





**THE STORY OF  
THE BUDDHA**



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# I

IN A CITY AT THE FOOT OF THE HIMALAYAS A SON WAS born to a king, and was brought up in wealth and luxury. When he was twenty-nine years old, he left his home and became a wandering ascetic in order to seek enlightenment. This he attained after six years of diligent effort, and from that time on to the end of his life, he went about the country teaching the people a way of life.

His teachings lived through the centuries, and today more than 500 million people call themselves his followers.

That man was Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. This is the story of his life.



# II

MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO, IN THE CITY OF SAKETA, there lived a king named Okkaka. He had five queens, Bhatta, Citta, Jantu, Jalini, and Visakha. Each queen had five hundred women to serve her and to attend to her needs. The eldest queen, who was the favourite of the king, had four sons named



Okkamukha, Karakanda, Hatthinika, and Sinipura, and five daughters named Piya, Suppiya, Ananda, Vijita, and Vijitasena. Shortly after the last of her nine children was born, queen Bhatta died.

Some time after her death, the king married another young and beautiful princess, and made her his chief queen. She had a son named Jantu. When this son was five days old, she dressed him in beautiful clothes and took him before the king. The king was so delighted with the child that he promised to give the queen anything she wanted, exclaiming, 'Ask me any boon that you will, O queen, and I will grant it.'

The queen naturally went and told her relatives what had happened, and what the king had promised. They advised her, and she went to the king again.

'Well,' said the king, in great good humour, 'and have you made up your mind what it is you want?'

And the queen answered, 'Yes, O king. I want the kingdom for my son after you.'

The king was very angry and he shouted and cursed, saying, 'Do you not know that I have other sons, older than yours? Perish, you base woman, for you want to destroy my sons.'

But when his anger cooled, the queen went to him again, and again, always asking the same thing, coaxing him when he was alone, so that the troubled king knew not where to turn for help, or what to do. 'You gave me your word, O king,' the queen would say. 'Is it right that a king should break his word?'



At last the king, being weary of her constant demands, agreed to grant her wish. He called his sons, and said, 'My sons, when I first saw the youngest of you, Jantu, I promised his mother a boon. She now demands the kingdom for her son. I must keep my promise however much I may dislike it. Therefore take what elephants, horses and chariots you want, all except the state elephant, the state horse, and the state chariot, and go away. When I am dead, perhaps you can come back to this kingdom.' And the king ordered eight of his ministers to go with them.

Preparations were made, and when all was ready the sons set off, with the ministers and an army to escort them. Their five sisters went with them, saying to the king, 'We do not want to part with our brothers. We will go with them.' And many people of the town, seeing the king's sons going away in this manner, decided to go with them.

On the first day, they marched one league, on the second they marched two leagues, and on the third, three. The brothers talked amongst themselves and said, 'We are many people with a great army. If we conquer some neighbouring king and take his land, it will not be enough for us. And why should we oppress others? It is not right that we should take land that belongs to others. This country of Jambudipa is great, and there is enough room for all of us. Let us build a city in the forest.'



So they marched towards the great Himalayas, looking for a place to build a city.

Now in the forest there lived a Brahmin named Kapila, who had left the world and become a hermit. He had built himself a hut of leaves, and lived on the slopes of the Himalayas on the banks of a lotus pool, in a *saka* grove. The place was holy, for when lions and tigers and such animals pursued the deer and boars, or when cats chased frogs and mice, they were not able to follow them beyond that place. All the small animals were safe there. Kapila knew this, and that is why he had built his hut there.

The princes, looking for a place to build a city, came near Kapila's hut. The sage went out and asked them what they sought. When he heard their story, he pitied them, and said, 'A city built on the place of this leaf-hut will become the chief city of Jambudipa. A single man born there will be able to overcome a hundred or even a thousand men. Build the city here, and make the king's palace where the leaf-hut now stands. By building the palace there, the king will be exceedingly powerful.'

'But,' said the princes, 'does not this place belong to you, reverend sir?'

'Do not worry about that,' said the sage. 'Make me a leaf-hut on a slope, and build the city here, and call it Kapilavatthu.'

So the princes built a city there, and built a leaf-hut on a slope for the sage Kapila, and they lived there.





### III

AFTER THEY HAD LIVED THERE FOR SOME TIME, THE ministers thought to themselves: 'These princes are now grown-up. If they were with their father, he would arrange marriages for them. Now it is our duty to do so.'

They therefore went to the princes and discussed the matter with them.

The princes said, 'We are Kshatriyas. We must marry women of our own caste. Here there are no daughters of Kshatriyas like ourselves whom we may marry. Nor are there any Kshatriya princes like our sisters, whom they may marry. If we marry amongst those not like ourselves, our children will be impure. We will therefore marry our sisters, and live with them.'

They set up their eldest sister in the place of a mother, and then the four brothers married the four sisters, and they had many sons and daughters.

Now the eldest sister, who had been set up in the place of the mother, became afflicted with disease and



her limbs grew white like the *kovilara* flower. The princes were afraid, since they thought that anyone who lived close to her would catch the disease. So one day they took her in a chariot as though going for an outing and, leading her into the forest, dug a lotus pool and a house in the earth. There they placed her, and, having provided her with different kinds of food, they covered the house with mud so that she could not come out. They left her there and went home.

It so happened that at the same time Rama, the king of Benares, was also afflicted with the same disease. Because of this, all his ladies and followers avoided him, so that he was sorely disturbed. He therefore gave away his kingdom to his eldest son, left the city, and entered the forest. There he lived on woodland leaves and fruits, which soon cured him of his disease, and he became of a healthy golden colour again. He found a great hollow *kola* tree, cleared a space within it, fitted a door and a window and fastened a ladder to it, and made that his home.

One day a tiger happened to pass by the hut of the king's daughter. It came up and began to scratch the mud. In a short time it managed to make a hole in the mud covering the house. When the princess saw the tiger through the hole, she was terrified and cried out aloud.

King Rama, sitting by a fire he had made near his hut, heard the cry and hurried to the place to see what was wrong.



When the tiger heard him coming, it turned and bolted into the forest.

King Rama came to the place from where he had heard the shout and called out loudly, ' Who is there? '

' A woman, sir,' answered the king's daughter, relieved that the tiger had gone.

King Rama was surprised to find a woman living alone in the forest.

' Of what caste are you? ' he asked.

' I am the daughter of king Okkaka, sir,' she answered.

' Well, then, come out, princess,' said Rama, wondering what sort of woman she was.

' I cannot, sir,' she said.

' Why not? Are you hurt? '

' No. I have a skin disease.'

So king Rama asked her all her story, and she told it. He told her that he himself was a Kshatriya and he persuaded her to come out. He gave her a ladder, and helped her to climb out. He took her to his dwelling, and showed her the medicinal leaves and fruits which had cured him. In a few days she also was cured of the disease, and her skin too grew to be of a healthy golden colour.

And so they lived together as man and wife.

She gave birth to two sons, and then again to two more, and then again to two more, and so for sixteen times. Thus there were thirty-two brothers. As they grew up, their father taught them all the arts.



One day, a man from the city of Benares was passing through the forest on his way to the mountains, to look for jewels. He saw Rama, and, recognizing his former king, he greeted him joyfully. Rama asked him for news of his kingdom, and while they were talking Rama's sons came by, returning from their play. Rama explained who they were, and who their mother was, and from which family she was descended. The man, excited at all he had seen and learnt, hurried back to Benares and told the whole story to Rama's son, who was the king.

The king at once decided that he would go into the forest and bring back his father. He went with a large army and, saluting his father, asked him to accept the kingdom.

'Enough, my son,' said Rama, 'remove this tree for me and build a city here.'

So the king did as his father bade him, removed the *kola* tree, and built a city, which they called Kola-nagara. Having done this, the king saluted his father, and went back to his own city. Thus king Rama and his queen had now a city in which they lived, and over which they ruled.

When the princes had grown up, their mother said to them: 'Children, the Sakyas who dwell in Kapilavatthu are your maternal uncles. Your uncles' daughters have the same style of hair and dress as you. When they come to the bathing-place, go there and let each take the one that pleases him to wife.'



So next day the young princes went to the bathing-place. When the girls had bathed and were drying their hair, they each chose one, told them their names, and brought them away to their own city and married them.

When the Sakya rajas heard of this, they said to themselves, 'Let it be, for to be sure they are our kinsfolk.'

Thus the Sakyas and the Koliyas <sup>१५४</sup> flourished, dwelling in peace and often marrying amongst each other, so that they became like one people. And the succession of the Sakyas and the Koliyas came down to king Sihahanu. King Sihahanu had five sons, Suddhodana, Amitodana, Dhotodana, Sukkodana, and Sukkhodana. Of these, Suddhodana ruled the kingdom after his father. He married the beautiful Mahamaya and her sister Mahaprajapati.





## IV

IN THE CITY OF KAPILAVATTHU, IT WAS THE CUSTOM FOR the people to celebrate the festival of the full moon day in the month of Asalha. Queen Maya also celebrated the festival from the seventh day before the full moon.

On the seventh day she rose early and bathed in water scented with roses and jasmine. Then she went out into the city and bestowed 400,000 pieces of gold as alms to the poor people, so that on that day there was no one who did not have enough to eat and to give to his children.

After eating choice food specially prepared for her, she took the ceremonial vows. She went into her adorned state bedchamber, and lay down on the bed to sleep. While she slept she had a strange dream.

She dreamt that the four great heavenly kings who were the guardians of the city came to her and, raising her bed, carried her away to the Himalayas. They set her down under a great sal tree seven leagues high, which grew on the Manosila tableland. Having placed her there, the kings stood to one side.

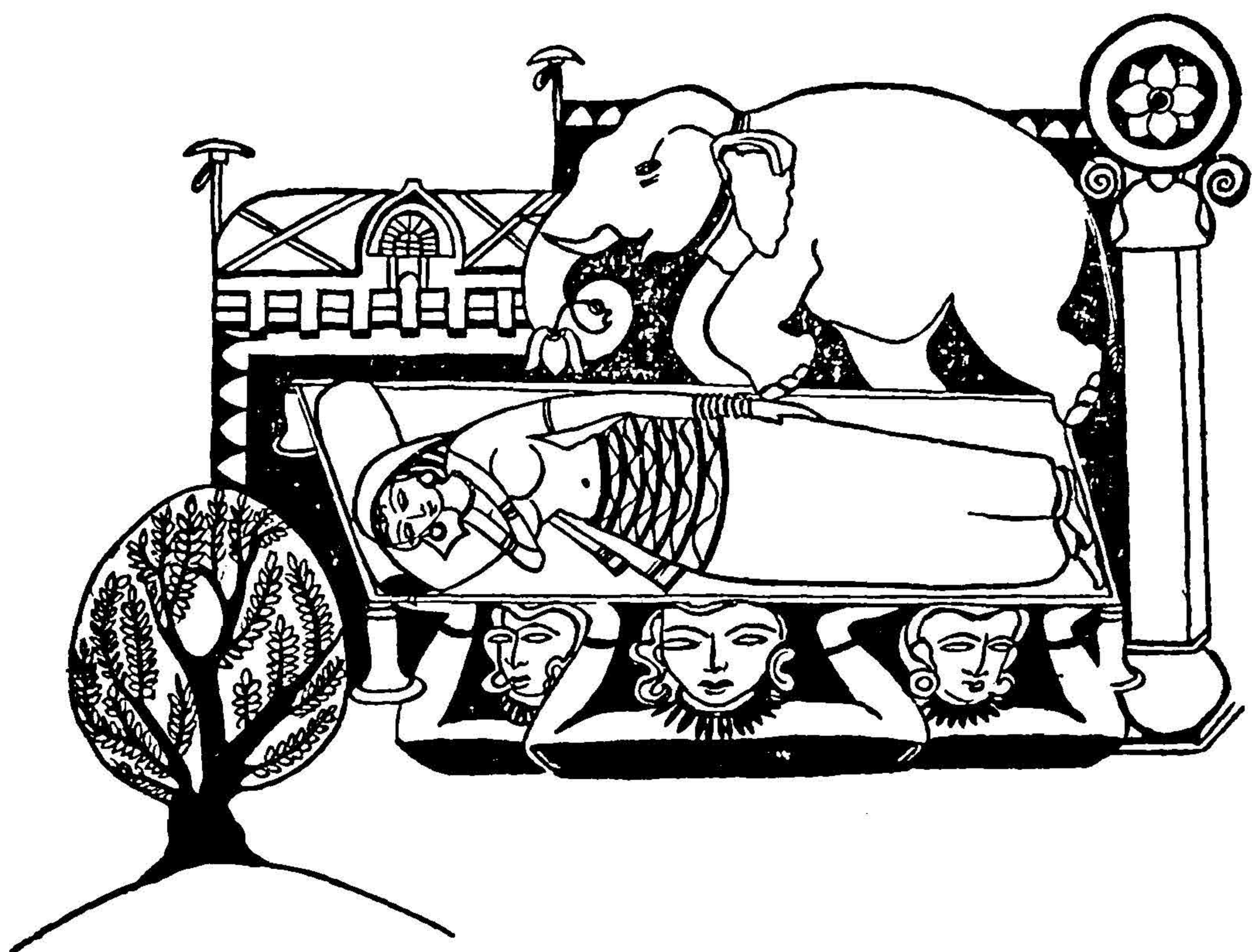
Their queens then came forward, and took queen Maya to the Anotatta lake, and bathed her in its clear, sparkling waters. They dressed her in heavenly clothing, anointed her with rare perfumes, and decked her with flowers.

Not far away there was a silver mountain, on which there stood a golden mansion. In this great mansion,



the queens prepared a divine bed with its head to the east, and laid Queen Maya on it.

Nearby was a golden mountain. A white elephant descended from this mountain and approached the silver mountain from the north. His trunk was like a silver rope, and in it he held a white lotus. Trumpet-



ing, he entered the golden mansion, circled the bed three times, and then smote Queen Maya's right side. And smiting her, he entered her womb.

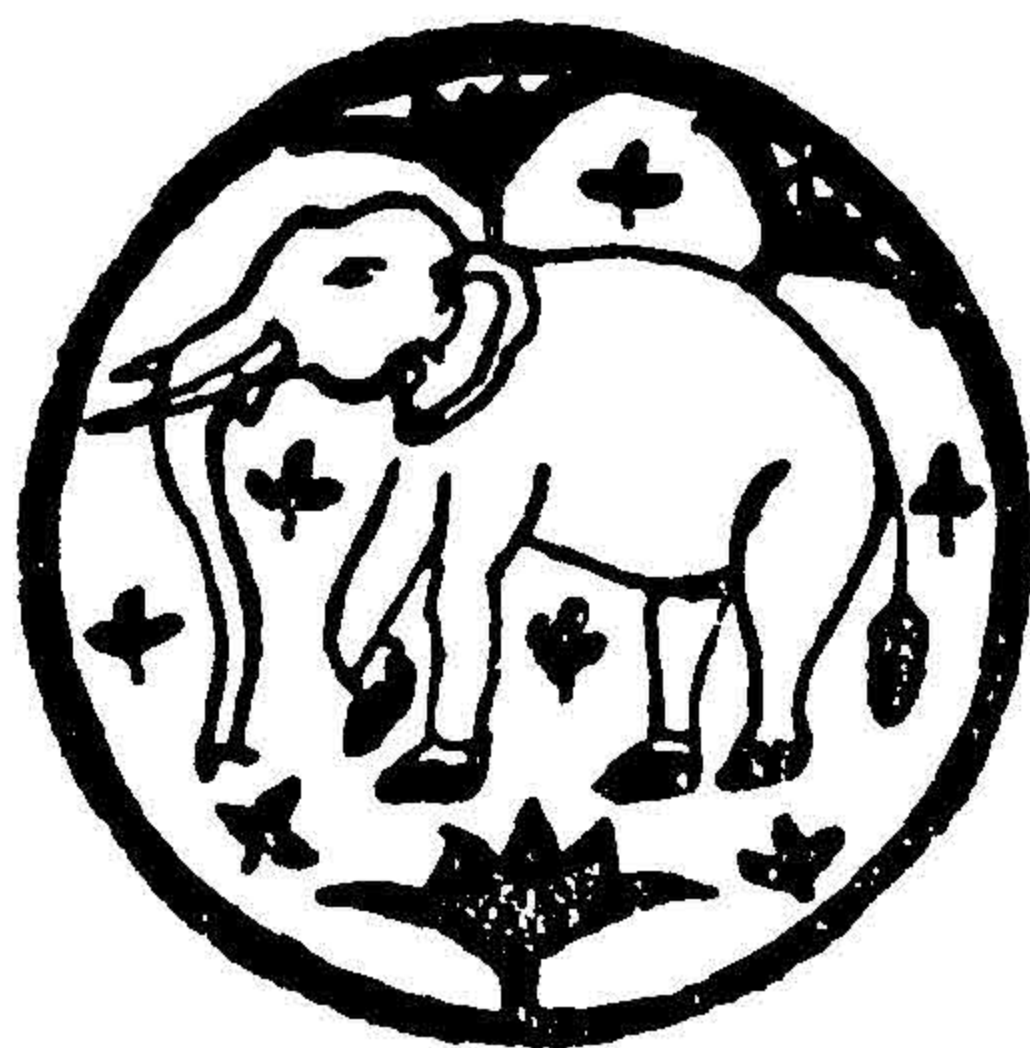
The next morning, when the queen rose, the dream was fresh in her mind, and she told the king about it. King Suddhodana, eager to find out what this strange dream meant, called sixty-four learned Brahmins. He gave them rich food and presents and then he told



them about his wife's dream, and asked them what it meant.

The Brahmins interpreted the dream, and said, 'Do not be anxious, O king. You will have a son. If he dwells in a house, he will become a great king, a universal monarch. If he leaves his house and goes forth from the world, he will become a Buddha, an enlightened one, and a remover of the veil of ignorance.'

The king, who had long wanted a son, was overjoyed, and said, 'This is great news, indeed. He will surely become a great king, a universal monarch, as befits a Sakya and Kshatriya. No son of mine will leave his house and go forth from the world to become an ascetic with matted hair, abandoning the duties of a king.'



V

WHEN THE TIME WAS COME FOR QUEEN MAHAMAYA'S son to be born, she went to her husband, and said, 'It is the custom among my people that the women go home when their children are about to be born. I wish therefore to go to Devadaha, the city of my family.'



The king readily agreed. He ordered his officers to make the road from Kapilavatthu to Devadaha smooth, so that the mother of his son might suffer no discomfort, and to adorn it with vessels filled with plantains, flags, and banners. He seated her in a golden palanquin carried by a thousand courtiers, and sent a great retinue with her.

Now between the two cities there was a pleasure grove of sal trees, called the Lumbini grove, where the people of both cities came to amuse themselves. At that time, the trees in the grove were covered with flowers from the roots to the tips of their branches, and the breeze wafted their fragrance to the people as they passed. Amongst the branches and flowers, myriads of bees and gaily coloured birds flitted about, and their buzzing and singing made the grove loud with pleasant sound.

When the queen saw this beautiful grove, she felt a strong urge to go and wander about in it for a while. She ordered the courtiers to stop and, stepping out from her palanquin, she entered the grove. She walked about for a while, enjoying to the full the beauty of the trees and the flowers.

She came upon a great sal tree, and rested awhile under it. Standing at the foot of this tree, she stretched out her hand to seize a low branch. And as she caught hold of it, she felt the pains of child-birth, and knew that her time was come.



The courtiers quickly put up a curtain for her, and retired. And it was thus, as she stood in the Lumbini grove holding the branch of the sal tree, that her child was born.

And the four pure-minded Mahabrahmas who were the guardians of the city came with a golden net, and received the child on it, and put it before his mother, saying, 'Rejoice, O queen, a mighty son has been born to you.'

Then four great kings received the child from the Brahmas, putting him on a ceremonial robe of antelope skin, soft to the touch. From their hands, human beings received him on a silken cushion.

But the child freed himself from their hands, and stood on the ground, looking towards the four quarters of the earth.

When the people of Kapilavatthu and Devadaha heard the news of the birth of their prince, they came to the grove, and took the queen and her child back to the city, making a great and joyful procession.

Seven days later, queen Mahamaya died. Her sister, queen Mahaprajapati, took the child as her own, and fed it from her own breasts.

And the boy was named Siddhartha.





## VI

AT THAT TIME, ON ONE OF THE MOUNTAIN SLOPES OF THE Himalayas there lived a sage named Asita: When Siddhartha was born in the Lumbini grove, Asita saw many wonders in the heavens from which he knew that an important event had taken place. Being a learned sage, he observed all Jambudipa with his divine eyes, and saw the great city of Kapila, the palace of king Suddhodana, and the young prince who had been born. And he saw that the boy had the thirty-two marks of a *chakravartin*, or universal monarch.

So the great sage Asita rose into the air and flew like a swan to the great city of Kapilavatthu. He entered the city on foot, and having reached the door of the king's palace he said to the doorkeeper, 'Go, man, and inform the king that a sage is standing at his door, and wishes to see him.'

The doorkeeper had been the guardian of the king's door for twenty years, and yet he could not remember a sage ever having visited the king uncalled-for, and in this manner. He was therefore rather worried as to how the king would receive the news. He went to the king and, clasping his hands, said, 'O king, there is an aged sage, old and advanced in years, standing at your door, who says that he desires to see the king.'

'Let him come in,' said the king. 'I will see what he wants.'



The king prepared a seat for the sage, and the door-keeper showed Asita into the room. Asita approached the king, and said, 'Hail, O king. Long may you live, and rule your people righteously!'

King Suddhodana did reverence to the old sage, and asked him to sit down. When Asita was seated, the king asked, 'I do not remember that I have seen you before, O sage. With what purpose have you come hither?'

And Asita replied, 'A son has been born to you, O king. I have come here because I desire to see him.'

And the king said, 'The boy is asleep. Wait a short while till he wakes.'

When the boy awoke, the king brought him before the sage. Asita saw the thirty-two marks of the *chakravartin*, and the eighty minor marks, and he said solemnly, 'Marvellous indeed is this person that has appeared in the world.'

Saying this, Asita rose from his seat, clasped his hands and fell at the boy's feet. He got up and went round the boy, then, taking him in his arms, he looked at him in deep contemplation. And he knew that if the boy dwelt in a house he would become a king, a universal monarch, but that if he went forth from a house to a houseless life, he would become a fully enlightened Buddha.

And as he looked at him Asita began to weep.

When the king saw him weeping and sighing, he



was distressed, and asked anxiously, 'Why do you weep, O sage, and shed tears and sigh deeply? Do you foresee some misfortune that will befall the boy?'

And Asita replied to the king, 'I do not weep for the sake of the boy, O king. There is no misfortune for him. It is for myself that I weep. I am old and advanced in years, and shall not live to see him attain supreme enlightenment. He will surely teach in a way that no ascetic or Brahmin has taught before, for the good and happiness of the world. He will proclaim the religious life, the doctrine that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end. Just as an *udumbara* flower rises in the world at some time, even so at some time and place, after countless cycles of years, a Buddha arises in the world. When your son has attained enlightenment, he will help countless beings to free themselves from constant rebirth, and lead them to the immortal state in which there is no rebirth. But I shall not live to see that Buddha-jewel. That is why I weep and sigh.'

King Suddhodana gave food and clothes to the sage. Asita then took his leave of the king, and prepared to return to his mountain hermitage.

And the king thought to himself, 'This sage has seen only half of what he should see, and thus weeps without cause. For the Brahmins said that my son would either be an enlightened one, or a great king. And surely my son will become a great king, follow-



ing the traditions of his family, and not an ascetic teacher.'

As Asita returned to his dwelling-place, he tried to remember if he had any relatives who might live to see the prince when he had become a Buddha. Remembering his nephew Nalaka, he went to his sister's house in order to see him. When the boy came before him, he said, 'You know that a son has been born in the family of king Suddhodana. After thirty-five years, this boy will become a Buddha. You will still be alive and able to see this, Nalaka. Therefore renounce the world today, and come with me so that you may prepare yourself to receive his teaching.'

Now Nalaka had been born in a house of great wealth, and it was not easy for him to leave it and follow his uncle. But when he heard and understood all that Asita had to say, he went and bought some yellow robes and an earthen bowl. He cut off his hair and beard, put on a yellow robe, and with the bowl slung over his shoulder in a bag, he went to the mountains with his uncle to live the life of an ascetic.

Many years later, long after Asita was dead, he learnt that Siddhartha had received enlightenment and become a Buddha. He went to see him, and Buddha taught him the 'Way of Nalaka'. Having heard that, Nalaka returned to the Himalayas and lived for seven months, after which he attained Nirvana, the immortal state after which there is no rebirth.





## VII

ON THE FIFTH DAY AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE, the name-giving ceremony took place, when the name Siddhartha, 'he who has achieved his aim', was given to the boy.

A hundred and eight learned Brahmins were invited to the ceremony, and eight of these were interpreters of bodily marks. They studied the marks on Siddhartha's body, and having consulted amongst themselves they said to the king, 'Your son will leave the world after he has seen these four signs: an old man, a sick man, a corpse, and an ascetic. If he does not see these signs, and does not leave the world to become an ascetic, he will live to be a great king, a universal monarch.'

When the king heard this, he said again to himself, 'No son of mine will leave the world to become an ascetic. I must make sure that he never sees these four signs that the Brahmins have told me about.'

And he decided that he would place strong guards



at all the palace gates, with strict instructions not to let in any old or sick person, nor any person stricken with grief or in pain. He determined that his son would see only happy people, and joyous things. And so he gave instructions to the palace guards in this manner.

But the king did not stop to ask himself whether it was really possible to hide the knowledge of old age and sickness and death from anybody in this way.



## VIII

ONE DAY, WHEN SIDDHARTHA WAS A YOUNG BOY, FIVE years of age, he was taken to see the state ploughing of the king's fields.

This was an old custom followed by all the Sakya kings. The king owned certain fields, and on a fixed day in every year all the people gathered to plough these fields, and the king himself and all his courtiers took part in the ploughing.

There were a thousand ploughs. Of these ploughs, a hundred and seven were of silver, for the courtiers, and one was of gold, for the king.

Siddhartha sat on a couch under a rose-apple tree and watched the ploughing. During the course of



the day, one of the ploughs disturbed a serpent, and another a frog. The frog was taken for food by one of the farmers, but the serpent was beaten and thrown away. Siddhartha had never seen anything being treated in this way, and he was much troubled. And it was thus, as he sat under the rose-apple tree, thinking on what he had seen, that he attained his first trance.

At meal-time the boy could not be found anywhere, and the king was extremely worried lest some unfortunate accident had overtaken him. He sent all the ministers and courtiers to look for him. Finally, they found him under the tree, in a trance. They called his father, and king Suddhodana, knowing that a trance was only possible for saints, did reverence to his own son.



## I X

NOW BECAUSE HE WAS THE ONLY SON, AND BECAUSE HE had lost his mother, both the king his father, and queen Mahaprajapati his foster-mother, took great care of the little boy, and gave him all manner of comforts



and riches. They ordered many hundreds of servants, minstrels, clowns, singers, musicians, story-tellers, actors and courtiers to look after him, and to satisfy his every wish.

Thus the prince grew up extremely delicate, being excessively cared for.

Three lotus pools were built for his amusement. One contained blue lotuses, another red, and the third white. His dresses were made of the finest cloth from Benares. Day and night, a white silken parasol was held over his head, so that he would not be touched by any cold or heat, by dust or dew.

Three palaces were built for him. One was for his use during the hot season, another for the cold season, and the third for the rainy season. The summer palace was built of cool marble and stone, on the banks of the river Rohini, whose cool, clear waters came from the melting snows of the Himalayas. And round about the palace there were shady trees, and beds of pleasant flowers, and green lawns. The palace itself was large and airy, and its long, pillared corridors caught the slightest breeze that blew. In the evenings, the prince and his attendants could sit out on the balcony and look out on to the snowy peaks of the mountains rising from behind the trees, the high peaks piercing into the sky.

The winter palace was built of wood, being well protected from any cold winds that might blow. Thick carpets and tapestries kept the rooms warm and



pleasant. The palace for the rainy season was large, with many great rooms, so that the prince could have his entertainments and amusements indoors, without having to go out at all.

And within these palaces, the prince had everything that the king's money and power could obtain.



## X

WHEN THE THREE PALACES WERE READY, KING Suddhodana began to wonder what more he could do for his son. And he thought to himself, 'Now that the prince is sixteen years old, and growing into manhood, I should choose a wife and women for him.'

He consulted with his ministers, and one of them said, 'It is said that Yasodhara, the daughter of Suppabuddha the Sakya, is more beautiful than any maiden in the country. It is said that her beauty is like that of a single white lotus that grows in a mountain lake, and is rivalled only by its own reflection.'

'Good,' said the king, 'very good. We will arrange for my son to marry Yasodhara, the daughter of Suppabuddha.'

And the minister, smiling slightly at the king's impatience, said, 'Have you considered, O king, that



when the *swayamvara*, or ceremony for choosing the bridegroom, is held, there will be young nobles from all over the country to display their prowess and their art before the maiden? And have you considered that though your son is fair and fit to look upon, he knows no art? How then will he fare in competition and tournament with other young nobles who have not lived as sheltered a life as he has? Though your son is a prince and heir to the throne, yet the daughter of a noble like Suppabuddha has the right to choose what husband she will at the *swayamvara*, and none may compel her.'

And the king knew his minister was right, and that none, not even the king himself, could compel Yasodhara to marry anyone she did not choose herself. 'And it is true,' he thought, 'that my son knows no art. In competition with other young princes and nobles, it is unlikely that he will win. Perhaps I have done wrong in making him lead such a sheltered life. And yet, how else could I make sure that the knowledge of old age, of sickness and of death would be kept hidden from him?'

And again he thought, 'My son is going to become a universal monarch. Now, what art should a universal monarch know? What shall I have him taught?' Pondering this question, he came to where his son sat in the garden by himself—for Siddhartha loved solitude—and said, 'My son, what art should a universal monarch know?'



Siddhartha knew exactly what it was that troubled his father. And smiling, because his father was so worried, he said to him, 'I must string the bow requiring the strength of a thousand men. Let it be brought to me, and I will do it.'

Now this great bow was so powerful that no one had ever been able to string it before. It had been kept in the palace of the Sakya kings longer than the oldest man in the city could remember. It was said that he who could string it alone would be a ruler not only of the Sakyas, but even of the whole world. It had been strung only once, when a king had ordered a thousand men to put their strength together in order to perform the task. So it was kept in the palace, and though many were the people who came to try their strength on it, lured by the promise of world rulership that it held out, none had ever succeeded.

Therefore it was that when Siddhartha asked for this great bow, the king thought his son was joking, and spoke mockingly. But when he saw that his son was serious, he did not know what to say or think.

'Do you not know, my son,' he said in agitation, 'that no one has yet been able to string that bow? It is hardly possible that you, who have no great experience or knowledge about these matters, should be able to do it. Would it not be better if you were to devote your attention to other things in which you are competent?'



But Siddhartha insisted, and at last the king yielded, though very unwillingly. He was sure that no good could come of this.

When the great bow was brought, Siddhartha sat on a couch and, taking the bow in his hand, he wrapped the string round his toe, and drawing it thus, he strung it with one strong, swift movement. Holding the taut drawn bow in his right hand, he took a stick in his left, and struck the string with it.

As he struck it, there was a great noise like the anger of Indra in the season of rains, and all the people in the city heard it and wondered. 'What is that great noise?' they asked one another, anxiously. Some said that it was the thunder of king Vajrapati, lord of the tempest, and that a great storm was approaching. Others said it was an earthquake that had shaken down buildings and trees. Others said the gods were angry and wished to destroy the earth, and they ran to their temples to pray.

But when they came to know what had happened, they quickly forgot their fears and imaginings, and said in amazement, 'Do you know what has happened? The prince has strung the bow requiring the strength of a thousand men.'

And they went about the streets telling the story to one another, again and again; and, as is the habit with men, the marvel of the prince's deed grew with each telling.





## XI

GREAT PREPARATIONS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THE *swayamvara* of Yasodhara. Her father had decided that the tournaments would be held in a large courtyard before his house. This had been decked with gay banners and streamers, while along the sides large shamianas had been erected to give shade to those who watched.

On the appointed day, princes and nobles and young men from all over the country came, hoping to win the hand of the maid in marriage, for the fame of her beauty had travelled far and wide.

Yasodhara herself sat in a pavilion specially built for her, shielded from the public gaze by delicate curtains of silk and gauze. Through these she could see all, and yet remain unseen. The garland for the chosen bridegroom, made of jasmine and champak, marigolds and roses, hung near at hand. And many were the people who glanced constantly at this veiled pavilion, wondering what she herself must be like, since mere report of her beauty had drawn so many men to the lists.



Yasodhara looked out to see the hosts of young men who had come to tourney for her sake. And amongst them she saw Devadatta, cousin to prince Siddhartha, a great man with thick black hair and meeting brows, seated on a magnificent black horse. Devadatta had long desired to marry Yasodhara, and now he often cast eager glances towards the pavilion, hoping to glimpse her. Being confident of victory, he looked scornfully about at the others who had gathered there. He felt that no other was so well equipped, or so strong in arms, or so handsome, as he.

Meanwhile, Siddhartha sat quietly on his pure white horse, Kanthaka, content to remain unnoticed till the tournament began.

When it was time to begin, there was a blare of trumpets, and liveried attendants announced the beginning of the competition. There were tournaments of jousting, and of sword-play, of archery and of single-stick, of horsemanship and feats of strength. And as the tournament progressed, one by one the many young men dropped out, exhausted or defeated. And finally all eyes were turned to Devadatta on his black horse, and to Siddhartha on his white one, for these two continued without seeming to tire.

And so, being the only two left in the lists, they were brought together to compete in archery. A target was fixed at one end of the courtyard, and they took their positions at the other. Each was given three arrows. Devadatta shot first, and of the three



arrows, one went right to the centre of the mark, and the others close to it. Then Siddhartha stood forth, and while the crowds lining the field held their breath in excitement, he drew his shaft and shot his first arrow. It went straight to its mark, and split Devadatta's arrow, that had remained fixed in the centre. Then in quick succession, Siddhartha shot his two other arrows, and each split the preceding one. A gasp of amazement went up from the crowd, for they had never seen anything like this before. And soon the gasp turned into loud cheering.

Devadatta bit his lip in anger, and glanced hungrily towards the pavilion. As he listened to the cheering, black thoughts rose in his mind. When the noise died down, he challenged Siddhartha to sword-play. After this had been announced in the proper manner, they faced one another, swords in one hand, shields in the other, Devadatta a great bulky man, Siddhartha, slight and nimble.

And at the signal they began, the one using his strength to hack at his opponent, the other using his skill and lightness to parry and thrust. And after they had fought thus for some time without advantage to either, Devadatta began to pant with the exertion. He had hoped to disarm his slight opponent in the first few minutes and, failing in this, he grew desperate. He forgot his skill, and began to fight wildly, so that Siddhartha soon struck the sword out of his hand. And so again they faced each other, Devadatta



unarmed, his sword lying in the dust, Siddhartha the victor.

And again the loud cheers of the crowd brought shame and anger to Devadatta.

And yet again Devadatta challenged Siddhartha, this time to a joust on horseback. After the due ceremonies, they faced each other again, mounted and with heavier swords and bigger shields. And after the signal was given, they met with sword and shield, now surging forward, now backward, according to the progress of the joust. And often the black horse, well trained in its work, would drive the other back, while Devadatta's strokes fell heavily on Siddhartha's shield. And at such times Yasodhara, watching all closely, would hold her breath with fear lest the young prince suffer some grievous hurt. For she had long before set her heart on Siddhartha. If she could have had her will, she would have ended the tournament there and then, for she had already made her choice.

But Siddhartha remained calm and unruffled, parrying stroke after stroke, while Devadatta began to tire again. And long they fought, while at times it seemed that the one must win, at times the other. And the supporters of both grew hushed with watching and wondering. Then Siddhartha urged on Kanthaka, and with quick lightning strokes drove the other back towards his end of the lists ; and there, when Devadatta could go back no further, he disarmed him once again.



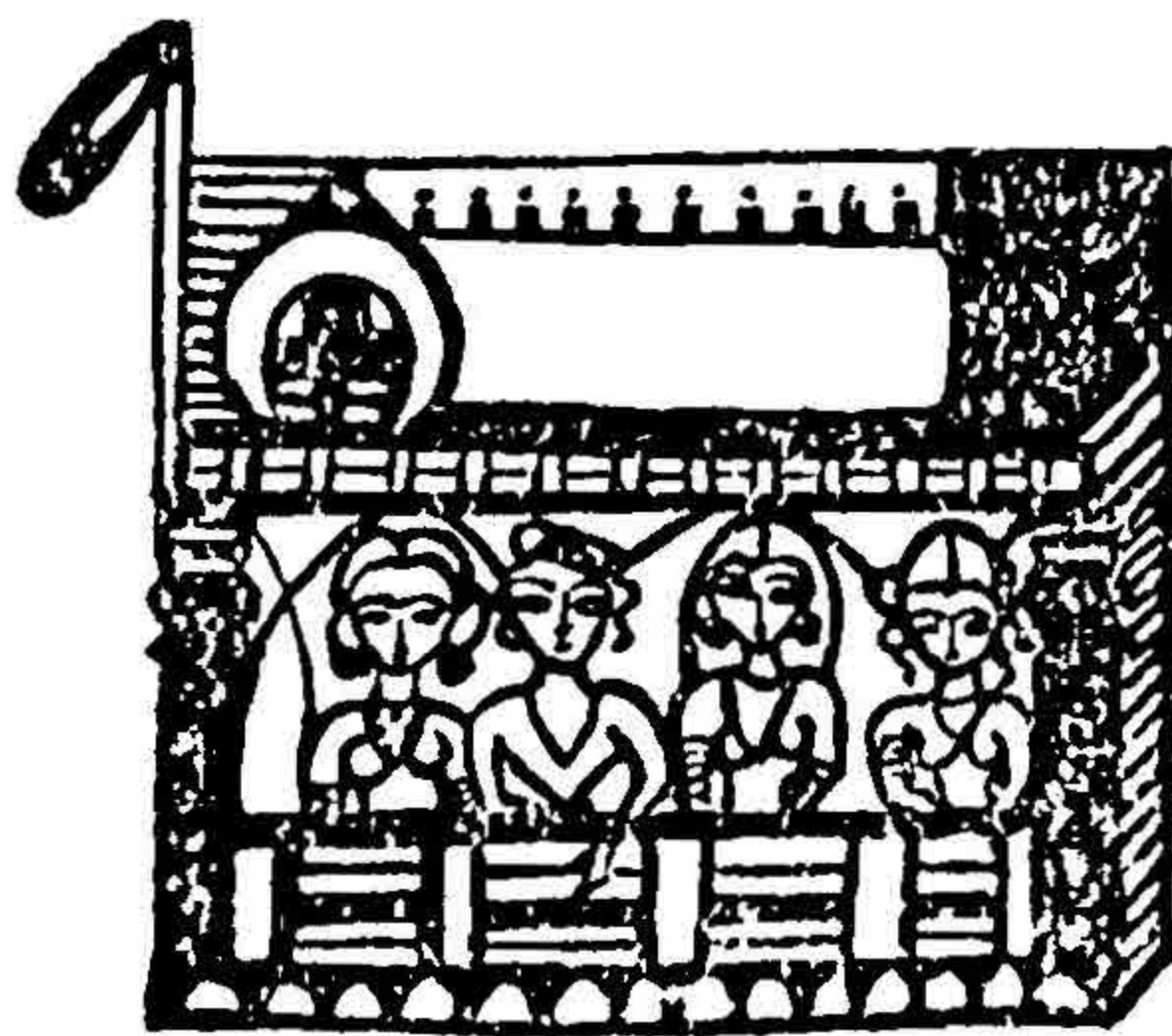
The people found their voices, and cheered their prince, for never before had they seen such an exhibition of skill in arms and horsemanship.

And when the cheering was over, the tournaments were declared ended, and the suitors gathered in their appointed places in the courtyard. The time was come for the maiden to choose.

All eyes now turned towards the pavilion. Slowly the curtains parted and, like the moon issuing from behind clouds that have long hid it, Yasodhara stepped down. She took the garland from where it hung, and came into the centre of the courtyard. Slowly, with dignity and grace, she stepped towards Siddhartha where he sat motionless on Kanthaka, until she stood by his stirrup. Then Siddhartha dismounted, and bowed his head, so that she might slip the garland round his neck.

And there they stood, Siddhartha the pride of the Sakyas, and Yasodhara, the pearl amongst women. And to the cheering people, wild with joy and excitement, it seemed that never before had they seen such a handsome and accomplished prince, or such a graceful and beautiful princess.

Only Devadatta watched with sullen eyes, and his disappointed heart brooded on revenge.





## XII

AND SO, WHEN ALL THE PREPARATIONS HAD BEEN MADE, Siddhartha was wed to Yasodhara, the daughter of Suppabuddha. He lived in his own palaces, with his wife, and with the many beautiful women his father had obtained for him, with all manner of pleasure and luxury.

In all the world there was only one thing that was denied to him, and that was the knowledge of the world outside the palace gardens. For his father would not allow him to go out into the city lest he see the four signs and renounce the world. Wishing to keep him confined to his palaces, like a beautiful bird trapped in a golden cage, he showered presents and luxuries on him, thinking this would bind him to his palace.

But it is difficult to bind the spirit of a man for ever with bonds such as these. And often Siddhartha grew weary of the dancing-girls and perpetual merriment provided for him, and wandered by himself, brooding and sad. And at such times, if he chanced to see him, the king was troubled; and thinking his son was tired of what he had, he ordered more, and yet more.

But the desire to go outside the palace into the streets and see his people grew in Siddhartha. And it was one day when he was twenty-nine years old that he made up his mind that he would go to the park, and that no one should say him nay.

When the king heard of his purpose, he tried to



dissuade him, but Siddhartha was determined and said, 'My father, you have given me everything for my pleasure and luxury, yet you do not ever allow me to leave this palace, and I am like a prisoner. I wish to go to the park, and to see the city and the people whom I shall one day rule. It is not right that I should remain forever hidden from them, and they from me. Do not deny me this, for go I must.'

The king realized that his son was determined, so he gave his permission. He ordered his soldiers to guard the route to the park, so that none but those who were happy and well might appear when his son passed, and no unpleasant sight might trouble the prince.

So Siddhartha, having at last won his father's consent, ordered Channa to make ready to go. Channa, eager for the expedition, harnessed the four milk-white state horses to the prince's chariot. When Siddhartha had dressed in his best silken clothes and arrayed himself in jewels, they set forth towards the park.

The people, having heard of the prince's intended visit, had lined the streets, and they cheered him as he passed. When Siddhartha saw and heard this, he was deeply moved, and love for the people welled up in his heart.

But suddenly, from the midst of the people, there came an old man, worn out with years, with broken teeth, grey hair, his body bent and broken, walking along with a stick in his hand, and trembling as he



walked. And no one knew how it had happened that the guards had not seen him, or prevented him.

The old man tottered out into the middle of the street. When Siddhartha saw him he was amazed, for he had never seen an old person before, and he wondered what manner of man this was. He told Channa to stop the chariot and, being puzzled, asked, 'What manner of man is this, Channa? His teeth are broken, his body bent, and he trembles as he walks.'

Channa was afraid to answer, knowing full well the orders of the king. But he could not refuse to answer when the prince asked. Besides, if the gods had willed that this old man come before the sight of the prince, who was he to deny the prince the knowledge which the gods wished to give him? So he said, 'Lord, this is an old man, bent and weakened by old age.'

'And is every man subject to old age, Channa?'

'Yes, lord. Every man and woman is subject to old age, for it is the common lot.'

Siddhartha was greatly upset and disgusted when he learnt this. But after a while he thought to himself, 'Should I, who myself shall grow old like all other men, be troubled, ashamed and disgusted at the sight of an old man?'

He ordered Channa to turn back and return to the palace immediately. And when they had returned, he hastened into his room alone to think over what he had seen and learnt.

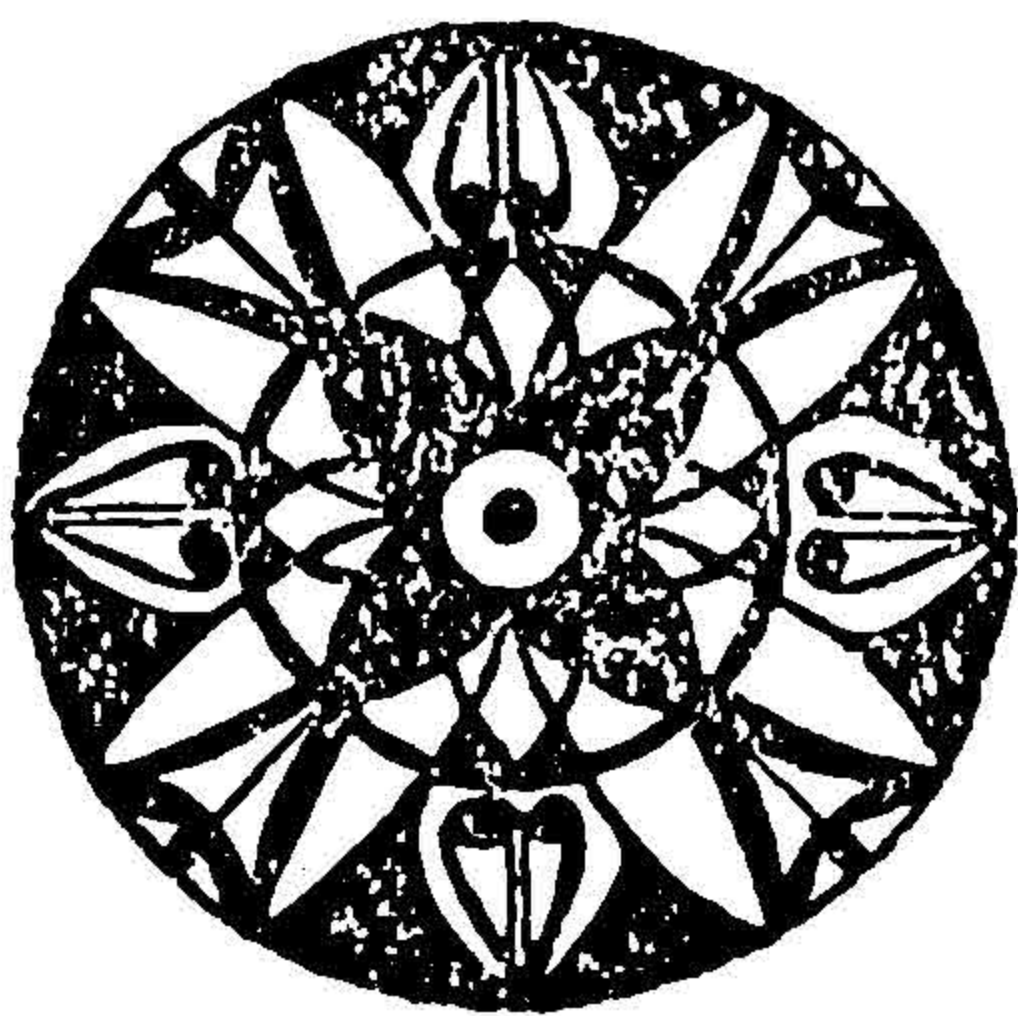


And when the king came to know what had chanced, he called Channa before him, and angrily demanded why he had not protected his son from the unhappy sight.

‘The gods wished the prince to see the old man,’ answered Channa, ‘for how else could he have escaped the notice of the many guards you had set along the route? Is it possible, O king, to keep the knowledge of pain and suffering, which are the common lot, from your son for ever?’

And the king, being agitated, ordered more dancing-girls for his son, and more musicians, for he knew no remedy but this. He hoped that in the pleasures of his princely existence, his son would soon forget the sight he had seen.

And he ordered more guards to be set at the gates.



### XIII

SOME DAYS LATER, SIDDHARTHA AGAIN MADE UP HIS MIND to go to the park, and again when the king saw that his son was determined, he unwillingly gave his consent. He ordered his soldiers to guard the streets



again, and let no unhappy sight come before his son. Channa prepared the chariot, and they set out.

But suddenly as they drove along the streets crowded with cheering people, happy to see their prince again, there came a sick man, shaking with fever, and moaning, for his body was swollen and disfigured, and his eyes were full of pain and fear. And no one could tell how it was that the guards had not seen this sick man, nor been able to prevent him from coming into the street.

When Siddhartha saw him, he was amazed, for he had never before seen a sick person. He wondered what manner of man this was. He told Channa to stop the chariot, and asked him, 'What manner of man is this? His body is swollen, and disfigured, and he is shaking and moaning.'

Channa knew the king would be angry if he answered, but how could he refuse when the prince demanded? Besides, if the gods had willed that this sick man come before the sight of the prince, who was he to deny the prince the knowledge that the gods wished to give him? So he said, 'Lord, this is a sick man, swollen and disfigured with sickness.'

'And is every man subject to sickness, Channa?'

'Yes, lord, for it is the common lot.'

'So, then, even the years before one must grow old and weak are not free from pain and suffering, for there is sickness,' said Siddhartha.



And thinking thus, he was greatly upset and disgusted. But he thought to himself, 'Should I, who myself am subject to sickness, be troubled, ashamed and disgusted at the sight of a sick man?' Then turning to Channa, he said, 'Turn the chariot. We will return directly.'

And when they had returned to the palace, Siddhartha hurried to his room alone to think over what he had seen and learnt.

And when the king came to know what had passed, he again called Channa before him and demanded why he had not protected his son from the unhappy sight. And again Channa answered, 'Surely the gods wished the prince to see the sick man, for how else could he have escaped the notice of the many guards that you had set along the route? Is it possible, O king, to keep the knowledge of pain and suffering, which are the common lot, from your son for ever?'

And the king was agitated because his son had already seen two of the four signs, in spite of all his efforts. Yet he would not admit defeat, so he ordered his courtiers to take in more dancing-girls, and entertainers, and food and drink to the prince, thus hoping to lure his mind away from what he had seen.

But when Siddhartha saw the dancing-girls, he thought to himself, 'Even these beautiful bodies are subject to sickness and disfigurement. And these maidens, now young and joyous, must one day grow old and weak.'



And thus he saw the truth of old age beneath the covering of their youth, and the truth of sickness beneath the covering of their health.

The dancing-girls could not make him forget what he had seen.



#### XIV

SOME DAYS LATER, SIDDHARTHA AGAIN MADE UP HIS MIND to drive through the city to the park, and once again the king was forced to give his consent. He ordered his guards to line the roads, and said, 'Twice now have you failed in your duty, and let an old man and a sick man appear before my son. See to it that you do not fail this time. Guard the road well, and let no unpleasant sight appear to the prince, I charge you.'

So Channa harnessed the state horses, and they set off for the park. As they drove along the streets they came upon a funeral procession. Four men, mourning loudly, were carrying a dead body towards the burning-ghat.

When Siddhartha saw this, he was amazed, for he



had never before seen a dead person, and he told Channa to stop. Horrified at this strange sight, he turned to Channa and said, 'What is this?'

Channa knew he had no choice but to answer, so, bowing his head low, he said, 'This is a dead man. The breath has left his body, and he has no life in his limbs or organs. His life on earth is ended. His friends are taking him to the burning-ghat to burn what remains of him. Soon nothing will remain.'

'And is every man subject to this, Channa?' asked Siddhartha, knowing as he spoke that this was so.

'Yes, lord,' answered Channa, 'for death is the common lot, and everything that lives must die.'

'So,' thought Siddhartha in disgust and bitterness, 'one goes through sickness and old age merely to come to this.' And being upset and disgusted at the sight, he thought to himself, 'Should I, who am myself subject to death, be troubled, ashamed and disgusted at the sight of a dead man?'

He told Channa to turn the chariot and drive home.

The king had been waiting anxiously for news, and when he learnt what had happened, he tore his hair and stamped through the palace corridors, shouting that he and his line were being destroyed. And again he ordered his courtiers to take in more dancing-girls and musicians to his son, and thus to take his mind away from the things he had seen.

Meanwhile the prince sat alone filled with strange thoughts that would not leave him alone. 'There is



pain in sickness, in old age and in death,’ he thought to himself, ‘yet there is no escape from these things, for they are the common lot. It makes no difference whether one is rich or poor, a prince or a beggar. In this way, life is full of pain. Is there no way in which one can escape this painfulness?’

And he thought much on this problem, but could think of no answer. And lost in his thoughts he was not even aware of the many dancing-girls and musicians that the king had sent before him.

Siddhartha spent several days thinking over the matter that troubled him so much. He decided that he would go out into the city, and see the lives of the ordinary people. ‘Perhaps,’ he thought, ‘in seeing their lives full of pain and misery, I might be able to find an answer to the question that troubles me.’

He asked permission of his father, and again the king had to consent, much against his will. King Suddhodana was almost resigned now, for had he not taken every precaution possible, and had not the three signs appeared none the less, in spite of all his guards? Yet he felt he must do everything within his power to prevent the fourth sign from appearing before Siddhartha, so once again he ordered the soldiers to go out into the city and guard the streets.

Siddhartha and Channa set out again, this time to go through the streets of the city. This time there were no cheering people to line the streets.

By and by they came upon an ascetic who had re-



nounced the world. He was walking towards them dressed in a yellow robe, and carrying a begging-bowl in his hand. Siddhartha stopped when he saw him.

‘What manner of man is this, Channa?’ he asked.

‘This is an ascetic, lord,’ replied Channa, ‘a man who has renounced the world to seek for truth.’

There was something in the appearance of the yellow-robed ascetic that appealed to Siddhartha, and standing before him he greeted him, and asked him who he was and what he did.

‘I am an ascetic,’ said the man. ‘I have renounced the pleasures of the world and become a beggar. I was disgusted at all the pain and misery in the world, and with things that constantly change. Happiness did not lie in such things, or in pleasures that depended on changing things. So I gave all these things up, in order to search for something more lasting, something that would give real happiness. This I seek in forests and lonely places.’ And he passed on, going towards the mountains.

When Siddhartha heard this, he felt as if a great burden had been lifted from his shoulders. ‘Surely,’ he thought, ‘this is the path for which I have been searching.’

He determined that he too would leave the world and, feeling easy in his mind now that this decision had been made, he told Channa to drive on to the park.

He bathed, and sat on the royal rock of state that



his grandfather had built in the park. There he sat for a long time, undisturbed.



## X V

WHILE SIDDHARTHA WAS SITTING IN THE PARK, HIS WIFE gave birth to a son. King Suddhodana was overjoyed when he heard this, and sent messengers to carry the good news to the prince. He hoped that the birth of a son would make Siddhartha forget the sights he had seen, and make him remain contentedly in the palace.

The messengers met the prince returning from the park, and told him the good news.

‘A son is born to me,’ thought Siddhartha; ‘a son is a bond to tie me to the world.’ And aloud he said, ‘Let Rahula be the name of my son,’ for *rahula* means ‘bond’.

When they had returned to the palace, Siddhartha went into his room and lay down on his bed. He fell asleep for a short while. When he awoke he saw several of his musicians and dancing-girls lying and sitting around in disgusting attitudes, where they had fallen asleep while waiting for him. And he noticed



that on their bodies, which appeared so perfect when they performed before him, there were wrinkles and blemishes he had not noticed before.

Siddhartha's heart was filled with disgust and loathing, and he thought to himself, 'The heart can only be truly happy when the fire of passion is extinguished. It can only be happy when the fires of illusion, pride, and false views, of all lusts and pains and desires, are extinguished. I must therefore seek to extinguish these passions and desires, and thus attain Nirvana. Even from today must I reject and renounce the life of a household and go forth from the world to seek Nirvana.'

Being decided, he wasted no time. He called Channa and told him to saddle Kanthaka. When Channa had gone to get the horse ready, Siddhartha thought, 'Before I go, I must see my son.'

He went to the room of Yasodhara, the mother of Rahula. As he opened the door, he saw a lamp of scented oil burning in the middle of the room. The bed was strewn with heaps of jasmine flowers and rose petals, and the air was heavy with fragrance. The mother, looking more beautiful than ever, was sleeping with her hand resting gently on the head of her little son, who slept beside her.

Siddhartha stood in the doorway, thinking to himself, 'If I move aside her arm in order to take my son in my arms, I shall wake her, and then it will be much





more difficult for me to keep to my decision and go away.'

So Siddhartha looked for a long time at his wife and his son, but did not go near the bed. 'When I have attained Nirvana, and become a Buddha, I will come back and see my son,' he thought.

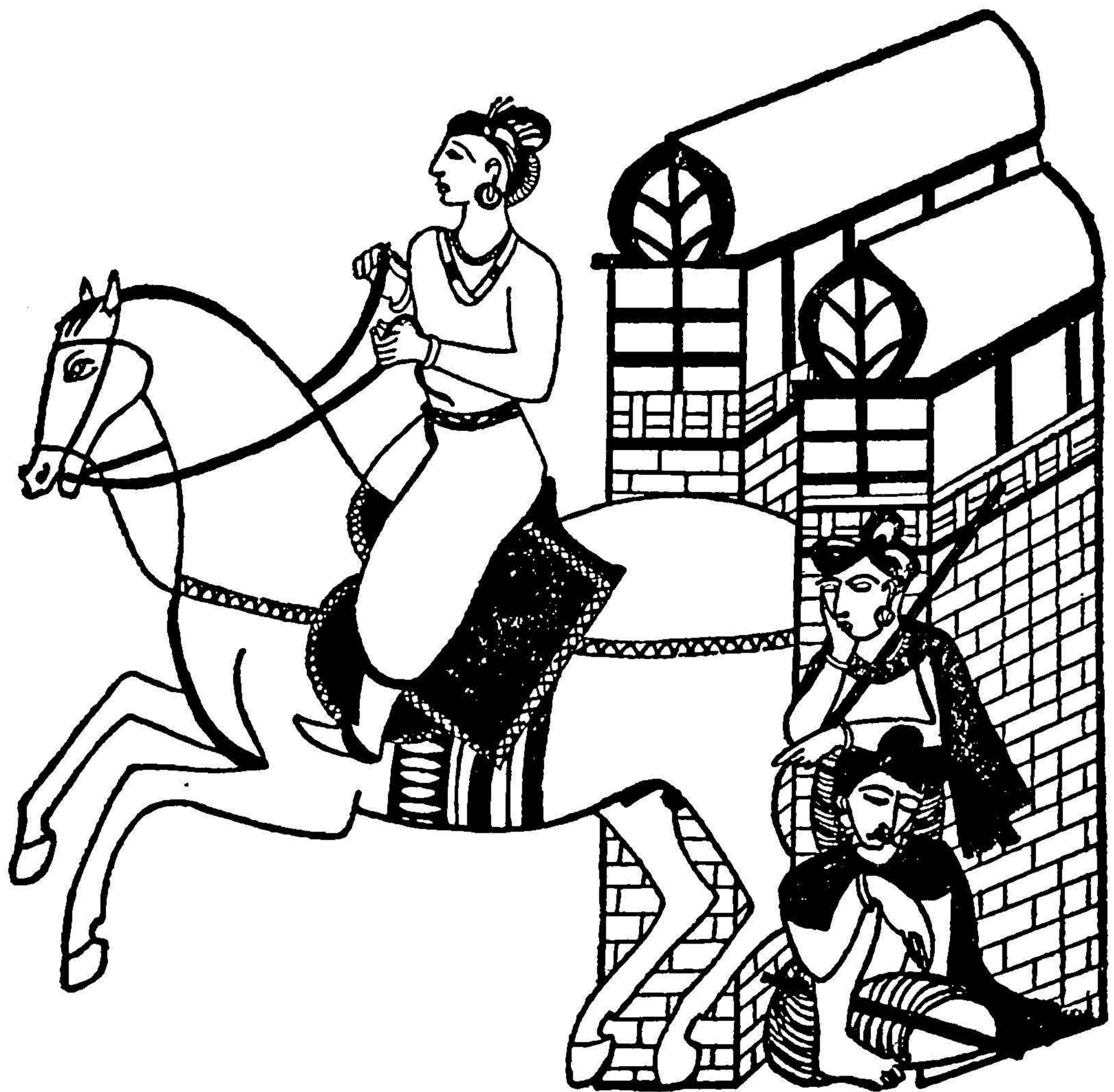
He stole out of the palace and no one knew that he was leaving.

Channa was waiting outside the gate with Kanthaka. Siddhartha mounted and rode towards the palace gates, going very slowly so that no one could hear the sound of the horse's hooves. Channa followed behind, holding on to the horse's tail lest he get left behind.

When they reached the palace gates, they found all the guards fast asleep at their posts, so that they had no difficulty in letting themselves through. As they



passed through, Mara, the evil tempter, came to the departing prince, and whispered in his ear, 'Prince, do not go. Why do you want to leave all the luxuries and pleasures of this beautiful palace, to leave your wife and child, and go into the wilderness? There you will meet only suffering and pain, and you will lose the respect and love of the people, and gain their mockery. If you stay, you will become a powerful king, and rule over the four great islands of the world, and the two hundred smaller islands as well.'





But Siddhartha refused to listen to Mara the Evil One. The tempter left him, vowing that he would come again and again to the young prince, until he caught him in a moment of weakness.

It was thus that on the day of the full moon of the month of Asalha, Siddhartha the Bodhisattva, the man who would become a Buddha, left the house and city of his father to live the life of an ascetic.

Siddhartha rode for a distance of thirty leagues, until he came to the river Anoma. Though the river was wide, Kanthaka crossed it at one leap. They stopped on the other side, and Siddhartha dismounted. He took off all his ornaments and rich jewels, and handed them over to Channa. Then, taking up his sword, he cut off his long hair, so that it was no more than two fingers in length. He took the hair of his head and of his beard in his hands, and threw it into the air, so that the wind carried it away.

Just then a Mahabrahma passed by and, seeing that a young man was about to begin the life of an ascetic, he gave him the eight things required by a hermit: three robes, a bowl, a razor, a needle, a girdle, and a water-strainer, and went his way.

When Siddhartha was ready to go on alone, he turned to say good-bye to Channa.

‘Go back to the city, Channa,’ he said, ‘and take Kanthaka with you.’

Now the horse, who had been a favourite of the prince for many years, saw what was happening and



understood that his master was about to leave him. When he realized this, his heart broke, and he died.

Channa took leave of Siddhartha with a heavy heart, for he was sorry to part from his beloved master. He journeyed back to Kapilavatthu alone, taking the clothes and ornaments with him.

When it had been discovered at the palace that the prince had left during the night, there was great consternation. The king ordered search-parties to go out, and he himself went about the palace moaning and weeping, because in spite of all his efforts his son had thus gone away. Now when the king and courtiers saw Channa coming with the robes and ornaments of the prince, they thought that perhaps the prince had been attacked and killed by bandits. They questioned Channa anxiously, asking him what had happened.

Channa told them how prince Siddhartha had left the palace and the city. 'He has left the world to become an ascetic, and nothing will persuade him to come back till he has attained enlightenment,' he said.

And king Suddhodana sat by himself, thinking, for he now realized that not all his wealth or power could hold back a man who had determined to be an ascetic.





## XVI

SIDDHARTHA, STRIVING AFTER THE GOOD AND SEARCHING for the supreme state of peace, went to Alara Kalama, the old teacher. 'I wish, friend Kalama,' he said, 'to practise the doctrine and discipline of the religious life.'

And Kalama replied, 'Then abide here, my friend. By living here and learning, you will soon know all that I have to teach.'

It was not long before Siddhartha had learnt all that Kalama could teach him. Then one day Kalama said to him, 'Friend, you have learnt all that I have to teach you. It is not meet that you should remain here as my pupil. Stay here as a teacher then, and help me in the teaching of the other pupils.'

So Siddhartha stayed, but only for a short time, for he wished to seek further knowledge.

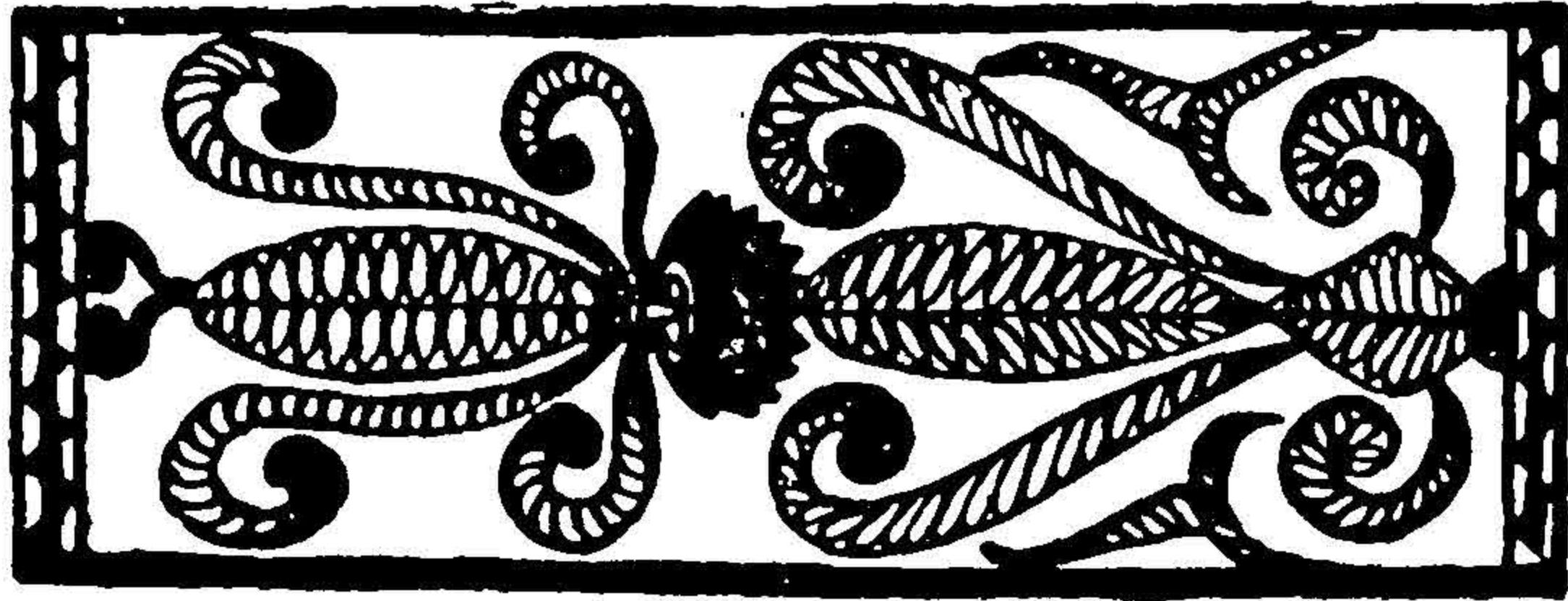
After leaving Kalama, he came to the teacher Uddaka Ramaputta, and dwelt with him for some time. When he had learnt all that Uddaka had to teach him, he left him also, as he had left Kalama.

Then Siddhartha wandered along the roads and the byways of the country in his search of the good and of peace. He passed through many villages and towns, talking with many kinds of men and women. Some were bad and some were good, some were intelligent while others were foolish, some revered him while some mocked him. Some there were who called him



fool for having left his home and all the comforts in it, to wander about homeless and a beggar.

He listened to all these patiently, but held steadily to his purpose.



## XVII

AFTER MANY MONTHS OF WANDERING AND LEARNING from different masters, Siddhartha came to the country of the Magadhas, and went to Uruvela, the town of the general of the army. There he saw a delightful spot, with a pleasant grove and a river with clear water flowing through it. Nearby were several fords, which the people used on their way from one village to another. Seeing all this, Siddhartha said, 'This is really a remarkable spot. It is beautiful, with a grove and a lovely river. And near about are many villages and roads where I can go and seek alms. It would be difficult for me to find any place better suited than this to meditation and striving.'

So Siddhartha sat down there, to meditate and strive for enlightenment.

He wondered how best he could prepare himself, and what he should do in order to attain enlightenment. He thought of the usual practices of ascetics,



who practise severe austerities. He decided that he too would try that method, and through the torture of the body attain knowledge of the mind and freedom of the spirit.

Siddhartha tried several kinds of austerities. First, he set his teeth and pressed his tongue to his palate. And he tried by determination and will-power to burn out all desires from his mind. He felt as if a strong man had seized him by the head and shoulders, and was trying to crush him. Sweat flowed from his armpits, and drenched his forehead. Though the pain was great, and the suffering terrible, he did not lose consciousness.

Then Siddhartha endeavoured to practise going into a trance without breathing. He held his breath, not breathing from either nose or mouth. As he did so, there was a violent noise in his ears, as of rushing winds, or as of air blowing through the bellows of a blacksmith. Siddhartha tried to close his ears as well, so that the passage between the ears and the throat might be stopped. As he did so, he felt as if a strong man were crushing his head with the point of a sword.

And after some time, Siddhartha tried again to enter a trance without breathing. And this time, the pains were as if a strap were being twisted tightly around his head. And when he tried for a third time, he felt as if a butcher were cutting up his body into little pieces with a sharp knife. But he tried yet again, and the fourth and last time, he felt as if two strong men



had taken hold of him and, in spite of his struggles, were holding him firmly over a fire of coals, so that his body was slowly being burnt.

But at no time did he lose consciousness.

Then Siddhartha cast about in his mind, trying to think of some other form of austerity he could practise. He thought he would torture his flesh by eating only very little food, and, by suffering through lack of food and the weakness it caused, perhaps attain the peace he was looking for.

So he gave up eating meals, feeding himself on beans or vetches, or chickpeas, or pulse, and eating no more than a mere handful every day. His body grew thinner and thinner, until the bones showed through. The bones of his spine looked like a row of spindles in a spinning workshop, and his ribs stuck out like the wooden beams in an old shed. His eyes sank deep into their sockets, so that they looked like deep wells of low-lying water. And just as a bitter gourd cracks and withers, when it is cut off the tree while still raw and left in the wind and the sun, so the skin of his head began to crack and wither. So lean did he grow that his stomach touched his spine, and his spine seemed to grow through his stomach. If he stroked himself, the hair of his body, decayed through lack of nourishment, fell off under his hand.

While Siddhartha Gautama was suffering in this manner, five monks came by and, seeing him, they paused and said among themselves, 'This man is



undergoing very severe austerities. No doubt he will soon attain knowledge and will then be able to teach us. Let us stay here, and become his disciples.' So they sat down close by, intending to remain till Siddhartha attained enlightenment.

As for Siddhartha, when he had grown weak and lean for lack of food, he began to wonder to himself whether he had chosen the right way to knowledge. And he thought to himself, 'I have now practised austerities for several years. I have undergone severe hardships and suffering. Surely no ascetic could have undergone greater pain and suffering than I have done. Yet, after having done all this, what is the result? I have not attained supreme knowledge. Is it not foolish to think that knowledge can come through bodily suffering?'

And the more Siddhartha thought about this, the more foolish it appeared to him that anyone should expect to attain knowledge and peace in the way that he had been trying.

And thinking in this manner, he seemed to hear a song:

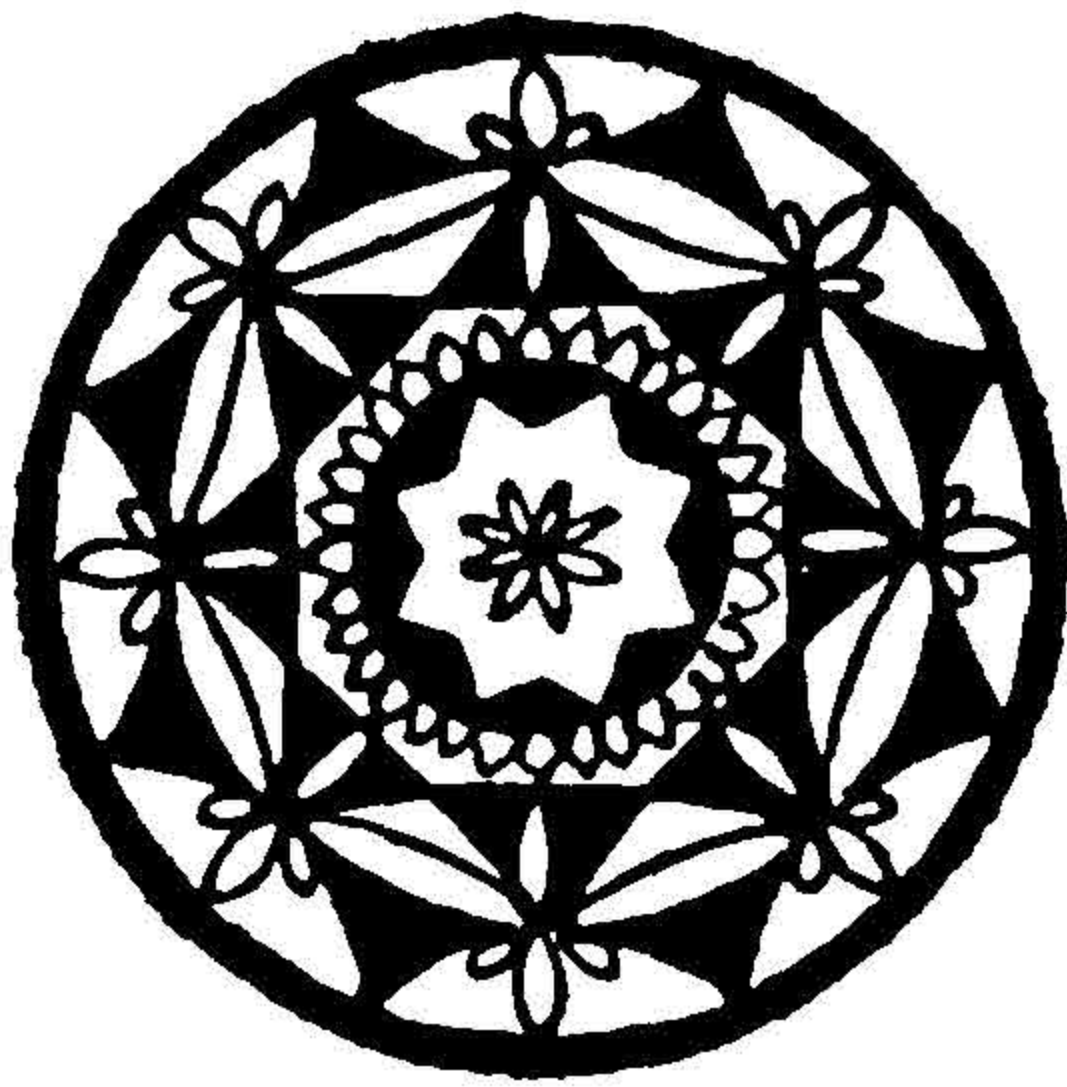
The string o'erstretched breaks, and the music flies,

The string o'erslack is dumb, and music dies,

Tune us the sitar neither low nor high.

And he realized that enlightenment could come neither through looking after the body too well, nor through torturing it.





## XVIII

SIDDHARTHA CAST HIS MIND ABOUT, AND RECALLED THE trance he had attained when sitting under the rose-apple tree, watching the king's ploughing. He had attained that trance of joy and pleasure not through fasting and austerity, but through seclusion, and by reasoning and investigation.

Having realized that knowledge could not come through lack of food, Siddhartha decided to give up his fasting, and take solid food once again.

Now it so happened that in the town of Senani nearby there lived a young maiden named Sujata, who had long wished to have a son. One day she had gone to a banyan tree and, taking it for a god, had prayed to it for a son, vowing that if her wish were granted she would give a yearly offering to the tree. After some time, her wish had been fulfilled, and she had borne a son. Delighted, she told her maid Punna to go to the tree and prepare a place for the offering.

Punna hurried to the banyan tree and found the ascetic Siddhartha sitting underneath it. She went







back to her mistress and said, 'I went to the tree as you told me to do, and there I found that the god of the tree had come down to the ground and was sitting under the tree.'

Sujata was pleased to hear this and, taking food in a golden bowl, she brought it to Siddhartha just at the time that he had decided to end his fast. He took the food, thanked her for her kindness, and began to eat.

When the five monks who were waiting to be taught by Siddhartha saw him eating this food, they said to one another in disgust, 'This man whom we thought was trying to achieve wisdom has given up his efforts, and begun to eat food and live comfortably. He will never attain enlightenment in this manner.' So they took up their belongings and went away.



## XIX

ONE DAY SIDDHARTHA FELT CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD become a Buddha before the morrow. He spent the day in the grove of sal trees, and in the evening he went to the bodhi tree growing near the Neranjara river. A grass-cutter going home after the day's work



in the fields gave him some grass, and with this he made a seat for himself under the bodhi tree.

As he sat cross-legged on this seat, he said to himself, 'Come what may, whether my skin and muscle and bone, my flesh and my blood dry up and rot, I will not leave this seat without attaining complete enlightenment.'

Just then Mara the Evil One, who had been following Siddhartha ever since he had left his palace six years ago, came up to him and said, 'You are lean and weak. If you sit here, striving to attain enlightenment, you will merely die. Do you not think it would be much wiser for you to give up this foolish striving that has brought you nothing but pain for the last six years, and decide to live? Why, then you will be able to go about doing good actions, and live religiously, instead of dying in this miserable manner. Live, enjoy yourself and do good instead of torturing yourself to death.'

And Siddhartha, knowing full well the cunning of Mara, replied, 'I know you well, Mara, you friend of the slothful. I know now that this is the way to attain enlightenment and to rid myself of all desires and wants. I know you have a large army consisting of lusts and desires, hate, hunger and thirst, craving, sloth, laziness, cowardice, doubt, hypocrisy and stupidity, of praise of one's self, of false fame and glory and power. This is the army with which you conquer the cowards. But I am ready to fight against your



army, for it will be better to die fighting than to live in defeat. I will fight against your army by training disciples far and wide. This is my answer to you.'



And Mara thought sadly to himself, 'For six years now have I followed him without success. I am like a crow that mistakes a stone for a lump of fat and flies to it, and is disappointed in finding nothing to eat.' So Mara went away, depressed and sorrowful.

Siddhartha, left alone at last, began to meditate and attained several trances. He attained the first trance by thinking calmly about life and its problems, by reasoning and investigation. Then he fixed his mind on one thing and one thing only, and thus, through concentration, he attained his second trance. Then he considered joy and hate calmly, being neither



attracted towards joy nor being disgusted with hate. Thus he attained his third trance. And having considered joy and hate without being moved by them, he put aside pain and pleasure, and realized that a strong-minded man need feel neither. And in this way, he attained his fourth trance.

Through these four trances, Siddhartha had cleansed his mind, and made it pure and firm and supple, and able to concentrate. But his object was to gain knowledge and enlightenment, so in the first watch of the night, sitting under the bodhi tree, Siddhartha concentrated his mind on the knowledge of his former existences. Gradually, as he strove with all the strength of his mind to attain that knowledge, he began to remember his former life, and then the life before that one, and then the life before that one, and so on for tens, hundreds and thousands of lives. And he saw clearly in his mind the circumstances of his previous births, the way in which he had lived and what he had done, and the manner of his deaths. He saw how death in one existence had led to birth in another. And the knowledge of his former existences and actions was the first knowledge that he attained as he sat there in the first watch of the night. He felt the ignorance of his mind giving way to knowledge.

Then Siddhartha turned his mind towards the passing away and rebirth of other beings. He saw beings passing away and being reborn, high in rank



and low in rank, good and bad, happy or miserable, according to their *karma*. He saw that those beings who led good lives in deed, word or thought, who did not speak evil, nor live falsely, were reborn in a happy state. But he saw that those who led evil lives in deed, word or thought, who spoke evil of good people, and who spoke falsely, were reborn in a state of misery and suffering. This was the second knowledge that Siddhartha gained in the second watch of the night.

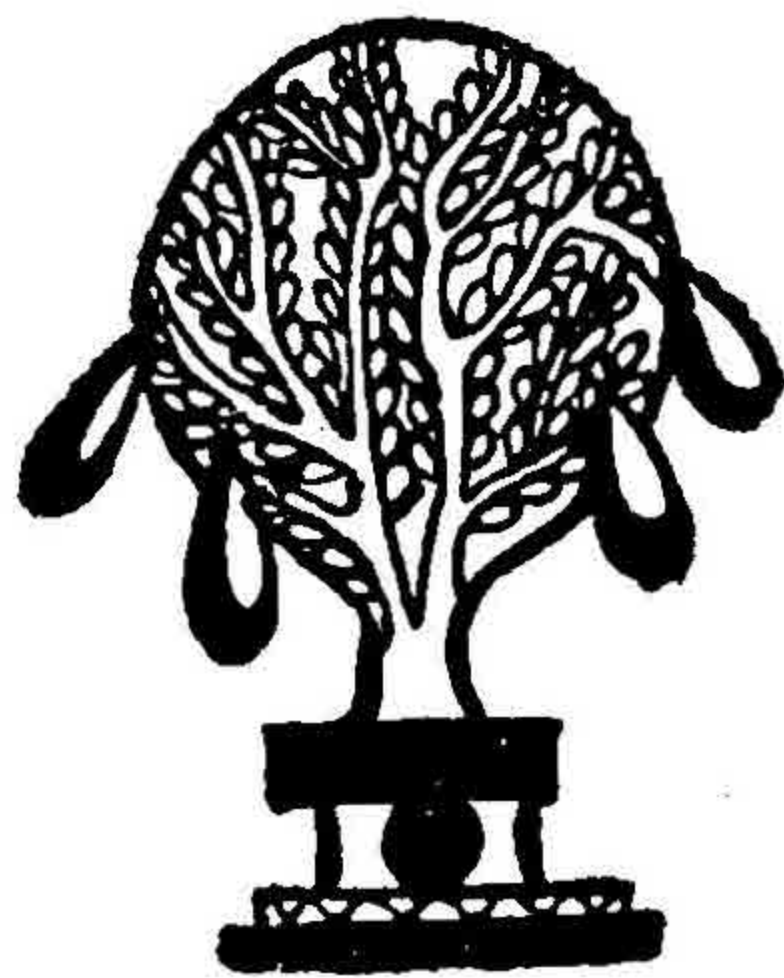
Then Siddhartha turned his mind towards the knowledge of the destruction of the three *asavas*—that is to say, physical desire, desire for existence, and ignorance. At first he thought of pain, and realized what pain was, and how pain could be destroyed. In the same way he realized what the *asavas* were, and how they could be destroyed. And having discovered this, he was able to destroy them within himself, and thus free himself from the *asava* of physical desire, from the *asava* of the desire for existence, and from the *asava* of ignorance. And as he freed himself, the knowledge of his freedom came to him, and he knew that he was no longer tied down by those bonds. And this was the third knowledge that he gained in the third watch of the night. Thus the ignorance of his mind was dispelled by knowledge, as darkness is by light.

And as Siddhartha's darkness fled before the light of knowledge, he said to himself,



‘ The joy of pleasures in the world,  
And the great joy of heaven,  
Compared with the joy of the destruction of craving,  
Are not worth a sixteenth part.  
Sorry is he whose burden is heavy,  
And happy is he who has cast it down.  
When once he has cast off his burden,  
He will seek to be burdened no more.’

It was in this way that Siddhartha Gautama, son of a great and wealthy king, attained knowledge and enlightenment, and became a Buddha, an Enlightened One.



X X

WHEN SIDDHARTHA HAD ATTAINED ENLIGHTENMENT AND become a Buddha, he felt that he should get up and go about, teaching the people the things he had learnt, and showing them the way to true happiness. But then a great weariness seized him, and he thought to himself, ‘ I have gained this knowledge only after many difficult years of trying. I have learnt the causes and reasons of things, I have renounced desire and craving, and I have learnt the way of non-attachment. But most men are busy in searching for



joy and pleasure, full of passions and desires, deeply attached to material things. They will not listen to me, nor understand me. I shall meet many difficulties if I try to teach them about the extinction of craving, the absence of passion, the ceasing of the cycle of rebirths by the attainment of Nirvana. Far better, then, that I should remain here with my knowledge, than that I should try and give it to others.'

But Buddha realized that such thinking was really due to weakness, and his knowledge would be wasted if he did not share it with others, however difficult that might be. He knew that there were really a great many people in the world who would listen to him, and who were not so deeply attached to material things. He knew that though there were some people who were full of impurity, there were others who had but little impurity, that some were clever, others dull, some were living in good and comfortable conditions, while others were living in poor and miserable conditions. And he also knew that some people would be difficult to teach, others would be easy. So Buddha decided to go out into the world and teach the doctrine that he had learnt.

Buddha wondered whom he should first teach. He thought of his former teachers, Kalama and Uddaka, but they had both died recently. Then he thought of the five monks who had attended him while he was fasting, and who had gone away in disgust when he



had begun to eat. He made up his mind to teach them first.

He knew that they were living at Benares, and so he left Uruvela where he had stayed for such a long time, and journeyed to Benares.

The five monks were living in the deer park of Isipatana. When Buddha arrived there, they saw him from a long way off, and said to one another, 'There is the ascetic Siddhartha, whom we attended at Uruvela for some time. He is the man who has given up striving and taken to a comfortable life. He is now coming towards us. We will not greet him, nor rise in respect for him, nor take his bowl and robe, as we would for a learned and good man. But if he wants to sit down here, we will prepare a seat for him, and he is welcome to stay with us for a time.'

But as Buddha approached, they could not keep to their decision, and one by one they rose to greet him. One took his bowl and robe, another prepared a seat for him, and another brought water, so that Buddha could wash his feet, which were dusty after his long journey.

When Buddha had washed and was seated in the place prepared for him, the monks asked him what he had been doing, and how he came to be there.

'I have achieved the immortal, the enlightenment. Now I shall go about and teach the doctrine that I have learnt,' Buddha said.



And the monks said to one another, 'Can it be that this man, who gave up striving, in order to live in comfort, has attained the immortal?'

And they said to him, 'When you were striving, you did not gain knowledge. Is it possible that when you gave up striving and began to live a comfortable life, you attained what is so difficult to attain?'

And Buddha answered, 'Monks, I did not give up striving, and I have not lived in comfort and plenty as you suppose.'

He then began to teach them, and when the monks heard him, they knew that he had truly attained knowledge, and all their doubts disappeared. They listened to him gladly.

And so Buddha stayed there for some time. Two or three monks would go for alms, while Buddha taught the others, and as the days passed, the monks learnt the doctrine, and realized the truth of birth and rebirth, and knew that real peace could only be had in the state of Nirvana, where there was no more rebirth.





## XXI

THE FIRST SERMON THAT BUDDHA TAUGHT THE MONKS he called the sermon of Turning the Wheel of the Doctrine. 'There are two extremes which must be avoided,' he taught. 'One extreme is the life dominated by passions and desires, a life of pleasures and cravings. Such a life is low and vulgar, ignoble and useless. The other extreme is the life of self-torture, such as is lived by those ascetics who seek knowledge through bodily pain and hardships. Such a life of self-torture is painful, ignoble and useless. The right way to attain knowledge is the Middle Way, avoiding these extremes. It is through the Middle Way that I attained enlightenment. It is the way that leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment and Nirvana.'

Buddha explained that the Middle Way consisted of the Eightfold Path, that is of right thinking, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

'You will understand why one should follow this eightfold path when I have explained the Four Noble Truths to you,' Buddha continued. 'The truth about pain, O monks, is that birth is painful, old age, sickness and death are painful. Sorrow, lamentation, and despair are painful, contact with unpleasant things is painful, separation from pleasant things is painful, not obtaining what one wants is painful. This is the first Truth.'



‘ When we see that all these things are painful, we try to discover what causes this pain. And if you consider the truth about the cause of pain, O monks, you will find that pain is caused by the craving for existence, and by lust and desire. It is the craving for existence that leads to rebirth, and it is desire that makes men seek pleasure wherever they can. It is this craving for existence, for passion and for change that causes pain. This is the second Truth.

‘ And having realized the truth about the cause of pain, it is easy to seek the truth about the ending of pain. Pain can only end when craving ends, and when one is completely freed from desire. This is the third Truth.

‘ And the way that leads to the ending of desire, and therefore of pain, O monks, is the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the fourth Truth.’

And Buddha explained the eightfold path to the monks.

‘ Right thinking,’ he said, ‘ is the ability to distinguish between the real and the unreal, between that which is permanent and that which will change and decay. Do not always think that you are separate from other people, and that your pain and suffering are great things, while the suffering of other people is not worth bothering about.

‘ Right intention is the determination to attain knowledge through self-discipline. There is a right way to do everything and good things cannot be



achieved through evil ways. If you want beautiful flowers, you cannot get them by planting weeds.

‘ Right speech is the first step in practising self-discipline. You should speak only true and pure words, and avoid any abuse or slander. It is wrong speech that leads to quarrels and fighting.

‘ Right action consists of deeds that are true and noble, and of no others. When you do something, do not do it in expectation of any gain or reward. Do not do anything out of hate or desire for revenge, for no right action can come from wrong motives.

‘ Right livelihood is earning your living honestly and truthfully. You cannot live rightly by earning money at the expense of someone else, or because of someone else’s work. You must live without hurting or killing any other living thing, for we are all dependent on each other, and bound by the same bonds of life and death.

‘ Right effort is doing things with a wise purpose, fully understanding what you are doing and why. When you want to attain something, you must try to use your efforts in the right way. When a farmer wants to grow rice, he does not plough his fields in winter, or try to harvest his crop in summer.

‘ Right mindfulness is the state of mind that is at peace, having completely shaken off the thought of self, or of “ I ” and “ my ”. Thus the mind knows Truth, and is not misled by false appearances. It is



free from hatred and desire, and conscious that all living things are bound by suffering and death.

‘Right concentration is the final state a man achieves, when he has completely shaken off grief and troubles, false beliefs and false hopes. Then it is that a man achieves a peace that cannot be described, but can only be experienced.’

When Buddha had finished his first sermon, one of the monks, Kondana, attained knowledge and became Buddha’s first disciple. Later on, after Buddha had taught further, the other monks, Vappa and Bhaddiya, Mahanama and Assaji, were also admitted as his disciples.



## XXII

IT SO HAPPENED THAT AT THAT TIME, A YOUNG MAN named Yasa, the son of a wealthy guildmaster, was living in Benares. He woke up one night, and, looking around his luxurious bedchamber, he saw his attendants and musicians asleep all round the room, in unseemly attitudes. Looking at them he felt revolted and gave a cry of disgust, just as Prince Siddhartha had done. He got up and left his house and the city,



and went to the deer park of Isipatana. There he met Buddha and his disciples. Buddha consoled him, well able to understand his disgust, and taught him the doctrine.

Next morning, when Yasa's father learnt that his son had left the house, he determined to find him and bring him back. He followed the marks of his shoes till he too came to the deer park. When Buddha saw him coming, he made Yasa invisible. He talked to the guildmaster, and instructed him, so that he became a believer in the doctrine, and a member of the Order of Monks. Yasa had heard the Buddha teaching his father, and having understood the doctrine he attained full enlightenment. Buddha made him visible again, and explained to his father that when a person's mind had become quite free from attachment to the world, he could not possibly return to it again.) Yasa was then ordained, and became the seventh member of the Order.

The first two women to become disciples were the mother and the former wife of Yasa. Then four friends of Yasa, then fifty others, entered the Order, and all became *arahats*, or learned ones who had overcome the three *asavas* of desire for existence, desire for pleasure, and ignorance.

Buddha then sent his monks out to preach the doctrine, saying, 'Go, monks. Go all over the country and teach the doctrine that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end.'



And soon there were so many people wanting to become disciples that Buddha alone could not perform the admission ceremony, and he asked the monks themselves to perform it. This ceremony consisted of removing the hair, putting on the yellow robe, and reciting three times the threefold pledge: 'I take refuge in Buddha, I take refuge in the Doctrine, I take refuge in the Order.'

Buddha admitted two kinds of disciples. One was the householder or layman, who accepted the doctrine and determined to follow the eightfold path in his daily life. The other was the monk, who abandoned the life of the householder, donned the yellow robe and became a monk and follower of Buddha. Women were accepted only as lay disciples, and not as members of the Order of Monks. It was only many years later that women were permitted to join the Order.

There were ten rules laid down for the conduct of disciples. Lay disciples were only required to accept the first five of these, while members of the Order accepted all ten. The rules were: not to destroy life, not to take what is not given, to abstain from unchastity, not to lie or deceive, to abstain from intoxicating drinks, to eat temperately and not after noon, not to see dancing or hear singing, not to wear garments and ornaments, not to use luxurious beds, and not to accept gold and silver.





### XXIII

AFTER SPENDING THE THREE MONTHS OF THE RAINY season in seclusion, Buddha returned to Uruvela. On the way he met thirty wealthy young men and their wives, who had been amusing themselves in a grove. One of the young men had no wife, and he had therefore brought a courtesan with him. While they were amusing themselves, the courtesan had taken their belongings and fled. The young men were much upset, and angry, and went about looking for her. Not only did they want their belongings back again, but they wanted to punish the woman and show her that she could not treat noble young men such as they in this way and escape punishment.

When they saw Buddha, they asked him whether he had seen such a woman anywhere, and they described her to him.

‘What do you think, young men,’ Buddha replied; ‘which is better? That you should go in search of a woman, or that you should go in search of yourselves?’

The answer was obvious. ‘It is better, lord, for



us to 'go in search of ourselves,' they said, feeling rather ashamed.

Buddha then told them to sit down, and he taught them the doctrine. Thus instead of finding the courtesan and their belongings, they found the teaching of Buddha and, being eager to become disciples, they were ordained.

At Uruvela, there lived an old ascetic with matted hair and ashes covering his head and body. He was called Uruvela Kassapa and had five hundred disciples. Further down the river lived his two brothers, Nadi Kassapa, with three hundred disciples, and Gaya Kassapa with two hundred disciples. Buddha went to Uruvela Kassapa and his disciples, and began to teach them.

Kassapa did not like this, for he refused to admit that Buddha's knowledge was greater than his. It was only after Buddha had stayed and taught for several months that Uruvela Kassapa was convinced and, bowing with his head at Buddha's feet, he asked for ordination. Buddha told him to consult his pupils. When he did so, they at once cut off their matted hair, and threw it together with their sacrificial utensils into the river, and were all ordained.

As the hair and the utensils floated down the river, the pupils of Nadi Kassapa and Gaya Kassapa saw them, and wondered whether some accident had befallen their comrades. They hurried to the ashram of Uruvela Kassapa, and when they learnt what had



happened, they all did the same, and were ordained. Buddha taught them and they became *arahats*.

Buddha then journeyed to Rajagaha, the capital of King Seniya Bimbisara. When the king heard of his arrival, he went to visit Buddha and listened to his teaching, mingling with a crowd of other listeners. He invited Buddha and his disciples to his palace, where he served Buddha with his own hands. After the meal, he gave a park called Veluvana, the bamboo park, to Buddha and the Order, for their use.



## XXIV

AT THAT TIME THERE LIVED IN RAJAGAHA AN ASCETIC named Sanjaya, and among his disciples were two named Sariputta and Moggallana. These two had been close friends since childhood. They had left the world together in order to seek the doctrine of release from worldly attachment under Sanjaya. But having stayed with this teacher and learnt all that he could teach them, they wished to find another teacher. They had sworn to each other that whoever should first win the immortal knowledge they sought, should at once tell the other.



One day, early in the morning, Sariputta saw Assaji, one of Buddha's disciples, going towards the town with a begging-bowl in his hands. When Sariputta saw the way in which Assaji walked, decorously and with serene untroubled eyes, he thought to himself, 'This person is surely an *arahat*. No other person would walk in such a manner.'

He was anxious to talk to him and find out how he had become an *arahat*, but he did not wish to disturb him in his work. He followed Assaji silently until the *arahat* had finished collecting alms. Then Sariputta went up to him and said, 'Your faculties are clear, friend; the colour of your skin is pure and clean. Whom do you follow in leaving the world? Who is your teacher, and whose doctrine do you approve?'

Then Assaji told him that he followed Sakyamuni, the great sage of the Sakyas, the enlightened one.

'What is your master's teaching?' asked Sariputta eagerly.

'I have only recently left the world, and cannot explain the doctrine and discipline at much length,' answered Assaji, 'but I can tell you the essence of it in a few words.'

'That is all that I want,' said Sariputta. 'I would be grateful if you explained it to me.'

'The Buddha teaches that the cause of pain is craving for existence and pleasure. The way to end pain is to end craving,' explained Assaji.



And Sariputta understood and, realizing something of the greatness of such teaching, he said, ' You have achieved the sorrowless state through that knowledge.'

He took leave of Assaji, and hurried to find his friend. When Moggallana saw him, he was surprised at his friend's clear and untroubled countenance, and asked, ' Your faculties are clear, friend; the colour of your skin is pure and clean. Can it be that you have attained the immortal knowledge? '

' Yes,' said Sariputta, ' I have attained the immortal knowledge.' And he hastened to tell Moggallana of his meeting with Assaji, and what he had learnt. And when Moggallana heard this, he also understood and recognized the truth of such teaching.

Then Sariputta and Moggallana went to the other disciples of Sanjaya and told them that they intended to follow the Buddha. On learning why these two were leaving, the other disciples decided to go with them.

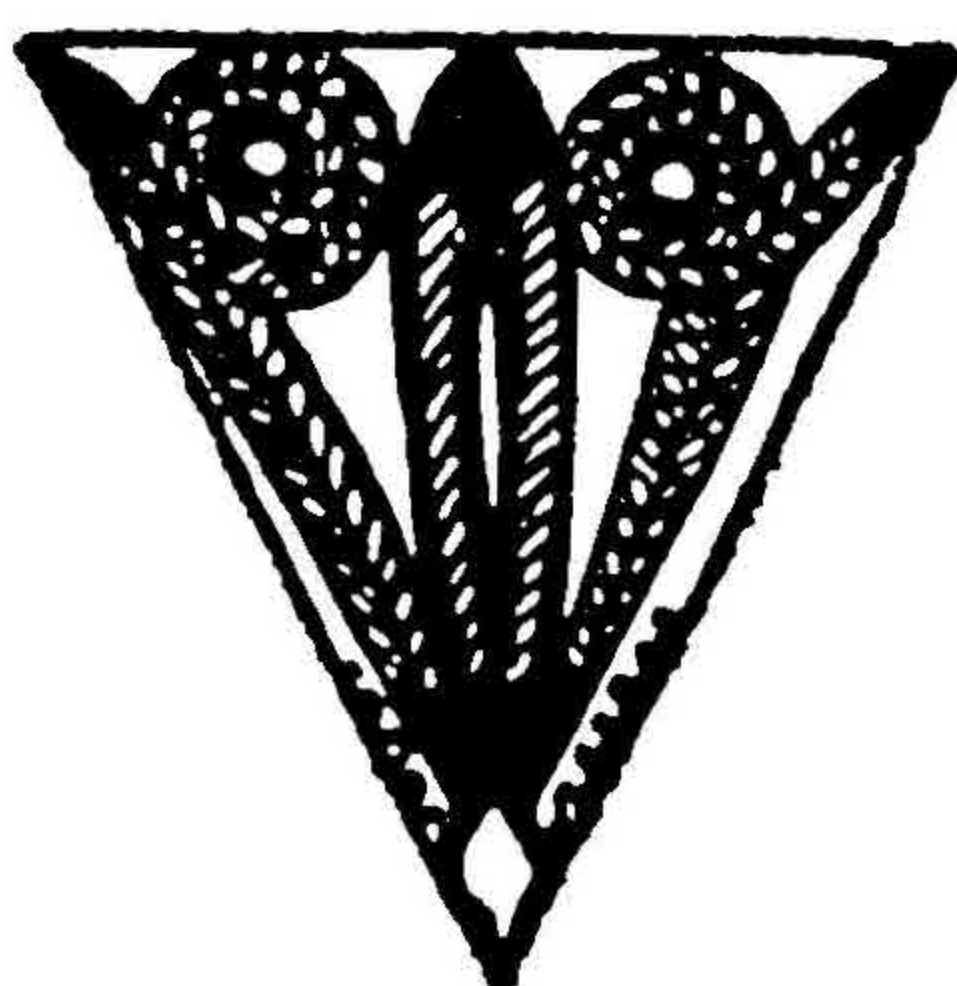
Now when Buddha saw these two men coming towards him, he said, ' These two companions shall be my chief pair of disciples.'

They came up to him, and asked to be ordained.

At first the other disciples were angry that these two new members should be made chief disciples over their heads, and they muttered to one another, saying that this was not just. But Buddha explained that in their previous lives, these two had made the wish



to become the chief disciples of a Buddha, and now their wish had been fulfilled.



## XXV

DURING THE WINTER, BUDDHA RETURNED TO RAJAGAHA with his disciples. When king Suddhodana learnt that his son was preaching in that city, he sent a courtier attended by a thousand men to invite Buddha to visit Kapilavatthu. The courtier and his attendants came to Rajagaha, and found Buddha preaching. They stood by, wishing to wait until he had finished, but as they listened they became *arahats*, and after the preaching was over, they were ordained as members of the Order. Being *arahats*, they were indifferent to the affairs of the world, and so they never gave Buddha the message from his father.

King Suddhodana sent another courtier with another thousand attendants, but these too became *arahats* and were ordained as members. King Suddhodana sent yet another mission, and yet another, sending nine missions in all, but all with the same result.

Then the king called Kaludayin, who had been a



playmate of Siddhartha in his childhood and youth. The king asked him to go and persuade Buddha to visit the city and his father. Kaludayin went to Rajagaha, and he too became an *arahat*, and joined the Order. But he did not forget the message of the king, and in the beginning of spring, on the full moon day of the month of Phagguna, he gave Buddha the message from his father.

Buddha decided to accept the invitation, and set out with 20,000 *arahats* for Kapilavatthu. They travelled slowly, being so many, while Kaludayin went ahead to tell the king, and to make preparations for their arrival.

When Buddha and his followers arrived in Kapilavatthu, the people of the city offered them the Nigrodha park as a dwelling-place. King Suddhodana came to his son, and did reverence to him, and all the Sakyas followed his example.

The next morning, following their usual practice, Buddha and his monks went round the city begging for alms. Now in Kapilavatthu the people knew Buddha as prince Siddhartha, the son of their king, and when they saw him going round begging for alms, they were surprised and angry that a Sakya prince should so humiliate himself. So they talked of it to one another, and the news soon reached the king.

Suddhodana was exceedingly angry, and he hurried into the streets. He found that the report was true, for he saw his son going round the streets with a



begging-bowl in his hands, asking for alms. He spoke to him in his agitation, and said, 'Why do you disgrace yourself and your family by begging in this way?'

Buddha was quite unmoved by the king's agitation, and said, 'It is our custom, O king, to beg for alms in this manner.'

'Surely it is not the custom of Kshatriya kings to beg,' said the king. 'We are descended from a royal lineage, and you know as well as I do that it is not the habit of kings to beg.'

'The royal lineage is your lineage,' replied Buddha, 'and it is you who are descended from kings. My lineage is the Buddha lineage, and I am descended from Buddhas such as Dipankara, Kondanna, Kassapa and many others. These and thousands of other Buddhas have got their livelihood by begging.'

Then Buddha lifted up his voice and said, 'One should practise well the *dhamma* or doctrine, for who practises the *dhamma* rests in bliss both in this world and the next.'

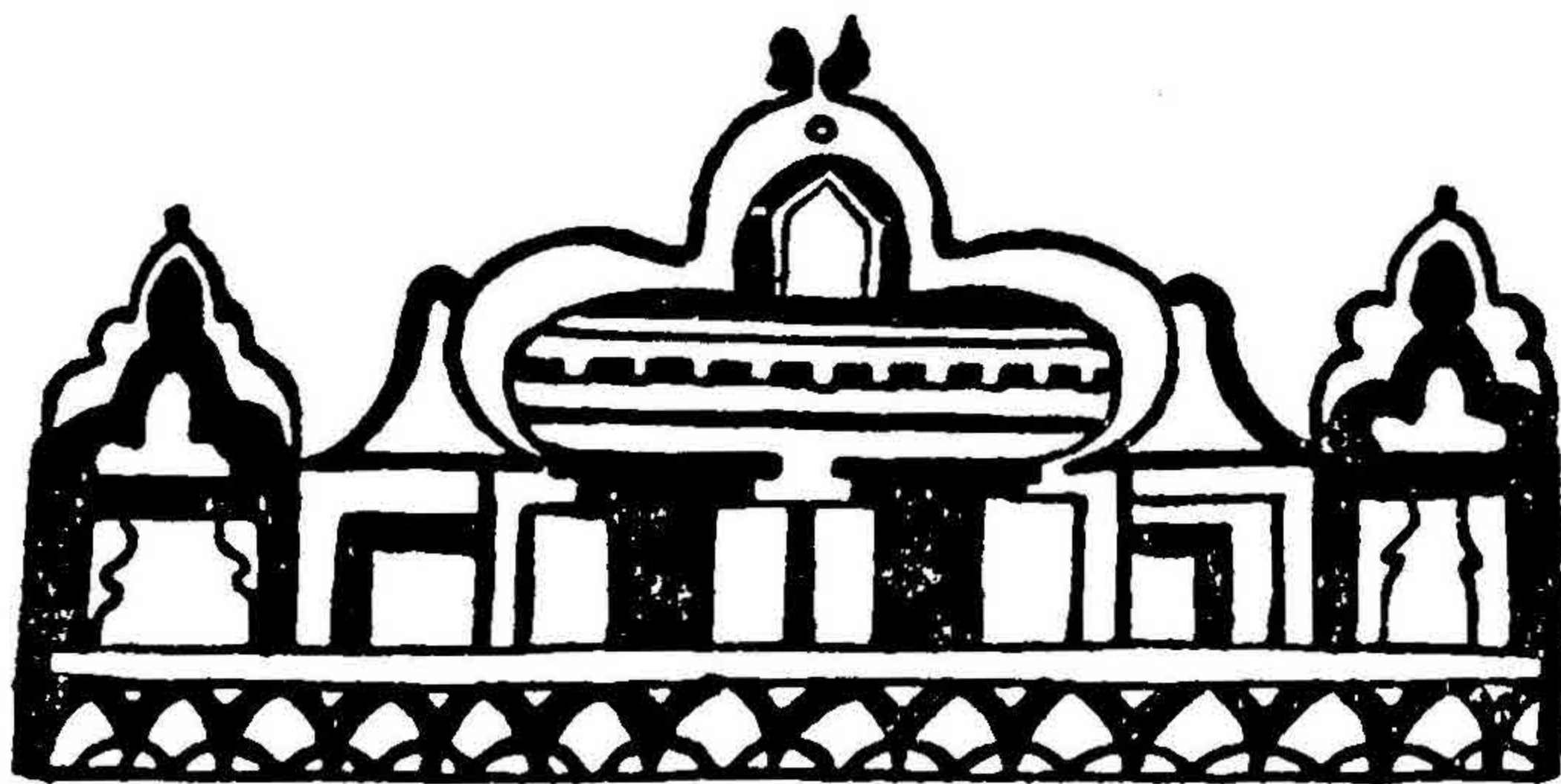
Abashed and slightly ashamed, the king heard and understood this, and thus entered the first of the three stages of conversion, that of entering-the-stream. In this stage, the person destroys the three bonds of belief in a permanent self, of trust in ceremonies and good works, and of doubt. After a person has entered this stage, he is not reborn in a state of suffering, and is destined for enlightenment.



The second stage is that of the once-returner, when the person has reduced passion, hatred and confusion of mind. If a person dies in this stage, he is reborn only once again before attaining Nirvana.

The third stage is that of the non-returner, when the person has succeeded in destroying the bonds of sensuality and malice. A person who dies in this stage is reborn in a higher existence, not in this world, and attains Nirvana there.

The stage after this is that of *arahatship*, when a person has destroyed all the bonds and the *asavas*, and craving has been destroyed through the knowledge of the origin of pain and the way in which it can be ended. No layman can enter this stage, for any person who becomes an *arahat* naturally leaves the world, since he has destroyed the craving that attaches men to the ordinary things of life.



## XXVI

ALL THE WOMEN OF THE PALACE EXCEPT YASODHARA came to listen to Buddha. And Buddha said, 'One should practise well the *dhamma*. One should not



practise evil. Who practises the *dhamma* rests in bliss, both in this world and in the next.'

When queen Mahaprajapati, foster-mother of Siddhartha, heard and understood this, she entered the first stage of conversion. When king Suddhodana heard and understood this, he entered the second stage, that of the once-returner.

Now some of the palace attendants went to Yasodhara, the mother of Rahula, and said, 'All the palace women have gone to listen to Buddha. Why do you not go too, to do reverence to him?'

And Yasodhara answered, 'If I have any worth at all, my master will himself come to me. When he comes, I will do him reverence.'

When Buddha had finished preaching to the women of the palace, he came to Yasodhara's chamber accompanied by his two disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana. Yasodhara came swiftly up to him, and clasped his ankles, and did reverence to him.

King Suddhodana then told Buddha of her great love for him. 'Lord,' he said, 'when my daughter heard that you were wearing yellow robes, she too put on a yellow robe. When she heard that you ate but one meal a day, she too insisted on taking only one meal a day. When she knew you had given up a large and comfortable bed, she too lay on a narrow, hard couch. When she learnt that you had given up garlands and scents, she gave them up as well.'

Buddha heard this and said, 'In a previous life too







did she show her great devotion to her husband. She was a fairy named Canda. A great king came, and desired to win her love. He shot her husband with a poisoned arrow and began to woo her. But she pleaded to the gods to restore her husband, and when they would not listen, she mocked them, saying, "Are there no guardians of the world left, or are they all gone abroad, or are they dead, that they do not protect my husband?" The gods admired her devotion and courage, and restored her husband to life.'



## XXVII

BUDDHA'S HALF-BROTHER, SON OF QUEEN MAHAPRAJAPATI, was now 16 years old. Since his elder brother had left the world, he was the chief prince and heir to the throne. It had been decided that he would be both married and consecrated as heir-apparent on the same day.

On the day appointed for the marriage and the consecration, Buddha handed his begging-bowl to Nanda, and asked him to hold it for him. After a while, Buddha got up and went away, without having taken the bowl back. Nanda was not very sure what he



should do, but after some thought he decided that he ought to follow Buddha in order to return it to him.

His bride, who had been watching from the doorway of her chamber, cried out when she saw him going, and asked him to come back. But he did not listen, and followed Buddha right up to the monastery in Nigrodha park.

Buddha then turned and asked him, 'Are you going to leave the world?'

And Nanda replied, 'Yes.'

Thus Nanda was ordained as a member of the Order.

Seven days after Nanda had joined Buddha's followers, Yasodhara decided to send her son to his father. She dressed Rahula in his best clothes and decked him with rich ornaments. Then pointing out Buddha to him, where he sat among his monks, she said, 'Rahula dear, do you see that golden-coloured ascetic looking like Brahma, and attended by thousands of monks? He is your father. Before he left the world to become an ascetic, he had four great vases full of valuable treasure. Since he has left, we have not seen these vases or the treasure. Go to your father, then, and ask him for your inheritance. Say that you are the prince, and that when you become king you will be a universal monarch, and will need wealth. The son, as you know, is the owner of what belonged to the father. Thus the treasure that belonged to your father must belong to you.'



Buddha was dining in the palace when Rahula came up to him. The young lad was seized with love for his father, whom he now saw for the first time. When Buddha had finished his meal, Rahula said, 'I have come to ask for my inheritance, O ascetic.'

Buddha looked and recognized his son. However, he said nothing but, rising from the table, he left the palace and walked towards the park. Rahula followed, and though several of Buddha's disciples tried to persuade him to return to the palace, he refused to do so.

When Buddha reached the park, he thought to himself, 'He is asking for his father's wealth. But that wealth is liable to change and will be spent. In any case such wealth is a source of trouble and annoyance. Instead of the treasure, I will give him something far more valuable. I will give him the noble wealth I received under the bodhi tree. In that way he will receive an inheritance beyond this world, and something that will never be spent nor be changed.'

He called Sariputta and told him to admit Rahula to the Order.

When king Suddhodana heard of this, he was stricken with grief, and he thought to himself, 'One by one all my children and grandchildren are leaving the world, and I shall be left alone without anyone to help me.'

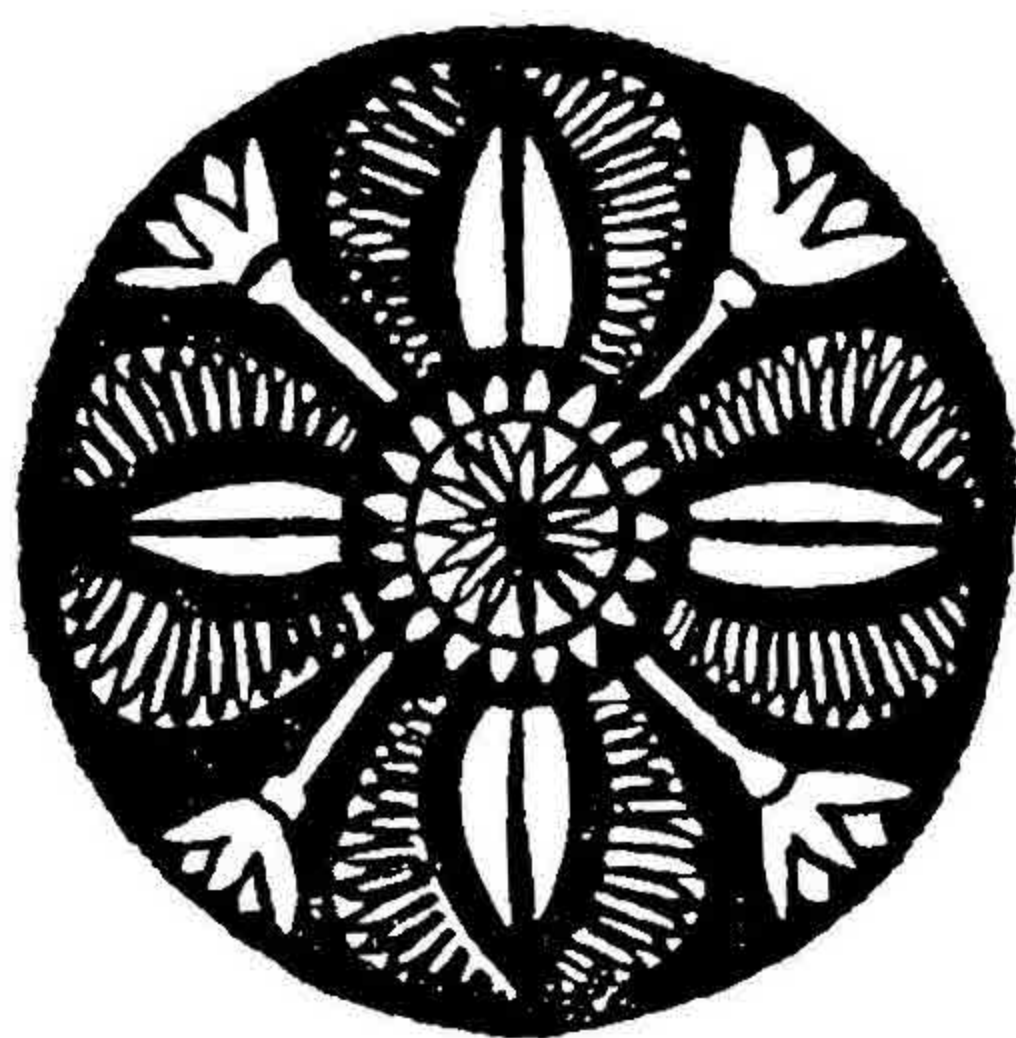
He hurried to the park, wishing to speak to Buddha. When he had sought him out, he said, 'Lord, I have



come to ask a boon of you. You know that when you left the world it made us all very sad, and left us quite lonely. Then Nanda left to follow you, and now Rahula has done the same. This has caused me a great deal of pain, since all my sons and even my grandsons are leaving the world and the kingdom, leaving me to a lonely old age, with no one to relieve me of my responsibility and work. And that is why, since the love of a father for his son is a great and a good thing, I have come to ask this boon. Make it a rule of your Order that no son is to be admitted without the permission of his father and mother.'

Buddha realized that what the king said was just, and so he granted the boon. २५

From that time on it became one of the rules of the Order that no son should be admitted without the permission of his parents.



## XXVIII

ONE DAY WHEN BUDDHA WAS TEACHING HIS FATHER, king Suddhodana said, 'Lord, while you were practising austerities, a holy person came to me and said, "Your son is dead". But I refused to believe him and



said, " My son will not die without attaining enlightenment ".'

Buddha then told Suddhodana how in a previous life people had come to him, and shown him bones, telling him that they belonged to his son. Yet he had refused to believe that his son was dead. And hearing this Suddhodana entered the third stage of conversion, that of the non-returner.

When Buddha was preparing to leave Kapilavatthu and return to Rajagaha, 80,000 Sakyas joined him, one from each family. However, no one joined him from the family of Amitodana, though there were two sons, Mahanama and Anuruddha. Mahanama proposed that one of them should go, and urged Anuruddha to do so.

At first, Anuruddha's mother refused permission, but finally agreed on condition that his companion Bhaddiya, one of the Sakya rajas, go with him. She thought to herself, ' Bhaddiya is one of the rajas of the Sakyas, and has duties to the king and the country. He will not be able to leave these duties and go. Hence my son will not go either.'

But Bhaddiya readily agreed to go, and within seven days he had arranged to hand over all his duties to his brothers and his sons, and was ready to leave.

Bhaddiya and Anuruddha set off accompanied by four of their friends, Ananda, Bhagu, Kimbila and Devadatta. Ananda and Devadatta were cousins of Buddha. Ananda was later to become one of the



best-loved of Buddha's disciples, while Devadatta, who had never forgotten how Siddhartha had defeated him in the tournaments at Yasodhara's *swayamvara*, was to prove himself an evil traitor.

The young men took their family barber Upali with them. After having journeyed some way from home, they gave all their ornaments to Upali, and asked him to take these back to their families. But Upali was afraid to return, lest the families of the young men should become angry with him, and so he decided to go with them and follow Buddha too.

The young men caught up with Buddha and his followers at Anupiya, and asked that Upali be admitted to the Order first. They thought that by having their former servant as their senior in the Order, their pride would be humbled and they would be better fitted to be followers of Buddha.



## XXIX

NOW WHILE BUDDHA WAS AT RAJAGAHA A MAN NAMED Sudatta, a wealthy dweller of the city of Savatthi, happened to visit the city. He had heard much about



the teaching of Buddha, and he came to listen to his teaching. He was converted to the doctrine, and invited Buddha to spend the rainy season at Savatthi. Buddha accepted the invitation.

Sudatta knew that Buddha and his disciples always spent the rainy season in seclusion in some quiet place, where they could be by themselves, and turn the wheel of the excellent doctrine in peace. He began to look around for such a place near Savatthi. He finally decided that the park of the young prince Jeta was the most suitable, so he set about to buy that park.

Prince Jeta told him that he would only sell Jetavana if it was covered with gold pieces, believing that this would be impossible. Sudatta, however, set about the task, and brought cartload after cartload of gold pieces till nearly the whole park was covered, and only a small space remained. When Jeta saw this he was greatly impressed by Sudatta's devotion to Buddha, and asked that he be allowed to give the part that remained uncovered. Sudatta naturally agreed at once, and Jeta built a gateway and a rest-house on that piece of ground.

It was while Buddha was at Jetavana that Kisa Gotami, a woman of Savatthi, came to see him to ask for help. Her little son, whom she had loved more than anything else in the world, had died. Grief-stricken, she refused to let him be buried, but carried him about on her hip, pretending that he was still alive. People advised her to go and see Buddha and,



thinking that he might bring her son back to life, she came to Jetavana. She told Buddha how her little son had died, and asked for his help. Buddha, understanding what the matter was, promised to help, and said, 'Go to the town, Kisa Gotami, and bring me a mustard seed from a house where no one has ever died.'

Kisa Gotami, thinking that he would work magic with the mustard seed and bring her son back to life, returned hopefully to Savatthi. But though she went through all the town, knocking from door to door, she could not find a single house where no one had died. And gradually she realized why Buddha had sent her on this quest. She realized that death was a common thing, and not something that had come only to her son.

So she took her dead child to the cemetery and left him there, saying, 'My little one, I thought that death had come to you alone, but now I know that it is common to everyone, and that what lives must die. I realize that I am not the only person who suffers in this world.'

She returned to Jetavana, and Buddha asked her, 'Have you brought the mustard seed you went to seek?'

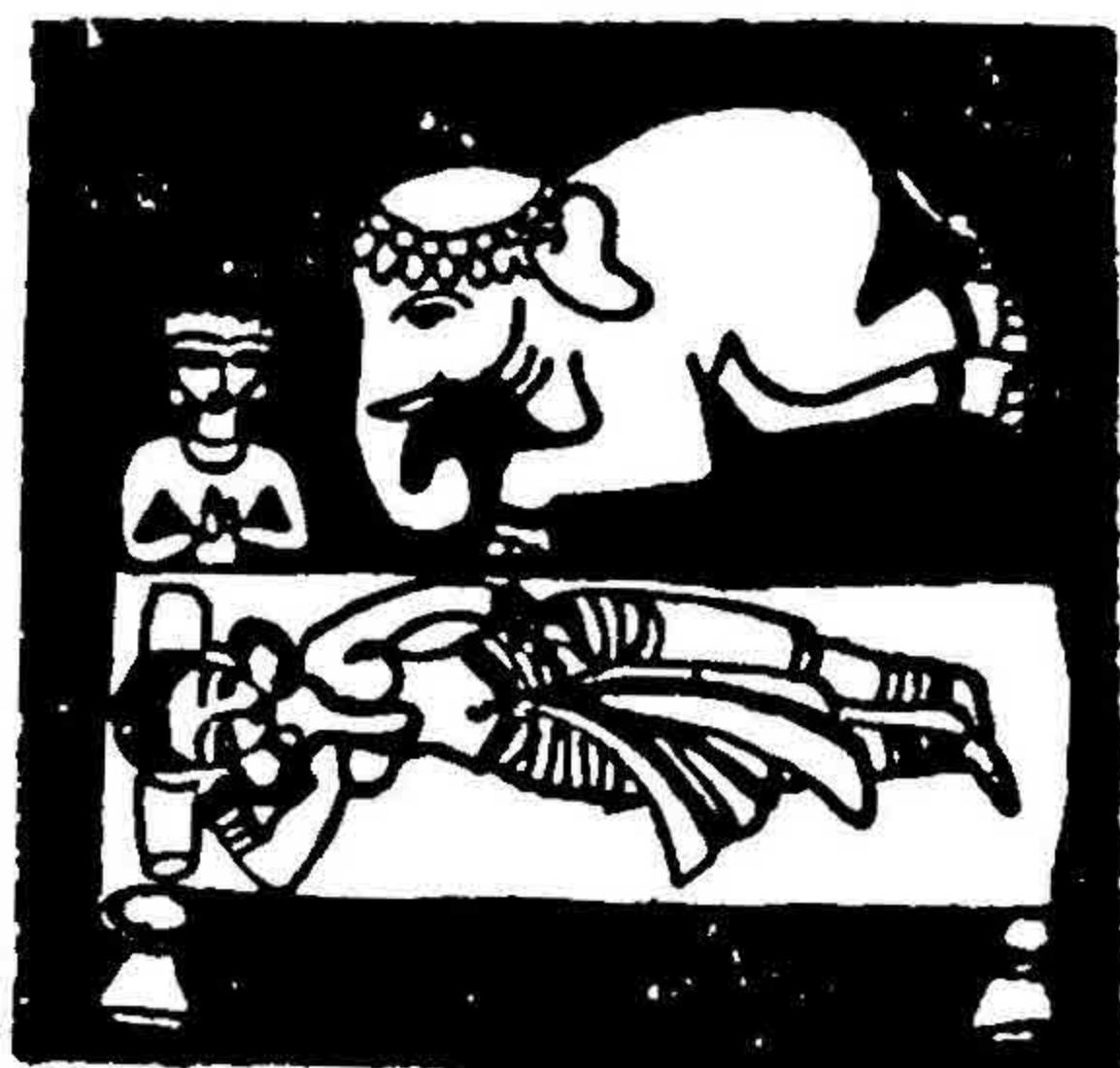
'No, lord,' she replied, 'but I have learnt the lesson you wished to teach me.'

And Buddha taught her: 'To the person whose mind is filled with the love of children and of wealth,



death comes like the coming of a swift flood upon a sleeping village.'

Kisa Gotami understood this, and entered the first stage, that of entering-the-stream. She asked to be ordained, and became one of Buddha's disciples.



### XXX

IN THE FIFTH YEAR AFTER HIS ENLIGHTENMENT, BUDDHA was spending the rainy months at Vesali, when he came to know that his father was shortly going to die. He hurried to Kapilavatthu, and preached to him on his death-bed, so that Suddhodana attained *arahatship* before he died.

After the king's death, Queen Mahaprajapati came to Buddha in Nigrodha park, and asked that she might be allowed to leave the world under the doctrine and the discipline of the Buddha. Buddha refused, believing that it was not right that women should be admitted as nuns to the Order.

After Buddha had left, Mahaprajapati cut off her hair, dressed herself in yellow robes and set off with



some other Sakya women for Vesali. They arrived there tired and bruised after the long journey, and came again to see Buddha. Ananda, who was at that time serving his turn as the personal attendant of Buddha, met them, and they told him what it was they wished.

Ananda went to Buddha and asked him to admit these women to the Order, as they desired. Buddha continued in his refusal. Now Ananda, who had a very tender and loving heart and could not bear to see any living thing suffer, sympathized strongly with the desire of these women to leave the world and join the Order. He asked Buddha, 'Is it possible for a woman to attain the three stages of conversion?'

'Yes, certainly it is possible,' replied Buddha.

'Then why do you refuse them in the Order?' asked Ananda. 'These women have suffered much, and they deserve to be allowed to join. I beg you to let them in.'

At last, Buddha agreed, and the women were admitted as full members of the Order, and they were the first women to be allowed to join.

Buddha made it a condition, however, that all women admitted to the Order as nuns should follow eight very strict rules that he laid down, so that the Order might not be weakened or destroyed by their coming. For he was afraid that the discipline of the Order would suffer due to the presence of women.





## XXXI

AND YEAR AFTER YEAR, BUDDHA WENT ABOUT THE country, teaching and explaining, except during the months of the rainy season, when he lived quietly in one place with some of his monks. And during his wanderings he came across many strange people and met with many strange incidents. There were many people who were jealous of him, or angry with him, because he led the people away from their false teachings. But wherever he went there were people who listened to him and realized that he taught the truth. And by following his teaching, and that of his disciples, many were the people who found peace and happiness.

And often, to explain his teaching, Buddha would tell the people stories of his previous lives, when he had been a Bodhisattva, or one who is destined to become a Buddha in a future life.

It was thus that he told them of the time when he was the leader of a herd of eight thousand monkeys living on a large mango tree, on the banks of the river Ganges. The fruit of this mango tree was sweeter than any other fruit in the world.



One of the branches of the tree grew out over the river. The Bodhisattva noticed this and, having called the herd together, he said, 'If any fruit drops from that branch into the river, it will be carried down by the current. Anyone who happens to find and eat it will surely come to look for the tree which bore such sweet fruit, and he might well come here and do us some harm. Therefore go and pick off all the fruit growing on that branch so that none falls into the water.'

The monkeys did as they were told, but one mango was so well hidden by leaves that no one noticed it. When this ripened, it fell into the water and drifted down.

Lower down the river, the king of Benares was bathing in the morning, as was his custom, when he saw the mango drifting down. He took it and ate it, and at once determined to find the tree that bore such sweet fruit. He sent out his attendants to look for the tree, but they could not find it. The king then gathered together his army, and set out with them to find the tree.

They came at last to the great mango tree and saw the herd of monkeys living in it, and feeding on the fruit. The king determined to take the tree for himself, and so he ordered his soldiers to shoot and kill all the monkeys.

When the monkeys saw the king and his army and realized what was happening, they were very frighten-



ed. There was no way in which they could escape, for the nearest tree was on the other side of the river, and not even the strongest could jump across. The Bodhisattva calmed them, and promised to save them.

Then, before the archers had time to fit arrows to their bows, he jumped into the river and swam across with swift, clean strokes. On the other side, he cut a long bamboo and tied one end of it to the tree. He tied the other end to his waist, and jumped across the river to the mango tree. However, the bamboo was just a little too short, and could not reach the mango tree. So the Bodhisattva let it remain tied to him, while he hung on to a branch of the tree. Then he ordered the monkeys to cross the river by using his body and the bamboo as a bridge.

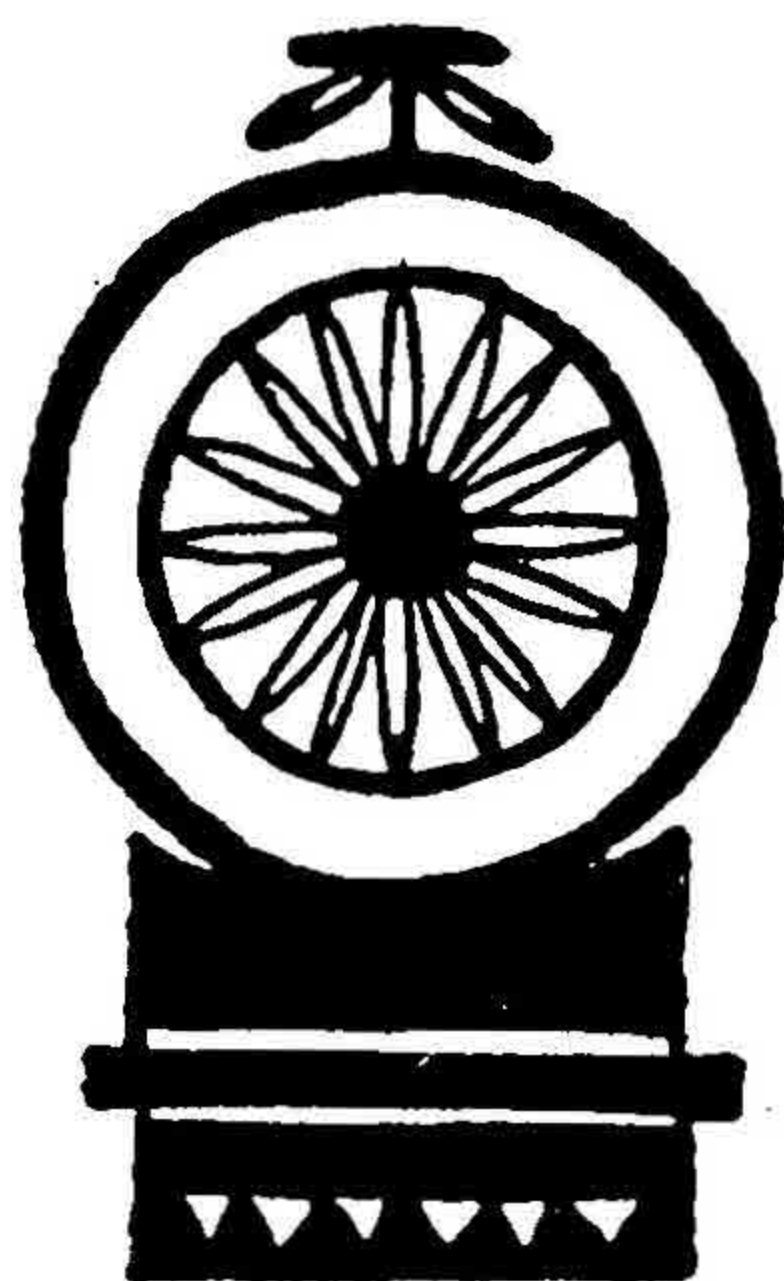
The monkeys scampered across as fast as they could, while the Bodhisattva grew weaker and weaker from the strain. Finally, only one monkey remained to cross. This, however, was an evil monkey and, being jealous of the leadership of the Bodhisattva, he stamped hard on his back and broke it as he passed over.

Thus, after all the monkeys had crossed the bridge safely, the Bodhisattva remained hanging from the branch, bruised and broken, and on the point of death.

The king had been watching, and when he saw what had happened he ordered his men to help the Bodhisattva down and to look after his hurts. But in spite of all their efforts, they could not save him, and the leader of the monkeys died shortly after.



The king was deeply moved, and left the mango tree untouched, vowing that he would never try to rob any living creature as long as he lived.



## XXXII

IN ANOTHER LIFE, THE BODHISATTVA WAS A WHITE elephant named Chadanta, leader of a large herd of elephants. This herd lived near a beautiful lake surrounded by seven great mountains.

Chadanta had six tusks of different colours, like the stems of graceful water-lilies. He had two wives named Chullasubhadha and Mahasubhadha.

One day as they were feeding in the forest, Chadanta shook the branch of a tree with his trunk, and it so happened that all the flowers fell on Mahasubhadha, while all the thorns and red ants fell on Chullasubhadha. Chullasubhadha noticed this, and thought to herself, 'My lord loves Mahasubhadha better than he loves me. That is why he shook flowers over her body, and thorns and red ants over mine.' And she grew jealous and bitter.







Some days later, one of the young elephants, who had been playing in the waters of the lake, brought a beautiful lotus that he had found and gave it to the leader. Chadanta took the lotus and gave it to Mahasubhadha. Chullasubhadha saw this and grew more jealous and angry than ever. She determined to take her revenge, cost what it might.

She prayed that she might die and be born again as the daughter of a king. Her prayer was granted, and she died shortly after, and was born as the daughter of king Madha. She grew up into a beautiful woman, and was given in marriage to the king of Benares.

The king of Benares was very fond of his beautiful wife, and promised to give her whatever she wished. The queen had not forgotten her desire for revenge, so she said, 'Send me all the hunters in your kingdom, O king.'

The king granted her wish. When the hunters came before her, she chose one, Sonuttara, because he looked stronger and more fierce than the others. 'Listen, Sonuttara,' she said, 'there is a white elephant with six tusks living near the lake beyond the seven mountains. Go, seek him out, and bring me his tusks. If you succeed in this, I will give you a great reward. If you fail, your reward will be death.'

Sonuttara promised that he would find the elephant and bring her the six tusks. Taking several hunters with him, he set off for the lake beyond the mountains. The mountains were high, and the way was



long, so that one by one all his companions died, and Sonuttara was left to continue the journey alone. After travelling for seven years, seven months, and seven days, he managed to reach the lake.

He soon spotted the white elephant with the six tusks. Disguising himself as a holy monk, he approached Chadanta, and when he was near enough he shot him with a poisoned arrow. When the other elephants in the herd saw this, they trumpeted with rage, and would have trampled the hunter to death. But Chadanta restrained them, and prevented them from hurting Sonuttara.

Then Chadanta asked Sonuttara why he wished to kill him. Sonuttara told him the whole story, and said, 'It is the command of the queen. She has ordered me to bring your six tusks back to her.'

When Chadanta heard this, he realized that the queen was none other than his former wife, Chullasubhadha, and he understood why she wanted his tusks.

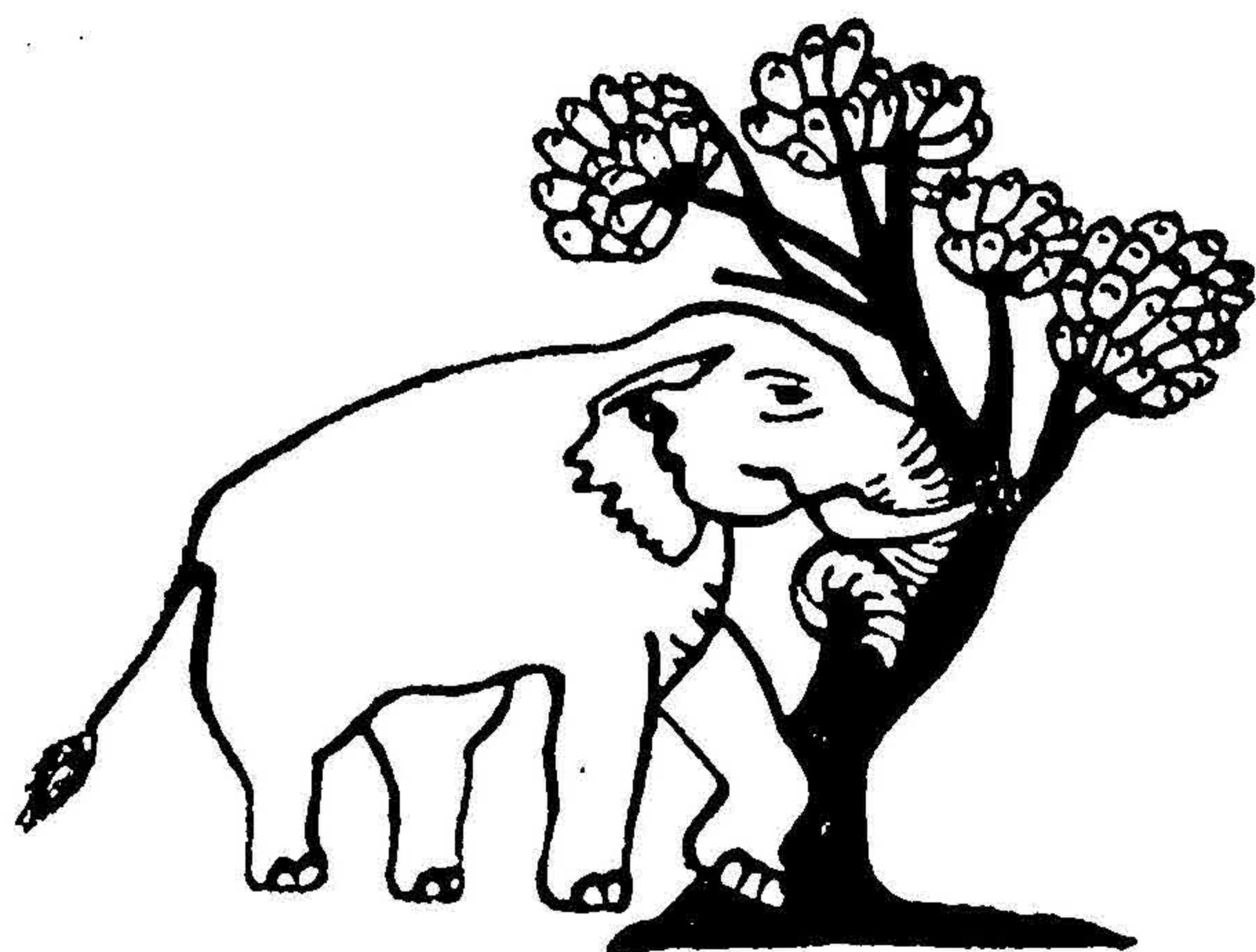
'Then cut my tusks and take them,' he said to the hunter.

Sonuttara tried to cut them, but they were too hard and he failed. When Chadanta saw this, he wound his trunk round each of them in turn and pulled them out one by one. He suffered great pain, and blood poured from his wounds. No sooner had he managed to pull out the last of his tusks than he collapsed, and died.

Sonuttara took the tusks and carried them back to



Benares. He took them before the queen and told her how he had managed to obtain them. When the queen heard the story, she was filled with remorse and sorrow. She recalled the happy days she had spent with her lord, and the memory broke her heart, and she died.



### XXXIII

IN ANOTHER LIFE, THE BODHISATTVA WAS BORN AS A stag, and lived in a huge forest. One day, a great fire broke out in the forest and, being fanned by a strong wind, it spread rapidly. All the birds and animals of the forest were panic-stricken, and fled from the roaring flames, and the whole forest echoed and re-echoed with their cries.

But through the forest there flowed a fierce torrent, and only the big and strong animals could cross it. Pursued by the flames, however, all the animals, big and small, threw themselves into the water one after another, and many were swept away.

When the stag saw this, he jumped into the river,



and placed himself across it in order to help the smaller animals to cross. The angry waters beat against him, and battered him against the rocks, so that his body was soon bruised and broken. He persevered, however, until all the animals had managed to cross.

Just as the stag was about to drag himself out of the water, he saw a lame hare come limping along. He stayed to help him across, but this last effort so tired him that he did not have enough strength left to save himself. Thus, exhausted and bruised, he fell into the stormy waters and died.



#### XXXIV

IN ANOTHER LIFE, THE BODHISATTVA WAS THE PUPIL of a learned Brahmin. This Brahmin knew the Veda-bha charm. At a time when the planets were in a certain position, the charm could make the seven precious things rain from the sky—gold, silver, pearls, coral, cat's-eyes, rubies and diamonds.

One day the Brahmin took his pupil and set off on a long journey. They had not gone far, however, when a gang of five hundred robbers set on them, and tied the Brahmin up. They demanded ransom from



him, and allowed the pupil to return to his home in order to fetch it. Before the pupil left, he warned the Brahmin, 'Wait till I return. Do not use the Veda-bha charm in order to pay the robbers, or great harm will fall on you and on the robbers.'

After the Bodhisattva had left, the Brahmin noticed that the planets were in the favourable position necessary for the charm. Not heeding the warning of his pupil, he repeated the charm. The seven precious things fell from the sky, and the robbers collected the treasure with much excitement. As it was much more than they had expected as ransom for the Brahmin, they set him free and got ready to go on their way.

Just then another band of five hundred robbers arrived and, seeing the great baskets filled with gold and silver and precious stones, they asked, 'From where did you get all this great wealth?'

The leader of the first gang said, 'We got it from this Brahmin. If you want some too, catch him and make him repeat the charm which makes such wealth rain from the skies.'

The second band at once seized the Brahmin and ordered him to obtain wealth for them too. The poor Brahmin was very frightened now, and explained: 'I can only use the charm when the planets are in a certain position. Since I have already used it this time, I shall have to wait until the next time that they are in that position. That will not be for another year.'



‘What, you scoundrel!’ said the robbers, ‘you got all that wealth for the other gang within a few minutes, and now you tell us to wait for a whole year! We will teach you to try and fool us, and play tricks with us.’ And they fell on him in great rage, and beat him to death.

They then pursued the first gang, rushed on them with wild cries and slew them all. They took the great baskets of treasure and proceeded to share it amongst themselves.

But as each of them wanted more than the other, they were unable to agree as to how it should be shared. They began to quarrel violently and, fighting amongst themselves, they killed each other, so that by and by only two of the robbers remained alive. These two were a little wiser, and they decided not to quarrel but to divide the treasure into two equal halves.

When this was done, one of the robbers set off for the village to buy some food, while the other stayed behind to guard the treasure. As he waited for his friend, he could not remove his greedy eyes from the pile of wealth. ‘I would like to have it all for myself,’ he thought. ‘When my comrade returns I will kill him, and take his share as well.’

Meanwhile his companion, having purchased the food, thought to himself, ‘I would like to have all the treasure for myself. I will poison his food and kill my comrade, and then take it all for myself.’ So he



bought some poison and put it into the food of his companion.

As he returned to the forest where he had left his companion, he was attacked from behind and killed. The companion was now alone with the treasure all for himself. Being hungry, he first sat down to eat what his friend had brought for him. No sooner had he eaten the food than the poison took effect, and he died.

When the Bodhisattva returned from the home of the Brahmin with the ransom, he saw the murdered body of his master. A little further on, he found the bodies of the five hundred robbers, and then he found the bodies of the second band of robbers who had killed each other. Finally he found the bodies of the two companions.

And there, lying unheeded, was the treasure which no one had managed to keep.



## XXXV

ONCE, WHEN BUDDHA WAS AT KOSAMBI, A GREAT DISPUTE arose amongst his disciples. One monk had committed an offence, but at the time he had not known that



it was wrong. Some monks said that since he had committed an offence he should be punished according to the rules of the Order. Others said that since he had not known that it was wrong, he had not really committed any offence at all, and therefore should not be punished.

Buddha endeavoured to calm this dispute by telling them the story of Dighiti, a former king of the Kosalas.

King Dighiti had been attacked by king Brahmadatta of the Kasis, and been defeated. Dighiti and his son Dighavu escaped to Benares, where they lived in disguise for several years. However, one of his attendants finally betrayed Dighiti, and handed him over to his enemy. Brahmadatta lost no time in executing his rival.

Dighavu continued to live in disguise, and after some time managed to become an attendant to king Brahmadatta. One day when the king was out hunting, Dighavu followed him into a thick grove and, finding that they were alone, he revealed himself. Brahmadatta was sorely frightened, being sure that the son would revenge his father's murder. However, Dighavu remembered his father's oft-repeated advice, 'Never hate anyone. You cannot calm another's hatred by hating him in return. The only way to remove hatred is by love.'

He spared the king's life, and let him return in safety to his palace. Brahmadatta was so impressed



with this, that he handed the kingdom of the Kosalas back to its rightful heir, Dighavu, and returned to his own country.

Buddha hoped that this story would show his monks the uselessness of quarrelling, and make them give up their hatred. But the monks persisted in their dispute, so Buddha left them, and went off into the forest by himself. When the monks realized that their leader had left them because of their quarrelling, they settled their differences, and went to Buddha to ask forgiveness.



## XXXVI

ONCE WHEN BUDDHA WAS GOING THROUGH THE VILLAGE of Ekanala, he saw a Brahmin farmer named Kasi-bharadvaja distributing food to the poor people. Buddha came up and asked for alms. The farmer looked at him, and said, 'Listen, ascetic. I plough, and I sow, I harvest and I thresh. It is only after months of hard work that I obtain food. And it is this food for which I have worked and sweated that I eat. If you want food, why do you not plough and



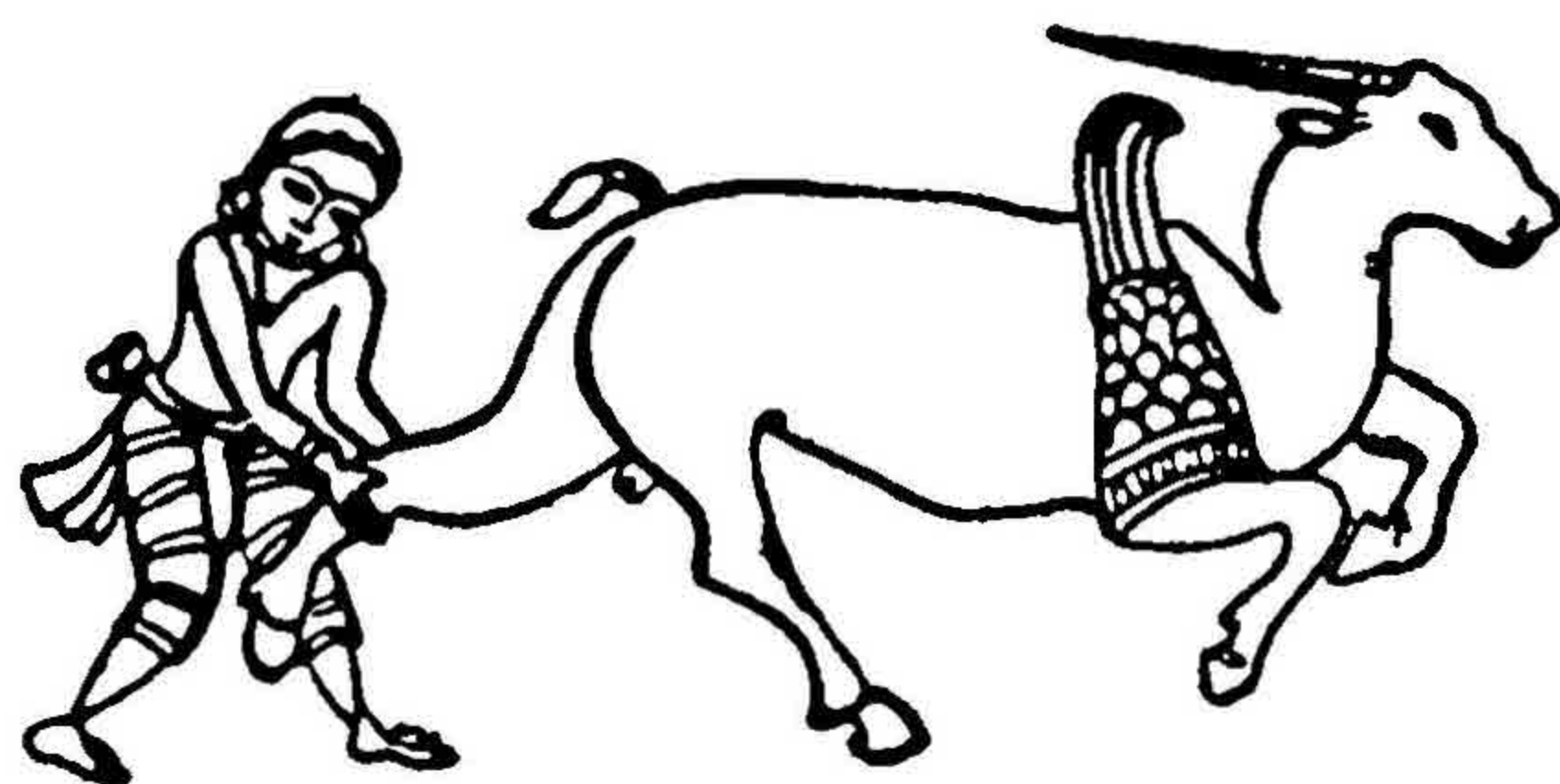
sow too? Or must we do all the work, so that you may eat without working at all? ’

And Buddha replied, ‘ I plough and I sow too, farmer.’

Kasibharadvaja sneered, and said, ‘ It is strange then that I do not see your plough, or your oxen, or your fields. All I see is your begging-bowl.’

‘ I do not plough with a wooden plough,’ said Buddha. ‘ I use the plough of truth and wisdom, and my fields are men’s hearts and minds. The fruit that is produced in this way cannot be eaten, but it is an immortal food that frees men from pain.’

Kasibharadvaja understood and, realizing that though Buddha did not dig and plough, yet he performed work far more important, he gave Buddha alms, and asked to be taught the doctrine.



## XXXVII

IT WAS THE CUSTOM FOR THE BRAHMINS TO CONDUCT prayers and sacrifices, and to recite from the Vedas at the proper times. For these services the people gave them money and gifts, and held them in reverence, for none but the Brahmins could conduct such ceremonies.



Now as Buddha went about the country teaching the eightfold path, he taught that prayers and ceremonies and recitations from the Vedas were not necessary. He taught that only the eightfold path was important, and that anyone could follow this path, whether he was a Brahmin or a Sudra, whether he was rich-born or poor-born. 'A true Brahmin is known by his actions, not by his birth,' he said. 'It is not the knotted hair and the sprinkling of ashes that make a Brahmin, but truth and love.'

The people who followed Buddha's teachings therefore stopped giving money to Brahmins, since they no longer required their services for prayers and ceremonies. When the Brahmins saw this, they were angry with Buddha, and wished to destroy him and his teachings.

One day a Brahmin of Damati named Kutadanta came to Buddha determined to mock him and lessen his influence among the people. He stood before Buddha and said insolently, 'I am told you are a Buddha. If you were really a Buddha, you would not come as a poor hermit, but as a great king in all his glory and power.'

Buddha smiled and said, 'Are your eyes blind, Kutadanta? If they were not, you would see the glory and power of the truth.'

'Show me the truth and I will see it,' replied Kutadanta, 'but your teaching is untrue and will soon disappear.'



‘Truth never disappears,’ said Buddha, ‘it is eternal.’

‘You pretend to teach the truth,’ said the Brahmin, ‘yet you go about scorning rites and ceremonies, and you refuse to sacrifice at the altar of the gods, saying that such sacrifices are not a proof of devotion. I tell you that sacrifice and devotion are the most important things in a good life.’

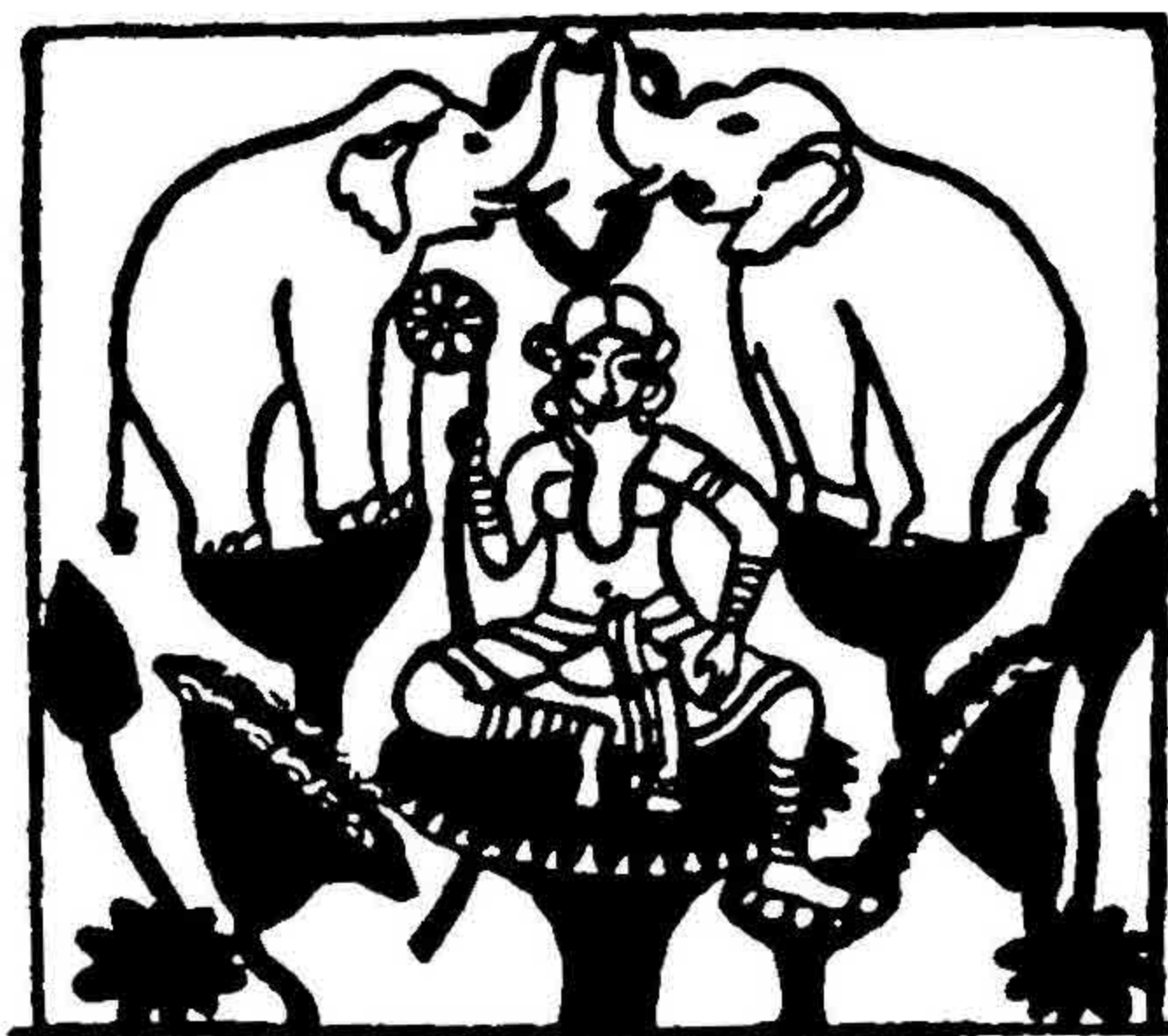
‘Sacrifice?’ asked Buddha, ‘Yes, indeed, for surely sacrifice is better than killing animals on an altar. Those who have sacrificed their evil desires and passions know how useless animal sacrifices are. Anyone is capable of taking life, but no one can give it. Therefore sacrifice is useless, and worse than useless.’

When Kutadanta heard this, he realized its truth, and he was somewhat shaken. However, he persisted and asked, ‘And the Vedas? Do you not think it important to know the Vedas? I have learnt them by heart.’

‘Learning is a very good thing, Kutadanta,’ said Buddha, ‘but it is not through books, but only through the heart, that one can acquire true knowledge. Goodness and love are more important than the Vedas. Truth is the same for all people, whether they are learned in the Vedas or not.’

Kutadanta understood, and, ashamed of his anger and insolence, said, ‘I understand, Master. Forgive me for my rude questions, and accept me as a disciple.’





### XXXVIII

CERTAIN OTHER BRAHMINS, WHO HAD SEEN KUTADANTA fail in his mission, now came forward and tried in their turn to prove that Buddha was a false teacher.

‘ Lord,’ they said, ‘ though you teach about the good life and about Nirvana, you do not teach about the most deep and important things. Will the world end or will it go on for ever? How did the world begin? What is the nature of Nirvana? What happens to the soul after death? ’

‘ I am not come to teach about death, but about life,’ answered Buddha. ‘ The knowledge of these matters is not conducive or necessary to the good life. I teach the eightfold path because that is the right way to live. It is the manner of living that is important, not the knowledge of the end of life.’

Stooping down, Buddha picked up a handful of leaves. ‘ Tell me, Brahmins,’ he said, ‘ are there more leaves on the trees in the forest than there are in my hand? ’

‘ Surely,’ they answered, ‘ many more.’

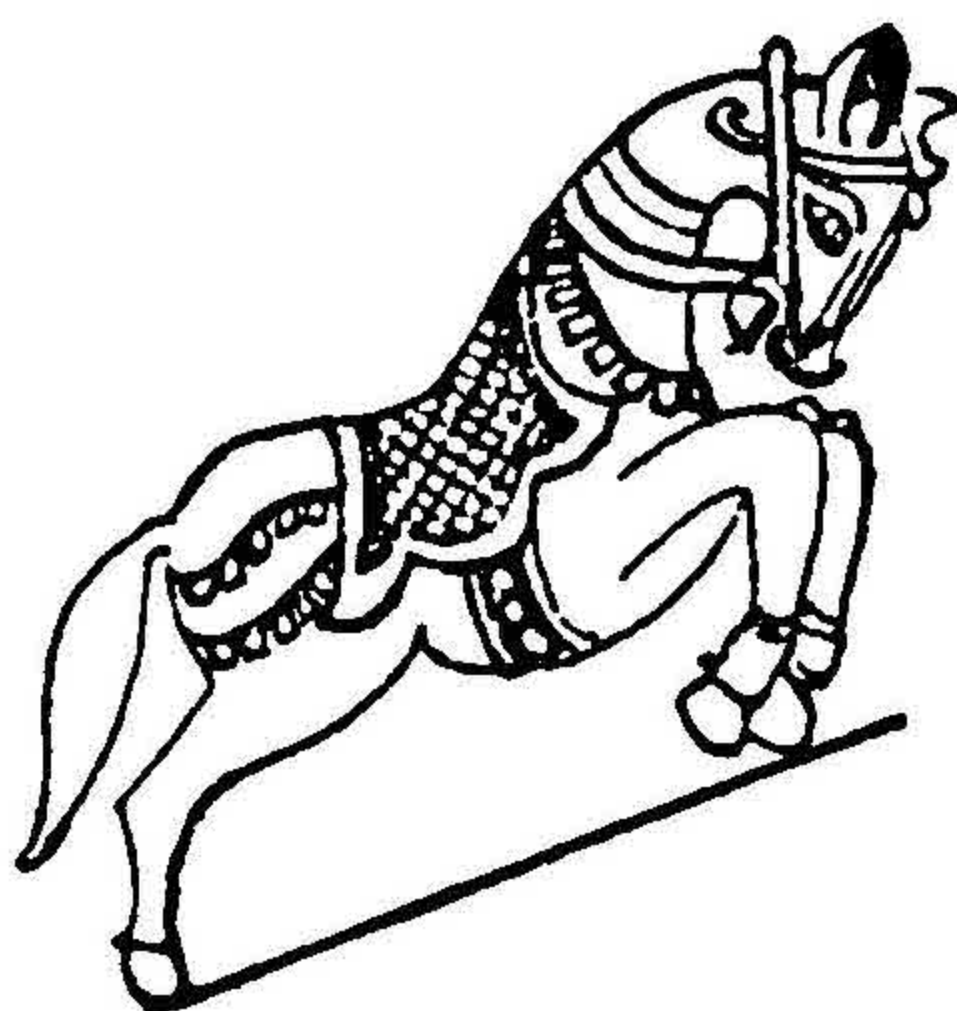


‘ So is the knowledge that I have not revealed to you much greater than that which I have taught. If I do not teach you everything, that is because it would not be any help in living a good life.’

And he told them a story. ‘ There was a soldier who was wounded in battle with a poisoned arrow. His friends immediately carried him to a doctor, in order that he might be treated and cured. Now, suppose the soldier had said, “ I will not be treated until I know the name of the man who shot me, and the name of his family,” or if he had said, “ I will not be treated until I know of what sort of wood this arrow is made, and who made it,” what would have happened? ’

‘ He would have died,’ said the Brahmins, ‘ for it would have taken a very long time to find out all the things he wished to know, and in the meantime the wound would take effect and kill him.’

‘ So it is with the questions about whether the world will end or not, and whether the soul will live after death or not. The knowledge of these questions is not relevant to a good life. When you attain perfection you will know the answers to these questions. In the meantime, do not waste your energies in pursuing them, but use all your efforts in doing the right things.’





## XXXIX

IN THE MONASTERY AT SAVATTHI, A MONK NAMED TISSA became afflicted with an ugly skin disease. He became so deformed, and his rotting flesh had such an unpleasant smell, that the other monks could not stand it, and they put him outside the monastery and left him to die.

It so happened that Buddha passed along that way, and, seeing the unfortunate Tissa, he came to attend him. He took him inside and heated some water in order to bathe him. When the monks who had put Tissa outside saw Buddha preparing to bathe him, they were ashamed of themselves, and now came forward and insisted on bathing him themselves.

So they bathed his body, and washed and dried his clothes, and gave him new clothes to wear. When Tissa had bathed and dressed in clean clothes, Buddha taught him, so that he became an *arahat*.

Shortly after that, Tissa died.



## XL

IT HAD BEEN THE HABIT OF THE MONKS TO TAKE TURNS in attending on Buddha, and each day a different monk



carried his bowl. After twenty years of wandering and teaching, however, Buddha felt that he should have a permanent attendant, who would always look after his needs. Buddha therefore said to his monks, 'I am old now, and need a permanent attendant to look after my needs.'

Sariputta got up at once and offered himself, but Buddha refused. 'Your work lies in teaching, Sariputta, not in looking after me,' he said.

And in the same way, he refused the offers of Moggallana and eighty other important disciples. Now Ananda was very eager to become Buddha's attendant, but he kept silent, not wishing to suggest himself. At last Buddha spoke to him, and asked him if he would like to serve as his attendant.

Then Ananda replied, 'Yes, very much, but only under certain conditions. For instance, if you receive a fine robe, you must not give it to me. If alms are given to you, they must not be handed over to me. I will not sleep in your scented chamber. If you receive a personal invitation to a meal, this invitation must not include me, merely because I am your attendant, but if you receive a general invitation to go to some particular place, I must always be allowed to accompany you. If people come from far away to see you, I must be allowed to bring them in to you at once. I must be able to come and see you whenever I wish. And whatever you teach to the people, you



must later repeat to me, for you know that I am slow and take time to understand.'

Buddha gladly accepted these conditions, and from that time on until Buddha's death Ananda remained his constant and beloved attendant.



## XLI

AFTER BUDDHA HAD BEEN WANDERING AND TEACHING for thirty-eight years, and had grown old and grey, his disciple and cousin Devadatta began to grow ambitious and sought to win fame and honour for himself.

Though Devadatta had been a disciple for many years, he had not really accepted the doctrine. Nor had he yet forgotten that day, many many years ago, when Siddhartha had beaten him so thoroughly at the *swayamvara* of Yasodhara. Now his resentment rose again, and he began to plot against his teacher.

First he set out to win prince Ajatasattu, the son of king Bimbisara of Magadha, into his power, so that he could use him in his plans. Having acquired certain magic powers during his training in the Order, he



took the form of a child wearing a girdle of live snakes. In this horrible shape, he suddenly appeared before prince Ajatasattu. The prince was terrified, and would have fled, but Devadatta quickly changed back to his normal form. Ajatasattu was much impressed by this performance, and did reverence to him, taking him for a great spiritual teacher.

Devadatta was flattered, and told Ajatasattu that by becoming his follower, and doing as he told him, he would earn great glory. Ajatasattu said he would always look on Devadatta as his leader, and promised to do whatever he was told.

Devadatta was pleased at his achievement, and the thought came to him, 'I can gain followers in this manner easily enough. Why should I not then take Buddha's place as leader of the Order?' But as soon as this evil thought came to him, the power to perform magic left him.

Now Moggallana came to know through one of his disciples that Devadatta was plotting to usurp Buddha's place, for Devadatta had gone among the monks speaking cautiously of his plans, hoping to win followers. 'Buddha is old,' he would say, 'and weak. He can no longer act as leader of such a movement as ours. Our Order is too large and too strong to have such a feeble old man as its chief.'

When Moggallana learnt about Devadatta's intentions, he grew agitated, and went at once to Buddha, and said, 'Lord, I hear that Devadatta is plotting to



take your place as leader. What shall we do about it? ’

Buddha calmed him, saying, ‘ There is nothing to do about this, nor is there anything to say. If Devadatta is so foolish and ambitious, he will reveal himself as such, sooner or later, without our interference.’

So it was that one day when Buddha was preaching at Rajagaha, Devadatta came forward and said, ‘ Lord, since you are growing old, many of us feel that you ought to hand over the Order of monks to someone younger and more able to lead. We feel that you ought to retire as leader, and let me become leader in your place.’

‘ Though I am old,’ replied Buddha, ‘ yet it is my duty as the Buddha to lead the Order. I will not therefore hand it over to you, Devadatta.’

Devadatta asked again, persisting in his request.

‘ I would not even hand the Order to Sariputta or Moggallana,’ said Buddha at last, ‘ and do you think I would hand it to you, you vile and evil person? ’

Devadatta being thus rebuked in public was angry and ashamed, and hastened away. Buddha ordered a proclamation to be issued by the Order, informing the people that whatever Devadatta said or did from that time onwards was his own responsibility, as he had nothing further to do with the Order.

Devadatta, seething with anger and with his mind full of plots against his former leader, went straight to his friend Ajatasattu.



Now Devadatta was prepared to kill Buddha in order to get his place as leader, but he knew that king Bimbisara was a great friend and loyal follower of Buddha, and would at once bring Devadatta to justice. If, therefore, Bimbisara could also be removed at the same time, and his place taken by Ajatasattu, he would have nothing to fear.

Devadatta and Ajatasattu talked the matter over, and after much discussion decided on a plan. Ajatasattu would kill his father Bimbisara, and thus assume the throne while Devadatta would kill Buddha and thus win leadership of the Order. In this way, they would both become powerful, and working together they could rule the country as they willed.

When the two men finally parted, they had sworn a solemn oath to be loyal and true to one another, and to perform the murders before the week was out.



## XLII

THOUGH AJATASATTU WAS THE KING'S SON, IT WAS NOT easy for him to see the king alone, for during the day Bimbisara was usually busy with affairs of State, and



there were always many people to see him, some coming from neighbouring and faraway countries on embassies and missions, some coming from Magadha itself with complaints and petitions. The king had to attend to them all.

One afternoon, however, the king was feeling tired and went to his bedchamber to sleep for a while. After some time, Ajatasattu followed him in and, seeing that there was no one else in the room, he drew his dagger and began to tiptoe towards the king's bed.

Bimbisara was fast asleep, yet perhaps he felt the coldness of approaching murder, for he shivered and, moaning slightly, turned over on his other side. Ajatasattu paused for a while before continuing his progress towards the bed.

One of the king's attendants in the adjoining chamber heard the king's moan and came in to see whether he was awake or not. He saw Ajatasattu creeping towards the bed with the naked dagger in his hand, and called out. Ajatasattu turned round at the shout, startled and frightened, and let fall the dagger from his hand.

Some of the king's ministers were in a nearby room, and when they heard the shout, they rushed into the king's chamber, wondering what was happening. The attendant told them what he had seen, and the ministers took the prince into custody.

When king Bimbisara was dressed and ready after his sleep, the ministers brought Ajatasattu before him



and narrated the whole story. Ajatasattu confessed his intended crime, and told them how he had been persuaded to the murder by Devadatta and for what reason. The ministers urged the king to sentence both Ajatasattu and Devadatta to death immediately.

King Bimbisara thought the matter over. He realized that his son had been misled by Devadatta, and had been too weak to resist him. If he had been strong in himself, or if he had had power and rank, he would not have submitted to such evil prompting.

Now king Bimbisara, being well advanced in years, had long thought that he would like to pass on the burden and responsibilities of kingship to someone else and spend his time in meditation and study. And he thought to himself, 'If I now hand over my throne to my son Ajatasattu, it will give him power and confidence, so that he will not again be able to fall into the clutches of evil men like Devadatta. At the same time, I shall be left free to devote myself to peaceful and quiet pursuits.'

Having decided to do this, he called his son to him, and said, 'I pardon you for your attempt on my life. I will not think about it any more. Do you likewise forget it. I have long wished to relieve myself of the heavy duties of kingship, and to hand them over to someone else. I have therefore decided to hand over my kingdom to you from this time forth. Long live the king!'

When the ministers heard this speech, they were



dumbfounded and came in their agitation to the king and said, ' Do you not realize what you are doing? This son of yours would have murdered you while you slept, and usurped the throne. And now, instead of punishing him with death as he deserves, you are going to make him king, and let him rule over this great kingdom. Have you thought what evil might result from this? Have you thought what your people might think on seeing this? '

And king Bimbisara calmed them, and said, ' My ministers, I am fully aware of what I am about. I know full well the important functions of a king, and I also know full well the qualities and defects of my son. I am giving my son power which will enable him to resist evil in future. You will find that after this one evil weakness he has shown, he will be stronger and better than before. If I punish him, it will confirm him in wickedness, and should he become king after my death, he will prove a wicked and tyrannous king. If you seek to prevent him from becoming king, he will fight you with his followers, and much bloodshed and misery will result. As to the people, they will murmur at first, saying the king is lenient and forgiving because it is his own son. But when they see that my action has made Ajatasattu into a good king, they will cease murmuring, and realize that it is always better to return good for evil than to punish and revenge. They will learn the power of forgiveness. So rest assured, my ministers, that no harm will result from



my action. I have thought deeply on this matter, and am doing what is best to be done.'

The ministers remained only half-convinced, but Ajatasattu was so overcome by his father's forgiveness and generosity that he fell at his feet and vowed that he would never err again. From that time forth he did his best in everything to prove a worthy king, and follow in the footsteps of his father. Often he went to listen to Buddha preaching, and learnt much about the good life. And as the days passed, the ministers realized that Bimbisara had been right, and that kindness and understanding were indeed more powerful than revenge and punishment.



### XLIII

IN THE MEANTIME, DEVADATTA SET ABOUT TRYING TO kill Buddha. He engaged sixteen archers, and posted them along various forest paths, having instructed them to shoot and kill Buddha if they saw him.

Buddha, walking along these paths, encountered the first of these archers. The archer attempted to draw his bow and shoot, but at the sight of the calm and



peaceful face of Buddha he became so terrified that his limbs stiffened and he could not move. Buddha came up to him, and comforted him. The archer threw down his bow, and confessed that he had been posted there to slay him. Buddha preached to him and converted him to the doctrine.

And so it happened with all the other archers. None of them could draw his bow against him and, listening to him preaching, they were all converted and became his followers.

When Devadatta learnt what had happened, he decided that since he could not rely on others, he would kill Buddha himself.

Knowing that it was Buddha's custom to walk of an evening along a little path on the side of Gijjhakuta hill, he posted himself on the top of the hill, behind a huge rock. In the evening, when he saw Buddha walking slowly along the narrow path, he pushed the rock, and set it rolling down the hillside. But there were some trees growing on the hillside, and the rock was caught between two of these. However, some splinters broke off and came and hit Buddha's feet.

Buddha looked up, and said, 'Great evil have you produced for yourself, wicked man, in attempting to kill me.'

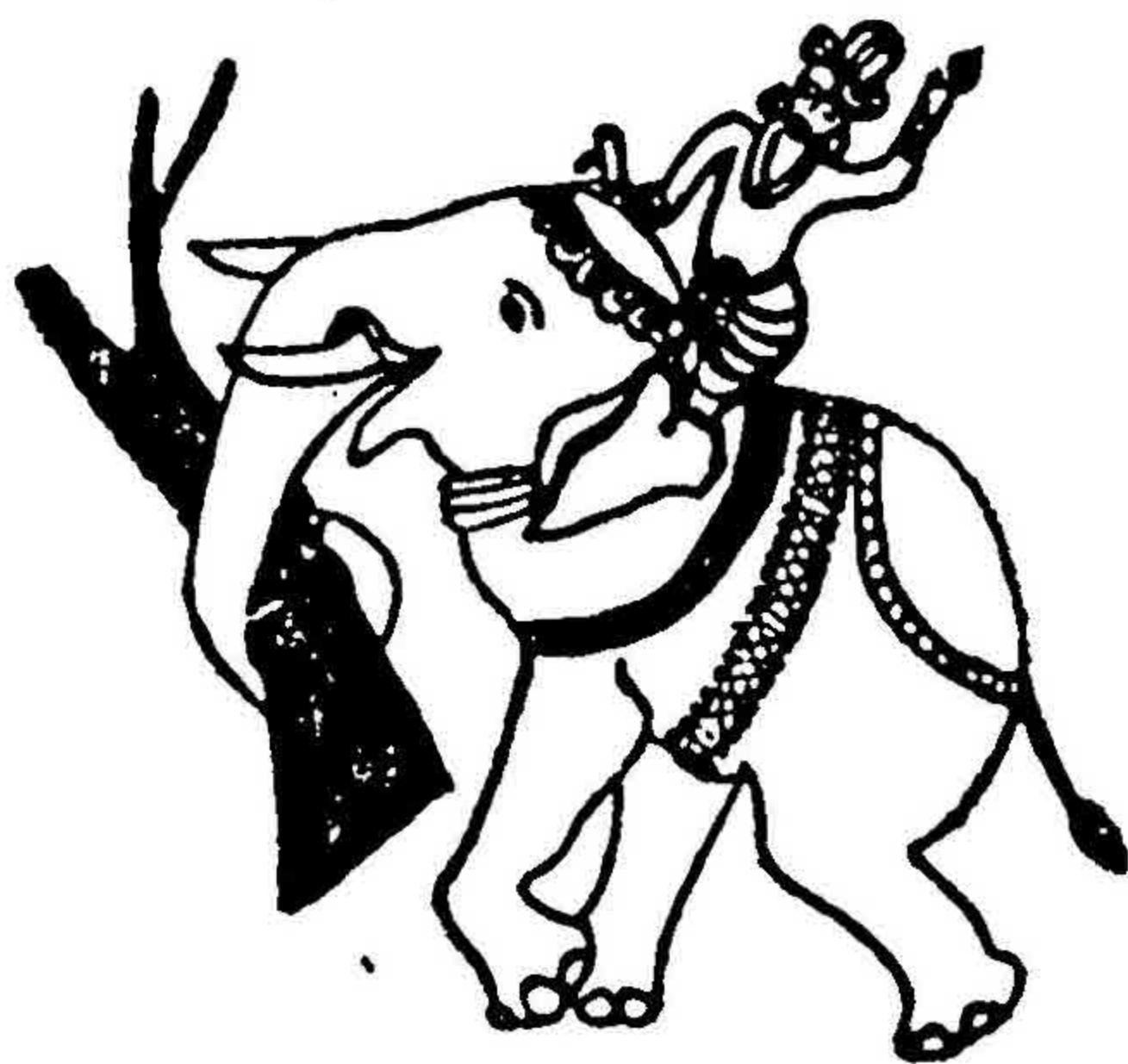
When the story of this attempt on Buddha's life reached the monks, they wanted to provide a guard to protect him from future attacks, but he refused.

Devadatta, having failed in this attempt, tried again.



He went to the elephant-keepers and bribed them. They let the fierce old elephant Nalagiri loose on the road along which Buddha was coming. When the monks saw this elephant come lurching towards them, trumpeting and bellowing with rage, they urged Buddha to turn and flee. But Buddha refused, and walked straight towards Nalagiri, looking towards it with love and compassion.

Such was the power of Buddha's love that, as the elephant drew near, it stopped its bellowing and became quite calm. It caressed Buddha with its trunk, and when Buddha told it to turn back and return to its stable, it obeyed like a well-trained dog.



#### XLIV

DEVADATTA REALIZED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO kill Buddha. If therefore he wanted to set himself up as a leader, he would have to go about it in a different way.

He returned to the monks, pretending that he wished to join the Order again, and was prepared to accept



its discipline. He then managed to win over three other monks to his side, and the four of them went to Buddha and said, 'We feel that these five rules should be established in the Order to guide the behaviour of the monks: that monks should live all their lives in the forest; that they should live only on the alms they receive by begging, and should never accept an invitation; that they should wear only clothes and rags that have been thrown away by others, and should not accept gifts of clothes; that they should live under the trees or in the open air, but not in a house and under a roof; and that they should never eat meat or fish.'

Buddha replied, 'These rules may be followed by those monks who wish. But monks must be free to live and behave as they think right in these matters. I will not make these rules compulsory.'

Devadatta was happy at this answer, and he went about with his friends saying, 'Buddha wants to live in comfort and luxury. He refuses to follow the rules that all good monks should follow.'

And thus he managed to win over some of the newly ordained monks. He then went to Ananda, and said that he intended to hold a meeting of the monks and carry on as leader of the Order. Then, taking the five hundred monks who were willing to follow him, he went to Gayasisa hill.

Buddha told Sariputta and Moggallana to follow them, and win back the monks who had been misled. When Devadatta saw these two coming, he was highly



pleased, because he thought that even Buddha's two chief disciples had decided to leave Buddha and follow him.

Devadatta preached to the assembly until he was tired. Then, feeling drowsy, he asked Sariputta and Moggallana to continue, while he slept for a while. Sariputta and Moggallana preached with such effect that they soon made the five hundred misguided monks realize their mistake, and they returned to Buddha.

When Devadatta woke from his sleep, he found he was completely alone, and that all his followers had left him.

Buddha accepted the five hundred monks back into the Order without reproaching them. He told them that Devadatta would suffer the results of his evil *karma* for numerous lives, but he would finally become a Bodhisattva.



## XLV

SARIPUTTA AND MOGGALLANA BOTH DIED A SHORT TIME before Buddha himself.



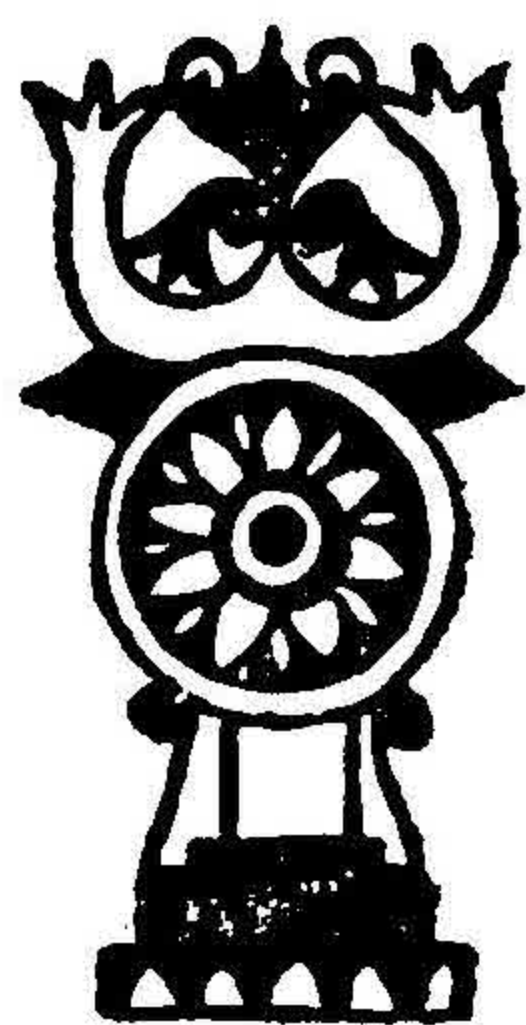
Once when Buddha came to Savatthi, Sariputta practised concentration and realized that chief disciples attain Nirvana before their teachers. He realized that he would die in another seven days.

He wished to return to his mother's house and teach her the doctrine before he died. He also wished to die in the same room in which he had been born. He came and talked to Buddha, who gave him permission to go to his home.

Sariputta taught the monks for the last time, then, taking five hundred of them with him, he set off for his home near Rajagaha. His mother welcomed him and the monks, and looked after their needs.

Sariputta taught his mother and she entered the first stage of conversion, that of entering-the-stream. Then he called the five hundred monks together and preached to them for the last time. He asked them to forgive him if he had done anything during his life to offend them, or that they did not like.

Then, at dawn, he attained Nirvana, and passed from this body.





## XLVI

AT THIS TIME, MOGGALLANA WAS LIVING ON ISIGILI HILL, near Rajagaha. There were several false teachers in that neighbourhood, and Moggallana was engaged in showing up the falseness of their doctrines to the people.

These teachers saw that the people who had hitherto listened to them were leaving, and they grew extremely angry with Moggallana. They could do nothing about it, however, so they finally decided to kill him. They hired a robber, gave him a thousand pieces of gold, and told him to go and kill Moggallana.

The first time that the robber came up to Moggallana, the saintly man exercised his magic power and rose into the air, so that the robber was unable to catch him. The same thing happened on the second day and on the third, and so on for six days.

Now in a previous life Moggallana had plotted with his wife to kill his aged parents. He had taken them into the forest, and then, pushing them into a thicket, had begun to beat them, pretending that a robber had attacked them. The parents were old, and their eyes were weak, and they really believed that they had been attacked by robbers. They called out to their son and said, 'We are being attacked and beaten by robbers. Run away quickly, lest they attack you too.' When Moggallana had heard this, he had wondered, saying to himself, 'Even when they themselves are being attacked and beaten to death, they think only of my



safety and welfare.' He had been ashamed of himself and, after pretending to chase away the imaginary robbers, had led his parents safely home and looked after them.

But the *karma* of this wicked deed in a previous life took effect in Moggallana in his present life, and when the robber came on the seventh day to kill him, he could not make use of his magic power to rise in the air. The robber thus caught him and beat him with a thick club, and left him for dead.

But Moggallana, through the power of concentration, had managed to remain conscious. He dragged himself to Buddha and, having bade him farewell, and obtained his permission, he attained Nirvana.



## XLVII

WHEN BUDDHA WAS EIGHTY YEARS OLD, AFTER HE HAD been wandering and preaching for forty-five years, he set out on his last journey to Kusinara, where he attained Nirvana.

As he was passing through the village of Pataligama, he found the people building a new city close by, and



he prophesied that it would become a great city by the name of Pataliputra.

He crossed the Ganges, and at Vesali he stayed in the grove of Ambapali, a famous courtesan of the city.

Ambapali came in her beautiful chariot to visit Buddha and his followers. Since she was a favourite of the king, and much sought after by the nobles of the town for her great beauty, she was wealthy, and came attended by many servants.

She listened to the discourse of Buddha, and when it was over she came to him and said, ' Lord, will you and your disciples come and dine tomorrow at my house? '

Buddha gave his consent by silence, as was his custom.

Ambapali was greatly excited, and drove back to the city as fast as she could, in order to make preparations for her guests. On the way, she met the chariots of some Licchavi nobles who were on their way to visit Buddha, and they wondered why Ambapali, the mango girl, was driving so fast.

The nobles came to Buddha and said, ' Will the Lord and his disciples come and dine with us tomorrow? ' And Buddha replied, ' We cannot, for we have already accepted the invitation of Ambapali.'

And the nobles were angry that a courtesan should have forestalled them, and robbed them of this honour.

Next day, after the feast at Ambapali's house was



over, she came to Buddha and said, with her head bowed low so that none could see her face, 'Is it possible, Lord, that such a person as I have the power to perform an act of truth?'

'Yes, Ambapali,' answered Buddha, 'assuredly you have.'

'Then,' said Ambapali, 'I give the mango grove in which you are staying to the Lord and to the Order for their use.'

After Buddha and his disciples had returned to the grove, some of the monks began to murmur and say, 'It is not right that our lord should have eaten his meal in the house of Ambapali, who is a courtesan, and a girl of low caste.'

And Buddha told them, 'Do not talk of high and low caste, for everyone has power to attain the truth of whatever caste he may be. The waters of the Ganges and of the Krishna are different, and come from different places, but when they enter the sea their water is all one. So when persons accept the doctrine and follow the eightfold path, they are all one, and there is no high or low caste.'





## XLVIII

BUDDHA KEPT THE RETREAT DURING THE RAINY SEASON at the village of Beluva, while his monks remained at Vesali. It was at Beluva that Buddha fell dangerously ill. When Ananda saw that Buddha was ill, he was alarmed, and said, 'Surely, lord, you will not attain Nirvana without making some decisions about the Order, and without leaving some instructions?'

'What decisions or instructions am I to give?' asked Buddha. 'It is for the Order to decide of itself who will lead it, and what they will do. I am old and weak. Do not seek help or refuge in me. Live as if you yourselves were your own guide and your own refuge, Ananda, and not as if you had some refuge other than yourself.'

After the rains were over, Buddha gathered the monks together at Vesali, and informed them that he would attain Nirvana after three months.

He continued his journey, and at Pava he stayed in the mango grove of Cunda the smith. Cunda gave him and his monks a meal, but though he had taken great pains over the food, the pork he served was bad. Buddha saw this and, not wishing to hurt Cunda's feelings, he ate the pork himself, and gave the other food to the monks.

Leaving the grove he felt violently sick, and asked Ananda to spread a robe under a tree, so that he might



rest. 'Give me some water from the stream, Ananda,' he said, 'I am thirsty.'

But Ananda answered, 'Five hundred bullock carts have just crossed the river, and the water is muddy and dirty. Wait a while, till the mud settles and the water is clear again.'

But Buddha insisted, and so Ananda took his bowl and went down to the water's edge. There he was surprised to find that in spite of the carts having crossed the river, the water still flowed clear and pure.

They journeyed on, and having crossed the river Hirannavati they reached the grove of sal trees at Kusinara. Here Ananda prepared a bed, with the head towards the north, and Buddha, who was suffering from pain, lay down on his right side.

Ananda asked several questions about the Order. 'It has been the custom for the monks to come and see you after retreat,' he said. 'Where should they go when you are no longer here?'

'There are four places worthy to be visited by the faithful,' said Buddha. 'The place where the Buddha was born, the place where he attained enlightenment, the place where he taught for the first time, and the place where he attained Nirvana.'

And when Ananda realized that the master he had followed for so many years was about to leave him, he went away by himself and wept, saying, 'I am still a learner, and have not attained perfection. What shall I do when my master leaves me?'



Buddha told some of his disciples to go and call Ananda to him. When he had come, Buddha said, 'Do not weep, Ananda. I have often told you that everything is subject to change, and that everything that lives must die. Be steadfast in your endeavours, Ananda, and you will attain knowledge, for you are closer to it than you imagine. For many years now have you been near to me, and never have I heard you speak an angry or an unkind word, or express an unkind thought, and that is indeed a remarkable thing.' And turning to the monks he said, 'There are four wonderful qualities in Ananda. When the monks hear him speak, they are happy. When he is silent, they feel anxious and worried. So it is when the sisters of our Order hear him speak, or see that he is silent.'

Buddha then asked Ananda to go to the Mallas of Kusinara and announce to them that he would pass away in the third watch of the night. When the Mallas heard this, all of them came to visit Buddha before he died. There were so many that Ananda did not have time to present them one by one, but had to present them by families.





## XLIX

NEARBY THERE LIVED AN ASCETIC NAMED SUBBHADDA, and when he heard that Buddha was at Kusinara, he came there, hoping that Buddha would resolve some of his doubts and difficulties.

When Subbhadda arrived at the grove, Ananda tried to prevent him from going to Buddha, thinking that there were enough people to worry him during the last hours of his earthly life, without having this man ask him questions. However, Buddha realized what was happening, and told Ananda to let Subbhadda approach. He taught Subbhadda and converted him to the doctrine.

Then Buddha asked the large gathering of monks, 'Is there any among you who has any doubts? If so, speak.'

But no one spoke. And Buddha turned to Ananda and said, 'In this Order there is not a single monk who has any doubt. Even the most newly arrived monk has entered the first stage of entering-the-stream.'

Then Buddha turned towards the assembled monks, and said, 'Now then, monks, I address you. All things are subject to decay and change. Strive earnestly and sincerely.'

These were the last words that he spoke. He passed into a trance, and so, in the third watch of the night, he attained Nirvana.



Those of the monks who had not yet become free from passions and feelings began to lament, and Anuruddha comforted them by repeating some of Buddha's teachings about change and decay.

The next day, the Mallas of Kusinara came with perfumes and flowers and garlands, and music, to do honour to Buddha's body, and this continued for six days. On the seventh day, the eight chief men of the Mallas carried the body to the place of cremation.

When the body was placed on the funeral pyre, and everything was ready for the flame, the pyre began to burn of itself, without any flame being applied to it. When the body was completely burnt, without leaving any part behind, streams of water came from the sky, and extinguished the flames.

And people from all over the country came to collect the ashes, and each tribe and kingdom took some relics in order to honour them.





L

AND THOUGH BUDDHA HIMSELF WAS DEAD, HIS teachings continued to spread to many countries and to many peoples, for the voice of a good man is more powerful than the voices of kings and conquerors.





