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THE LIFE OF PRINCESS YASHÔDARA
WIFE AND DISCIPLE OF THE LORD BUDDHA

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The Buddha Sâkya-muni. From Foucaux's *Le Lalita Vistara*.



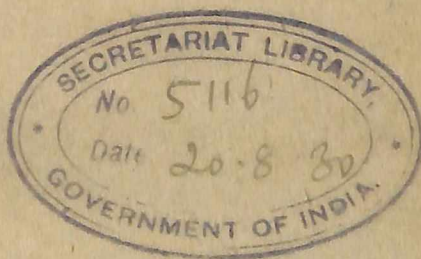
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THE LIFE OF
PRINCESS YASHODARA
WIFE AND DISCIPLE OF THE LORD BUDDHA

by 9
SUNITY DEVEE, C.I.
DOWAGER MAHARANI OF COOCH BEHAR

With eleven coloured plates reproduced from drawings, and a map, by
BHUBAN MOHEN MUKERJIE



ELKIN MATHEWS AND MARROT LIMITED
BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C. 1

1929



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BY RICHARD CLAY
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I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO
MY SON
VICTOR NITYENDRA



AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

IN placing this short life of the Buddhist Princess Yashodara before the public I must plead for leniency for any shortcomings. My one aim in the book has been to form a vivid word picture of a Princess born in the purple of royalty and wedded to the heir of a great kingdom who became a saint. Never has there been such another Maharani *Bhikshuni*. Through the centuries which have passed her name has been handed down and we find a sweet and living reality in her memory.

The Princess Yashodara first accepted the Prince Sidharta as her heart's love and lord. Later, when he left her to found a new religion, she suffered all that a loving and devoted wife can suffer. Later again she realised the greatness of his work, and elected to follow him as his disciple. Idolatry then flourished in India, Buddhism was in the throes of its birth. The new cult was not easy to practise. It demanded self-abnegation, suffering and penance. Yet Princess Yashodara, foreseeing its inner meaning, accepted the Lord Buddha as her saviour and became his most ardent follower. Her great love as wife became purified and perfected by the teachings and practice of her husband's religion, and Yashodara shines through the ages a perfect wife, mother, queen and saint.

The "o" in the name of the Princess is long—Yashōdara.

My thanks are due to Sraman Purnandho Swami and Dharma Pal for their kind help in the writing of this book, and to my friend Sir Ernest Wallis Budge, Litt.D., etc., who has edited my manuscript and seen the book through the Press. The works of the standard authorities on Buddhism have been of great service and have been freely quoted. To their authors and editors I offer my grateful thanks.

DOWAGER MAHARANI OF COOCH BEHAR

London,
July 3, 1929.

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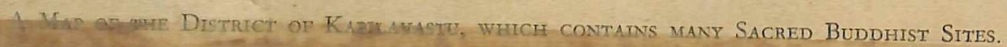
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YASHODARA

ABOUT two thousand six hundred years ago Maharajah Supra Buddha reigned over the Koliya race. His small kingdom was at the foot of the Himalayas, whose sapphire-coloured peaks guarded it on the north. Through the south ran the river Rohini, while in the east the river Magad sang her riches day and night. Away on the west lay the famous Kosala Raj, where Harish Chandra, Ram Chandra and other great kings ruled.

The Palace of Supra Buddha stood on a rocky eminence overlooking the river Rohini. It was a magnificent white marble building, adorned with many-coloured terraces supported with fine marble pillars. One of these terraces had a wonderful pink marble staircase leading down to the river, and here the Queen of Supra Buddha with her little daughter often sat and watched the boats passing to and fro. The pillars were ornamented with carved figures of lions, tigers, boars, serpents, etc. Some of these stone animals had lights arranged in their open mouths, and lamps were held up by others. Each corner of the Palace was flanked by a tower. The centre of the Palace had a dome-shaped roof surmounted by the figure of a girl whose crown was formed of stars. When illuminated, its brilliance could be seen many miles away. The legends of Koliya said this figure had saved many lives and that its bright beams still cheered and guided travellers. The statue was the image of the little Princess. Huge white marble elephants stood on either side of the great gates, holding golden bells in their raised trunks.

Within the Palace lofty halls and sculptured walls showed the skill of the architect and the artistic arrangements of a wealth of flowers. Creepers and orchids softened towers and terraces. The Nagisharri passion flower nestled among its dark leaves, and the air was fragrant with the sweetness of Champa, Padma and Chamile. In the fertile country all round the Palace were rich orchards bearing the choicest of fruits, and away to the hills stretched great forests of sal and fir trees.

The river Rohini separated Koli Raj from the greater kingdom of Kapilavastu, where Supra Buddha's two pretty sisters, Mahamya and

Mahaprajapati, lived, as they had been married to the Maharajah Suddhodhan of Kapilavastu.

King Supra Buddha had two children, a son named Deva Datta and a daughter called Yashodara. The latter was the light of her father's eyes and the joy of Koli Raj. An astrologer had once foretold that her life would be higher than a queen's. Supra Buddha, taking his little daughter's hand in his own, had answered proudly, "Higher than a queen! Why, she is so already. I know she is an extraordinarily beautiful child and that she will be a marvellously lovely woman. I thank thee, Sir Astrologer, for having read her hand." Then, turning to his little girl and looking at her flower-like face, he said, "My little Yashodara will not forget what the wise man has said." The child in reply laughed the gay, happy laugh of childhood.

Princess Yashodara fulfilled the prediction and blossomed to unrivalled loveliness. Her graceful movements and queenly bearing attracted great admiration. Wavy black hair graced her head and fell in lustrous abundance over her perfect shoulders. Her soft, almond-shaped eyes revealed a fine sympathetic spirit which charmed all hearts. Wherever she went she carried happiness and brightness with her. Supra Buddha was frequently approached by kings and noblemen for her hand in marriage for their sons, wards or brothers, for each noble youth of Sakya who had seen her longed to call her queen of his life. Supra Buddha would not entertain any of these proposals. He had resolved to marry his precious daughter to none other than a Prince truly royal in nature as well as by birth.

King Supra Buddha spared neither money nor pains to give his daughter the very best education. The Princess surpassed all her companions in learning and always stood first in every competition. She was taught to dance, ride and shoot, sing and play the *vina*. Yashodara was gifted with music, and sometimes when she sat on the marble steps of the lake and sang to her mother the Court ladies marvelled at the richness of her voice. The Princess had a majestic appearance, and wherever she went she was marked by her regal carriage. Yet, for all her great beauty and talents, she lived and loved a simple life. Often would she nurse the sick and help the poor. Her sweet voice comforted the aged. The subjects of Koli called her "The Luck of the State," and said that without her the Raj would not have been so prosperous as it was in her girlhood.

The Princess loved animals, and had pet deer, peacocks, birds and baby elephants. Her many girl friends adored her and made her the centre of all their games. At times they would enthrone her on a rock



Yashodara often stood in the garden which her
father had made according to her wishes and
design.

[See page 3]



YASHODARA

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as queen and be her courtiers. On other days she would dress like a hermit and sit in a cave in meditation. Sometimes she would carry a beggar's bowl in her hand and ask alms of her girl friends. At other times they would all wander away to the hills and the Princess would say, "Is it not delightful to be free and play with the wild animals and sing with the birds?" In the hot days in summer they would swim in the river and pluck the lovely lotuses floating there. On these occasions Yashodara often said to her companions, "If I ever marry I shall worship my husband with the lotus." It was not Yashodara's accomplishments which made her so loved and lovely, but rather her wonderful personality.

The fair Princess loved all that was beautiful in nature, and was extremely fond of flowers. Though there were plenty of rare plants in her rooms and on the terraces, she begged her father to give her a garden of her very own. It was enough for Yashodara to express a wish, and her father granted it. The Maharajah immediately ordered that the best gardener should be selected to lay out a garden to the Princess's taste. Yashodara was delighted, and had a garden planted out just as she had dreamed it. Hundreds of delicious flowers were caused to bloom there. In a sheltered corner was a small thatched cottage where the Princess worshipped and wove rich scented garlands for the family gods enshrined upon the altar. In the centre of the garden stood a fountain formed of a striking white marble figure of a godlike youth, through whose hands the life-refreshing water flowed. Yashodara often stood by the fountain and gazed at this statue. (Plate 1.) One day she stood there absorbed in thought, and her girl friends wondered, and one of them drew near and asked, "Princess, at what are you looking? Why do you gaze thus in meditation at a lifeless statue?" "Dear friend," Yashodara answered dreamily, "you would not understand even could I explain it." "Why should not we, Princess? Surely this figure holds no charm for you." Yashodara answered very slowly and thoughtfully, "Do you know, I often feel that this figure speaks to me of a Kingdom of Peace where we shall all go hereafter; and I can also see hundreds of men and women satisfying their thirst with the water that flows from His hands." Her companions could find no words to reply, and wondered much at the Princess's imagination. Another day Prince Deva Datta was walking round his sister's garden, and stopped abruptly at the fountain to ask, "Who has made this statue? It is exactly like our cousin Sidharta of Kapilavastu." Yashodara's fair face flushed and she answered, "He is my ideal, dear brother." Deva Datta disliked Sidharta, and was much displeased at these words, and hurriedly changed the subject. But



YASHODARA

Yashodara's quick eyes had caught the expression on her brother's face, and she knew he did not like her ideal.

The Princess listened with great interest whenever her father spoke of Kapilavastu and his sister Mahamya and her son Sidharta. One evening she asked, "Father, has Aunt Mahaprajapati no daughter?" "Yea," replied the Maharajah, "a very pretty little girl called Sundarinanda." "Oh, father," exclaimed Yashodara, "I wish I could see her; I am sure we would be great friends." "Perhaps you may see her some day," the Maharajah answered.

THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE

SIDHARTA, whom Yashodara had unconsciously chosen to be her ideal, was the heir of Kapilavastu, and the last of a race of heroes famed for their valour and kingliness. Their domain lay at the foot of the Himalayas, and was included in the Kingdom of Kosala. Maharajah Suddhodhan reigned so wisely and well that he had attained an unusual position of wealth and power. His people lived happily under his rule. Towns and villages prospered alike, and scarcely ever was any poor man seen begging for alms. The subjects of Kapilavastu realised their supreme desire of enjoying perpetual peace, and unanimously loved their sovereign, often saying as they invoked blessing upon his head, "Our Maharajah is the best monarch in the world." On his side Suddhodhan ever sought to increase their happiness, and so blessed had been his endeavours that Lachmi, the Goddess of Good Fortune, always dwelt in his Raj.

The scenery of Kapilavastu was marvellously grand. The majestic Himalayas formed its northern boundary, and many rivers, great and small, traversed its length and breadth and gave luxuriance to the soil. Valuable forests and field lands gave occupation to the inhabitants, and glorious flowers adorned its sumptuous palaces and gardens.

The only want of this rich kingdom for many years had been an heir to the throne. Suddhodhan secretly grieved over this misfortune. He had married the two lovely sisters of Supra Buddha. The two Queens were devoted to each other and to their lord. Daughters of the same father and wives of the same husband, they had never been parted for a day, and their mutual sorrow drew them still closer together, for they mourned with him their misfortune in not having an heir. At last the cloud was lifted by Divine Providence. Early one morning Maharani Mahamya related to her husband a wonderful dream. "I dreamt that all the saints in heaven were gathered together and with clasped hands were praying over me. A six-rayed rose-coloured star darted through the sky, and, being transformed into a six-tusked elephant, entered into my womb. I awakened from this strange dream just before sunrise, to find the horizon lit up with a lovely light, and an unspeakable bliss filled my soul. An earthquake shook the hills and undulated the waters

of the river. Flowers bloomed all around in their mid-day glory. My joy passed to the remotest worlds, dispelling their gloom by the annunciation of the birth of a *deva* (god), and filling them with the hope of salvation."

The Maharajah summoned his wise men and bade them divine this mysterious dream. "Your Majesty, it is good," they answered. "The combination of the stars is most favourable. The Queen will bear a son who shall prove to be an incarnation."

Maharani Mahaprajapati heard their divination with perfect faith, and related that their mother had told her that Mahamya had been born with divine marks upon her body, and that it had been foretold from these marks that if Mahamya ever bore a son he would be a *chakrabuti*."

The glorious news filled Kapilavastu with joy. The Queen's pregnancy was marked with many wonders. The *devas*, or heavenly guardians of the four quarters of the sky, were ever near her, and forty thousand gods from the ten thousand other *sakwalas* remained on guard with drawn swords in their hands. Some surrounded the Palace, others guarded the city, and others again guarded Jambudwipa (India) and the *sakwala*. The body of the Queen became transparent, and the babe could be distinctly seen like a golden image enclosed in a crystal vase, or like a priest seated upon a throne saying Nirvana. Each day it could be noticed how much the infant grew.

The Queen was filled with wonder at the mystery she contained, and carried herself with great care and reverence. Like one who carries a vessel of rare oil that he fears to spill, she moved about with much caution. She avoided lying upon her face and left side, and kept herself calm and still, abstaining from hot bitter or highly seasoned food, and was careful not to eat to repletion, and refrained from taking exercise and any violent exertion.

When the nine months of expectancy were drawing to their close, Mahamya informed the Maharajah that she wished to visit her maiden home, and go to her brother's wife (Supra Buddha's wife) for confinement. Suddhodhan immediately commanded that the road between Kapilavastu and Koli should be made level, strewn with clean sand and have trees planted on either side, with vessels filled with water placed between at intervals.

Soft cushions were placed in a golden litter, and a thousand nobles in their richest apparel elected to carry it. The Queen bathed in pure water and dressed herself in robes of priceless value, adorning her person with all kinds of precious gems and ornaments. She entered the litter



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and the journey commenced. The grand procession was many miles long. Thousands of elephants and chariots with banners and music followed the royal entourage.

Between the two cities stretched a garden known as Lumbini and famous for its sal trees. Here the people of Kapilavastu and Koli resorted for recreation. It was springtime and the trees were covered with blossoms. Myriads of bees and butterflies played hide and seek among the flowers. The melody of feathered songsters filled the air, and the gay plumage of the peacocks and birds of Paradise could be seen among the trees. As the Queen's procession neared Lumbini a marvellous perfume floated from the garden as if to greet her, and the warbling of the birds filled the sweetly scented air with a perfect jubilation of welcome. The Queen purposed resting awhile in this garden, and a pavilion had accordingly been prepared for her reception. She entered with her ladies-in-waiting and maids and passed slowly on, admiring the scenery of Nalura until she came to a sal tree. Mahamya raised her hand to catch one of its branches, and the tree, as if divining her need, bent its branch towards her. As she stood thus holding the branch of the sal tree the birth of her babe commenced. Her ladies-in-waiting arranged a curtain around her and then withdrew to a short distance. The *devas* of the ten thousand *sakwalas* reverently guarded the place. The Queen faced the east, and the new-born child was received by MahBrahma, who, presenting him to his mother, said, "Rejoice, for the son whom you have brought forth will be the salvation of the world." The ladies wrapped him in folds of the softest and finest muslin, but, to their wonder, the babe slipped from their hands to the ground, and immediately a lotus sprang up beneath his tiny feet.

Instead of proceeding onwards to Koli, the Queen returned to Kapilavastu, and a hundred and sixty thousand noble ladies of both cities accompanied her.

It was the day of full moon, and a Thursday in the month of Wesak (April) when this wonderful infant, afterwards world-famed as the Buddha, was born, and on the same day there came into being all those who were destined to share his life: Yashodara, the Princess of Koli who became his wife. Kantak, his favourite horse, on whose back he fled to find the law of Nirvana. The noble Channa, who was his friend and charioteer and who accompanied him from the city when he set out on his quest for salvation. Ananda, his faithful disciple after he became the Buddha. Kaludeyi, the ambassador sent by his father to beg him as Buddha to visit Kapilavastu. The Bo tree near which he became the

Buddha sprouted on this same day, and the five mines of treasure were discovered on this day.

King Suddhodhan celebrated the birth of his heir in a manner befitting the occasion. The town was decorated with flags, flowers and plantain trees and brilliantly illuminated at night. Strains of music floated from Palace and city. The populace gave themselves up to rejoicing, and all was *mangal* (very well). Heralds with conch shells proclaimed the birth of the heir. Rich merchants brought golden trays laden with offerings and presented them to the infant Prince, whom all called Savarthasiddh (all prospering) or briefer Sidharta.

The venerable Sage Asista, who for many years had led the life of a recluse, devoting himself to asceticism, meditation and prayer, unexpectedly visited the Palace of Kapilavastu. His holy appearance inspired all with reverence. The Maharajah saluted him deferentially and Maharani Mahamya hastened to place her babe at his feet for the honour of his blessing. When the aged seer beheld the Prince, he bowed himself down to the earth in homage. The King remonstrated with him, saying, "The Prince is but a babe." The saint answered rapturously, "Maharaj, this is He whom the world awaits, for He brings salvation to us." And to the Queen he spoke in words of reverence, "Dear child, whom gods and men honour for this divine birth, you are too sacred to endure any suffering. After seven days you will painlessly pass from this life and attain everlasting bliss."

Exactly a week after the birth of the holy man Maharani Mahamya breathed her last, leaving Maharajah Suddhodhan to mourn her deeply. The baby Prince was placed in the charge of Mahaprajapati, the second Queen of Kapilavastu. She had a son of her own, Nanda, and a daughter Sundarinanda, but so great was her affection for her elder sister and co-wife Mahamya that she devoted her life to nurse the motherless babe, and entrusted her own two children to nurses and attendants. Prince Sidharta loved her with all the ardour of his heart, and never in life did he forget her who was loving and tender a mother to him.

When Sidharta was in his eighth year, Maharajah Suddhodhan addressed his Ministers in Council concerning the education of his heir. The Durbar selected Viswamitra, the wisest man in the kingdom, to be tutor to the Prince, and he was immediately appointed in his important office.

The young Prince was beloved by all, and began his mission of mercy in his early boyhood. He and his cousin Deva Datta of Koli often met and played together, although Deva Datta never appeared to care for



THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE

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him. One day Deva Datta shot at a dove, which fell pierced through by his arrow on a path in the garden where Prince Sidharta was playing. Sidharta tenderly lifted the maimed bird from the ground, drew the dart from its wing and laid healing leaves and honey on the bleeding wound. After a while Prince Deva Datta came in search of his spoil, and seeing the bird in Sidharta's hands demanded it haughtily, saying, "I shot a dove, which fell among the roses here ; I see you have picked it up ; give it to me." Sidharta answered, "Were the bird dead I would give it to you, but it lives." "Living or dead," retorted Deva Datta, "the bird is mine, because I brought it down with my arrow. Give me my prize, noble cousin." Sidharta placed the palpitating bird caressingly against his cheek and answered gravely, "Cousin, the bird is mine, the first of myriad creatures which shall come to me by right of mercy and love. Now I realise, by what my soul reveals to me, that I am called to be a teacher of compassion. If you still desire to dispute possession let us defer to the decision of our Ministers." Deva Datta replied angrily, "Let it be so."

The Council was accordingly summoned to decide the difference between the two cousins, and found the question so strange that their debate seemed likely to be indefinitely prolonged, when suddenly an unknown priest arose and declared, "If life has any value, the saviour of a life owns the living thing rather than the one who sought to slay it. The slayer spoils and wastes, the cherisher sustains. Give Prince Sidharta the bird." This judgment was applauded by all, and the King, delighted with the wisdom of the sage, called for him to confer an order upon him, but the unknown one had vanished as mysteriously as he came. Thus Sidharta began his mission of mercy, and as he grew to youth and manhood he won all hearts.

THE BETROTHAL

THE Maharajah commanded three stately residences to be built for his heir. The first was to be made of square beams lined with cedarwood for winter residence, the second of burned bricks covered with blue tiles for spring, and the third of pink-veined marble, cool and restful, for a summer house. The King ceremoniously named these three houses Sabha, Surama and Ramma. They were surrounded by fragrant gardens ornamented with graceful pavilions, spacious lawns, lakes and rippling streams. These palaces were sheltered from all strife, no sound of the sorrow and suffering of the world ever entered their halls and gardens. Here Sidharta spent his youth, wandering freely among the lovely arbours and flowers. Yet, in spite of his seclusion, humanity mysteriously called to him, and often he would be found lost in deep meditation.

As he neared his eighteenth year the Maharajah grew anxious for his marriage, for the prophetic words of the Sage Asista haunted the King and he feared that his beloved son and heir might become a Buddha. The thought made him sad, and he felt strongly that if a suitable wife were found for the Prince marriage might divert him from his serious meditations and prevent him from abandoning the heirship. Accordingly the King summoned his Council and communicated to them his hopes and fears, and the marriage of the Crown Prince was decided upon.

A deputation was sent to the Prince from the Durbar to acquaint him with his father's wishes. Sidharta listened with profound attention, and answered with deep filial respect, "My beloved father is my *guru* (teacher), and it is my duty and a great pleasure to me to obey him."

The Maharajah wept with joy when this welcome answer was delivered to him, and he and his Council immediately decided to send messages to all Sakya rulers and nobles informing them that the Maharajah desired the marriage of his son. Fathers and guardians of marriageable girls were happy at the news, and each proudly hoped that his house might have the good fortune to give a daughter to be the future Queen of Kapilavastu. The Chiefs cordially responded to the royal invitation, and sent replies of courteous greeting, saying that they were proud and honoured to have been remembered by His Majesty on such an occasion,



THE BETROTHAL

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and that they would be highly honoured in sending their girls to the Prince's Durbar.

A levée of maidens was arranged for the Asokha Bhandas festival. The King decreed that Prince Sidharta should give each girl a present, and should he be especially attracted by any one of them he would present her with a gift surpassing in value all the others. The day fixed for Prince Sidharta to choose his bride was in the time of spring. Flowers were blooming everywhere and the hills were resplendent with fresh verdure. Birds were singing gaily, and all the world and Nature were merry. The Surama Palace was richly decorated and hung with garlands, and *nababats* were played. The fountains showered fragrant rose-water and the gardens round the Palace breathed perfume. In the spacious hall the maidens were to pass before the Prince. The walls of this grand hall were hung with light golden-coloured draperies. Couches of carved wood and silver, ivory chairs, tables of silver and carved ivory and a great variety of ornaments stood about in artistic array. In the centre of the hall a large silver table was placed, covered with a rich red velvet cloth bordered with heavy gold fringe, and on it, on a golden tray, were arranged *asokhabbandas* (cups made of peepul leaves) and jewels. Prince Sidharta stood near this table. He was dressed in simple robes, with his sword hanging from a diamond belt, and the only jewel he wore was a simple emerald necklet.

The auspicious hour was the time immediately after sunset. The western sky was still blushing rosy red with the sun's last kiss, and its reflection made the roof of the Surama Palace appear as if of pure gold. The rich radiance gleamed in the hall and transformed the gold and silver ornaments into innumerable fairy lights. All this grandeur and beauty was an advantageous setting to the fair maidens of Sakya who were gathered there. One by one they entered the hall, all dressed in marvellously tinted *sarees*, their hair plaited, eyes painted with *soorma*, feet stained with crimson *alta*, and golden anklets gracefully tinkling. All looked extremely shy and each one wondered upon whom the Prince's choice would fall.

At the conclusion of the entertainment Sidharta presented each one with an *asokhabbanda* containing a jewel. Each fair recipient made obeisance and returned to her seat. At last all the jewels were distributed, and Prince Sidharta remained standing by the table absorbed in perplexity. He could make no choice: all the maidens seemed alike to him, and he was divided between his own desire for celibacy and his devotion to his father's wish.

Suddenly a thrill of admiration magnetised the room, and Prince Sidharta raised his eyes. Floating towards him with angelic grace came a lovely damsel. Pearls entwined the plaits of her luxuriant silky black hair, precious jewels sparkled on her neck and arms. Her fascinating and large dark eyes, adorned with long curling lashes, were gazing directly at the Prince. Her dainty coral lips were slightly parted, disclosing a set of pearly teeth. The winning expression of her face and the radiance of her beauty were so remarkable that even among that vast gathering of lovely maidens she was peerless. Yet it was rather an inward spiritual beauty which radiated from her soft black eyes and captured all hearts. It electrified the Prince, and he made a clearly perceptible movement towards her. Like a queen coming into her kingdom, she stepped into the room and slowly walked up to where he stood, and with gracious dignity asked, in a sweet musical voice, "Is there no present for me, kind sir, because I am late? Must I return home empty-handed?" The silvery notes of her voice touched an unknown chord in Sidharta's heart; his face paled and then flushed. Love awakened. Their two hearts beat in unison. The hall was hushed and still, it seemed as if they two were alone in all the world, and as their souls met in rapture Sidharta's deep eyes gazed into hers and said, "You shall be my life's companion." Her luminous eyes gave him his answer, "I am thine." An enchanting blush enhanced her loveliness, her red lips quivered. Then the fair eyelids dropped, and her silky lashes swept her velvet cheek. "No, fair maiden, thou wilt not go empty-handed," answered the Prince, and removed the emerald necklet he wore and fastened it round her neck. (Plate 2.) His action broke the spell which had held the assembly. The kingly decision of his action left no doubt of his choice, and murmurs of approbation filled the room. "Who is the maiden?" asked some, and quickly came the answer "Supra Buddha's daughter." The Princess received the mark of Sidharta's choice by bending low in homage to her heart's lord and gracefully touching his feet. Then, standing once more erect, she thanked him with a smile which spoke of her love to him, and gently moved away from the table. The news of the Prince's happy choice was swiftly carried to the Maharajah, whose heart thrilled with joy. Asista's prophecy seemed melted in the air, and all dread and foreboding were forgotten. There was no reason for delay, and grand preparations for the marriage were immediately decided upon. The Maharajah of Kapilavastu was anxious to see his son married, and Supra Buddha was ready to give his consent to the union as soon as the Prince proved himself a brave knight. "I must be sure he is worthy of my



Syambara, Kapilavastu. The prince removed the emerald necklace he wore and fastened it round her neck.

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THE BETROTHAL

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precious daughter," he said, and announced that he would test Sidharta's horsemanship.

It was in accordance with Sakya law and chivalry that a suitor for the hand of a fair and desirable maiden of a noble house had to prove his valour and lineage in martial arts against those who challenged him. This custom could not be set aside even by kings. The test of chivalry might be appointed by opposing suitors or by the maiden's father.

Supra Buddha caused an untrained horse to be brought from his stables. The animal was absolutely wild and unmanageable. Every knight strove to master it, and one after another failed. Among the defeated combatants were Prince Deva Datta, Yashodara's brother, and two brave young knights Nanda and Arjuna, both sons of proud noblemen who yearned for a marriage alliance with the Koli race.

At last Prince Sidharta's turn came. With a caressing hand he gathered up the reins and mounted the horse. The animal arched its fine neck as if proud of its master and galloped over the greensward, rider and horse in perfect accord and making a pleasing picture to the beholders. Yashodara was among the spectators, and fear quickly gave place to loving pride at the Prince's success. She whispered shyly to her own heart, "He conquers by love." Supra Buddha was delighted. It had been the secret desire of his heart that Sidharta would stand first in the tournament of Sakya knights, and he now greeted the youth gladly, "I am pleased with you, my gallant rider ; my daughter shall be your bride."

THE MARRIAGE

THE news of the betrothal was received with universal rejoicings, and congratulations poured in from all the Sakya States. Suddhodhan was impatient for the realisation of his wish, and the celebration of the marriage was fixed for an early date. The royal homes of Kapilavastu and Koli were busy with preparations. The ceremony was performed with great pomp and splendour, and the bride was brought to her new home with songs and sounds of conch-shells. The hearts of all the subjects of Koli Raj were full of happiness because their loved Princess Yashodara was to be the bride of Prince Sidharta, the first of all Sakya knights. "Some day she will be the Maharani of Kapilavastu, and then we shall go there and see her," they said to one another. Maharajah Supra Buddha gave his daughter a handsome dowry—jewels, horses, boats, cows and many other valuable presents. He chose her ladies-in-waiting from among her girl friends, which made the little Princess very happy. She thanked her beloved father in her own sweet way for his kind thought: "In my new home, Kapilavastu, I shall be surrounded by Koli friends sent by my dear, dear father."

The only adverse party to the approaching marriage was Prince Deva Datta, Yashodara's brother. "Why are you so annoyed at my betrothal?" she asked him, and he answered her, "I know not, save that I dislike Sidharta, and feel that your marriage with him will cost you much suffering."

After the manner of brides, the Princess bade farewell to her happy maiden home with tears. Kneeling before her parents, she entreated their blessing. "Dear father and mother, give me your blessing, I pray. May you always have cause to be as proud of me as you are to-day."

Her tears of parting were chased away by the welcome which awaited her in Kapilavastu. The Maharajah received her as a much-loved daughter, saying, "You have come to be a ray of sunshine to us, dispelling a fear which oft clouded my heart."

Maharani Mahaprajapati folded her in a motherly embrace, whispering, "Little daughter, you are the treasure which holds my son's heart."

Pretty Sunda Nanda welcomed Yashodara with the sweet remark, "Here is the sister I have been longing for."

The happy young couple were lovingly escorted to the new Palace of Bishramvan, which Maharajah Suddhodhan had caused to be specially built for them. It proved to be a wonderful pleasure-house, with wide-spreading grounds watered by the river Rohini, a tributary of the Ganges. In the centre of the grounds stood a hill surmounted by a little summer-house. To the south were groves of tamarind and sal trees, many overgrown with the pale blue junthi flower. On the north the Himalaya mountains towered in grand majesty, and their snowy peaks could be viewed from the palace, which faced them on a terraced hill. Like all the Sakya Palaces, Bishrambhavan was built of white marble, but its façades and arches and pillars were ornamented with tracery and sculpture surpassing any that had ever before been seen. Within, the wide wooden beams were carved with scenes representing the legendary history of the past. In the centre of the great reception hall stood a huge statue of the God Ganesha, with his disc and hook with which he dispenses wisdom and wealth to his worshippers. The inner gate of Bishrambhavan Palace was of the purest white marble, the threshold inlaid with alabaster and the doors of sandalwood, their panels carved with mythological scenes. Stately staircases led up to latticed galleries, and lofty halls had wonderfully painted ceilings. Beyond these halls and galleries was an inner chamber decorated with the most fantastic art the world has ever seen. The whole construction of the bridal palace of Bishrambhavan was similar, though grander, to the three Palaces in which Sidharta had spent his youth. There were shady gardens and deep cool pools of water where the lotus flower bloomed and diffused its fragrance on the gentle breeze. There were groves and bowers where rest and solitude might be found, and where the strife of city life was unknown, or if known, forgotten. There was a wealth of shade and meditation beneath the stately peepul and sal and thickly-foliaged mango trees. In such surroundings had Prince Sidharta grown to manhood. The same atmosphere now formed the background of his married life, and Maharajah Suddhodhan hoped that the rich glamour of love and cheerful seclusion of Bishrambhavan would obliterate the early yearnings and inclinations of his son's heart.

Hand in hand, Sidharta and Yashodara wandered through the fragrant gardens and woods, gathering into their souls the best of all in Nature, drinking deep of the bliss of God, learning daily, if unconsciously, the lesson of life which was later to be unfolded to others. The golden

charm of those wonderful days was varied by rides through the thick forest on the banks of the Rohini. Yashodara was a superb horse-woman, and enjoyed to rival her husband in the art in which he excelled and had won her. Side by side they galloped over the greensward in the dewy mornings and bright days. Often Sidharta would exclaim, "Ride not so fast, my gallant rider; you seem to conquer me in everything." (Plate 3.)

Both Prince and Princess were gifted with and fond of music. The Maharajah had provided for their entertainment by engaging a band of pretty young girls, some of whom danced with great art, while some sang and others played on the *vina* and various other instruments. One evening one of these girls sang a touching song on the emptiness of the world. The theme seemed at first to surprise the Prince, and he listened with greater attention. At the close of the song he turned to Yashodara, and showed his appreciation by saying, "Dearest, would you not like to reward this girl for singing to us a song of such deep wonder?"

The Princess agreed she would, but had no present in hand. The Prince easily found a solution of this difficulty. "Beloved, give her the string of pearls you are wearing," he said. The Princess, with a sweet smile, unclasped her pearl necklet and presented it with a few charming words to the singer. All present were touched at such gracious condescension, and the young singer felt highly honoured at receiving such marked appreciation from the Prince and such a valuable gift from the Princess.

Yashodara and her husband often wandered round the great lake where the swans floated among the lotus in the daytime and the pure white *kumindinis* gleamed in the moonlit nights. The scented flowers and all the beauties of Nature around them whispered to them of God, and as Yashodara listened to the words of her beloved, she felt that heaven had commenced for her even on earth. The charm of those happy days was like music to their souls, and each day drew her and Sidharta closer together. Yashodara's beauty seemed to increase daily, and the Prince's wonderful personality was intensified and sweetened. He had ever been the pride of his father's heart and the hope of Kapilavastu, and now, when Court and State rang with the story of the idyllic happiness of the young pair, the father's anxiety was at rest and a perfect worship of loyalty surrounded Bishrambhavan. Pretty stories of the Prince and Princess and of their devotion to each other floated through the kingdoms of Kapilavastu and Koli, and in either Raj were joy and thanksgiving that the union had proved such a happy one. Sidharta



Often Sidharta would exclaim, "Ride not so fast, my gallant rider; you seem to conquer me in everything."
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THE MARRIAGE

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seemed now to live only to love Yashodara. When she played on the *vina*, he often remarked it was the touch of her exquisite fingers which produced such enchanting music. When she wore her favourite jewels of coral, he would declare the *mounga* (coral) borrowed its colour from her lovely cheeks. When the sun was waking them to a new day, the young Prince would draw near to his wife and say, "Gopa, the dawn is nearing to touch your eyes. Open them, my sweet one, and listen to the birds singing, asking you to join them."

One morning, when they were walking hand in hand in the garden, they stopped by the lake, and Yashodara was admiring the lotuses. Sidharta asked, "My beloved, which is the best lotus?" Yashodara answered, "They are all alike, are they not? all beautiful and perfect." The Prince lovingly framed her flower-like face in his long and shapely hands and, looking adoringly into her soft eyes, answered, "Your face is the most beautiful and perfect lotus, my lovely Yashodara." (Plate 4.) The Princess glowed with happiness, and clasping his hands in hers, answered, "My lord, my beloved husband, I am your lotus and you are my sun. I can only bloom in your love. If it ceases to shine upon me I shall fade away, even as the lake lotuses close up when the sun ceases to shine upon them." "Beloved," answered Sidharta, and they remained rapt in each other till the notes of the *nababat* called them back to the Palace.

Thus the halcyon days flew on: each morning the fresh breeze wakened them to another day of gladness, each night came with the assurance of dreams of happiness. Yashodara's life was all sunshine and music, and she herself was like a rose scattering her sweetness all around her. The Maharajah Siddhodhan loved her more than a daughter—she who had chased away all the gloom of the Sage Asista's prophecy. Maharani Mahaprajapati watched over her with the same motherly devotion she had for Sidharta himself. Indeed, the Crown Princess was the hope and the joy of the State, and her kindly sympathy and generosity endeared her to all who came in touch with her. Her beautiful clothes and jewels were but a meet setting for her exquisite beauty, as a costly frame is to a lovely picture. Her corals and pearls merely enhanced the fairness of her complexion, and each gained in beauty and lustre from contact with her pure skin. Her very name, Yashodara, sounded like sweet music. So great was her happy abandon that in time it caused comment among some of the Court ladies, and one day one of the Princess's friends ventured to say nervously to her, "Princess, some of the ladies have been making remarks about you." Yashodara was surprised, and asked, "What have I done?" The lady-in-waiting replied tearfully, "Dear Princess, they



say you have no bashfulness. You are still a bride, but you do not cover your head or hide your face, as other brides do in the presence of their husbands." Yashodara laughed brightly, and answered, "Is that all my fault? Why should I be ashamed, and what need is there for me to hide my love for my husband? Is it not a pure love? I am proud of my love for my lord, and my face is but the mirror of my happiness. Does the river hide itself, or does the moon cover herself? Do they not both reflect the sun in their brightness? My beloved husband is my sun, and I reflect in my face his love for me."

The Prince lovingly framed her flower-like face in his long and shapely hands, and, looking adoringly into her soft eyes, answered, "Your face is the most beautiful and perfect lotus, my lovely Yashodara."

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SIDHARTA

ONE evening Yashodara asked for her husband. Sidharta had gone into the garden at noon, and the Princess had not seen him all day. When she inquired, she was told he sat by the lake absorbed in meditation. The shadows deepened and still the Prince did not return. Yashodara grew anxious, and sent again and again. Her messengers returned to say the Prince was deep in prayer and they did not dare disturb him. The Princess was alarmed, and when at length Sidharta returned to the Palace she hurried to him and, throwing herself into his arms, hid her face against his breast and burst into tears. Her agitation distressed the Prince. "Yashodara, my beloved one, what ails thee?" he inquired anxiously. "Dear love," she answered plaintively, "I felt lost without thee. The Palace was dull in thy absence." Her sorrow gave way to surprise when he answered tenderly, "Weep not, my sweet one. Thou art still a child. What wouldst thou do were I to go on a tour for a length of time?" "Do not speak of leaving me, beloved," exclaimed the Princess in a tone of anguish. "If thou wert to go away for long I should try to live supported by the bright hope of seeing thee again, but my life would be one of desolation. Oh! why should we ever part? Why should our love ever suffer the agony of separation?" "Yashodara," gravely answered the Prince, "love is tried and perfected in many ways. The love which unites husband and wife is divine. Love is given to lead us to higher and greater union." "Dear one," cried the Princess, "let us never part. I cannot bear the thought of any separation. I should not be able to endure thy absence." The Prince drew her tear-bathed face close to his own. "Gopa," he said tenderly, "I know only too well how strong and true thy love for me is. Weep no more, my deer-eyed dear, smile brightly as long as possible."

When Princess Yashodara was twenty-nine years of age she gave birth to a little son. Prince Sidharta was away in a garden when the happy event had taken place in the Bishrambhavan. Maharani Mahaprajapati tended her with a mother's loving care, and sent the good news of a son's birth to the Maharajah. Suddhodhan wept with joy and asked,

"Does my son know he is a father?" "Majesty," answered the courtier, "the Prince is occupied in prayer in the garden at Bishrambhavan." "Hasten to him," commanded the King, "and inform him that the Princess has borne him a son, and return soon and tell me of his happiness."

The messenger hurried away, and found the Prince in deep meditation. "Your Highness," he ventured, "His Majesty thy sire bade me inform thee that thou art the father of a son." The Prince's expression remained grave and unchanged, but he murmured aloud, "*Rabulum, rabulum*" (another bond). The courtier returned to the King, who asked how the Prince had received the news. The messenger answered, "His only words were '*Rabulum, rabulum*.'" The King immediately concluded that Sidharta wished his son to be called Rahul, and the babe was accordingly so named.

On the way to the Palace Sidharta met his cousin, the Princess Krishna Gautami. She thought he looked handsomer than ever, and wishing to gain his favour, she said these few lines to him.

These words have the twofold meaning of "Nirvana" and "Fortunate parents of such a son are perfectly happy." The greeting pleased the Prince, because in the height of earthly bliss he was reminded of his heavenly mission:

"Blessed indeed is that mother,
Blessed indeed is that father,
Blessed indeed is that wife,
Who owns this Lord so glorious."

Sidharta turned these words over in his mind. "The heart of the mother and of the father are made happy by the birth of a son, but by what can every heart attain to lasting happiness and peace, and what of the heart which is estranged by sin?" and there floated through his mind the answer

"When the fire of lust is gone out, then peace is gained;
"When the fires of hatred and delusion are gone out, then peace is gained;
"When the troubled mind is free from pride and credulity, then peace is gained."

Sweet is the lesson this singer makes me hear. The Nirvana of Peace is that which I am seeking. I will renounce the world. I will follow only after Nirvana."



In gratitude for these words he presented Krishna Gautami with the necklace he was then wearing. She mistook this act of kindness, and believed it to be one of future choice. She concluded that, having borne a son, Yashodara might lose her good looks and Sidharta would weary of her and seek a second wife. Krishna Gautami never realised her dream. She and Sidharta never again met.

The Prince manifested tender devotion to Yashodara and her baby. Maharajah Suddhodhan felt that there was now no cause for fear, and decided it was quite time for his heir to study administration. Sidharta gladly assented to his father's suggestion. The King decreed that no sights of sorrow or suffering should be permitted to meet the Prince's eyes. The places selected for him to traverse were decorated, and heralds were sent in advance to clear the streets before the approach of the Prince, in order that life should appear to Sidharta as bright and happy as the sheltered palaces and gardens were.

Despite all precautions, the very first day the Prince went abroad an aged man with withered skin and back, bent with the weight of years, came forth from a hut leaning upon a staff, his rags clearly denoting his poverty and decrepitude. The Prince gazed at this, to him, strange sight, and when his attendants strove to drive the beggar away he called out authoritatively, "Let him be. Channa," he asked his charioteer, "what is this pitiable creature? Why is he like this?" Channa explained, "This is old age, my Prince. Everyone who lives for many years grows old and shrivelled up like this man." "Shall I be like that some day?" questioned the Prince. "Yes, sir," answered Channa, "every mortal being suffers change of appearance with age." "What!" murmured the Prince, "will my beautiful Yashodara ever become hideous and wrinkled up?" The thought made him shudder, and he feverishly commanded the charioteer to drive him home.

When he reached the Palace he was met by Yashodara, a perfect picture of youth and health, and in her presence he forgot the miserable sight he had seen.

A few days later Sidharta again drove out from joyous Bishrambhavan. As they passed along one of the city highways he noticed a man disfigured by illness sitting under a tree. "Stop, friend, stop!" he excitedly commanded his charioteer, "and tell me what is this dreadful sight I see!" Channa was overcome with grief that the Prince's innocence of life and its vicissitudes should cause him so much distress, and answered in a very gentle tone, "Dear Master, this is a man suffering from some disease." "Disease!" echoed the Prince. "What is it? Is it common

to all mortals, like old age ? ” “ Yes, Prince,” answered Channa ; “ there is no one who is exempt from bodily ailments.” “ Drive home, please drive home,” said the Prince. The new knowledge seemed to overpower his soul. Terribly distressing thoughts surged through his brain. He longed to see his lovely Yashodara and assure himself that no illness had assailed her.

“ My beautiful wife, my beloved Gopa,” he said when he met her, “ is it possible that her fine figure may some day be misshapen, her lovely face disfigured, her peerless beauty which now gladdens all eyes vanish ? Oh ! my Gopa, my beloved, how terrible is this life ! Is there no antidote against old age and suffering ? ”

These thoughts troubled the Prince, and so terrible was the anguish of his soul that he spent long hours in meditation, and days passed before he recovered the shock he had sustained. Yashodara was greatly troubled to see her lord so distressed, and did all she could to distract him from his sad reflections. At last her influence prevailed, and the Prince resumed his usual cheerfulness and once again sought to please his father by attending to the administration of the State.

He summoned his charioteer and they drove through the gates of peaceful Bishrambhavan. As they neared the city the Prince observed some men carrying a curious burden. He asked of Channa, “ What do they carry ? ” The charioteer answered reluctantly, “ A dead body.” The Prince asked, “ What is death ? ” Channa answered, “ The hands and feet lose all power of movement ; the eyes become vacant and fixed ; the tongue loses its speech ; the body becomes inert and useless, and in a short time crumbles into dust.” “ Drive me back to the Palace, drive me back soon,” implored the Prince, who was horrified. He longed to see his gay young Yashodara and to know that life still reigned in her perfect body, and to hear the music of her living voice. It was a sad and serious Prince who entered the *antapur* that day. His loving wife felt a dart of anguish pierce her heart when she beheld him. “ What ails my lord ? ” she asked tenderly. He told of the grim sight he had just seen and of the terrible thoughts it had awakened. “ Beloved,” said Yashodara, “ think not of death and sorrow. Think rather of life and all its thrilling beauty, of our love for each other and of our son.”

From that day Yashodara noticed a great change in her husband. The Prince devoted himself to meditation. His face became grave and serious. Yashodara felt her life overawed by the shadow of some great calamity, and anxiously watched him. In his sleep at nights he would cry aloud, “ Oh, my world, my world ! I must save thee from suffering.”



Poor Yashodara, ever growing more and more anxious, would wake him in alarm and ask, "Beloved, what are you saying? What do these words mean?" He would always make the same reply, "Oh, my dearest Yashodara, I have come to save the world from suffering." He grew very restless, and his mind seemed oppressed with the desire of freedom from earthly bonds. He continually contemplated how to break these ties in order to devote himself to humanity. The nights often held no sleep for him.

ALONE

At last Sidharta determined to cast aside all earthly ties and devote himself to the salvation of the world. His greatest sorrow was to desert Yashodara, whom he loved with all his heart and soul.

On a bright moonlight night in April he decided to go away. The windows were open and the silvery beams brightened the room. Yashodara slept soundly. The Prince stood for a time at the window. The cry of the sorrow-beleaguered world rose louder and louder in his ears. He walked towards the bed and looked thoughtfully at his lovely wife, lovelier than ever in unconscious sleep. "How can I leave her?" he asked himself. Suddenly the Princess started up and, catching hold of his hand, cried out, "My lord! my lord!" Sidharta took her up in his arms. "What has happened?" she asked. Then, noticing he was fully dressed, she cried out in alarm, "Are you going to leave me?" Terrible heart-rending sobs shook her delicate frame. The Prince drew her face on to his breast and tenderly inquired: "My beautiful Yashodara, my wife, why are you weeping so?" His caresses soothed her, and when her sobs grew less he kissed her tenderly and said, "You must not weep, sweet wife. These dear eyes were not meant for tears."

"Ah!" sighed the Princess, "I had such an alarming dream. An ox *Soa* (Light of Asia) was running through the town, and I heard a voice from the temple of Indra say, 'Stop it, or the Luck of Kapilavastu will cease to be!' No one dared go near the animal, it looked so fierce. I went up to it and threw my arms around its neck to stay it, but it threw me from it and went away, and I lay wounded there. Then I slept for a while and dreamed again. This time, my beloved husband, I saw your clothes lying on the bed, but you were gone. I awoke and cried and then slept again, and another vision came to me. This necklace which you gave me on our betrothal turned into a viper and tried to sting me. I woke up terrified and called for you."

Prince Sidharta looked gravely and tenderly at her, but no words came to his lips. He realised that the *devas* had come to prepare his wife for the parting which had to be. His heart ached for her suffering.



The call of humanity and his divine mission on earth demanded sacrifice. In that sacrifice he foresaw the great sacrifice that Yashodara also was called upon to make.

He turned to her and said gently, "Yashodara, my wife, rest assured that wherever I may be you are the one I have loved." At these words Yashodara clung to her husband and said, "You are not going to leave me, my lord." "Beloved Yashodara, be happy. You shall always be my most beloved Yashodara. Try to sleep, my dearest one; the night is well advanced and you are tired." With her arms around his neck she rested herself close up against him, and soon fell into a deep sleep. It was impossible for him to leave her that night. The next night was full moon, and when everything was quiet and still, Sidharta again stood by the open window. The mysterious voices were again irresistible. The *devas* in the sky and all the people on earth were urging him to his mission. He could resist his vocation no longer. The moonlight streaming over the marble floor showed him Yashodara sleeping soundly on their golden bed. He drew near and, gazing into her exquisite face, asked himself, "How can I leave her? Why should my innocent one suffer?" He returned to the window, and the persistent voices seemed louder than ever. His love for Yashodara impelled him to deafen his ears to their crying. He heard the voices of the *devas* saying, "Oh, Sidharta, have you forgotten your mission? Did you not promise to find the Great Law, which will give this sorrow-sick and death-stricken world Nirvana and peace?" He looked towards the city, and thought it was quiet with sleep. But no! the people's cry was heart-rending, calling out to him, "Ah, kind heart, come out of the Palace and go and seek and find the Law that will save us from age, sickness and death. Waste no time, Prince, have pity on us and come out of the Palace."

Backwards and forwards he paced several times to the window. His soul was bent upon the voices and he longed to leave the Palace. Slowly he walked up to the bed. It was a heavenly picture he saw. Yashodara was sound asleep. Her new-born babe, just a week old, had his little head on his mother's right arm, and the room was bathed in moonlight. The Prince stood still for a few moments, looking at wife and child, and was absorbed in admiration. Then the cry of suffering sounded once more in his ears, and, nearing the window, he listened once more to the voices of humanity which spoke to him of their misery. The Prince became impatient to hasten to their relief. Hurriedly he came back to the bed, and knelt at its foot, and whispered, "My poor, innocent Yashodara, I am leaving you to-night. Will you think me unkind? Yashodara,

love has united us. The bond is strong. It will never break. My poor wife, I can foresee your suffering. You want nobody but me. Your life and soul are your husband's. Be brave, my good wife. Your sacrifice means so much to the people. If I stay here I shall not be able to find the Law which will save the world from suffering. Forgive me, my sweet wife. This is my farewell to all whom I love dearly, to all whom I hold near and dear to my heart. When the morrow comes there will be no Sidharta to kiss open your eyes. Never shall I hold you in my arms again. But, Yashodara, it is the Law of Peace I am going to find, and if I succeed we shall meet again. Love has been sweet in our lives and this love shall never cease. Forgive, forgive your Sidharta, and do not mourn my absence."

He gently touched Yashodara's feet with his forehead. He longed to take his baby son in his arms once more for the last time, but dared not lift the child, as the wee head was resting on the mother's arm. He addressed the unconscious infant, "Rahul, my son, if I succeed in finding the Great Law I shall see you again." He bent over to see Yashodara's face once more, and saw, glistening in the bright moonlight, pearl-like tears rolling down her cheeks. Was Yashodara awake or was she dreaming this sad parting? There was no time to lose. Sidharta said to himself, "I must go, and go at once. Farewell, Sweet One, fare thee well." (Plate 5.) He hastened from the room, for he feared that his loved wife's voice might stop him once again. Thus Prince Sidharta tore himself away from his loving ties. The moon which made Yashodara cry that night in her sleep made the whole of India laugh with joy and happiness, for its bright beams helped Sidharta in his flight to find the Great Law.

The Prince passed through the antechambers and galleries where the Princess's attendants slept. Nature had summoned the Goddess of Sleep to help Sidharta. Sleep had come laden with happy dreams and strewn them over the Palace and city. None awakened. The Prince passed out from the Palace to the stables. "Channa, Channa," he called softly. The driver wakened. Was that his master's voice? Realising it was, and seeing the Prince standing there, the charioteer saluted his royal master and asked, "What troubles thee, Prince? Why callest thou me at this hour of the night?" "Hush, Channa! speak low, my friend," said the Prince, "be careful to disturb no one. I want my horse. Saddle him without delay. Channa, my friend, I am starting to-night on the great journey that I have been thinking of taking. Help me, my friend, to seek the treasure that my heart longs to find."

Sidharta said to himself, "I must go, and go
at once. Farewell, sweet one, fare thee well."
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Siddhanta said to himself, "I must go, and go
at once. Parzwell, sweet one, fare thee well."
The day is





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Channa looked up to his master ; with eyes filled with tears and clasped hands he said, " How can you be so cruel as to order me to get Kantak, to help you in your flight, to leave your home and all your dear ones ? Do you not know, master, that many young men have envied you for your wealth and happiness ? Are you going to trample all this for something unknown ? " " Yes, Channa," answered the Prince, " for the unknown, for the Great Treasure that is hidden, that, my friend, at the end of the long journey I may find it."

With clasped hands and in a most piteous voice Channa implored him : " Master, be not in a hurry. Consider your aged parents, your young wife, the new-born baby and the feelings of your subjects." Sidharta saw that Channa was much moved, and was afraid to say much to him for fear he should break into sobs. He said gently, " Channa, my friend Channa, time is precious. Delay not. Please bring Kantak." Channa obeyed his master, said not another word and fetched the horse. The noble animal seemed to understand his master's need, and came forth fresh and ready to do his bidding. The Prince patted his neck and said caressingly, " Many a time have you carried me on pleasure rides, my Kantak. To-night you have to bear me on the long journey I thirst for." The fine horse bent its head in dumb acquiescence, and for the last time Sidharta mounted the gallant animal.

At the dawn of the day they reached the river Anama. It was a cool morning in the month of Baisakh, and the flowers were blooming all around. The breeze fanned him after the ride. The butterflies fluttered round him, as if they had brought a message from the *devas*. The crystal-like water of Anama rippled as if singing with joy. Sidharta dismounted from his horse, and so did the faithful Channa. The Prince unsheathed his sword and cut off his hair with it, leaving the hair just an inch long, and it never again grew any longer. He took off his royal robes, and was wondering with whom he could change them when a young man clad in *gairik* (almond-coloured) robes appeared, carrying another robe over his arm, which he offered to the Prince. Sidharta accepted the gift, and covered his fine figure with it. Then the stranger disappeared. Where the stranger went and whence he came was a mystery.

For the last time Sidharta held the sword in his hand and the royal robes, and then gave them to Channa, saying, " Take these back, take them to Kapilavastu ; they belong to the Raj." (Plate 6.) Channa burst into tears. " Master," he cried, " take me with thee. I cannot return alone." The Prince answered kindly, " No, my dear and true friend ; forgive me, but it is not possible for you to accompany me. You must return to

Kapilavastu and to my father. He will feel my absence much. You must be ever at his side to tend and console him. You must bear the news of my safety to my dear mother." He paused for an instant, and then resumed, "Poor Yashodara, she was asleep when I left. I know not what message to send her. Tell her, Channa, tell her that she will always be the same to me." Again he paused, and it seemed to Channa as if the thought of the Princess was too painful. Sidharta murmured, "My poor Yashodara, it must be. Tell her not to cry and mourn my absence. I go to seek Nirvana."

Channa fell on his master's feet and said, "There has never been such a lucky servant as I have been, master, to have served thee ; and there has never been such an unlucky servant as I, to leave such a master on the bank of Anama to travel alone to an unknown world. Forgive me, master, forgive me ; were I to die here I would be happy." Prince Sidharta blessed him and said, "Calm yourself, and waste no time in getting back to Kapilavastu." These words were his last, and turning from Channa and the horse, he walked straight onward. The two gazed after him, Channa's eyes dim with tears, and Kantak mute and quivering. The faithful charger knew that his master would need him no more. A sigh shivered through his frame, and with a broken whinny he dropped dead.

For the last time Sidharta held the sword in his hand and the royal robes, and then gave them to Channa, saying, "Take these back, take them to Kapilavastu; they belong to the Raj."

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THE DEPARTURE OF SIDHARTA

Sleep, sweet Princess, sleep on,
The moon is beautifully shining on you,
The lotus has closed for the night,
The birds have gone to their nests for rest,

The strings of the *vina* are silent,
All Nature is peaceful and quiet,
Sleep on, beautiful Princess of Sidharta,
The sun might awaken you to a sad scene,
The day will begin with a new leaf of life,
Sleep on, fair Princess, thy peaceful sleep.

THE month was Jaishta (the end of April and beginning of May) and the gardens were fragrant with the delicate perfumes of spring. The birds twittered their love-songs as they flitted among the trees, and the little river Rohini rippled melodiously to the fresh balmy breeze. It was the loveliest season of the year when Sidharta started on his great quest for Nirvana, and his deserted wife was left in the springtime of her youth and beauty to live on alone to the end of her days. It seemed so mysterious that one so lovely, young and innocent should be called upon to suffer so.

As usual, the drums beat that morning and the music played, and the national hymns on the *vina* wakened Yashodara. No sooner were her eyes opened than she turned, as had ever been her wont, to greet her lord. Where was he? Where were his loving words to wake her, his dear hands to caress her? Why was he out of the room so early? Poor Yashodara's heart beat fast. Her anxiety was so great that she left her babe on the bed and, springing to her feet, cried aloud, "My lord, where art thou? Where art thou?" Her attendants rushed into the room, alarmed by her cries, and crowded round her. Some tried to console her by saying, "The Prince must have gone to see his father. He has gone for a ride or a drive. Do not cry, Princess. What will he say when he returns to find your face all tear-stained?"

In vain their consolations. Yashodara realised that her beloved was

gone from her for ever, and she was beside herself with grief. "I want him," she cried again and again, "I want him alone. Oh, Surama, oh, Ganga, call him, bring him, send for him; I cannot live without him!"

The news spread swiftly through the Palace and city that the Prince was nowhere to be found. Horror and consternation filled every heart. The great and glorious city of Kapilavastu was clouded with grief. The Maharajah Siddhodhan heard the news with a stricken heart. He despatched messengers in every direction to search for the Prince, and tried his best to comfort Queen Mahaprajapati, who declared their son had gone to be a Buddha.

At last, after a few days, Channa returned alone, carrying his master's robes and sword. Crowds gathered around him, asking, "How could you leave your master alone?" Channa himself was bent down with grief, and could hardly lift up his head. It was a hard task for him to deliver Sidharta's farewell message. He went up to the Maharajah and laid the Prince's sword and robes at the poor old King's feet. Siddhodhan was overcome with grief. "Oh, my Sidharta, my son, light of my old age, hope of my kingdom, why have you gone? What have I done to be so punished in my old age?" The courtiers gathered around him and tried to console him by reminding him of his little grandson Rahul, and telling him of the grief of the Princess Yashodara. Queen Mahaprajapati hastened to Bishrambhavan, but the news of Channa's return had preceded her. On hearing of Channa's message Yashodara cried aloud, "Oh, my lord, my husband!" and then dropped to the floor in a dead swoon. Her prostration was so great that her attendants feared she would never survive the shock. Ganga, Rohini and other friends of her girlhood gathered around her and strove to rally her. "Our good Princess, do not mourn so bitterly. Be brave and accept this suffering as a gift from the Prince who loved you. It is he and he alone who has given you this sorrow to bear. We love you, dear lady, and would give our lives for your happiness. It grieves us to see you so bereft."

Yashodara was deaf to their voices and ministrations. All the world seemed a blank to her now that Sidharta was gone. For many hours they feared for her reason. At length speech returned to her, and she spoke kindly to them, saying sadly, "Dear, kind friends, when I was happy you shared my joy. Now I am in sorrow, will all of you kindly leave me? I need no jewels, no music, no flowers. This Palace is changed into a *sbmashan*. You girls can no longer stay with me. You are all young and beautiful. Seek some other palace, where you will have

merriment and pleasure as in the happy days now gone from Bishrambhavan for ever. Make yourselves happy, and forget poor Yashodara and her misery and desolation."

One and all the girls fell at her feet and begged her not to banish them from her presence. "Beloved Princess, all of us have been so happy here with you, so honoured by your love. We are so proud to think that you call us your friends. Dear Princess, how can we leave you! Do not make such a suggestion. We meant it when we said we would give our lives for you, if by doing so we could bring back your happiness. Let us remain and share your sorrow with you."

Yashodara was touched by their devotion. "May God and Indras bless all of you. I am indeed fortunate in having such faithful friends." She took off all her jewels, and one by one presented them to her ladies-in-waiting as tokens of her love as well as mementos of the happy days that were now ended. As she presented each gift she kissed the recipient on the forehead, and the ladies were all the more endeared to her for her sweet graciousness in her bitter sorrow. She reserved only two simple little ornaments for her wrists, and from that day dressed herself in *gairik*—the hermits' colour. The ladies wept to see her bare of all her jewels and so coarsely attired. "What would the Prince say if he were to see his adored Gopa in this dress!"

Yashodara answered them gravely, "Cease, my friends, for your Princess there now remains nothing—no coloured sari, no jewels, no joys. Life is all empty and blank for her, the sun has departed and this poor lotus must fade away." The Princess ordered that no *vinas* or music of any kind were to be played in her apartments. She freed the caged birds and sent away all her flowers, forsook her golden bed of silken cushions, and slept on the hard floor and lived on coarse food. The girls tried to dissuade her from a life of such austerity, but in vain. "How can you expect me to act differently," she asked them, "when my beloved lord and master may be starving and sleeping at night under the tree? Oh, Ganga. Oh, Surama. I love my husband devotedly, and my only consolation now is to be like him."

When the Maharajah Suddhodhan recovered sufficiently from his grief to go abroad, his first visit was to console his poor little daughter-in-law.

He found her in a hermit's dress seated on the bare floor of her room. The sad sight overpowered his feelings, and all that he could say was, "My poor Yashodara!"

At the sound of his voice Yashodara's grief revived, and she cast herself at his feet, crying, "Father, he has gone and left me alone. Father,

does this mean love for the sufferings of the people? Why has he left me for other sufferers? Do I not want him? Am I not suffering cruelly? Oh, my father, I know that not one of those sufferers want him so much as I do! Have I not loved him ardently? Have I not been a good wife to him? Now my life is a blank, this Palace a dungeon and the world quite dark and empty."

The Maharajah tried to console her. "Gopa, poor child, think of your baby Rahul; he is now our only hope, our only joy. Devote yourself to him. He is Sidharta's little son."

"I know, father, I know," she cried; "but it is not easy, and my sufferings are very great. Ah! who can end them?"

"Think of Rahul, my daughter, think of Rahul, Sidharta's little child," was all the old Maharajah could say in reply. He hastened from the room and, going to his wife, begged of her to try to console Yashodara.

Queen Mahaprajapati answered wisely, "It is no use grieving so bitterly, Gopa is acting rightly. Now that her husband is a *sannyasi* she must dress like a *sannyasini*. And as to Koliya Raj, her father and mother have sent word that they will hold no further communication with us, since our son has made their daughter a deserted wife. We can do nothing but bear our sorrow, and my son has done what God sent him on earth for, he has gone to be a Buddha.

Yashodara's wondrous beauty had captivated many hearts, and when the news that Sidharta had deserted her and thrown away his heirship spread abroad, many of the Sakya princes sent messages to the Maharajah asking for her hand in marriage. The Princess resented these proposals, and ceased to go abroad, secluding herself in her rooms in the sheltered palace of Bishrambhavan. Sometimes she felt she could not bear the separation much longer, and she would go and beg Queen Mahaprajapati to take charge of Rahul and allow her to go away. In consequence of this repeated request the Queen spoke to her one day very seriously, "My child, I cannot grant your wish. It grieves me, Yashodara, to say that even as a *bhikshuni* you cannot go near Buddha. Your beauty is great, so great that though he has gone and left his aged parents, yourself and his happy home, your beauty, Yashodara, might be an obstacle to his meditations. Poor child! just think that he has gone to seek for the treasure which will make us and the whole world rich one day. My girl, my loved Yashodara, your life has to be sacrificed." Mahaprajapati cried bitterly, and Yashodara, with her head down and with clasped hands, replied, "Mother, oh, mother, tell me why I am gifted with this beauty

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—such beauty which is a misfortune to me now ! ” True it was there was no other woman so fair and beautiful as Sidharta’s wife.

Rahul frequently asked about his father : “ Where is he and when can I see him, mother ? ” Whenever the boy asked these questions the Princess would kiss him fondly, and say, “ My son, if you are good you shall see your father some day.”

After a couple of years Maharajah Suddhodhan’s grief for his son’s absence was considerably lessened. All his hopes were centred in the little Prince Rahul. He himself took charge of the boy’s education. Rahul was more with the old King than with his mother, and became the light and hope of his grandparents. If the Maharajah ever noticed his grandson looking sad or quiet, his aged eyes would fill with tears, and with trembling voice he would ask, “ What troubles you, my precious Rahul ? ” The Prince used sometimes to question his grandfather about his father, and the dear old King was often at a loss how to answer the boy or satisfy his curiosity. “ Be patient, my little Rahul, and you shall see your father some day,” was his invariable answer.

The little Prince was a lovely boy with pretty curls clustering round his head and a fair skin. His large black eyes made his delicate face seem fairer still. His limbs were small and daintily formed, and he alone in the Palace of Kapilavastu was dressed in fine clothes and adorned with valuable jewels. The lad was the darling of the State, and every prayer was offered for his happy future. Wherever he went he was always welcomed, and none could deny him anything he desired. The subjects looked eagerly forward to his enthronement. All merry sounds had been silenced in the Palace where Suddhodhan and Mahaprajapati mourned their son and the Princess Yashodara led the life of a *sannyasini*. And out of respect for the royal grief the subjects no longer indulged in music, singing or dancing.

THE ASCETIC LIFE OF SIDHARTA

AFTER Prince Sidharta parted from Channa he walked along the bank of the river Anama, and when he came to a shady nook he bathed himself in the limpid waters, then resumed his journey, walking on and on towards the south-east. He rested at the various *topobans* through which he passed, and discoursed with the hermits dwelling there, but could not find the peace he sought, and travelled further and further, until at last he entered the great kingdom of Magadha, where Maharajah Bimbishara reigned.

Sidharta now decided to become a *sannyasi*, and chose a cave for his habitation. With a bikhshapatra in his hand he begged from door to door. His handsome and refined appearance and his great piety attracted much attention. Maharajah Bimbishara heard that a very holy hermit had taken up his abode in the cave in the hill. When, later on, he met Sidharta, Bimbishara was greatly struck by his appearance, and guessed that he was no ordinary *sannyasi*. Approaching him with clasped hands, the King addressed him in courteous words: "Guru Maharaj, you are asking alms. I beg of you to remain in my Palace as one of my family, and I shall give you a Princess in marriage."

Sidharta answered, "Maharajah, I thank thee kindly for thy gracious offer, but I am not in a position to accept it." "Oh, say not so!" pleaded the Maharajah; "you are too young, too refined, to endure the hardships of the life you are endeavouring to follow. Come with me; life will be so pleasant that you will never regret having given your consent."

The disguised Prince replied, "Noble sir, I appreciate your kindness and your interest in me. I had a dear father, a loving wife and newborn son, and I have left them all to become a *sannyasi*. Yes, I have forsaken all near and dear to me, and am in search of a spiritual treasure. May I have your blessing and prayers, O King, that I may find the peace which I seek?"

With a grateful obeisance, Sidharta left the Maharajah and quitted the kingdom of Magadha.

The Prince wandered on from place to place, up hills, down dales, beyond the river, and through the mighty forest, ever seeking, ever praying, till he arrived at Gaya. As he journeyed on he attracted followers,

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and at one time had a large number of disciples, but his doctrines were too deep for them to understand, and one by one they all left him, and when he reached the river Niranjana for his great meditation there were only five with him. These five disciples did not leave him. He took up his position under a bodhi tree. Here he sat and meditated, while his five followers kept watch a little way off. Months passed on, the sun shone through all the seasons upon him, storms and rains swept over his devoted head, and he sat lost in meditation, needing neither food, nor sleep, nor change.

Many visions passed before his mental gaze. Some were terrifying and awful, some illuminating and beautiful. Once he saw Indra, the God of Heaven, standing before him with a three-stringed instrument in his hand, and Indra spoke to him and said, "Observe these three strings as I play." Sidharta noticed that the God tightened the pin of one of the strings so much that the string snapped. He made the second so loose that it gave forth no sound. But the third was so correctly adjusted that it produced a sweet harmonious note, after which the vision disappeared. Sidharta's soul had grown and expanded with his Buddhahood, and he interpreted the dream thus to himself: The first string meant excessive austerity, which may snap the thread of life; the second, over-indulgence in worldly pleasure and luxury, which causes a soul to be negligently slack; while the third denoted necessary care of the body and health, resulting in right living and harmony with divine law. Sidharta had subjected himself to such hardships and starvation that he had become very weak—so weak that one day, after his morning bath, he dropped on the bank of the river, and his disciples thought he was dead. After a little time they found he was still breathing, and carried him back to the tree, where he again sat and meditated.

Not far from the bodhi tree there lived a rich merchant's wife named Sujata. She had been wedded for many years, but had no son. She worshipped the God of the Forest, and had vowed that if she should have a son she would make a special *pūja* to the Forest God. While Buddha sat and meditated under the bodhi tree a son was born to her. Sujata remembered her vow, and ordered a thousand cows to be pastured in a meadow of the richest grass. With the milk of these cows she nourished five hundred other cows, and with their milk two hundred and fifty, and continued to decrease the number of cows till there were only eight. She did this so that the very best and richest milk might be produced. In the month of Wesakh, on the morning of the day of full moon, the cows gave milk of their own accord, before their calves were

loosed. When Sujata saw that the cows were giving milk of themselves, she herself took charge of it and boiled it with sandalwood. She noticed with wonder, when the sandal-milk was mixed with rice and placed upon the fire, it did not boil over, and that all the bubbles as they formed moved towards the right side of the vessel, and that no vapour arose from the boiling milk. The god Sukra kept the fire burning. *Mahabrabma* sat near the fireplace, holding an umbrella, and the *devas* of the ten thousand *sakwalas* brought the most agreeable substances and added them to the milk. All these wonders pleased Sujata, and she felt assured that some special favour was at hand. Accordingly Sujata called her maid Purna and bade her go and sweep carefully the ground around the bodhi tree in the forest. The slave ran quickly to obey her mistress's order, and discovered Prince Sidharta sitting under the tree. Six rays of light emanated from his body, and their resplendency made it appear as if he were made of gold. Purna concluded it was the *deva* of the tree come in his own person to receive Sujata's offering. The maid immediately hastened home to inform her mistress of the divine visitant. Sujata was overjoyed at the wonderful news, and was so grateful to Purna for being the bearer of such glad tidings that she promised to adopt the maid as her eldest daughter and give her clothes and jewels suited to her rank. Sujata clothed herself in her richest apparel and, pouring the costly rice-milk into a golden vessel, placed it upon a golden tray and carried it on her own head to the bodhi tree. As she drew near and saw Sidharta sitting there, radiant with celestial light, her joy intensified, and she approached the tree, to present the food she had so lavishly prepared. Placing the golden tray at Sidharta's feet, she clasped her jewel-weighted hands together and said, "My God, accept my small offering and bless me, O God." Sidharta replied, "I am not a god, kind sister; I am an ordinary being, and you must not worship me." (Plate 7.) "Thou art the Lord of the Forest, 'Bana Devata,'" insisted Sujata, "and I have brought this offering because of my vow to thee." Sidharta replied, "No, dear sister, I am but an ordinary being, and came here to seek Nirvana."

Sujata said no more, but offered him the *paramauna* (rice curds). Sidharta accepted the food and, taking up the cup, ate the pudding. His doing so displeased his disciples, who remarked to each other, "After all that has happened, we cannot respect this man as our *guru*. He eats out of a golden cup. He is not the man we want as our guide; he is a very ordinary worldly man and pretends to be a *sannyasi*; there is no depth in him, let us leave him." The five followers deserted him.

"I am not a god, kind sister. I am an
ordinary being, and you must not worship me."
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After Sujata had gone away Sidharta washed his hands in the river, and then returned to his seat under the bo tree. This time more terrible visions than he had ever before had came to him. Satan, or *Mara*, tried to tempt him. In one of these visions he saw his wife Yashodara crying, "Why hast thou left me, my lord? I am alone and desolate in my Palace. Life is cold and empty for me without your love. Come back, beloved, come back. Take me in your arms, I am still young and beautiful. Do not forsake me." In another vision he saw his mother Maharani Dewi, whom in life he had never known. She held out her arms to him, saying, "Come to me, my sweet Sidharta; you are my baby. Oh, do not practise these hardships! Do not die of starvation and thirst. You were born a Prince. The whole kingdom anxiously awaits your return. Come back, come back." Her sorrowful tears touched Sidharta's heart, for he knew that a mother suffers most when her child is in trouble, and it added to his sufferings to see her so distressed. Then he knew it for *mara* (temptation), and cast such a destroying look at Satan that the arch tempter fled. His meditation then grew deeper. All human cares fell away from him, his prayers were heard and he found his long-hoped-for treasure Nirvana. The beautiful calm expression of his face showed that his heart was full of peace.

When he opened his eyes and looked round, he found that his five attendants had gone. He felt he must give that profound truth that he had found to them and to the whole world. He walked to the north-west and stopped at a place called Sharnath, a few miles from Benares. Here he found his five disciples and hundreds and thousands more. Here he preached his first sermon.

SIDHARTA RETURNS AS THE BUDDHA

YASHODARA seldom went to the pleasure-garden. One morning late in the summer the Princess with her little son and attendants went out into the garden. Very few flowers were in bloom. Yashodara took no interest now in either flowers or music, and though she had loved them once, neither cheered her since her lord left her. The world seemed a blank to her. On this morning, when the Princess and her son were walking by the side of the big lake where no lotus floated, she saw her reflection in the water, and shivered at the change in her appearance. Little Rahul asked, "Are you frightened, mother? I am near you." "No, darling," answered Yashodara, kissing her son, "I shall never be frightened as long as you are near me." She fondly played with her son's curls, kissing him over and over again. While the mother and child were playing thus, some of her girl friends ran up, much excited. "Oh, Princess, Princess, have you heard the good news?" "My friends," she answered sadly, "why do you make light of me? I have not had good news for the last seven years, and am not likely to have, unless my Lord the Prince returns." "Princess," they cried, "the Prince has returned, and as a Buddha." "As a Buddha!" repeated Yashodara, her two black eyes filled with tears—tears of mingled joy and sadness. "My handsome young husband the Prince, the future King of Kapilavastu, has returned as a Buddha!" She would see his fine body clothed in a coarse *gairik* robe. This thought made her sad, though she was happy to know her beloved was alive. She would hear his voice once more and see his loved face once again. All her girl friends were around her, and they asked many questions. "Are you pleased your husband is a Buddha?"—"How will you meet him?" "Will you ask him to the Palace?" No answer came. The silence showed that Yashodara's thoughts were far away. They all returned to the Palace, where the Maharani was anxiously waiting for her daughter-in-law. Mahaprajapati gave her the news, and said, "Now, my child, we shall all be saved: my Sidharta is a Buddha and has brought salvation for us."

After seven long years the son and heir of the Maharajah Siddhodhan returned to Kapilavastu. There was great excitement to welcome him.



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All the people awaited his arrival, and wondered much if Buddha Deva would visit his father and the Palace, if he would see the Princess, his wife. Some said, "No, in his doctrine family ties are set aside." Others said, "He must see them all, for Buddha Deva is coming to save all, and is bringing salvation with him." Instead of receiving their Prince with flags and banners and music, the crowd waited with clasped hands. The great Buddha entered the city with a large following of disciples. Prince Sidharta had left Kapilavastu in his royal robes. To-day he returned as a Buddha in a *gairik* with a common *kamundalu* (beggar's bowl) in his hand. The expression in Buddha Deva's face was serene. His steps were gentle and full of dignity. He begged from door to door. The news that he was begging from door to door reached his aged father, who cried aloud "How can I bear such a sight—my heir, my Sidharta begging, and my subjects giving him alms!"

After being consoled by his friends and relations, Suddhodhan went from the Palace to see his son, now the illustrious Buddha. The sight of Sidharta carrying a beggar's bowl and clad in a *gairik* dress pierced his heart. He paused for a while, and then spoke to Buddha: "Sidharta, must you beg from door to door, and from your own subjects?" Buddha Deva looked at his father, who had aged much in the last few years, and answered, "Maharaj, even kings beg in our religion." After a few days the King went again to the Buddha, and asked him to come and bless his Palace. Buddha Deva consented. In the afternoon, accompanied by Nanda and Ananda, two of his disciples, he came to the Palace. Hundreds of men and women gathered in the Durbar Hall to receive the holy one's blessing. King Suddhodhan was at the door to receive him. Maharani Mahaprajapati was most happy to learn the news, and spoke to one and all at the Palace, urging them to go to the Buddha for salvation. "How proud I feel my Sidharta is a Buddha! He has come to relieve the world of sorrow and misery. Go, my people, go, and ask him to bless you, that you may receive the treasure Nirvana which he has brought with him."

The Palace people and the neighbours were soon assembled in the hall. The Maharani then went to the chamber of Yashodara. The Princess was seated on the white marble floor, her long black eyelashes still wet with sad tears. Her glorious black hair fell neglected over her shoulders and rested in coils on the floor. Poor Yashodara was oblivious of her beauty then. Her face was sad and serious. Hearing the voice of her mother-in-law, she stood up, and when the Maharani entered knelt down and paid her homage.

Mahaprajapati said, in an affectionate voice, "My child, come with me to see Buddha Deva; and we will ask for his blessing." "Oh, mother," answered Yashodara, "forgive me, but I am not going to the Assembly to meet my lord." The Maharani answered, "Yashodara, you know not what you are saying. Your lord is the Lord of the World now, and he is a Buddha." "Devee, kind mother, I am proud of my lord, and it is the greatest honour to receive him, and to know Buddha Deva is coming to our Palace to bless us. But, mother, forgive me, I am unable to accompany you to the Durbar Hall." At this the Maharani looked disappointed, and said, "Yashodara, my child, do you forget Sidharta is a Buddha now?" Gently lifting her face, Yashodara said, "Mother, I bow down to Buddha's feet, but he is my husband, and I have loved him with my heart and soul. My love for him is true, mother, but he left me when I was asleep. What will the world say if I go to meet him? He has to come and see me here, and let the people know I loved him, and have been a true wife to him."—"Oh, Yashodara, you perhaps do not know that in his religion *bbikshus* are allowed no wives. How can Buddha Deva come to see you?"—"Oh, mother, he is my husband, and if my love is true and heavenly he will come." The Maharani left Yashodara's room disappointed, and joined the others in the Durbar Hall. Buddha Deva came with two of his followers. One and all went to him and asked for his blessing. Several times Buddha Deva looked around as if to see someone. Who was it he wanted? For whom did he look? Whom did the Buddha miss? After blessing every one Buddha spoke gently to his two disciples, and asked them to follow him to the inner apartments of the Palace. After seven years Buddha entered the *pandar*, and what a great change he saw in the house! All the pleasure-rooms were empty; the golden cages had no birds in them; the musical instruments were lying in a heap; the strings of the *vins* were broken. In the garden there bloomed no flowers, the fountain played no water. The Buddha passed through the many corridors and terraces, till he came to the room of his once-beloved wife. Her attire proved that she lived the life of a *bbikshuni*. Buddha entered the room, and Yashodara fell on his feet and sobbed like a little child. "Oh, my lord, my lord, why didst thou leave me? What did I do, my lord, to suffer so? Thou didst go to save those who had not loved thee. My lord, my master, I was at thy feet, and wanted no one but thee. Oh, my lord, thou went to those who were so very far away, who loved thee not, and poor Yashodara was not thought of." King Suddhodhan and his Queen were horrified when they saw Yashodara's arms round

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the holy one's feet, and with clasped hands begged Buddha Deva to forgive her, saying, "Oh, holy one, Yashodara is overwhelmed with grief, and forgets thou art a Buddha now, and has touched thy feet. Revered sir, kindly forgive her. Ever since you left her Yashodara has lived the life of a *bbikshuni*. She has only one very simple meal a day, sleeps on the bare floor, and wears not any jewels or coloured saris." Buddha Deva answered, "Maharaj, I know what Yashodara was to me, I understand her grief. Before we were born in this life we had met in a former birth. Yashodara was my favoured disciple, I loved her much, and when in heaven promised her if we were born again she should be my wife." Yashodara, still crying, again spoke to the Buddha, saying, "My lord, do *bbikshus* have no *bbikshunis*? May I not be allowed to follow thy footsteps, and be a *bbikshuni*?" Buddha answered her very kindly and gently, "Yashodara, weep not; wipe away those sad tears, I have brought the treasure for which I left you. Yashodara, ask for this treasure, and take what will make you happy and free you from misery and sorrow." Yashodara heard her lord's voice after six long years. How comforting its music was! She dried her sad tears and sat at her lord's feet listening to the law of Nirvana. When Buddha Deva was leaving the room, Yashodara, kneeling down with clasped hands, again begged of Buddha to allow her to be *bbikshuni*, but Buddha said, "Rahul is too small; you must do your duty to your child first." Yashodara patiently waited for a time when she might leave the Palace and its grandeur to take the vow of *bbikshuni*.

It was during the second visit of Buddha Gautama that the holy one heard that his disciples suspected Yashodara's virtue. They said little Rahul was not Buddha's son. On hearing this, Buddha spoke to his disciples, and told them that Yashodara was a perfect and virtuous woman, and he would prove it. The cruel calumny stabbed Yashodara to the heart, and she was much relieved when she heard that Buddha Deva himself would try her purity. On the appointed morning the Buddha with all his disciples, all dressed alike in *gairik* robes, with alms vessels in their hands, sat in a hall, and Yashodara was summoned there. The Princess looked neither sad nor nervous; there was a heavenly expression in her face, and her large black eyes spoke of her true love for her husband. She took little Rahul's hand and walked into the hall with gentle dignity.

Thousands of eyes were fixed at her beautiful face. Her soul was as pure as her face was beautiful. She noticed that all the disciples were dressed like the Buddha. The virtuous woman was silently praying that her pure love for her husband might be proved.

Yashodara gave a precious stone ring to her little son Rahul, saying, "Rahul, my son, take this ring and put it on your father's finger." The ring was one Prince Sidharta had always worn. Rahul had never seen his father. The little seven-year-old boy walked straight up to the Buddha and placed the ring on his finger. All the disciples and those who had doubted Yashodara knelt before her and the Buddha Deva, and with clasped hands asked pardon for their suspicion. On this visit Yashodara again asked the Buddha if she might become a *bhikshuni*, and again he answered, "Not yet. Rahul is too young." Some days after this the Lord Buddha was seated in a grove of mango trees near the Palace, discoursing to his followers. Yashodara stood in a window in the Palace which overlooked the grove, and Rahul was by her side. Pointing to the central figure in the group under the trees, she said to the boy, "My child, go to him and say, 'My father, every father gives his treasure to his son. I wish to inherit thine.'" Rahul was exuberant with joy, and sped through rooms and corridors, out through the garden to the grove. The bright little figure, dressed in rich robes, with a tiny glittering crown on his curly head, flew on straight to the royal hermit, and fell at his feet with clasped hands, saying, "Father, my father, pray give me your treasure, as all fathers give their treasure to their sons." (Plate 8.)

The Buddha did not speak, his deep luminous eyes surveyed the child kneeling at his feet, his lips moved in prayer. The disciples wondered what the child's words could mean, and Rahul continued to plead, "Father, dear father, may I not have your treasure?" The disciples were greatly moved by the touching scene. At last Buddha Deva made a sign to one of his followers to take the boy away and dress him as a *bhikshu*. Rahul sprang to his feet with joy, and the disciple led him away by the hand in obedience to the Lord Buddha's command. Presently Rahul returned with his pretty curls shorn off, the glittering crown and bright robes exchanged for a *gairik* dress. Once again he knelt at his father's feet and asked his blessing. As the great saint blessed his own child kneeling there, he wondered for an instant what had made the boy come to him with so serious a request. Looking towards the Palace, Buddha Deva saw Yashodara standing at the window, and he divined that the child's desire had been engendered by her. The Buddha knew that his Gopa was no ordinary wife and mother, but one who had found special favour with heaven, and who could be the only one of all around him to share with him the deep inward joy of seeing their son become a *bhikshu*. Yashodara loved her husband with heart and soul, and what was hers was his, and it was proved when she sent her son to him to be a *bhikshu*.



The bright little figure, dressed in rich robes, with a tiny glittering crown on his curly head, flew on straight to the royal hermit, and fell at his feet with clasped hands, saying, "Father, my father, pray give me your treasure, as all fathers give their treasure to their sons."

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The news that Rahul had been admitted to the Buddha's order was soon carried to the Maharajah Suddhodhan, who hastened in consternation to the ashram and cast himself at Buddha's feet. "Oh, Buddha Deva, why have you taken my little Rahul from me?" cried the poor old King, twice bereft of an heir. "He was the joy of my life, the hope of my kingdom. Now you have taken him, oh, take me too!" The aged ruler's grief was so pathetic that it touched the Buddha's heart, and he there and then ordained that no children should ever be received into the *bhikshu's* order without having first obtained their parents' consent.

After Rahul's *bhikshuship* the Maharajah gave his Palace for a *bihar*, and in fact the whole of Kapilavastu became more or less of a monastery. After Rahul's *bhikshuship* the Maharani Mahaprajapati became a *bhikshuni*. Her son Nanda was a great disciple of Buddha, and was always with him. After little Rahul became a *bhikshu* Yashodara asked the Lord Buddha if the time had come when she too might enter the order, and this time her wish was granted. For Yashodara life now held a higher meaning. She had suffered much in the seven years of her husband's absence. When she found him again their souls were reunited, but not in earthly love. He was now a *bhikshu*, the great Buddha Deva, and she, his wife, learned the lesson of her years of suffering and separation, and gained a greater love and happiness. Her love was pure, and she was able to enter into a greater communion with her husband in their mutual joy than she could ever have realised had she remained his wife in the worldly sense of the word. Here was true spiritual union. Even as a nun, wherever Yashodara went many women followed her. There was something extraordinarily good in her disposition. If the Princess *bhikshuni* sat under a tree, women and children quickly gathered round her, just to hear her voice and to gaze into her face. Yashodara often left the *bihar* and went right into the deep jungle, in order to be alone. (Plate 9.) Though her garment was a simple sari and in her hand was a beggar's bowl, still she looked a queen, and wherever she went her appearance showed she was not an ordinary *bhikshuni*. She begged from door to door, and if she was ill and could not go out to get any food she would fast that day. Once Yashodara was ill and not able to go out to beg. Rahul came and found his dear mother in great pain. He was distressed, and asked, "Mother, can I get anything that would relieve you of this pain?" "Rahul," said his mother, "once before I had such pain, and mango syrup made me well, my child." Rahul went out and begged at many a door, but did not receive any mangoes. The boy was sad at heart, and went to one of the disciples and told him of

his mother's illness. The disciple said, "Rāhul, I can get you a mango." This disciple had been asked to go and bless a family that morning, and the lady of the house had prepared a breakfast for him. The disciple was much pleased when he saw a mango on his plate, and carefully put it aside. His hostess asked why he did that, and when she learnt that a *bbiksbuni* was very ill and mango syrup was the only cure for her, she begged of the disciple to eat the mango she had placed for him, and made up a little parcel of a few mangoes for the *bbiksbuni*. Rāhul received his parcel with delight; tears of gratitude rolled down his cheeks and he thanked the disciple. Rāhul went to the *bihar* and made some syrup, and gave it to his mother, and it cured her of her great pain.

Such was the royal *bbiksbuni's* life. She lived entirely upon the food that she received from begging.



Yashodara often left the *bihar* and went right
into the deep jungle, in order to be alone.

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FROM THE BHIKSHUNI APADANA

THE *bhikshuni* Yashodara with five hundred *bhikshunis* approached the Blessed One and, having bowed down before Him, sat down at His feet, and said : " I am now seventy-eight years old. I have attained the limit of age, and the last stage of human longevity has been reached. I have to leave you, O Lord, and You have been my Refuge. Death is the end of life, and this night I shall enter Parinirvana, where there is no birth, no decay, no death, to that mortal city of Nirvana where I am going. I beseech, O Lord, that all your congregation of *bhikshunis* will show me forgiveness. I have finished my career of Sansaric deeds. I have removed their doubts.

" Born in the Sakya princely family when I was a lay woman, I was your wife.

" In that Palace I was chief of ninety thousand women.

" In the observance of polite courtesies I was always very attentive. I was beautiful, and my youth never disappeared.

" In the Palace, like the gods of the Nandana heaven, I lived with you, attended to by a thousand maidens.

" In domestic delights I had no equal, and in beauty I had no equal."

Having said these things, the *bhikshuni* Yashodara manifested her spiritual powers by the exhibition of wonderful and miraculous deeds.

By her spiritual powers she took the shape of Brahma, and preached the Dharma and paid homage at the Lord's feet.

" Blessed Lord ! I have practised the high powers of spirituality, I had attained to the heights of divine hearing, and was able to read the thoughts of others.

" I gained the divine knowledge of looking back to the past births, and I was proficient in the power of divine sight. All desires I have destroyed, there is no rebirth for me, Lord of Victory. Initiated by you, O Lord, I have gained the deeper knowledge of the profound Wisdom of Artha, Dharma, Nirukti and Pratibhana.

" Many Buddhas have given me their blessings for your sake.

" Whatever meritorious deeds I have done for the welfare of the

Noble Ones, all that I have done for your sake, expecting you to be my lord.

“Many times I have sacrificed my life for your happiness in the previous births.

“Many million times in the previous cycles of rebirth for the sake of worldly gain you had sold me, but I cheerfully endured the pain, desiring that you should be my only lord.

“Many million times I have endured the sufferings of a maidservant, but I had only one desire, you, and that was to have you as my only lord.

“Many million times I have sacrificed my life for your welfare, and that I did with a cheerful heart, desiring you to be my lord.

“Many million times I have given away all my ornaments and sacrificed my limbs simply for your sake, desiring you alone.

“Many million times I have given away my wealth and my sons and daughters away, desiring you, my lord.

“Whenever you expressed the desire to give alms to the poor, I cheerfully consented to fulfil your desires.

“O Victorious One in the Sansaric cycle of rebirths, I have undergone all sorts of sufferings for your sake, desiring you to be my lord.

“In each birth I endured suffering with a cheerful heart, and never did I grieve.

“In accordance with the principles of the noble teachings that you preached, I endured both pain and pleasure with a heart of moderateness, in order to reach the supreme heights of the wisdom of *Arbatship*.

“By the power of the great merits I had done I was born a Sakya Princess, full of beauty and full of grace and wisdom.

“Prosperity was my inheritance, and righteous was my life, and sorrow was not mine. Now I am free from all fears.

“Righteousness is the supreme law. To whoever acts in accordance with the laws of righteousness, happiness comes, follows him here and hereafter.

“Whoever desires happiness he follows the law of righteousness and avoids the path of unrighteousness.

“Disgusted with the painful processes of repeated rebirths, I renounced the pleasures of the Palace, and with the thousand maids who were my attendants of the Palace entered the homeless life of the *bhikshunis* and observed the higher laws appointed for the *bhikshunis*. Before the expiration of eight months I was able to gain the wisdom of the Four Noble Truths, and reached the summit of perfection as an *Arbat*.



"Robes, food, sweets and medicines needed for a *bbikshuni* were offered to me by many. Wave after wave of gifts came to me.

"All contaminations of the heart have I been purified of. Repeated births are not mine. I am like the she elephant that has won freedom by snapping off the chains that made me a prisoner.

"It has to be my supreme happiness that I have been able to achieve the thrice great wisdom of Trivida. I have observed the higher laws ordained by thee, O Supreme Buddha. I have now won Purity. All karma of the past have I annihilated. Present and future karma have been consumed. I therefore now worship Thy blessed feet."

On an evening in Baisakh when all was quiet and still the great call came to Maharani *Bbikshuni*. She was then living in a *bihar* in Rajgaha. This little town stood surrounded by hills in the midst of rich, well-cultivated fields. The monastery was situated near to a small forest. One evening Yashodara wandered away into the forest. No one in the ashram missed her. Some of the nuns were engaged in prayer and others occupied in work, and silence reigned everywhere. Yashodara wandered on, absorbed in her thoughts, and sat under a tree in the moonlit forest. Her mind travelled back over her life, and it seemed as if the silent world of Nature spoke to her. In the springtime this forest had bloomed with beauty and the scent of flowers and spices had sweetened the air. Even so had been her life, a very springtime of beauty and happiness. Now it was past and gone, and the music of her youth all silenced. Now she was old and a *bbikshuni*, and she longed for the peace of eternity. The love and beauty of her life were to live again in another world. Her beautiful dark eyes were now luminous with divine love. Her still shapely hands held a *kamandalu*. No longer a Princess, but a *bbikshuni*, she stood at the end of life's journey begging for peace. The chords of her memory gave back to her the loving voices of husband and child, and mingled with their voices came other notes. It seemed to her that angels were drawing near to her, and singing sweetly as they came. The love-music of the past grew fainter and the heavenly notes clearer and nearer. The rippling of the waters and the murmur of the forest were no longer clear to her, but the divine music grew louder and more triumphant. The moon was shining now as it had shone forty-eight years ago when Sidharta had left her, and to-night in this clear bright moonlight she was leaving her earthly life for the great Nirvana, the Nirvana which Buddha had preached, the treasure he had found and given to every one of them. Once more Yashodara found the world beautiful, and she herself was full of new strength and new hope, and

she lifted her voice and said aloud, "Nanda, Khema, father and mother, and so many others have entered the great Nirvana, and I am left. I was born on the same day as my lord, and in regular order ought to enter the Kingdom of Peace on the same day. My lord will in two years enter Nirvana. I would like to go before him. I will go and ask my lord to let me enter my rest before him, and I trust my lord will grant my request." (*Bhikshuni Apadana*.)

Yashodara Devi rose from her seat under the tree in the moonlit forest and walked miles and miles, absorbed in thought, in the direction in which her great lord lived. When she arrived she rendered him her homage, and with clasped hands asked him to forgive her for any faults she had committed, and then she entreated his permission to leave this earth. Lord Buddha answered her, "Yashodara, are you quite prepared to leave this earth? Have you entered Nirvana?" "Test me, my lord," she entreated. The Lord Buddha tried her in many ways to see if she had really gained perfection, and a great number of persons witnessed the wonderful miracles she performed.

Yashodara now addressed herself to the Buddha, saying, "My lord, my master, O great Buddha Deva, has not my pure love and virtue helped thee to obtain perfection? Was my help nothing to thee? All that I had, my master, was thine; the only child I had I gave thee for thy order. Didst not that prove that thou wert all to me? I came into this birth to serve thee. My lord, bless me, that I may enter the City of Peace in thy presence."

Lord Buddha responded, "I bless thee, *Bhikshuni* Yashodara, the most virtuous and perfect of women."

It was about midnight when Yashodara returned to her own room. There was nothing of any comfort in it. A few earthen pots were there for the storing of alms, and a heap of straw served for a bed. Yashodara seated herself upon the floor in the centre of the room, and with clasped hands and closed eyes began to pray. . . . (Plate 10.) Never again did her beautiful eyes open. Her soul was carried away by the angels, and strains of heavenly music drew the ladies of the *bihar* to the room. They discovered the Maharani *Bhikshuni* seated in deep meditation, with a beautiful halo floating over her head. They gathered round her in reverence, and presently noticed that she had ceased to breathe, and they knew that her sweet soul had fled to Nirvana, to wait there for her lord and master, Gautama Buddha.

Yashodara seated herself upon the floor in the
centre of the room, and with clasped hands
and closed eyes began to pray. . . . [See page 48]



THE STORY OF KHEMA

MAHARAJAH BIMBISHARA was a great devotee of Buddha. He became a *bhikshu* himself and tried to persuade his wife Khema to become a *bhikshuni*. He expounded his views to her on the "peace" of the religious life and the spiritual consolations which she would enjoy if she become a nun. The Maharani, however, had set her heart against it. Khema was very proud of her own personal beauty; no doubt she was a remarkably handsome woman, and had gained the admiration of all who saw her.

Upon a special occasion Buddha happened to be at B—. A large number of Sakya ladies went for a walk to a garden which had been placed at their disposal by a Prince. On their way back to their homes they had planned to pay a visit to Buddha, and asked Maharani Khema to accompany them, but she firmly refused to do so. Khema had a strong presentiment that if she were ever to see Buddha she would be compelled to become a nun. She decided to leave the garden by a shorter way, in order to avoid the Sage. Just as she was nearing the gate of the garden, to her surprise, Maharani Khema saw Buddha seated quite close to it. He seemed to be absorbed in meditation, while an exquisitely pretty girl was fanning him.

The external beauty of the young woman strongly attracted Khema, so much so that she stopped to look at her closely. Khema watched the fascinating figure changed into an old woman, with shrivelled-up skin, sunken eyes, toothless head covered with grey hair. Within a few seconds this unattractive form crumbled to pieces and fell on the ground, resembling a heap of ashes.

Khema was struck with horror at this sight. She shut her eyes and covered her face with her hand. After a few minutes, when she had recovered from the shock, she opened her eyes again, and, in looking round, found that Buddha had vanished, and the ashes had also disappeared.



Khema was deeply impressed by this vivid representation of the utter vanity of human beauty. She felt convinced that this extraordinary vision was ordained by Providence.

The beautiful Maharani, true to her heavenly call, went to Buddha and offered herself for the religious life. (Plate 11.)



CSL

The Buddha Deva converting the Maharani
Khema. [See page 50]



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started for Kusinara, a town about one hundred and twenty miles N.N.E. of Benares, and about eighty miles due east of Kapilavastu. About half-way between the two places flows the river Kakushta. Before reaching it, however, he was obliged to rest, and, being thirsty, he asks Ananda to bring him some water from the river. Thus refreshed, he is able to bathe in the river, and, resting many hours, reaches in the evening a grove outside Keistnagara, where he rests for the last time. At the river, feeling that he was dying, and afraid that Chanda should reproach himself or be reproached by others, he says to Ananda, "After I am gone tell Chanda that he will in a future birth receive a very great reward, for, having eaten the food he gave me, I am about to pass away. Say it was from my own mouth you heard this. There are two gifts that will be blest above all others : that of Sujata before I attained Buddhahva under the bo tree, and this gift of Chanda before I pass away." While in the grove of trees he talked long and earnestly with Ananda about his burial and about certain rules, mostly relating to intercourse with female disciples, to be observed by the order after his death.

7. Nirvana means bodhi or perfect knowledge.

8. Buddha sat under the tree for six years. He gave himself over to the most painful mortification. He attained to the consumption of a single grain of rice in the day, and ended by reducing himself almost to the condition of a skeleton.

9. Gautama Buddha's wife had several names, such as :—

Yashodara, Yasoda, Gopa, Subhadra.
The Princess was of a Kolyaclan.

10. The Gautama Buddha left his house and went to the journey of Nirvana. From that day people called him Sakya-Muni or Gautama.

11. Gautama is a sort of title, meaning the "Priest family."

12. Kosala was a rich and big kingdom.

THE FIVE HUNDRED PRINCESSES

It was during the residence of Buddha at the Mahawana Wihara that he delivered the discourse called the Maha Samaya Sietra, when a Kela-Laksha of Diwas and Brahmas became *rabats*, and an Asankya entered the three paths. With this discourse they are greatly pleased, and call it "Our Sutra."

The wives of the five hundred Princes, when they heard that their husbands had become *rabats*, thought it would be better for them also to become recluses than to remain at home in widowhood. They therefore requested Prajapati to go with them to Buddha, that they might receive consecration. At this time Buddha was residing in the Nigrodarama Wihara, near Kapila, whither he had come on account of the festival to be held at the burning of the body of Suddhodhan, who was now dead; and after the ceremony was concluded he remained in the same place a short period, that he might assist his relatives by instructing them in the Dharma. The Queen-Mother, Prajapati, said to Buddha that, as Suddhodhan was dead and Rahul and Nanda were priests, she had no wish to reside alone; and therefore requested that, with the other Princesses by whom she was accompanied, she might be admitted to profession.

It was clearly perceived by the Sage that if these females were admitted to profession they would derive therefrom immense advantages, and he saw also that it was the practice of former Buddhas to admit them; but he reflected that if they were admitted it would perplex the mind of those who had not yet entered into the paths, and cause others to speak against his institutions. He therefore thought it would not be right to accede to their request at once, and said, "Women seek not to enter my immaculate order." Three times they presented their request, but as it was still refused, they were afraid to make it a fourth time, and retired to their homes.

From Kapila, Buddha went to the Kutagara-Sala near Wisala. Then Prajapati said to the other Princesses, "Children, Buddha has thrice refused to admit us to profession; let us take it upon ourselves, and then go to him, and he cannot but receive us." On hearing this advice, they were

AJATSATRU

When Prince Ajatsatru, son of Maharajah Bimbishara, made his father a prisoner, Ajatsatru's own mother, the Maharani Baidehi, was the only one who was permitted to visit the Maharajah.

Ajatsatru had given orders that the prisoner should be fed very sparingly, in order to shorten his life.

Baidehi, having heard of these cruel measures, tried all in her power to save the Maharajah's life. She contrived to hide some food in her saree and to carry it to her husband.

When Ajatsatru was informed about his mother's artifices, he gave strict orders that the Maharani's saree was to be examined before she was allowed to enter the prison. Baidehi after this managed to plaster her hand with sugar, and to supply her husband with this sweet crust. Even this was found out and made known to Prince Ajatsatru, who after this would not allow the Maharani to pay any more visits to the prisoner.

Ajatsatru's own desire was to see his father starve to death, and therefore he would not allow any food to be taken to him. After some weeks he inquired if Bimbishara was still alive, and upon receiving a reply in the affirmative, he asked impatiently, "What on earth does he do to keep himself alive?" The warder of the jail replied, "The Maharajah walks about and repeats his prayers." "Then cut his feet off," commanded the Prince wrathfully.

Though Bimbishara was deprived of all bodily nourishment, his soul was sustained by the spiritual food which he had received from Buddha. After his feet were cut off he became very weak, and all who attended on him felt that he had not many more days to live. Although a prisoner, Bimbishara bore a most peaceful and happy expression on his countenance. Soon after the Maharajah's feet had been amputated, a little son was born to Ajatsatru. When Ajatsatru saw the infant, an ardent affection filled his heart, and he exclaimed, "I know now what a father's love is for a son. I must go and set my suffering father free." He was, however,



YASHODARA

too late, as the saintly Bimbishara had, some hours before this happy decision of his son, died of starvation in prison. Though his body had suffered agony, his pure soul had left a heavenly expression on his face. Maharajah Bimbishara had been a zealous follower of Buddha and had helped him to spread his doctrine extensively.

NOKULPITA AND NOKULMATA

AT Sravasti lived a noteworthy and admirably united couple known as Nokulpita and Nokulmata, who were happy indeed in their mutual love.

They had a notion that they would undoubtedly be reunited after death, on account of the implicit trust which they placed in each other and the deep devotion which they fostered for each other.

Upon one of their visits to Buddha Deb, they told him that they were convinced their marriage bonds would last throughout eternity, as nothing could ever part them.

Buddha Deb declared the practice of three great virtues only could unite them forever. Nokulpita inquired which they were. Buddha Deb answered, "Faith, Knowledge and Purity."

From that very day Nokulpita and Nokulmata commenced their lives as *bhikshu* and *bhikshuni*.

NOTES

1. An Aryan tribe named the Sakyas were seated about 600 B.C. at a place called Kapilavastu, on the banks of the river Rohini. This was about one hundred miles from Benares City. That insignificant stream rose from thirty or forty miles to the north of their settlement in the spurs of the mighty Himalayas.

The Sakyas had penetrated further to the east than west of their fellow Aryans. Beyond them in that direction was the powerful race of the Sicchasir and the Kingdom of Magadha. To the north were the hill tribes of Mongolian extraction, while behind them to the west lay those lands which the Brahmans held most sacred. On the other side of the Rohini lived Koliyan, or kindred tribe.

2. The names of Gautama Buddha are :—

Buddha, Sakya-Singha, Sakya-Muni,
Seagata, Sattha, Jine, Bhayava,
Loka-Natha, Sarvajana, Dharina-Raja,
Gautama, Tathagatha, etc., etc.

3. Kosala was a huge big kingdom once. All the powerful Rajahs reigned there. Maharajah Harish Chandra reigned here. Ram Chandra's mother came from Kosala, and Benares and Oudh have been the Aryans' great sacred places. Naimishyarannya was close to Kosala.

4. The prevalent notion is that Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a typical Indian. Hinduism had not yet at this time arisen. He had but little quarrel with the religion that did prevail. His purpose was to build it up, to strengthen it, not to destroy it.

5. An important event which took place three years before Gautama's death was the destruction of Kapilavastu, and the slaughter of the Sakyas by Vidudabha, son and successor of Pasenadi, King of Kosala. We know little or nothing of the clan after this.

6. On reaching Pasa he is entertained by a goldsmith of that place named Chanda (a man not of high social standing), who prepares for him a meal of rice and mushrooms (for meat). In the afternoon he

pleased, and the whole of them cut off their hair, put on the proper robe, and, taking earthen alms bowls in their hands, prepared to depart from their homes. The Queen-Mother thought that it would not be right for them to go in chariots, as it would be contrary to the institutions of the Recluse; they must travel in some manner that would be attended with fatigue, and they therefore set out for Wisala on foot. Previously they had thought it a great thing to have to descend from the upper to the lower storey of the Palace; they were only accustomed to walk in places so smooth that they were like mirrors, that reflected the image of all things near them; for fuel in the palace, when fires were required on account of the cold, they had only burnt cotton and silk cloth smeared with oil, as common wood would have caused too much heat, and sandalwood too much smoke; even when they went to the bath they were protected by curtains and canopies; and in every respect were brought up in the most delicate manner. In consequence of their tenderness, their feet were soon covered with blisters when they began to walk. The people of those parts, who had previously heard of their beauty, no sooner knew that they were on their way than they came from all directions to look at them. Some prepared food and requested they would do them the favour to partake of it, whilst others brought vehicles and litters and entreated that they would make use of them; but they resolutely refused to take advantage of these kind offers of assistance. The distance from Kapila to Wisala was fifty-one *yojamas*. It was evening when they arrived at the Wihara in which Buddha was residing. They did not enter within, but remained at the outside.

When Ananda saw them with bleeding feet covered with dust and half dead, his breast was full of sorrow and his eyes filled with tears, and he said, "Why have you come? For what reason have you endured these hardships? Have the Sakyas been driven from the city by the enemy? Why does the mother of Buddha remain in such a place?" An answer to these questions was returned by Prajapati; on hearing which, Ananda requested them to remain there whilst he went and informed Buddha of their arrival. To the Sage he related all that he had seen, and described the wretchedness of the appearance presented by the Princesses, at the same time informing him of their wish. But he merely said, "Ananda, seek not to have females admitted to profession." The priest then asked if the Queen-Mother was not worthy of being admitted, but he received only the same rebuke; and though he thrice repeated the question, no other reply was given. Then he inquired whether a female, on the supposition that she was admitted to profession, could enter the paths;

and Buddha said, "Are the Buddhas born in the world only for the benefit of men? Assuredly it is for the benefit of females as well. When I delivered the Tirokudha-Seitra many women entered the paths, as did also many Dewis when I delivered the Abhidharinma in Yawietisa. Have not Wisakha and many other Upasekhawas entered the paths? The entrance is open for women as well as men." No Diwa or Brahma would have been able to say more upon the same subject to the teacher of the world, but as Ananda knew his thoughts he was bold, and said, "My lord, it is right that women should be admitted to profession; when you delivered the Buddha Wansa discourse you made known that this was one of the institutions of the twenty-four Buddhas who have preceded you." With this reply of Ananda's Buddha was pleased; but he said nothing, nor did he give permission to Prajapati to enter, that more might be elicited upon the subject. Ananda therefore continued, "It is evident that women may be admitted to profession; then why may not Prajapati, who has rendered so much assistance to Buddha? What hindrance can there be?" And he proclaimed at length the benefits that Buddha had received from Prajapati in his childhood.

When he had concluded the great teacher saw that the time had now come in which it would be proper to admit the Princesses to profession; and he therefore said, "Ananda, if Prajapati be admitted to profession there are eight requirements to which the female recluses must attend."

The eight ordinances were repeated by Ananda to Prajapati and the other Princesses, and when they heard the conditions upon which they could be admitted to profession they were greatly delighted, and at once promised that all the ordinances should be strictly observed. They were admitted to profession in the presence of the priests; and when they had received Upasampada, Prajapati was appointed by Buddha to be the chief of the female recluses, and to instruct her relatives in the necessary discipline. Not many days afterwards, exercising Bhawana, she became a *rabat*; and the five hundred Princesses entered the paths at the time that Buddha delivered the Nandakowada-Sietra to the priest Nanda. The number of the females who were admitted to profession after this period cannot be computed, but the chapters, both of the priests and priestesses, increased so greatly that in all Jambudwipa it was scarcely possible to find a suitable place for the exercise of Wiweka, or solitary meditation.

PRINCESS VISIKHA

IN the sacred texts the type of a female votary of Buddha as she ought to be, with her indefatigable zeal as a giver and as a helper, is the honourable matron Visikha. She is a rich citizen Commoner at Savatthi, the chief town of Kosala, the mother of many blooming children, the grandmother of countless grandchildren. Everyone invites Visikha to sacrificial ceremonies and banquets, and has the dishes offered to her first. A guest like her brings luck to the house. It is Visikha who is represented to have made the first liberal preparations on a large scale to provide for Buddha's disciples, who come to Savatthi, the chief necessities of life. I here insert the narrative in point : It gives at once an intelligible picture of what people in the young brotherhood thought as to giving and receiving, and as to which of the two is more blessed : the only benefactor who must be thanked is not he who gives anything to Buddha and his order, but Buddha, who accepts the gift and thereby puts the giver in the position to practise the virtue of charity and to become a partaker of that reward which is promised to this virtue.

Buddha is one day dining with his disciples at Visikha. After dinner Visikha approaches him and says, "Light requests, Sire, I make to the exalted one." "The Perfect, Visikha, are too exalted to be able to grant every wish." "What is allowable, Sire, and what unblamable?" "Then speak, Visikha."

"I desire as long as I live, Sire, to give the brotherhood clothes for the rainy season, to give food to stranger monks who arrive here, to give food to monks who are passing through, to give food to sick brethren, to give food to the attendants on the sick, to give medicine to the sick, to distribute a daily dole of cooked rice, to give bathing dresses to the sisterhood of nuns."

"What object has thou, Visikha, that thou approacheth the Perfect One with these right wishes?" (Visikha now explains her several wishes, so she says.)

"A monk, O Sire, who comes from foreign parts does not know the streets and lanes, and he goes about weary to collect alms. When he has partaken of the food which I shall provide for the monks who arrive, he may then, when he has inquired the ways and the streets, go out refreshed to collect alms. This wish, O Sire, I have in view ; therefore I desire as long as I live to give food to the monks when they arrive. And again, Sire, a monk who is travelling through will, if he has to seek for food himself, fall behind his caravan, or will arrive late when he intends to rest, and he will walk on his journey wearily. If he has partaken of the food which I shall have provided for monks who are passing through, he will not fall behind his caravan, and he will arrive in proper time at the place where he intends to rest, and he will work on his journey refreshed.

"This object I have in view, Sire ; therefore I desire, as long as I live, to give food to the monks who are passing through.

"It has happened, Sire, that nuns were bathing naked together in the river Aciravati (Rapti) at the same bathing-place with prostitutes. The prostitutes, Sire, mocked the nuns, saying, 'Most respected ones, what do you need of your holy life as long as you are young ? Is it not proper to gratify desire ? When you are old you may begin a holy life, so both will be yours, this life and that which is to come.' When the nuns, Sire, were thus mocked by the prostitutes, they were put out of temper.

"Improper, Sire, is nakedness for a woman, obscure and objectionable. This, Sire, I consider ; therefore I desire, as long as I live, to provide bathing-dresses for the sisterhoods of nuns."

And Buddha says, "Good, Visikha ! Thou doest well that those seeking this reward asketh the Perfect One for these right wishes. I grant thee these light wishes, Visikha."

Then the Holy One Praised Visikha, the mother of Migara, in these words :

"Who gives food and drink with generous readiness,
 The follower of the Holy One, rich in virtues,
 Who, without grudging, gives gifts for the reward of heaven,
 Who puts an end to pain
 Obtains the reward of a heavenly life.
 She walks the shining commendable path.
 Free from pain, she joyfully reaps for a very long period
 The reward of good deeds in the happy realms of heaven above."



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PRINCESS VISIKHA

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Pictures like this of Visikha, benefactresses of the Church, with their inexhaustible religious zeal and their not less inexhaustible resources of money, are certainly, if anything ever was, drawn from the life of India in those days. They cannot be left out of sight if we desire to get an idea of the actors who made the oldest Buddhist community what it was.

HOW NANDA BECAME A *BHIKSHU*

BUDDHA went from Nigrodha garden to a festival that was held in honour of Nanda, the son of Mahaprajapati, who was the sister of Maha-Maya-Dewi and wife of Suddhodhan. It was a threefold festival, as on this day he was to be elevated to a new office, to enter upon a new residence and to be married. Buddha went with his *rabats* to the festival hall, that he might release Nanda from the sorrows of existence. When seated upon the throne that had been prepared for him, he repeated the following stanza : "The destruction of evil desire, the keeping of the Brahma Chariya, for the continuing in continence ; the knowing of the four great births ; and the comprehending of Nirvana ; these constitute the great festival." Having in this manner made him willing to follow the advice he received, he put the alms bowl in his hand, which he took, though at that time he was arrayed in the richest ornaments. Buddha then arose from the throne and went to the Wihara, followed by Nanda. The betrothed Princess, Janapada-Kalyani, called out to him from the window, to inquire why he went, but he gave her no reply. On arriving at the Wihara, Buddha said to Nanda, "Regard not the honours of the Chakrawartti ; become a priest like me." The thoughts of the Prince still wandered after his betrothed wife, but, as he said nothing against this advice, Buddha directed Seriyut and Mugalan to admit him to the priesthood. Still his mind was fixed upon the same object, and he became sorrowful.

The other priests saw that he pined away, and asked him the cause of his sorrow ; they wondered why he appeared so disconsolate, as he was the younger brother of Buddha, a member of the Royal Family, and in every respect most fortunate. He then told them that when he took the bowl from the hand of Buddha Janapada-Kalyani looked after him, and told him to return without delay, and that it was the Princess who was the cause of his sorrow.

This being known to Gautama, he inquired whether she was beautiful ; and Nanda described her person in the most glowing terms. The sage thought to destroy the fire of this passion by the water of Nirvana, and asked him if there was no one more beautiful than Janapada-Kalyani. "No," was the reply, "not in all Jambudwipa."



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Buddha then inquired if he wished to see one that was more beautiful, but he thought that this was not possible ; so the Sage took him by the hand and by the power of Irdhi conveyed him to the world of Sekra. As they were going he caused the withered body of an old female ape, burnt in the preparing of some forest land for cultivation, to appear, and asked the priest if he saw it ; who said that he did. On arriving at the Dewa-Loka he commanded five hundred of the principal Dewas of Sekra to come into his presence, and then inquired whether they or the Princess were the most beautiful. Nanda replied that in comparison to them his betrothed was like the burnt ape. When Buddha again asked if he would like to possess one of these beautiful Dewas, he demanded in what way could this be brought about, and being informed that he might secure one by being obedient to the precepts, he set himself to their strict observance. By this means he was induced to keep the precepts, and in a little time he became a *rabat*.

PRINCESS WISAKHA

THRICE each day Wisakha went to the Wihara, in the day-time taking an offering of food and in the evening flowers and lamps.

On one occasion she asked permission to prefer eight requests to Buddha. The Sage replied that the Buddhas were not accustomed to grant the requests of women ; but when she said they were relative to religion, permission was granted. " I request," she said, " 1. That whatever priests come to you, you will send them to my house first to receive alms. 2. That until my death I may give alms daily to five hundred priests. 3. That whenever a priest is sick application may be made to me for what is necessary. 4. That I may give alms to those who assist the sick. 5. That the Lord of the Universe will partake of the rice-gruel and other things I provide for the five hundred priests. 6. That yearly, at the end of *wass*, I may give five hundred sets of *prikaras* to as many priests. 7. That I may be applied to whenever any article of medicine is required. 8. That yearly I may give to all the priests of Buddha the robes called *Kaspilisandan*." The whole of these requests were granted by Buddha.

Wisakha had twenty children in twenty years, ten sons and ten daughters. Each of these had twenty children, so that she had four hundred grandchildren, and as each of these had again twenty children, she had eight thousand great-grandchildren ; and all these were free from every kind of disease. Though she had the strength of five elephants, the King of Kosol was sceptical respecting it, and to ascertain its truth he one day, on meeting her, urged his elephant towards her, but she held its trunk with two fingers, as if it had been merely a plantain tree, so that it roared out from pain. She afterwards thought it would be better to sell the ornaments she received at her marriage and erect a Wihara with the proceeds ; but there was no one in Sewet who had wealth enough to purchase them. She therefore bought a garden at the east side of the city, and expended immense treasures in the erection of a Wihara, which was called *Purnvarama*, from the place in which it stood. On the day when this Wihara was presented to Buddha he declared that all her riches, strength, and prosperity were the results of the merit she had received in former births.

THE QUEEN PRAJAPATI BECOMES A PRIESTESS AND GAINS NIRVANA

THIS Queen was the daughter of Supra Buddha, who reigned in the City of Kōle. Her mother, Maha-Yashodara-Dewi, was the aunt of Singha-Nanu, the father of Suddhodhan. On the day that the Princess received her name the diviners said, from the marks they saw upon her body, they could tell that if in after years she should have a son, he would be a Chakrawartti, or if she should have a daughter, she would be the Queen of a Chakrawartti. It was on account of the good fortune that was to befall her she was called Prajapati, and as she belonged to the lineage of Gautama she was called Mahaprajapati-Gautama.

On arriving at a proper age, she became, along with Maha-Dewi, the wife of Suddhodhan; and the two Queens lived together like two Srikan-tawas in one lotus flower. Six days after giving birth to the Prince Sidharta, who afterwards became Buddha, Maha-Dewi died, and went to the Dewa-Loka Tawutisa, when she became the Dewa Matru, and was the guardian Dewa of the palace of Suddhodhan. On the next day Prajapati also had a son, Nanda, afterwards a priest, who was given over to the charge of nurses, whilst Prajapati attended to the Prince Sidharta as if he were her own son, and fed him from her breast.

Thus she became the foster-mother of the illustrious Prince, and afterwards entered the path Sowān on the same day as Suddhodhan, which occurred on the first visit of Sidharta to his native city after he became Buddha.

WESSANTARA

SOON afterwards two Brahmans came to the city to inquire for Wessantara, and when they found that he had gone to the wilderness they asked if he had taken anything with him.

Being told that he had taken nothing more than a chariot, they followed him, and requested him to stop, begging that he would give them the horses that drew the chariot.

Without hesitation the horses were given, but Sekra, having observed what was taking place, sent four *devas* under the disguise of horses, that yoked themselves to the chariot and drew it. On the way another Brahman cried out, "Sir, I am sick and old and wearied ; give me your chariot." The chariot was now given up as readily as he had previously given the horses. The Prince then carried his son and the Princess her daughter ; and though they suffered much from the roughness of the road, their minds were filled with pleasure from the remembrance of the alms they had presented. Giving the children fruits to eat and water to drink from the ponds, thus they went on, until they came to a place in the Kingdom of Chetiya, whence Madri-Dewi sent to inform her father they were there ; and when the King with 60,000 Princes came to the Palace, surprised at what he saw, he inquired if Sanda was sick, or some other misfortune had happened, and asked what they had done with their retinue and chariots.

Wessantara told them the reason why they had left the city. On hearing which Chetiya invited them to come and reign in his own city ; and when they declined, he ordered the place in which they remained to be properly prepared and ornamented, and prevailed on them to tarry there seven days, during which period they had all delicacies provided for them ; but at its expiration they again set off on their journey towards Wankagiri. By command of Sekra, his wonder-worker Wiswakarmma had prepared for them two *pansols*, in one of which Wessantara dwelt, and in the other Madri-Dewi, with their two children. They all put on the dress of ascetics, and they had no intercourse with each other, unless when the children went to the *pansol* of their father during the time their mother was in the forest collecting fruits. After they had lived in this manner for the

space of seven months, there arrived an aged Brahman, called Jujaka, who from the age of eighteen years had been a mendicant. He had accumulated a hundred *masurans*, which he delivered to another Brahman, a poor man, to keep for him, but when he went to recover them the Brahman said he had spent the whole to supply his wants, and that he had now nothing to give him but his daughter Ametta-Tapa ; so, as he could get nothing more, he took away the Brahman's daughter, and she became his wife. But the other females of the household became jealous of the stranger, and greatly persecuted her, particularly one when she went to fetch water, at which she became angry and discontented, but Jujaka, in order to pacify her, said that he would himself, in future, fetch the wood and attend to all the work that was necessary to be done, whilst she remained at ease.

Ametta-Tapa, however, informed him the charitable Wessantara resided near the rock Wankagiri, and that if he applied to him he would be able to obtain a slave to wait upon her and render her all the assistance she required. The Brahman replied that the way was long and he was old and weak ; but she persisted in her demand, at the same time upbraiding the old man. So, having prepared as much fuel and water as would be required during his absence, he set off on his journey to the rock. He first went to Jayatura, and inquired for Wessantara ; but the citizens, incensed that alms should still be asked from the Prince, set upon him with sticks and staves and drove him away. As he fled from the city, not knowing whither he went, he was guided by the *devas* towards Wankagiri ; but when he came near he was seen by the guards who had been placed around the forest by the King of Chetiya, and would have been slain had he not told a lie, and said that he was sent by the Royal parents of Wessantara to inquire about his welfare. Proceeding on his way, he fell in with the ascetic Acchuta, who resided near the rock Wipula, to whom he said that he had been the preceptor of the Prince in his youth. It was now known, and thinking that at this time Wessantara would be away from the *pansol* collecting fruits, and that only Madri-Dewi would be at home, who would probably hinder the granting of his request, he resolved to remain in an adjacent cave until the next morning. That night the Princess had an uncomfortable dream, and early next morning she went to the *pansol* of Wessantara to have it explained. The Prince inquired why she had come at an improper hour, when she said that she had been troubled by a dream in which a black man came and cut off her two arms and plucked out her heart. Wessantara rejoiced to hear her dream, as he saw the time for fulfilling the Paramitas had come ; but he told her that she had formerly eaten agreeable food and slept on pleasant beds, whereas she had only

fruit to eat and was obliged to lie on logs of wood ; and with this intimation he sent her away.

At the usual hour she took the children and delivered them to his care while she went into the forest. When the Prince saw the Brahman approaching he told his son Jaliya to go and meet him and carry his water vessel. After the Brahman had partaken of some fruit that were set before him, Wessantara inquired why he had come ; and he replied that he had come to ask the gift of his two children. On hearing this request, the Prince told him that he was the best friend he had yet met with, as others had asked for only the elephant or the chariot ; but that their mother was then absent, and as it would be right for her to see them before their departure, he would have to remain until the next day. The Brahman said that he could not stay so long ; and that if he did not receive the children now he must go away without them, Wessantara then informed him that if he took them to his royal parents he would be rewarded with many gifts, but he replied that if he were to take them to the city it would cost him his life when it became known in what way he had received them, and that the Prince must decide whether he would give up the children or not. The two children, Jaliya and Krishnajina, on hearing this conversation, fled away in extreme terror, and hid themselves under the leaves of a lotus growing in a pond near their dwelling.

By this time Wessantara had resolved upon giving his children to the Brahman without any further delay ; but when he called them they did not make their appearance. Upon this the old man began to reproach him, and said that he had not seen so great a liar in the whole country, as he must have sent them away purposely, though he had promised to give them in alms.

To discover whither they had fled, the Prince went into the forest, and when near the pond called out to Jaliya ; and no sooner did the boy hear the voice of his father than he said, "The Brahman may take me, I am willing to become his servant ; I cannot remain here and listen to my father's cries," and tearing in two the leaf by which he was covered he sprang up, and ran to his father, weeping.

Wessantara asked him where his sister was, and when Jaliya told him that they had fled away in fear and hid themselves, he called out to her ; on which she came from under the lotus, as her brother had done, and like him shedding tears, clung to the feet of her father, but as Wessantara reflected that if he did not give up his children he could not become a Buddha, and he would be unable to release sentient beings from the

miseries of repeated existence, he called them to the *pansol*, and pouring water on the hands of the Brahman delivered them to him, saying, "May I by this become the All-knowing."

The Brahman took the children away, but he stumbled on going down a hill that he had to descend, and there remained lying upon his face. The children embraced the opportunity of running away and returning to their father. They put their hands upon his feet, and with many tears reminded him of the dream of their mother. Jaliya said how much they wished to see their mother before their departure, and requested that if it was necessary their father should give them to some Brahman, he would give them to someone who was less ugly than this decrepit old man; and further, as his sister was tender and delicate, and unfitted for work, it would be better to give him alone, and leave Krishnajina with her mother.

Wessantara made no reply, and as Jaliya was asking him why he was silent, Jujaka approached bleeding and looking like an executioner who had just been taking the life of some criminal.

The children trembled with fear when they saw him. Unable to retain them both, as Krishnajina ran away when he seized Jaliya, and the sister when he seized her brother, he tied them together by a withe and began to drive them along with a stick, beating them as they went. Looking at their father, they told him to see the blood streaming down their backs and to consider the pain they endured.

Wessantara reflected, "If my children have to suffer this before my eyes, what will they not have to endure when they are at a distance? How can they pass over hills, thorns and stones? When they are hungry who will feed them? When their feet are swollen, who will give them relief? When the cold wind chills, who will administer unto them comfort? How will the mother who has borne them in her bosom grieve when she returns at night and finds that they are gone?" Thus thinking, he resolved to drive away the Brahman and receive them again. As they passed along the shady places where they had played together, and the cave in which they had been accustomed to make different figures in clay as a pastime, and the trees growing by the familiar pond, they said sorrowfully, "Fare ye well, ye trees that put forth the beautiful blossoms; and ye pools in whose waters we have dabbled; ye birds that have sung for us sweet songs, and ye Kinduras that have danced before us and clapped your hands. Tell our mother that we have given you a parting salutation! Ye well-known *devas*, and ye animals with whom we have sported, let our mother know the manner in which we thus pass along the road!" When Madri-Dewi

was about to return home, Sekra sent for *devas* to assume the form of wild beasts and delay her return to the *pansol*; but as she went along her mind dwelt upon the dream and, alarmed at the sight of the animals (not having previously met with any in the same place), she dreaded lest the children should come to meet her and so be devoured, and when she came near the *pansol* and heard not their voices, she was still more afraid, and began to think some eagle or sprite had carried them away when sleeping, or perhaps her relatives had come and demanded them in order to take them away. Going to the *pansol*, she inquired of Wessantara where the children were, but he remained silent. This silence caused her to wonder, and the more so as he had not collected the wood and water as usual.

Then he said that they had gone out when she delayed her return from collecting fruits, as he thought that her death might be caused if he informed her at once that he had given them away in alms.

On hearing this the Princess went into the forest, going from place to place, and examining every spot in which they had been accustomed to play; and as she did not find them she became senseless. Wessantara followed her to learn the cause of her prolonged absence, and when he found her, he sprinkled water upon her face, by which she recovered. Her first question was, "Where are the children?" The Prince now informed her that he had given them away in alms to an aged Brahman, that the pre-requisites of the Buddhahip might be fulfilled.

Then Madri-Dewi replied, "The Buddhahip is more excellent than a hundred thousand children!" and rejoicing in the reward that was to be obtained from this gift, wished that it might be extended to all the beings in the world.

When Sekra perceived that Wessantara had given away his children, thinking that it would not be right that anyone should take the Princess in the same way, he assumed the appearance of an aged Brahman and went to the rock. Wessantara, on seeing him, asked him why he had come, and he replied, "I am now old and powerless; I have no one to assist me; I have therefore come to receive the Princess as my slave." The Prince looked in the face of Madri-Dewi, and she, knowing his thoughts, expressed her willingness to comply with the wish that had been expressed; whereupon he delivered her to the supposed Brahman, that the gift might assist in the reception of the Buddhahip. When the Brahman received her, he said, "The Princess now belongs to me; that which belongs to another you have not the right to give away, therefore keep her for me until I shall return." Then, assuming his old form, Sekra informed Wes-

santara that all the *devas* and Brahmans had rejoiced in the gifts he had offered ; and assuring him that he would most certainly attain the Buddhahship, he informed him that in seven days his relatives would come to him, together with his children, and that he would again receive the kingdom. The earth had trembled at the presenting of each gift, and Maha-miru and the other rocks expressed their approbation. Jujaka and the children were carried a distance of sixty *yojanes* before night, and placed under a tree that bent with its branches over them as a canopy. Two *devas* came to them in the shape of their parents and ministered to all their wants. The Brahman, overawed by this occurrence, took them the next day to the house of their grandparents. The previous night Sanda had had a dream, in which he saw a man bring him two lotus flowers. Having assembled the Brahmans learned in the four *vedas* to know the meaning of this dream, they informed him that it betokened the coming of two children, that would be to him the cause of much joy. Whilst they were speaking, the Brahman approached with Jaliya and Krishnajina, and the King asked them whence they came. The old man intended to say some other country, lest some harm should happen to him if the truth were known ; but through the interference of the *devas* he replied, " They were given to me as an alms-offering by Wessantara. When Sanda found that they were his grandchildren, he placed the boy on one knee and the girl on the other, greatly rejoicing, and ordered many presents to be given to the Brahman, who, however, from eating too much died at midnight. The next day his body was burnt upon a costly pyre. The King, without further delay, went with the children, the citizens and a grand array of nobles and princes to the top of the rock Wankagiri, that they might bring back Wessantara, who, when he heard the noise of their approach, sent the Princess to the top of the rock to see whence it proceeded.

On seeing the procession, she informed him that their relatives had come from the city. When the Prince perceived that among the elephants was the animal he had given to the King of Kalinga, he felt ashamed, as it had been presented in alms ; when told, however, that it had been returned by the people, as there was now plenty in the land, he was satisfied.

Thus the King Sanda, the Queen Phasuti, the Prince Wessantara, the Princess Madri-Dewi and their children, Jaliya and Krishnajina, accompanied by a great multitude of people from Jayatura and Chatiya, went from the rock Wankagiri to the city. Wessantara and the Princess again received the Kingdom, and after reigning in conformity with the ten precepts of Kings, he was reborn in the *devaloka* called Iusita.



YASHODARA

The Brahman Jujaka afterwards became the Prince Deva Datta. Ametta-Tapa became the female heretic Chinychi ; the Brāhman Acchuta became the priest Seriyut ; the Dewa Sekra became the priest Anurudha ; the King Sanda became Suddhodhan, the father of Gautama Buddha ; the Queen Physati became Maha-Maya-Dewa, his mother ; Madri-Dewi became Yashodara-Dewi, his wife ; Jaliya became Rahul, his son, and Krishnajina became the priestess Upphala ; and Wessantara became Gautama Buddha.

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