophers with the ultimate truth or *tathatā*, i.e. the state of permanent and invariable 'suchness' or 'reality.' That same reality is *pūrṇatattva* or *śūnyatattva*, by realizing which one becomes completely still, silent, or dumb, as it were, being unable to express in words its nature.

So, it will not be wrong to declare that Buddhism is also another phase of Hinduism, and we should not call it a heterodox system of Indian philosophy and religion. A Brahmvādin and a Śūnyavādin are easily interchangeable in their views on the ultimate Reality, if you so think. Hence the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (I.3.24) and the lyric poet Jayadeva (twelfth century A.D.) were right in including the Buddha in the category of incarnations of Viṣṇu.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BUDDHA'S SILENCE OVER CERTAIN QUERIES

It is said that the Buddha either remained silent, or declined to answer, when queries were put to him by his disciples as to whether, after death, even the Tathāgata's own existence will continue in any form or condition, and whether there exists any soul of a man, as different in nature from his body. All he used to say in reply was that such queries were unnecessary, or that they were unanswerable. In his opinion, the discussion of these mysterious questions could not further the attainment of knowledge of the ultimate Reality. He rather felt that there was no necessity for prolonged discussions on these secret problems.

The Master's silence is explained by some Buddhist scholars saying that he was anxious to benefit his hearers and inquirers by plainly telling them in a practical way what was good for them, and not to puzzle them by introducing such intricate and controversial matters of philosophy and religion. The span of life of men was too short to enter into all these baffling problems. Probably the Buddha knew the answers to these questions and felt himself not able to explain the true nature of the ultimate bliss or *nirvāṇa*, as it was not possible to be communicated by him

and comprehended by them. We also know of the famous line of the *Kaṭha* and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣads*: '*Nāyam-ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā śrutena*' (the knowledge of the highest Self cannot be obtained by too much of scriptural texts, or by one's own intellectual power, or by extensive hearkening from the teachers). The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes the Self as *avyapadeśyah*, i.e. indescribable by words. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* also says that 'The highest truth cannot stand discussion or debate, because it is beyond the ken of utterances (by word of mouth).'

The great Mahāyāna exponent, Candrakīrti, also states, *paramārtho hi āryānāṃ tūṣṇīmbhāvaḥ* (i.e. *paramārtha* is the state of utter silence of the noble men). And the Hindus, too, aver '*guroḥ tu maunam vyākhyānam*' (i.e. silence of the teacher is to be regarded as the explanation or interpretation of the ultimate truth). So the Buddha was concerned only with his success in elucidating the four *ārya-satya*s (noble truths); and his disciples and followers were to realize and act accordingly without further questionings, if they really wanted to obtain freedom from bondage and the bliss of *nirvāṇa*. If a seeker of truth waits till all his questions are debated and answered, he will not be able to realize the four noble truths during the short tenure of his life. Hence according to the teachings of Buddhism, one should only take refuge in the Buddha (the Teacher), the Dharma (the Law), and the Saṅgha (the Congregation or the Church), and one is sure to be delivered from all ills by resorting to this safest, easiest, and best refuge.

Let us now turn our attention to a consideration of how the later Buddhists, the Mahāyānists, developed some of their basic concepts by being influenced by Hinduism, and how the Hindus, in turn, were also influenced by the Buddhist theories.

BRĀHMANICAL INFLUENCE IN EARLY
BUDDHIST WORKS

The Mahāyāna Buddhism, both in its philosophical and religious aspects, was afoot in the first century A.D. The great Brāhmaṇa philosopher, poet, and dramatist Aśvaghoṣa, a contemporary of Kaniṣka (first-second century A.D.), was one of the founders and leaders of the Mahāyāna. He, it appears, had at first received a thorough education in Brāhmanical literature. Later on, he went over to Buddhism. He laid great stress on devotion to the Buddha, and prepared the Mahāyāna view in its first stage. His *Buddhacarita* was an actual Sanskrit epic on the Buddha. It is interesting to find that, in the concluding verses of his second Sanskrit epic, the *Saundarānanda*, Aśvaghoṣa says that he has given the book 'the form of an ornate poem (*mahākāvya*) only to be able to win over non-Buddhist hearers to the Buddha's doctrine and to make this doctrine palatable to them, just as one mixes a bitter medicine with honey to make it drinkable.' Aśvaghoṣa is regarded, though with some doubts, as the author of another book, named *Vajrasūci*, in which he has refuted the Brāhmanical caste system with the help of quotations from the Vedas, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Manu Smṛti*. The democratic way in which he has defended the equality of all classes of men is very noble and highly charming.

During the Vākāṭaka and Gupta periods (c. A.D. 200-500) of Indian history, both the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism flourished simultaneously. But there is no doubt that the Mahāyāna school was being steadily influenced by the revival of the Brāhmanical faiths during that age, though it too was growing stronger in volume and material. It may seem strange that Vasubandhu (fourth century A.D.), a prominent member of the Yogācāra school of Mahāyāna, was himself the son of a Brāhmaṇa of the Kauśika family of Puruṣapura (Peshawar). He wrote his famous work, the *Abhidharmakośa*, which is regarded as highly authoritative by all schools of Buddhism, and which treats

'of the entire field of ontology (science of reality), psychology, cosmology, ethics, and the doctrine of salvation'. A chapter of this book deals with the Buddhist doctrine of the denial of a permanent soul, and attacks the Pudgalavādins (Vatsīputras) who believe in a permanent soul in beings, like the Brāhmaṇic Hindus. This book also gives a description of the dogmatics of the ancient Buddhist schools, and is rich in quotations from the earlier literature (Pali canons). The existence of this school of Pudgalavādins, believing in individual souls, militates against the general view that all Buddhists denied the existence of and explained the continuity of births of a particular *pudgala*, *Jīva*, or *sattva*, or even *Ātman* as they also sometimes call it, in the manner already referred to in the earlier section.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BHAKTI CULT

At this later period, the story of the Buddha's life gradually began to give up the Hīnayāna form and assume a Mahāyāna garb, and this becomes clear from a study of the *Lalitavistara*, the *Mahāvastuavadāna*, the *Divyāvadāna*, and the *Jātakamālā*, some of which were written during this period. The philosophy propounded by the Mahāyānists like Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, and Dinnāga, and the creed preached by them, appealed to the mind of the ordinary people more than the philosophy of the Hīnayānists of older times. It is the *bhakti-yoga* principles of Hinduism which influenced these philosophers in their views regarding the attainment of release from bondage and the ills of life. In this connection, we may quote a significant passage from *A New History of the Indian People* (Edited by R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar, vol. VI. p. 384) :

'Atheism was replaced by the gospel of a divine helper of men, and the apprehensions created by the doctrine of *anattā* (non-existence of soul) were practically all removed by the doctrine of *dharmakāya*, through which an individual could get eternal existence. *Nirvāṇa* was not the tranquillization of human aspirations but the fulfilment of human life ; one can live in the whirlpool

of life and death and yet be above it, as the Bodhisattvas do, as a matter of fact. The latter are always ready and present to save the genuine devotees, and can also transfer to them their good *karma* to secure their salvation. What mattered was not *jñāna* so much as genuine *bhakti*; a single obeisance made to a *stūpa* or Buddha image by pious devotee would secure his eventual salvation. Naturally, a religion which offered this simple way to attain the spiritual goal became more popular than its rival, which maintained that one must depend entirely on one's own exertions for getting the *nirvāṇa*.'

Thus we find that the Mahāyāna tenets began to take the place of the Hīnayāna ones. The idea of the Bodhisattvas feeling more anxious for others' uplift and salvation than for their own is very noble and high indeed. Bhakti cult then prevailed in a very prominent way in Brāhmaṇic society.

The two schools of Mahāyāna philosophy, the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra, developed highly during this period (A.D. 200. 550). The chief expounder of the first, Nāgārjuna, belonged to the second century A.D., and his disciple Āryadeva, was the author of the *Catuhśataka*, which is the most authoritative work on the Mādhyamika system. The same period also saw the birth of the Yogācāra school founded by Maitreyanātha in c. A.D. 200. Near about A.D. 300 Asaṅga, himself a Brāhmaṇa convert to this school of Buddhism, converted his Hīnayānist younger brother, Vasubandhu, to Yogācāra tenets. Vasubandhu later on wrote many books in some of which he refuted, in a masterly way, the belief, prevailing amongst all people, in the reality of the external world, while he defended strongly the reality of *viññāna* only supporting the illusive nature of the external world, thus becoming, as it were, the expounder of the Vijñānavāda in Mahāyāna philosophy.

THE INFLUENCE OF VIJÑĀNAVĀDA ON GAUDAPĀDA

We shall presently see how Gaudapāda, an orthodox Brāhmaṇa philosopher of high repute, followed this doctrine somewhat

indirectly to establish his theory of Māyāvāda in his great Sanskrit work, the *Āgamaśāstra*, which also goes by the name of *Gauḍapāda-kārikā*. This book is regarded as a very sacred Hindu work, because the author establishes, in a masterly manner, the Advaita Brahmanavāda, basing his arguments on the terms, thought, and method adopted by the Vijñānavādins of Yogācāra school. Just as these Buddhists believe that *viññāna* (consciousness) is the only reality and the *prapañca* (phenomenal world) is absolutely non-existent, a total non-entity, a nothingness, so this Gauḍapāda, an erudite scholar in Hindu and Buddhist philosophies, and the grand-guru of Śaṅkarācārya, was the first to make an effort to explain the Śruti from the standpoint of *absolute monism*, which means, in short, that there is an eternal principle of absolute homogeneity which is truly existent, while, the world of multiplicity is truly non-existent. The *Gauḍapāda-kārikā* says, that 'this world of multiplicity and duality is only an illusion, the ultimate truth lies in non-duality or unity.'

We may add that, though the Brahmanavāda pervades throughout the Upaniṣads, the Māyāvāda is not very explicitly mentioned there. The doctrine of Māyāvāda was largely taken from the Buddhists, specially the Mahāyāna Buddhists of the Yogācāra school belonging to this later period, and Gauḍapāda gave prominence to it in his famous *Kārikā*. Then the great Śaṅkarācārya, his grand-disciple and the *bhāṣyakāra* of the famous *Brahma-Sūtra* and the chief Upaniṣads, followed this Māyāvāda and gave a fresh force to the revival of the Brahmanavāda of the Upaniṣads.

BUDDHISTS ARE ADVAYAVĀDINS

Vasubandhu, a Vijñānavādin and a great controversialist, refuted the Sāṃkhya position of Īśvarakṛṣṇa (author of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*) in his *Paramārtha-saptati*. Then comes, probably in the fifth century A.D., the well-known Mahāyāna treatise *Lāṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*, in which we find strong refutation of the views and theories of the Sāṃkhya, the Vaiśeṣika, the Naiyāyika, and the Mimāṃsaka. Developing further the Vijñānavāda, this

work maintains that all multiplicity (*dvaita*) and differentiation in the world is due to ignorance (*avidyā*); and that *viññāna*, which constitutes the essence of the *dharmakāya*, is the only reality. If this truth is once realized, all *dvaita* or dualism disappears, and it is only then that the non-existence and non-reality of the external world is understood. This book explains the non-reality of the multiplicity of the world by comparing it with the horns of a hare (*śaśaviṣāṇa*), the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāputra*), and the city of the *gandharvas* (*gandharvanagara*), and adds other examples for the purpose by comparing individual existences to simply appearances and images like *māyā* (magic or illusion), *mṛga-trṣṇikā* (mirage), *svapna* (dream), *jalandu* (the moon as reflected in water), and *pratināda* (echo).

The conception of the unreality of the world explained by the example of a circle that appears when a fire-brand is whirled round seems to have proceeded first from this *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*; and it was this simile that found a prominent place in the *Gauḍapāda-kārikā*, where a full *prakaraṇa* of 100 *kārikās* is named *Alātaśānti* (calmness of the fire-brand). A verse of the *Kārikā* says: 'Just as when a fire-brand is set in motion or made to quiver, it seems to assume images appearing as straight, curved, and so on, so when *viññāna* (consciousness) is set in motion or agitated, it seems to assume images (of objects and subjects) as the perceived and the perceiver' (IV. 47). So, according to this doctrine, multiplicity is produced when *viññāna* is disturbed, and when it is quieted, the multiplicity of objects disappears.

The Saugatas (Buddhists), also called Advayavādins as they do not believe in *grāhya* (an object perceived) and in *grāhaka* (a perceiver), regard that *viññāna* (*citta* and *manas*, as it is sometimes called) alone is the *asti-vastu* (truly existent thing), and all others are characterized by *jātyābhāsa* (images having, as it were, *jāti* or birth), *calābhāsa* (images having, as it were, a passing away or death), and *vastvābhāsa* (images having, as it were, the look of objects). The *Gauḍapāda-kārikā* categorically states: '*Viññāna*

(consciousness) is quite, devoid of the other two (namely, the perceived and the perceiver), because it is unborn, undying, and devoid of objectivity' (IV. 45).

VIJÑĀNAVĀDA PAVED THE WAY TO ADVAITAVĀDA

It therefore seems to be a fact that, in the history of philosophy in our country, the Vijñānavāda of the Mahāyāna Buddhists of this period paved the way to the enunciation of the Advaitavāda (of Vedāntism) by Gauḍapāda and, after him, by Śaṅkarācārya who fully elaborated the doctrine of Māyā or cosmic illusion and established the Advaitavāda, the doctrine of non-duality, rather, an idealistic monism, according to which phenomenal multiplicity is a phantasm of a dream and seems true only till one awakes to the reality of Brahman.

It may be briefly stated that the Upaniṣads teach the eternal existence of the highest Soul which is the only existent being, and human soul, which remains in an embodied condition, is identical with the absolute Self. Earlier Buddhism, however, opposed such a view and taught that there was no independent self or Jīva, which was nothing but 'a constant becoming and passing away of psychical and physical phenomenon,' impermanently. It is from this view that it may be said that the Mahāyāna Buddhism of the Mādhyamika school developed the doctrine of Śūnyatāvāda, the doctrine of 'it is not.' Nāgārjuna is the greatest teacher of this school, and his system is called Mādhyamika, middle doctrine, because of the fact that it declares nothing either positive or negative, but merely relativity. This śūnyatā or voidness can be best illustrated by the famous verse of the *Mādhyamika-kārikā* or *Mādhyamika-Sūtra* of Nāgārjuna, wherein we find the eight negations thus : '(Of it) no passing away, no origination, no destruction (or annihilation), and no everlasting continuance (eternality) ; no unity (or one-thing-ness), no multiplicity (or many-thing-ness), no coming, and no going ; I revere the best of teachers (the Buddha), who, becoming fully enlightened, (thus) taught the causally dependent origination (and) the salutary cessation of the world of phenomena (*nirvāṇa*).'

With this description, we can compare the famous words of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (7) : '(It is) unseen (by any sense organ), not related to anything, incomprehensible (by the mind), uninferable, indescribable, essentially of the nature of Consciousness constituting the Self alone, negation of all phenomena, the Peaceful, all Bliss, and the Non-dual. This is what is known as the fourth (*turīya*).'

If this view of the Mahāyānists be regarded as the right view, and everything is *śūnya* or void or empty, there can be no *caturārya-satyas* (the four noble truths), no fruit of deeds, good or evil (*śubhāśubha-karmaphala*), and no Buddha, no Dharma, no Saṅgha. Nāgārjuna explained his view stating that one who does not know the distinction between conventional truth, in which the deeper meaning remains hidden, and truth in the highest sense, cannot possibly understand and realize *nirvāṇa*.

We have shown above that the Vijñānavāda of the Yogācāra school of Mahāyāna Buddhists, like the Śūnyavāda of the Mādhyamika school, denies the reality of the external world, but all the same it recognizes an existence contained in thought and consciousness (the *bodhi* attainable by *yoga* practised in its ten stages, *daśabhūmis*, in the career of each Bodhisattva). It may be compared with *citśakti* of Brahman of the Upaniṣads. Strangely enough, Gauḍapāda, who accepted the terms and cardinal thoughts of the Mahāyāna Buddhists, formulates in *kārikā* (II.33) his six negations thus : 'There is no destruction, no origination, none in bondage, no devotee, none desirous of release or emancipation, and none who is emancipated—this is the essence of the ultimate Truth.'

It can therefore be said that the Advaitvāda of Gauḍapāda, along with the Māyāvāda of Śaṅkara, may be construed as a compromise of the Advayavāda of the Mahāyāna Buddhists, along with their Vijñānavāda. Finally, Gauḍapāda reached the climax when he said that 'according to the Buddha, the *tāyin* (i.e. one who taught the way discovered by himself), no *jñāna* or knowledge proceeds towards *dharma*s (or objects which are unborn) ; and the

fact is that the Buddha has not spoken anything about all *dharma*s and their *jñāna*' (IV. 99). 'But those who are well established in the unborn Sameness (Homogeneity) are to be regarded as great wise men in this world, but the ordinary people (of the world) do not comprehend it, because, probably, they always move in the midst of distinctions, and cannot therefore attain proficiency in the knowledge of the boundless Infinite ; and really those who are inclined towards *bheda* or distinctions and speak of their erroneous discrimination in phenomena are objects of pity' (IV. 94, 95).

LATER MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM AND HINDU MYSTIC SYSTEMS

A still more modified development of the Mahāyāna Buddhism under the influence of Hindu mythology and mystic literature, in still later centuries and in various parts of India, specially in the north-east (in Bengal and Bihar, for instance), may also be referred to in this connection. A spirit of toleration, mutual adjustment, and accommodation prevailed in both Hinduism and philosophers of both the systems threw challenges and counter-challenges and also offered charges and counter-charges and entered into controversies with one another.

It is a unique feature of the Indian people that, though they belong to different religious sects and follow different systems of philosophy, they generally cherish a spirit of toleration towards their opponents and heretics. Right from the time of the Buddhist emperor Aśoka (third-fourth century B.C.), we may mark this spirit of toleration. Aśoka always advised his people to cultivate and value religious toleration greatly and exhorted them to attend with respect the religious discourses of all sects. In one of his Rock Edicts (XII), he strongly recommended that people should avoid as much as possible both 'the praise of one's own sectarian views and hatred of the views of other sects.'

It is really a matter of glory that this spirit of religious toleration has been upheld through all the periods of Indian history, and the relation between the followers of Hinduism and

Buddhism has generally been cordial. The truth seems to be that the community, as a whole, recognized the fact that essentially there was uniformity underlying the fundamental principles of religion. We may here mention that, in the Vākāṭaka and Gupta periods of Indian history, we find from epigraphic records that several Buddhist kings showed great patronage to Hinduism, and similarly many Hindu Bhāgavata emperors (e.g. the Guptas) were patrons of Buddhism and Jainism. And there was complete harmony, during this period, amongst the adherents of the Vedic, Bhāgavata, and Śaiva sects of Hinduism itself.

As far as Bengal is concerned, we know that in the subsequent period (seventh to twelfth centuries A.D.), many royal families, the Khadgas, the great Pālas, and the Candras, were Buddhists, but some of their members showed great respect towards the images of Hindu gods and goddesses, and their ceremonies and customs and various social institutions. A new tendency towards eclecticism was exhibited, as the Pāla inscriptions may testify to; and the barriers between different religious sects were gradually disappearing. But the Buddhism which prevailed in the Pāla period in Bengal is of 'the new ideology of Buddha and Bodhisattvas in the most developed Mahāyāna form'. P. C. Bagchi writes that in the Pāla period 'the Mahāyāna has developed forms of mysticism which are known as Vajrayāna and Tantrayāna, and these, by their very nature, dealt with certain deeper metaphysical problems which had greater attraction for the religious man' (*The History of Bengal*, Dacca University, Vol. I., p. 419). Still later, this mystic Buddhism assumed various forms—in addition to the Vajrayāna, the Sahajayāna, and the Kālacakrayāna, in which *mantra*, *mudrā*, *maṇḍala*, and *yoga* practices played important and various parts. *Mahāsukha* or perfect bliss was the goal of these new systems. Very little trace of the once powerful Yogācāra and Mādhyamika Buddhism can be observed in these new forms of Buddhism, which attached great importance to ceremonials, against which the Buddha had raised his voice of protest.

Lastly, there was a fusion or coalescence of the Tāntric Śāktism with this new form of Buddhist mysticism, and it produced a new school of Kaulaśaktivāda (*kula*=śakti ; and *akula*=Śiva) which accepted the *varṇāśrama* system and became fully identified with the Brāhmaṇical Śāktism. On the other hand, the survival of the Buddhist mysticism can be marked in some of the later Hindu religious movements which did not accept *varṇāśrama-dharma*, viz. those of the Nāthas, Avadhūtas, Sahajiyās, Bāuls, and others.

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