

THE BLESSED ONE.

(What follows is put into the mouth of a real character of the Buddhist Scriptures. The incidents, the teaching, and in many cases the actual words follow translations of the ancient Buddhist Scriptures by such scholars as Max Müller, Fausböll, Rhys Davids etc. The date of the Gotama Buddha's birth is roughly 450 B. C. Great Buddhist scholars declare that the Cannon of the Scriptures was settled at the First Council immediately after the death of the Buddha. Max Müller fixes its latest date at 377, B. C.)

Now as I, Yasas, the aged Bhikkhu (monk) born of a Brahmin family, sat meditating in the Bamboo Grove of the monastery, the warmth of the sun was sweet to me and sweet the leaves of the bamboo floating as upon water in the limpid air, for the time was late afternoon when the shadows lengthen, and men, beginning to lay down the implements of their toil, prepare for the evening that brings all home—the bird to its nest, the child to its mother's bosom. And musing on the Three Jewels, the Lord, the Law, and the Communion of Saints, I thought thus, "Whence comes this serenity wherein my soul floats as a fish in clear water?" and these words occurred to me—When he who has attained knowledge, leaving ignorance behind him climbs the Mount of Vision, he looks down upon the care-worn tossing crowds, even as a man in the safe womb of a boat beholds the aimless breaking of the waves about him, he passing in peace to the appointed shore. And even as I thought this, I beheld two Bhikkhus approaching whom I knew not, men in middle life with grave eyes, calm of presence as becomes the Brethren of the Lord, and as they passed through shade and sunshine of the feathering bamboos, I

said in my heart ;

“ Full of hindrances is the household life, full of passion and desire. Free as air is the life of him who has renounced it. See how these men move like Kings in the bright perfection of peace ! ”

So, robed in the yellow robe of the Lord, begging bowl in hand, they drew near and made salutation, and this I returned and they spoke ;

“ Venerable Yasas, from the monastery of the Mango Grove are we come, bearing a message and a request from the Brethren. For you have seen the Lord and have dwelt in the light of his presence, and in seeing you surely we see the reflection of that Glory. And our names are Kassapa and Vasettha.”

So they seated themselves respectfully beside me, and the elder spoke this message which had been committed to memory.

“ To the Venerable Brother Yasas, the greeting of peace. Behold all things are transitory, and such is the teaching of the Tathagata, the Perfect One ; nor can the day be far distant when following him you also shall pass into the Silence. And since it is now many years since he departed, it is our request, O Venerable Yasas, that you who with fleshly eyes have seen the Blessed One and in his journeyings have gone beside him, do record these memories that are as grains of pure gold. For you, entering the Silence, shall return no more to birth and death, but we, bound upon the Wheel of Change, do seek very pitifully for deliverance. And these two Bhikkhus of virtuous life shall commit your words to memory, and they shall be our heritage for ever.”

So they waited in quiet and I considered the matter. And if because of my age this was not easy for me, yet I remembered the words of Bhagavat (the Blessed One) how he

said; "The men of high resolve dig in the very sand till in its depths they find pure water," and, knowing the request was just, I agreed. And not only that day but many others did Kassapa and Vasettba, the two Bhikkhus sit beside me in the shade and repeated my words, adding and subtracting nothing and comparing each with other that the Truth might be flawless. With these words I began;

Hear, O Bhikkhus, thus have I seen. I was yet but a very young man when I forsook all and followed the Lord. For I was a young man having great possessions, an almsgiver according to due proportion, one who regarded virtue, but hearing that a great Teacher was come to Rajagaha I came from far to hear him, for though I did these things there was a voice in my heart that would not be silenced and I had not peace. So I came, and he looked upon me and I said this;

"O Venerable Gotama, I am a liberal giver; justly I seek riches, bountifully I bestow them. Is this well?"

And the Master answered "Well. But there is yet a more excellent way." And I said;

"Instruct me." So he opened unto me the Law, and seated beside him I learned the Four Noble Truths, the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, the Truth of the Way that leads to the Extinction of Suffering. And immediately there arose within me forgetfulness of my riches, and sight and wisdom came upon me, and I said;

"Lord, most excellent are the words of thy mouth. May the Venerable Gotama receive me as a disciple from this day forth!" and forsaking all else I followed. But of this I say little, for at this gate have we all entered, and ye know.

Now of the bodily presence of Bhagavat will I say this. Age had come upon him with beauty so that my heart fell

at his feet and embraced his knees because he was as one to whom all evil things must flee for refuge that, being delivered from themselves, they might be made even as he. For none could see him without this desire. And in his presence virtue was not remembered, for he was virtue's self, made manifest in love, and in the ocean of love were all submerged who saw him.

His face was worn and calm, as in an image of mellowed ivory, his nose prominent and delicate, bespeaking his Aryan birth, his eyes of a blue darkness, and though a little bowed, he carried himself as one of the princes. But, O Bhikkhus, these might be said of another, and there was none like him—none! For Wisdom walked on his right hand and Power on his left, and Love went before him for a messenger.

Remember, O Bhikkhus, what said the King Bimbisara, seeing the Lord in his golden youth, when he approached the King bearing his begging bowl; "Be serviceable, nobles, to this man, beautiful is he, great and pure. Guarding his senses he comes. Surely such a one is of no low caste!"—and the King said again to him; "Young you are and delicate, a lad in his youth, fine and fair in colour as one of the Aryan people. Surely are you the Glory of the Vanguard of an army!"

So said the King; and remember also the noble virgin Kisa Gotami, when seeing him, a young lord, proceeding through the city, she cried aloud, nor could withhold;

Blessed indeed that mother,
 Blessed indeed that father,
 Blessed indeed that wife,—
 Who own this Lord so glorious!"

So was it in his youth, but every year that passed laid beauty at his feet, and I beheld in him the perfection of grace and truth.

And again, O Bhikkhus, you would know the manner of his daily life. Thus it was. For nine months of the year we wandered from place to place in the valley of holy Ganges, he teaching and all crowding to hear. Nor were any repelled. And at first, I, a Brahman, marveled at this thing, and it was a stumbling block to many, for I saw the outcaste, the man whose touch, nay, whose sight was pollution, come even with the noble to learn of the Way. And not only men, but women, the weak, the despised, they came also like homing doves, and he cast them not away. For to that Reason which had weighed power and pride and found them nothing, what were caste or sex that he should regard them? So crowds followed and he had little rest.

But when the great rains came, then he would stay from wandering and for those three months we rested at some spot where still he could teach, and the people come in peace to hear. And the manner of his day was this. Early would the Blessed One rise, and he would wash and robe himself and did not ask assistance though so aged. And then, O Bhikkhus, retiring within his own heart, he would meditate on the Truth, until it was time to seek alms and many marveled that he the son of a great family should do this thing. And since I speak of alms, once in Magadha thus have I heard and seen. Mark it well!

For Bhagavat approached with his begging bowl the ploughing fields of a rich Brahman and stood apart gravely, and the man said this;

“Having ploughed and sown I eat. You also should plough and sow, for the idle shall not eat.”

“I also, O Brahmana, both plough and sow.” So said Bhagavat. “Yet we do not see the plough of the venerable Gotama!” so said he, mocking. And Bhagavat answered;

“Faith is the seed, understanding my yoke and plough, tenderness my deliverance. So is this ploughed. It bears

the fruit of immortality, and having thus ploughed a man is freed from all ill."

And the Brahman poured rice milk into a bowl and offered it to Bhagavat, saying ;

"Let the Blessed One eat of the rice milk, for he also is a ploughman, who makes to grow the fruit of immortality."

And, O Bhikkhus, this man who mocked entered the Way and became a great Arhat, having heard the Noble Truths from the lips of the Lord.

So we would go forth for an alms, and sometimes alone, sometimes attended, he would enter a village or a town, and where he went the birds and beasts would give forth a sweet and gentle sound in welcome, and the sons of men could know—"Today it is the Blessed One who comes for alms." Then, clad in their best and brightest they would come forth, offering flowers and saying ; "Today, Lord, take your meal with us. We will make provision."

And they would take his bowl and spreading mats would await the moment when the meal was over. Then would the Blessed One discourse to them with due regard to their capacity, and some would take the householders' vow, and some the vow of the Bhikkhu, and so they would enter the Way. And when he had thus had mercy on the multitude, he would arise and wait for those of us who had not yet finished our meal, departing later.

And at evening when the sun was set, the people would gather at the place where he dwelt, bringing flowers, and to them would the Tathagata, calm and self-possessed, discourse of the Truth, and at the appointed time he would say, "Depart now, in peace, O Householders, each upon his own occasions," and respectfully saluting the Lord this they would do. And a part of the night he spent in meditation, walking up and down outside his chamber, and a part he would rest within. And as the day began to dawn he seated himself,

and calling up before his mind the multitudes of people, he considered their case, and the means whereby he could aid them. Such were the days of the Perfect One.

And because, O Bhikkhus, the Lord talked with men and women of all ranks and affairs, therefore the mind of none was hidden from him, and as they felt he knew, and their hopes and fears were not far from him. Fathomless were the wisdom and compassion of Bhagavat.

So also with women—they feared not to tell him their hearts, not to implore his mercy. Very patiently and according to the measure of their weakness he instructed them, and they grew like bamboos in a night, shooting up to the sun with glorious leaf and stem. And surely in these feeble ones, the Lord beheld the likeness of his mother, that noble Lady Māyā of whom it is said; “Joyously revered of all even as the young Moon, strong and calm of purpose as the Earth, pure of heart as the Lotus was Maya the great Lady.” And of these women many became wise and Teachers, and not a few attained unto the Perfect Enlightenment and were great Arhats, passing into that Nirvana where are no more birth and death.

But even the light women sought him, and he drove them not away. Mark this well, O Bhikkhus, for who is like unto the Lord?

Thus have I seen. For when the light women Ambapali who dwelt in Vesali heard that the Blessed One was come and had halted in her mango grove, she put off her robes of splendour and the jewels that many had bestowed upon her, and with circumspection she clothed herself, discarding all ornaments of perfumes and flowers. And she made ready her vehicle and proceeded to the grove, and I, standing there, bade her return for there were many that would speak with the Lord, and who was she to desire it? So she alighted from her bullock cart and stood looking upon me with humility,

beautiful as a night of moon and stars, and suddenly she passed me by, and I was silent nor could I restrain her. And she went swiftly on foot to where the Blessed One sat wholly lost in thought, and I looked that he should bid her depart, for how could it be that such as she should disturb him? Hear now, O Bhikkhus, the mercy of the Lord. For she bowed her head at his feet, and greeting her as "Lady," he commanded her to sit beside him, and her heart rejoiced and cast aside fear, and he instructed, incited and gladdened her with high discourse, while all marveled to see her that had been filled with world's delight, filled now with the joy of wisdom. And when the Lord had spoken she bowed at his feet and said this;

"O may the Lord, in deep compassion, do me the honour of eating at my house tomorrow?"

And surely I thought this thing could not be, and so thought all. But the Holy One gave by silence his consent, and again she bowed down, rejoicing, and keeping him respectfully on her right hand she departed, glad of heart, and the people made way for one so honoured.

Now the nobles of Vesali had come forth to greet the Tathāgata, O Bhikkhus, and they were on their way to the grove (Heed well what follows:), and Ambapali the Mango Grower, for so she was called from her grove, - in the exultation of her heart, drove up against the nobles, axle to axle, and they said with anger;

"How is it, Ambapali, that you being such a one, drive up against us?"

And she cried aloud;

"Noble Persons, I have bidden the Blessed One for tomorrow's meal. And he comes, he comes!"

And they halted and said;

"Ambapali, give up this meal to us for a hundred thousand. For you it is not fitting."

But she, shining with joy ;

“Noble Persons, were you to offer all Vesali with its subject territories, yet would I not give up this honorable meal !”

And the nobles cast up their hands, crying aloud ; “We are outdone by this mango girl ! We are outreached by this mango girl !” And in anger and talking among themselves they proceeded to the grove, and went in before the majesty of the Lord, and they saluted him and said ; “May Bhagavat do us the honour of taking his meal with us tomorrow.” But he replied ;

“O Noble Persons, I have promised to eat tomorrow with Ambapali.”

And again they threw up their hands exclaiming ;

“We are outdone by this mango girl !” But expressing their thanks and approval of the words of Bhagavat they rose from their seats and bowed down before him.

So the Holy One robed himself early in the morning and took his bowl and we followed, and he went to the place where she dwelt,—even there, O Bhikkhus ! And Ambapali set sweet rice and cakes before the Master, following that Law which forbids the slaying for food, and she herself attended upon us in great humility until we desired no more. And so we ate what we had not thought to eat. And when the Lord had eaten, she sat lowly by his side and addressed him and said ;

“Lord, I present this house to the Order. Accept it if it be your will.” And the Perfect One, seeing the heart that made the gift, refused it not, and after instructing and gladdening the woman with high discourse, he rose and went his way and we followed.

Yet, think not, O Bhikkhus, because of this compassion that at any moment the Lord relaxed his watchfulness, knowing well that women may be of all snares the very

worst. Stern were the rules he made for those men who live on the difficult heights of contemplation—strait and high the fences about the way. For the householders, purity, kindness, reverence to mother, sister, wife, daughter in their daily duties. For all, watchfulness lest the foot slip in the mire. And one day when we sat in the shade on a journeying the Venerable Ananda, the Friend of the Lord, the beloved disciple, asked an instruction concerning this thing.

“Lord, how should we who are Bhikkhus conduct ourselves with regard to woman-kind, for this is a hard matter.”

And the Excellent One said ;

“See them not, Ananda.”

“Even so, Lord. But if we should see them what are we then to do ?”

“Abstain from speech, Ananda.”

“Even so, Lord. But if they should speak to us what are we to do ?”

“Keep wide awake, Ananda.”

And we looked upon one another. And, O Kassapa and Vasettha, would that I could tell you the laughter of the Lord and the sweet converse when he related to us the Birth Stories, the Jatakas, of his former lives, and whether parable or truth how should I, the bondman of the Excellent One, say? But wise they were and sweet and full of teaching for the little ones, and the very babes might run to hear and laugh, and yet again the wisest pause and ponder the noble truths that were hidden in these.

Hear now, O Bhikkhus, a Jataka of the Lord: For this is called The Holy Quail, and the Blessed One told it as we went through a jungle of Magadha. And there a great jungle fire arose, and roared towards us very terribly and some of us would have made a counter fire and burnt the ground before it that it should cease, but yet others cried aloud ;

“Bhikkhus, what is this ye do? Surely it is like failing to see the sun when he shines in strength, for we journey with the Master who can do all. And yet, making a counter fire you forget the power of the Buddhas. Come, let us go to the Master.”

So we went, and the fire came roaring on to the place where we stood, and when it came within fifteen rods it went out like a torch plunged into water, and we magnified the Perfect One, but he said;

“This, O Bhikkhus, was not through my power, but it is due to the faith of a Quail. Hear now a Jātaka!”

And the beloved Ananda folded a robe in four, and spread it as a seat for Bhagavat, and he seated himself and we about him and he told this tale. “In this very spot long, long ago, was a young Quail, and he lay in the nest and his parents fed him, and he was too young to fly or walk. And with a mighty roar there came a fire and all the flocks of birds fled shrieking away, and his parents, being terrified, fled also.

So the young Quail lay there deserted, and he thought this;

“Could I fly, could I walk, I might be saved, but this I cannot. No help have I from others and in myself is none. What then shall I do?”

And he reflected thus;

“In this world there is Truth. There are also the Buddhas who have gained salvation by the power of the Truth and have shown it to others, and in these is love for all that lives. In me also is the Truth (though I am but a Quail) and the Faith that is true and eternal. Therefore it behoves me, relying on the faith that is in me to make an Act of Faith and thus to drive back the fire and find safety for myself and the other young birds.” So the Quail called to mind the power of all the Buddhas, and making a solemn asseveration of faith existing in himself, he uttered this;

“Wings I have that cannot fly,
 Feet I have that cannot walk.
 My parents have forsaken me.
 O all-embracing fire, go back !”

And before this Act of Faith the fire went back and died like a torch plunged into water. And the Quail lived his life and passed away according to his deeds. And because of this strength the fire dies when it touches this spot.

So said the Master, and when he had finished this discourse, he made the connection and summed up the Jātaka, saying ;

“My parents at that time were my present parents, but the Quail was I myself.”

And we marveled and were instructed. And yet again when two of the Brethren were angered with one another and ate their hearts with bitterness, they laid it before the Master, and he said this ;

“He abused me, he beat me ! In those who harbour such thoughts how should hatred die ? For hatred ceases not at any time by hatred, but only by love. This is an old rule.”

An old rule, O Bhikkhus, yet when the Lord spoke it from the heart of his peace it became a new commandment and his own. So those two saluted one another in love before the face of the Perfect One.

And again when a very young Bhikkhu was led away by the transient smile of a woman to his undoing, Bhagavat said this ;

“Even the Divine Beings may envy him whose senses like horses well tamed are utterly subdued. Him whom no desires can lead captive any more by what temptation shall ye draw him--the Awakened, the Omniscient, the Desireless ?”
 O Bhikkhus, I speak and ye hear, but who can declare his wisdom ? For as the mists ascend at dawn so illusion dispersed before him and the Sun shone upon us and in the fulness of

his day we beheld the Glory of the Buddha. Yet another thing, and heed it well for it was a day precious as clean gold. Lo, as we went we came to the fields by the river of Dhaniya the herdsman, a rich man who trusted in his goods, but a kindly soul and simple such as the Blessed One loved. And he stayed his feet, smiling a little, and we stood about him and he said this ;

“Here be great riches of beasts and pasture. Surely the man owning these is well content.”

And Dhaniya, seeing the Holy One, drew near in his pride and addressed him. “I have boiled my rice, I have milked my cows,” so said the herdsman Dhaniya. “I am dwelling near the banks of the Mahi ; my house is covered, my fire kindled. Therefore, if thou wilt, rain, O, sky !”

(For in his riches he feared nothing believing them a strong shield.)

“I am free from anger, free from stubbornness,” so said Bhagavat. “For one night I abide by the Mahi. My house is uncovered, the fire of passion is extinguished. Therefore, if thou wilt, rain, O sky !”

“Gadflies are not found with me”, so said the herdsman Dhaniya, “In meadows abounding with grass my cows are roaming, and they can endure rain when it comes. Therefore, if thou wilt, rain, O sky ?”

“I have made a raft, I have passed over to Nirvana, having overcome the torrent of passion,” so said Bhagavat. “Therefore, if thou wilt, rain, O sky !” “My wife is obedient”, so said the herdsman Dhaniya. “Winning she is and I hear nothing ill of her. There, if thou wilt, rain, O sky.”

“My mind is obedient, delivered from all worldly things,” so said Bhagavat, “There is no longer wickedness in me. Therefore if thou wilt, rain, O sky !” “I support myself by my own riches” so said the herdsman Dhaniya, “And my children are healthy about me. I hear nothing wicked of

them. Therefore if thou wilt, rain, O sky!"

"I am no one's servant" so said Bhagavat, "With what I have gained I wander through the world. There is no need for me to serve. Therefore, if thou wilt, rain, O sky!"

"I have cows, I have calves," so said the herdsman Dhaniya. "I have also a bull as lord over the herd. Therefore if thou wilt, rain, O sky!"

"I have no cows, I have no calves," so said Bhagavat. "And I have no bull as lord over the herds. Therefore if thou wilt, rain, O sky!"

"The stakes are driven in and cannot be shaken," so said the herdsman Dhaniya. "The ropes are new and well made; the cows will not be able to break them. Therefore, if thou wilt, rain, O sky!"

"Having like a bull rent the bonds, having like an elephant, broken through the creeper," so said Bhagavat. "I shall be born no more. Therefore if thou wilt, rain, O sky!" And he smiled, enthroned above pain or change.

Then all at once a shower poured down, filling both sea and land. And the eyes of Dhaniya were enlightened, and, seeing the true riches of the empty hand, the herdsman spoke thus, bowing to the feet of the Perfect One;

"No small gain indeed has accrued to us since we have seen Bhagavat. We take refuge in thee, O Wisest. Be thou our Master."

"He who has cows care with his cows," so said Bhagavat. "But he who has not these things has not care." So Dhaniya entered the Way of Peace.

And now, O Bhikkhus, there is a thing in this to be much pondered. For it is observable that the Holy One said unto Dhaniya these words. "I have passed over to Nirvana." How could this be and he yet living in this world? What then is the Nirvana? For, since the departing of the Perfect One, the ignorant have taught that it is an

extinction of all that was man. Not so, O Bhikkhus. And yet again not so. It is an extinction — most true, but this only—an extinction of the threefold lust and craving—the lust of the flesh, the lust of life, and the pride of life. And when the inward fires of lust, hatred, and illusion are extinguished once and for ever, then man has entered the Nirvana whether here or there. And surely, O Bhikkhus, this was the Lesson of Lessons, and many a parable, many a teaching had we of the Blessed One, that we might know it is the Self, the individual Self that lurks in a man that is the cause of all evil, and sorrow, and that this Self is no real thing, but an illusion and Nothing. And when this teaching is mastered, behold, we lift unblinded eyes, and about us the world is wholly fair. Cling fast to this Truth, O Bhikkhus, for it is the very kernel of the nut. This is the Way of Peace, this is the gate of the Ten Perfections, this is the Nirvana, and it is absolute in joy and rest Immortal.

And now, O Bhikkhus, will I tell of what my heart can as yet scarce bear nor my tongue utter -- the Departing of the Lord.

For on a certain day he spoke to Pisuna, saying ;

“The time of my deliverance is at hand. Let but three months pass by and I depart.” And hearing this all wept, but most of all Ananda. For he loved the Lord with a perfect love and service. It may be that Sariputta the elder was wiser, that Mogallama had a more burning zeal, but none loved like the Venerable Ananda, and on his love the Lord leaned as on no other. Be this remembered and set down, for this man was the friend of the Lord.

And Ananda went out alone and he wept.

Now when the Blessed One had entered upon the rainy season, there fell upon him a dire sickness and sharp pains, even unto death. But Bhagavat, mindful and self-possessed, bore them without complaint. Then this thought occurred

to him. "It would not be right that I should pass away without addressing the disciples and taking leave of the Order. Let me now keep my hold on life till this be done."

So he went out from the Wihara, and sat down behind the Wihara on a seat and the Venerable Ananda went and saluted the Blessed One and took a seat reverently on one side and said ;

"I have beheld, Lord, how the Blessed One had to suffer, and though at the sight of the sufferings of the Blessed One my body became as weak as a creeper, yet I took some little comfort in thinking that the Lord would not pass away until at least he had left some instructions as touching the Order."

And the Lord replied thus ;

"I now, Ananda, am grown old and full of years ; my journey is drawing to its close ; I have reached my sum of days, I am turning eighty years of age. And just as a worn-out cart, Ananda, can only be made to move with much additional care, so I think the body of the Tathâgata can only be kept going. Only when lost in meditation can the body of the Tathagata be now at peace. Therefore be strong — be lamps to yourselves. Hold fast to the Truth. Look not to any for refuge besides yourselves."

And again he said ;

"How pleasant is the Vulture's Peak, Ananda ; how pleasant the Banyan Tree of Gotama ; how pleasant the Squirrels' Feeding Ground ; how pleasant the Deer Forest !"

And the Blessed One exhorted the Brethren, saying ; "Behold, O Brethren, all component things grow old. Work out your own salvation with diligence. My age is now full ripe, my life draws to its close. Be earnest ; be steadfast in resolve. Keep watch over your own heart. Who wearies not, but holds fast to this Truth and the Law, shall cross the Sea of Life, shall make an end of grief."

And he said ;

“Come, Ananda, let us go to Pava.”

“Even so, Lord,” said the Venerable Ananda, and the Blessed One proceeded with us to Pava, to the mango grove of Chunda who was by family a smith. Now Chunda, in the reverence and love of his heart, for all loved the Lord, prepared a meal for the Lord and his Brethren, and after the Blessed One had eaten, dire sickness fell upon him, and mindful and self-possessed he bore it without complaint, and he said ;

“Come, Ananda, let us go to Kusinara”

And he addressed the Venerable Ananda and said ;

“Fold, I pray you, the robe, and spread it out for me, for I am very weary and would rest.”

“Even so, Lord.” And the Venerable Ananda folded the robe in four, kneeling. And the Blessed One seated himself, but the Venerable Ananda went into the Wihara and stood leaning against the lintel of the door, weeping sorely, for he thought this ;

“Alas, I still remain but a learner, and the Master is about to pass away from me—he who is so kind.”

And the Blessed One said unto us ;

“Where, Brethren, is Ananda? Go and say to him—Brother Ananda, the Master calls for you.”

So he came, weeping, and the Holy One said ;

“Enough, Ananda, do not be troubled. Do not weep. Have I not told you it is in the very nature of things dear to us that we must depart from them? For a long time, Ananda, you have been very near to me by acts of love, kind and good that did not vary and were beyond all measure. You have done well. Be steadfast, and you too soon shall be free of the great Evils.” And to us he said, looking upon Ananda,

“He is a wise man, is Ananda. In him are four

wonderful qualities. The company of Brethren is ill at ease when Ananda is silent."

And, O Bhikkhus, when the Lord said this, was not my heart sore within me that I had not loved him even as Ananda, and yet I loved him—I loved him. Surely he who knew all was not ignorant of the heart of the least of all the Brethren. And I wept, hiding my face in my robe.

And Ananda said to the Blessed one ;

"How wonderful a thing it is, Lord, that the face and body of the Blessed One should now be so exceeding bright !"

For indeed, O Bhikkhus, in the sight of us all a great light shined from the body of the Lord, and his face so shone that it was hard to look upon it. This is truth. I say who have seen. And the Lord said ;

"It is even so, Ananda. There are two occasions on which the body of a Buddha becomes exceeding bright. On the night when he attains to the supreme and perfect insight, and on the night when he passes finally away. These are the two occasions."

And we marveled. So we passed on to the Sala Grove that is a holy place for ever, and Ananda spread a couch between the twin Sala trees, and the Blessed one laid himself down. And he was very weary, so that we looked not for further speech from him, or it might be a word or two of the Law, holy and never to be forgot. But, O Bhikkhus, mark well what follows and the mercy and loving-kindness of the Lord. Mark it well. For the Blessed One, now clean forspent, said this, and scarce could speak.

"It may happen, Ananda, that some may stir up remorse in Chunda the smith, saying ; 'This is evil to thee, Chunda, and loss to thee, in that when Bhagavat had eaten his last meal from thy provision then he died.' Any such remorse in Chunda should be checked by saying. 'This is good to

thee, Chunda, and gain to thee. For the very mouth of the Blessed One has said. 'There is laid up by Chunda the smith a karma redounding to length of life, to good fame, to the inheritance of heaven and to sovereign power.' In this way, Ananda, should be checked any remorse in Chunda the smith."

So in dying the Lord remembered the sorrow of the humble and left peace as his gift. And he said again ;

"It may be that there is doubt and misgiving in some of the Brothers. Enquire freely. Do not after reproach yourselves with the thought—Our Lord was yet with us and we did not ask."

And three times he said this, and even the third time the Brethren were silent. And the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One ;

"How wonderful a thing, Lord, and how marvelous ! Verily I believe that in this whole Assembly there is not one who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha or the Truth."

And the Lord ;

"You have spoken from the fulness of faith, Ananda, and true it is, and the Tathâgata knows there is not here one Brother who doubts or fears, for all have entered into the Truth."

Then the Blessed One addressed us, saying ;

"Behold now, Brethren, I exhort you ; Transient are all component things. Work out your salvation with diligence."

This was the last word of the Perfect One. So while we stood round him in awe that cannot be told, the Lord passed into deep meditation like unto death, and Ananda cried unto Anuruddha,—“O my Lord—O Anuruddha, the Blessed One is dead !”

And he, leaning above That Peace, said with calm ;

“Nay, Brother. He has entered that state in which

sensation and ideas have ceased to be." And we veiled our faces.

And passing out of the last stage of meditation, the Blessed One immediately expired.

And there arose at that moment an earthquake terrible and great, and the hair rose on the heads of us all and the Venerable Ananda said this; "Then there was terror and the hair rose on the head, when he who possessed all grace—the Supreme Buddha died."

And those of us not wholly yet freed from the passions wept and said; "Too soon has the Happy One died. Too soon is the Light of the World darkened." But the great Arhats bore their sorrow calm and self-possessed, saying; "Impermanent are all earthly things. How is it possible they should not be dissolved?" And all that night did the Venerable Ananda and Anuruddha spend in high discourse, but we wept nor could be comforted.

And now, O Bhikkhus, wherefore should I tell of that fire where the Body of the Lord passed from us into gray ash, fulfilling all even unto the uttermost.

"Bow down with clasped hands!

Hard, hard is it to meet with a Buddha through hundreds of ages."

We knew in whose Presence we had stood.

And with one thing more I end as at this time, O Bhikkhus, though my heart that then was all ear and eye is now all memory. Hear what befell!

For I sat with Pingiya the aged Brahmin, and he spoke of the Lord; he saying; "As he saw the Way so he taught it, he, the very wise, the passionless, the desireless Lord. I will praise the voice of him that was without folly, who had left arrogance far behind. For he has come nigh to me—to me! It is he only, the Dispeller of Darkness, the High Deliverer, who giveth light!"

And seeing his love, I said;

“How then can you stay away from him even one instant, O Pingiya?”

And the old man replied;

“Not even for one instant do I stay away from him, O Brother. Vigilant day and night I see him in my mind. In reverencing him do I spend the night and surely I think I am not far from him.”

And he mused awhile and added this;

“I am worn out and feeble, but my heart, O Venerable Brother, is joined to him for ever.”

And lo, as Pingiya sat and said this word, there shone about us a great light and a vision appeared before us, and Pingiya with his fleshly eyes beheld the Blessed One stand there in majesty. And he said these words;

“Strong is thy faith, O Pingiya, and thou shalt make it bright. Fear not. Thou shalt reach that farther shore, the haven of the realm of death.”

And when I had said these things and made an end, Kassapa and Vasettha sat in silence and I also.

So with lips of clay I told that which cannot be told, and with mortal thought I set forth the Highest. And well I knew this thing could not be, for it is above the flesh and the heart cannot utter it.

So those two Bhikkhus made reverence and departed and I saw them no more.

Glory to the Blessed One, the Holy, the Perfect in Enlightenment!

L. ADAMS BECK