

A PROJECT ON BHARATTIYA-SAMSKRITI-SARVASVA-KOSHA

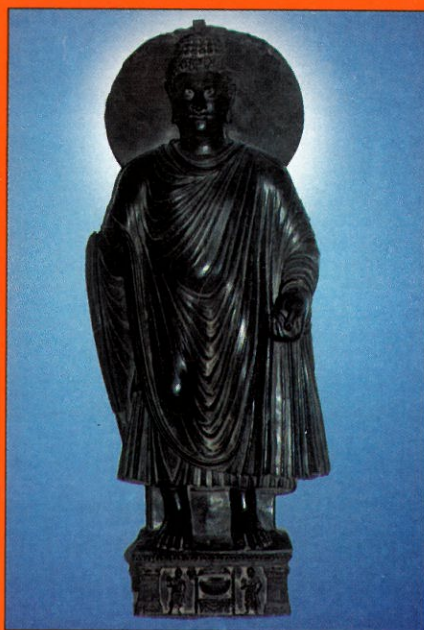


॥ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

Kalpatharu Research Academy Publication

Chief Editor : DAIVAJNA K.N. SOMAYAJI

GĀTHĀ-ŚATAKA



By

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

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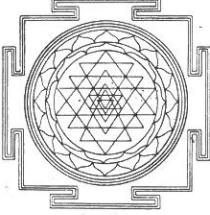
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PREFACE

Kalpatharu Research Academy's project Bharatiya-Sanskriti-Sarvasva-Kosha proposes to publish all significant Indological literature, Vedic, Tantrik, Bauddha and Jain in Orientation. Its aim is to make available all important contributions to the totality of India's cultural heritage. Accordingly, we are now bringing out a Buddhist poem in a Hundred Stanzas. It is a unique work, but is little known. We are grateful to Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao for having kindly edited this poem, Gāthā-Śataka, in Pāli with his own translation in English. He has also prepared an elaborate introduction to the poem.

We are fortunate in being the recipients of the munificent blessings of the Chief Patron of the Academy, His Holiness the Jagadguru of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham and we offer our praṇāms to him. Likewise, we are lucky in having Shri V.R. Gowrishankar, the Administrator of Sri Sharada Peetham of Sringeri, our chairman, and we are indebted to him for his keen interest in our activities.

We also thank the Authorities of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Govt. of India, New Delhi and the Authorities of the Ministry of Education, Govt. of Karnataka for their interest and assistance to our publication work and also we thank M/s. Omkar Offset Printers, who have brought out this book neatly and expeditiously.

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

INSTITUTION FOR :

- * Promotion of Research Oriented Studies in Veda, Vedanga, Agama, Jyoutisha, Vedanta, Yoga and Ayurveda.
- * Study of Sanskrit language in particular and other related languages.
- * Propagation of Vedic Phonetics.
- * Establishment of Veda Patashalas in Guru Kula system.
- * Running of Oriental Libraries (Prachya Granthalaya).
- * Collection, Preservation and Publication of Old Manuscripts.

INTRODUCTION

There are many beautiful literary works in Sanskrit and Pāli, which unfortunately have not merited the attention they deserve. They are little known, and less studied. But they bring into bold relief the salient features of Indian culture. Gāthā-Śataka is one such. It is a poetical work of great merit in Pāli, consisting of hundred gāthās, uttered by a Buddhist monk as he was dying in a cauldron of oil. The poem expatiates on the miseries of saṃsāra and the great need to obtain enlightenment and emancipation. The poem has been edited here, with translation in English*. I have also equipped it with an introduction which discusses the role of the Buddha and his Dharma in Indian culture.

I am indebted to Sri Daivajna K.N. Somayaji, Chief Editor and Director of Kalpatharu Research Academy, for having included this work of mine in the Kalpatharu Research Academy series of publications. I am grateful of Sri Sri Sri Bharathi Tirtha Swamiji, the Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham and the chief patron of the Academy and to Shri V.R. Gowrishankar, the Administrator of the Sharada Peetham and Chairman of the Academy for their interest in this publication.

I sincerely thank the authorities of the Omkar Offset Printers for having printed this book in an excellent manner.

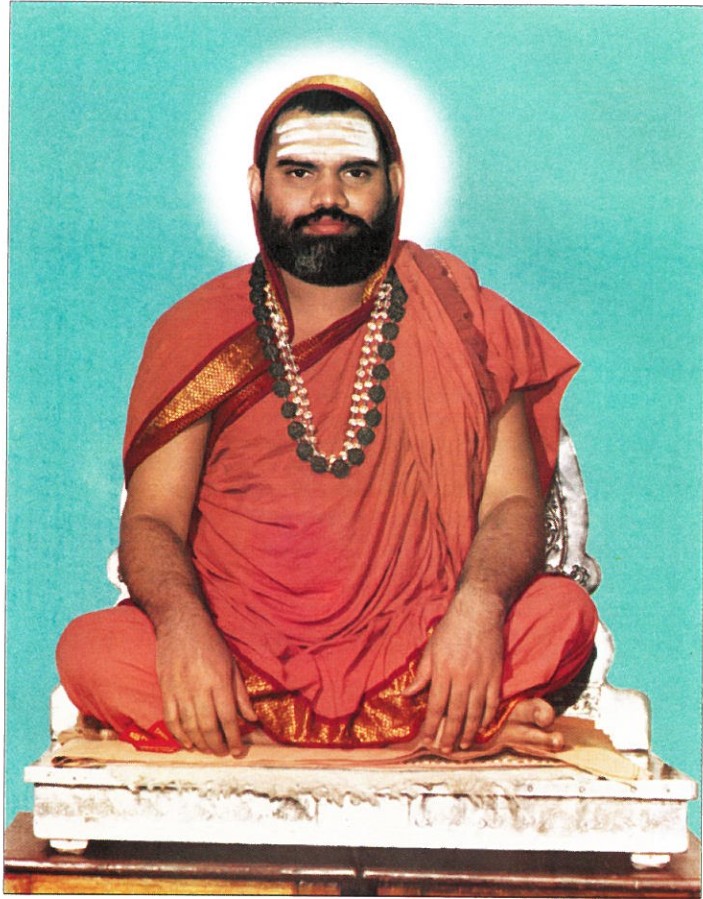
S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

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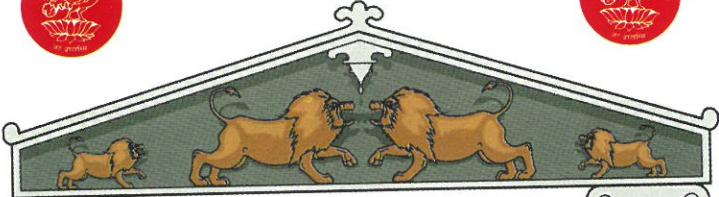


नमस्ते जगदेक मातः
 चतुर्भुजे चन्द्रकलावतंसे
 कुचोन्नते कुङ्कुमरागशोणे ।
 पुँईक्षुपाशाङ्कुशपुष्पबाण-
 हस्ते नमस्ते जगदेकमातः ॥



H.H. Sri Sri BHARATI THEERTA MAHASWAMIJI
HUMBLE DEDICATION TO OUR CHIEF PATRON

भारतीकरुणापात्रं
भारतीपदभूषणम् ।
भारतीपदमाकुटं
भारतीतीर्थमाश्रये ॥



॥ श्री शुङ्गेरी श्रीजगद्गुरुमहासंस्थानम् ॥

श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यवर्य पदवाक्यप्रमाणपारावारपारीण
यमनियमासनप्रणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्ययनसमाध्यष्टाङ्गयोगानुष्ठाननिष्ठ
तपश्चक्रवर्त्यनाद्यविच्छिन्न श्रीशङ्कराचार्यगुरुपरम्पराप्राप्त षड्दर्शनस्थापनाचार्य
व्याख्यानसिंहासनाधीश्वर सकलनिगमगमसारहृदय सांख्यत्रयप्रतिपादक वैदिकमार्गप्रवर्तक
सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रादिराजधानी विद्यानगरमहाराजधानी कर्णाटकसिंहासनप्रतिष्ठापनाचार्य
श्रीमद्राजाधिराजगुरुभूषण्डलाचार्य ऋष्यशृङ्गपुरवराधीश्वर तुरुभद्रातीरवासि
श्रीमद्विद्याशङ्करपादपद्याराधक श्रीजगद्गुरु श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थस्वामिगुरुकमलसञ्जात

॥ श्री जगद्गुरु शुङ्गेरी श्रीमद्भारतीतीर्थमहास्वामिभिः ॥

अस्मदत्यन्तप्रियशिष्य श्री नरसिंह सोमयाजि विषये नारायणस्मरणपूर्वकं विरचित
आशिषस्समुल्लसन्तु ।

वैदिकान्ववाये लब्धजनिर्भवान् ज्योतिर्विद्यामभ्यस्य तद्द्वारा बहून् जनान् उपकुर्वन्नास्ते ।
वेदागमशास्त्रेषु भूयसीं श्रद्धामावहन् तत्प्रचाराय कल्पतरु संशोधनप्रतिष्ठान नाम्नीं संस्थां
प्रत्यस्थापयत् । सा च संस्था विशिष्टान् ग्रन्थान् प्रकाशयन्ती वरीवर्ति ।

शृंगगिरि जगद्गुरु महासंस्थाने पारम्परिकीं भक्तिमास्थितवतो भवतो मनसि संस्थामेनां शृंगगिरि
मठीयां विधातुं सङ्कल्पः उदभूदिति विज्ञाय मोदामहे । अत एव अदसीयानि प्रकाशानानि इतः
परं मठीयत्वेनैव प्रकाशयिष्यन्त इत्यपि भवान् निरचिनोत् । दुर्लभाः भारतीयसंस्कृतिप्रबोधकाः
विशिष्टाः ग्रन्थाः संस्थायानया प्रकाशयन्तां तेन च भवदीयो मनोरथः फलेग्रहिर्भूयात्
श्रीशारदाचन्द्रमीलीश्वरयोरनुकम्पया भवान् इतोधिक श्रेयः परम्पराभिः समभिवर्धतामिति
चाशामहे ।

शृङ्गगिरिः

ईश्वर भाद्रपदशुद्धदशमी भार्गववासरः

12.9.1997

इति नारायणस्मरणम्

INTRODUCTION

THE BUDDHA AND THE DHARMA

It is over 2,500 years since the Buddha was born. He preached a gospel of renunciation, and he himself was an ascetic. He invited his disciples to lead rather an unworldly life, a life of quiet contemplation and stern analysis of phenomena. But it is surprising how such a teacher has been the stimulus for countless outbursts of artistic imagination.

His simple story has been told and retold, in story and poem, in sculpture and painting, in music and dance. The Buddha's life has excited the imagination of the poet and the scholar alike. Into the plain life of an ascetic saint strands of exquisite romance have been introduced, and fabrics of delightful fantasy have been interwoven.

The pious imagination has been exercised so frequently that a fabulous atmosphere prevails round the life of the Buddha. It is thus natural for scholars of the type of Kern and



Senart to wonder whether the Buddha as the one tradition describes lived at all historically, whether his story is not a mere allegorical ballad of the ubiquitous solar myth. While this is an extravagant conjecture, it is clear the popular life of the Buddha, as we know to-day, may not be his real life.

We may fruitfully cogitate on the effect of the passage of time on the development of the legendary account of the Buddha's life from the earliest historical accounts. But in the mass of fantasy and fiction of the former, it is difficult to decipher the latter.

It is by no means easy to ascertain the stages of development, and we are never on very sure grounds. It may not even be justifiable to apply this supercritical inquiry in regard to the life of one who is not merely an object of intellectual curiosity, but for countless millions an unrivalled object of religious devotion. But such an attempt seems necessary in order that the spirit of his teachings may properly be appreciated, and not lost in the motely host of ornamental embellishments.

The popular account of the Buddha's life are traceable to a few ancient tracts of celebrity - the Pāli account as

current in Srilanka and Buddhadatta's *Jina-charita* of the 13th century: the Sanskrit texts *Lalita-vistara* and *Buddhacharita*; the Burmese account, *Mālālaṅkāra-vatthu*, translated by Bishop Bigandet into English; and the Tibetan account given to us in English by Rockhill.

A good bit of mythology predominates all of these accounts. There is always an element of the wonderful, and a constant attempt to exalt the subject of the religious romance to a divine, or at least superhuman, status. Plain facts and miracles are made strangely to coexist. But the basic pattern of the life-story is common to all these accounts. That is to say, there must have been the earliest of accounts, which was more or less historical, and because of that fact, an extremely plain account.

It is well-known that the Pāli accounts are the oldest among them. But it should be remembered that the Pāli canon itself (the Tipiṭaka) does not contain any connected account of the Teacher's life. We find such an account for the first time in the Introduction to the *Jātaka* Commentary, known as *Nidāna-kathā*, which is not earlier than the first century of our era, that is to say, about 500 years after the death

of the Buddha, and which may probably have been originally a Sinhalese composition.

This very charming literary piece is of little historical value, as it makes little distinction between fact and fable. But this is the stock from which all the later accounts have drawn. And *Nidāna-kathā* itself depended for its matter on an earlier tradition, namely the Canon, which was preserved for centuries in the memory of the monk-reciters (*bhāṇakas*) and reduced to writing only in the first half of the first century B.C. in Śrīlankā.

The authenticity of the Canon is more or less firmly established, but it is not difficult to discern systematic accretions to what must have been the original gospel, reported to have been settled soon after the demise of the Teacher. That there was the tendency to add to the Canon is evident from Buddhaghosha's account of the first council in his *Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī*, where he mentions only four *nikāyas* in Sutta-Piṭaka, omitting the fifth, Khuddaka and Abhidhamma-ṭaṭṭaka altogether. The original gospel, nucleus for the later Canon, must have been a collection of just the words of the Teacher (*sattunopāvachanam*), as heard and grasped and remembered by his immediate disciples.

For the benefit of the next generation of disciples, a short context was supplied to the actual words of the Teacher. Usually, the recitation of the Buddha's words were prefaced with '*Evam me sutam*' (*Thus have I heard*) and one or two sentences relating where the teacher was when he uttered the words, and to whom the words were addressed: and at the end of the recitation was another short sentence 'Thus spake the Blessed One' (*idam avocha bhagavā*), marking the close of recitation.

The Canon as was settled in the first conference of monks under the presidency of Mahākassapa during the rainy season following the death of the Buddha must have consisted of a long series of such discourses in the direct speech of the Teacher, each with a brief contextual information. All other matters that we find included in the Canon as it stands to-day, are probably later additions from time to time.

We may, as an example, take the most famous and important of the Buddha's sermons, in fact, the very first of his sermons, the *Dhamma-chakka-pavattana-sutta* (included in *Samyutta Nikāya* collection.) This discourse consists of twenty paragraphs. The first sentence is the customary

preface - 'Thus have I heard'. The second sentence indicates the place where the discourse was given, 'In Deer Park near Banaras'; the third sentence informs us who were addressed by the Teacher, 'The group of five monks'.

From the fourth sentence to the end of 14th paragraph we have the Buddha's own words, in the direct speech. There is no reason to doubt that these were the actual words of the Buddha. At the end of the 14th paragraph we have the conventional expression 'ti' (meaning 'thus', 'iti'), occurring for the first time in the Sermon, indicating the close of the Sermon. The next sentence after this is the usual 'Thus spake the Blessed One'.

As any one can make out, from 'Thus have I heard' to 'Thus spake the Blessed One', we have a compact and complete narration. But the next five paragraphs bristle with supernatural events, and curiously enough, each paragraph ends with the conventional 'ti'. These five paragraphs contribute nothing whatever to the content of the sermon. They in no way explain or supplement the actual words of the Teacher. It is clear that these were later additions at different times, of course, within a couple of centuries following the Buddha's death.

The original form of the discourse, containing very little besides the words of the Teacher, is best illustrated in the second Sermon *Anatta-lakkhaṇa-sutta* and in the most important of all the sermons, the 'Sermon on the Arousing of Mindfulness' (*Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*). At the other extreme is the long-drawn discourse concerning the Great Decease (the *Mahā-parinibbāṇa-suttanta*), wherein the actual words of the Buddha exist along with a huge lot of extraneous, and what appear to be irrelevant, matter. And there are a number of discourses such as the *Mahāpadāna-sutta*, *Janavasabha-sutta*, *Mahā-govinda-sutta*, *Sakkapañha-sutta*, etc. which read like fantastic fairy tales, and which must, of course, be considered as later compositions.

Thus the original Canon may safely be assumed to be a collection of the Buddha's own words (*buddha-vachana*). If, in order to determine his teachings, we rely on his own words, perhaps we may do so to get an idea of his life as well. Of course, we should not expect to find long autobiographical narrations in the Pāli Canon: but here and there, there are highly revealing bits of information, clothed in the Buddha's own words.

The Buddha is certainly not the personal name of this teacher: nor is there any evidence to show that our Teacher

assumed this name at any stage of his life. The Buddha, meaning 'the Awake', is the indication of an attainment; and it seems probable that a number of persons both before and during the life-time of our Teacher were known by this title. In later works, Siddhattha is given as his personal name: but there is no mention of this name either in the *Nikāyas* or in *Vinaya-Piṭaka*.

In the Canon he is known to his acquaintances as Samaṇa Gotama (the ascetic Gotama) or simply Gotama. It is generally believed that this was his family name: but we are not very certain about it. It may be his personal name. In the Canon, the Teacher is sometimes referred to by his clan: he is 'Śākya-muni', 'Sakya-putta', or 'Sakyakulamhā pabbajito'. To his disciples, of course, he was merely Bhagavā (The Blessed One), which was (and is) the usual expression used in reference to a great teacher.

In all *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, it is only in the first Khandaka of Mahāvagga that we hear of Śuddhodana, the father of the Buddha here he is merely called a *Sākyan*. In all the four *Nikāyas*, Śuddhodana has been mentioned only once: and that in a discourse of doubtful authenticity, *Mahāpādanasutta* of Dīgha-Nikāya. Here Śuddhodana is called a rājā and his caste is given as *Khattiya*.

The later and romantic *Nidāna-kathā* styles him as a Mahārājā, but the same account describes the Sakiyans (people to whom the Buddha belonged) as a small agricultural community. In the *Pabbajjā-sutta*, Bimbāsāra is informed by the Buddha himself that Sākiyas were a republican community, strong and prosperous, belonging to Kosala Kingdom at the foot of the Himālayan ranges. There is here no mention of his father's name or position.

The *Nālaka-sutta* describes Śuddhodana's residence as a mere house (*bhāvanā*) and not as a palace (*pāsāda*). Thus it is likely that Suddhodana was a petty chieftain or the elected head of the small republican community of Śākyans. The *Mahāpadāna-sutta* gives the mother's name as Māyā, but nothing more is told about her.

As regards the actual birth of the Buddha, the Canon is entirely silent. The dream of Māyā, entrance of the Bodhisattā into her womb, delivery in the Lumbinī Garden, miracles attending the event must all be later inventions for the sake of dramatic effect.

We have no account of the Gotama's marriage, or of his early life in the Canonical books. Indeed we are not

informed what name Gotama's consort bore, if we confine our trust to the Canonical literature. Once only in the *Vinaya-Piṭaka* we hear her mentioned as Mother of Rāhula (*Rāhula-mātā*).

The Commentary *Monoratha-pūraṇī* gives her name as Yaśodharā. But the *Buddhavaṃsa* calls her Bhadda-kachchā. And the unreliable *Nidāna-kathā* describes her as chief of consorts (*agga-mahishī*). We hear of other names also: Bimbā, Gopā, Subhaddā.

We do not get much from the Canon about the boyhood, youth or marital life of the Buddha.

It is popularly known that the Buddha, as a young man, while on pleasure rounds, beheld three instances of suffering, namely, old age, disease and death; and that this was the immediate provocation for his great renunciation. The later legends make the three instances messengers of gods who appeared on the earthly scene just to remind the Bodhisattā of his great mission.

But in the Canon the episode occurs in a very diluted form. In the 38th Sutta of *Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, for instance, the

Buddha himself recounts before his disciples: “(living in excessive luxury) it occurred to me: An ordinary, uninstructed man, himself subject to old age, to disease, to death, and not having passed beyond them, when he sees an old man, a diseased man, and a dead man, is alarmed, abashed and repelled, being alarmed for himself... As I thought thus, all intoxication with life utterly left me.”

Mark the words- “it occurred to me.” The Pāli words used are: ‘mayham etad ahosi’. It signifies that the young Buddha only reflected upon old age, disease and death. They were mere thoughts. And elsewhere in the Canon, these three are called communications Yama-Rājā or the Lord of Death. The later legends must be elaborations of this figurative remark.

The great renunciation, *mahābhinikkhamaṇa*, has been the subject of a multitude of literary compositions and artistic creations. The pious imagination has been strained into a tender story full of pathos and the marvellous. His young wife, the new born child, the favourite horse Kanthaka, the beloved charioteer Channa, the still of the night, the river Anoma, the host of sympathetic gods are all brought into the picture for brilliant effect.

But in the Canonical *Ariyapariyesana-sutta* of Majjhima-Nikāya, there is a highly interesting autobiographical account, which tells us of the event in exceedingly simple words. The Buddha tells the bhikkshus - "While still young, with glossy black hair, in vigorous youth and in my prime, though my mother and father were unwilling and tears poured from their eyes, I caused my hair and beard to be cut off, and donned the ochre robe, and went forth from home to homelessness. And having thus renounced, pursuing the highest good, seeking the supreme path of peace, I came to Ālāra Kālāma."

The same account occurs in the *Mahāsacchaka-sutta* also. This must doubtless have been the event as it occurred: but it is too plain and matter-of-fact to evoke the adoration of the layman. Hence the fanciful legends teeming with romance and miracle.

This account suggests that Gotama at the time of his departure from home must have been very young. This is supported by another account in the *Pabbajjā-sutta* of *Sutta-nipāta*, where King Bimbāsāra attempts to dissuade Gotama from the path of renunciation on the count that he was very young, a mere boy.

The *Ariyapariyesaṇa-sutta* account also reveals that the mother of the Buddha was alive when he left home: and there is no mention of his wife. Also, the great departure was not a stealing out in the dead of night, but a public event.

After leaving home, all accounts agree, Gotama approached the two ascetic teachers Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, lived the holy life under them successively, mastered their techniques of meditation, but left them dissatisfied: his goal was still unreachd. The Jain author Devasenā-hārya in his *Darśana-sāra* mentions that he studied for a while under a Jaina ascetic Pihitāśrava in Pālāśa-nagarī on the banks of Sarayū.

Then he retired into the jungle retreat of Uruvela in the Magadha country in order to engage himself in austerities. This is celebrated as 'the great struggle' (padhāna) connected with the well-known legends about Māra's temptations, combat, consequent defeat, and finally Gotama's enlightenment which made him the Buddha.

Māra is the personification of desire, the force which individualises man as an ego, and subjects him to the

wretchedness of *saṃsāra*. But Māra as the Evil Incarnate (*pāpimā*), the god who gave a tough fight to the struggling Gotama, and the leader of an army (*senā*) is a later and legendary conception.

In the Canonical records, the *Mahāvagga* of *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, we have this sole reference to Māra: 'He (the strenuous, meditative sage, Gotama) stands and scatters the army of Māra, even as the sun lighting the heavens'. Even this reference is part of a short verse (*udāna*) included in the prose narrative, and may not be very ancient.

But neither here nor in the *Majjhima-Nikāya* account do we have mention of any supernatural or miraculous occurrence. The Māra legend is entirely absent from the Canonical books; also the account of the struggle therein does not indicate the extraordinary severity of austerities, invariably mentioned in later works.

The ancient accounts of enlightenment are charmingly simple, plain and matter-of-fact. In the *Ariyapariyesana-Sutta*, the Buddha himself recounts:

"Being myself subjected to earthly existence, I perceived the wretchedness of what is subject to earthly

existence, and seeking the supreme peace of Nibbāṇa, which is not affected by earthly existence, I attained the supreme peace of Nibbāṇa not affected by earthly existence.... And the insight now as the thing seen arose in me. My emancipation is won, this is my last birth, and there is no more becoming for me."

The latter part of the passage occurs verbatim in *Dhamma-chakka-ppavattana-Sutta*. The *Mahāsacchaka Sutta* makes the Buddha further say: "Lived is holy living, done is what was to be done, there is nothing beyond this" (usitam brahmachariam, katam karaṇīyam, nā' param itthattāya). It is interesting to note that the very same attainments are mentioned in regard to the first five disciples of the Buddha also (in *Ariyapariyesana-Sutta*), and in the Second Sermon the five disciples together with the Buddha are called 'Chha arahantā' (the six worthies), indicating thereby that the Buddha's attainments were human.

Then, journeying from place to place the Buddha came at length to Vārāṇasī, and in the Deer Park there, met the five ascetics, whom he knew before, and announced to them for the first time the details of his enlightenment. This is the *Dhamma-chakka-ppavattana-Sutta*, included in the *Samyutta-*

Nikāya. In this, most probably, we have the very words of the Buddha. This is substantially repeated elsewhere in the Canon, as for instance, in the *Mahāvagga* of *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, and is held in the highest esteem by the devotees.

Perhaps, this makes the most fitting introduction to the entire philosophy of Buddhism. Equally authentic is the next discourse which the Buddha gave before the same audience, the *Anatta-lakkhaṇa-Sutta*. The audience became convinced of the excellence of the new doctrine, and the Buddha emerged as *the* Teacher.

From this point onwards, there is general agreement among the various accounts as regards the career of the Buddha. He attracted into the fold of his Sangha eminent men like Sāriputta (Śāriputta) of great insight, Mahā-Moggallāna (*Mahāmaudgalyāyana*) of spiritual powers, Mahākassapa the ascetic, Anuruddha of divine vision, Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja and Kumāra-Kassapa the incomparable lecturers, Ānanda of great learning (*bahu-ssuta*) and excellent conduct, who was also the personal attendant (*upaṭṭhāka*) of the Buddha, Upāli, well-versed in discipline, and many women renunciants such as Mahā-Pajāpati, Khemā, Uppalavaṇṇā, Paṭāchārā and others.

Among the lay devotees numbered the wealthy Anāthapiṇḍika-Sudatta, the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika, Mahānāma the Śākyan, Jīvaka-Komarabhaccha, who is curiously described as 'having faith in individuals' (*puggalapasanna*), Sujāta, Visākha and others.

The Buddha, according to *Madhuratthavilāsini*, was continuously on the move as a wandering monk (a paribbājaka) for twenty years after his great enlightenment; and then settled down at Sāvatthi, but living on alms, for about twenty-four years. He left Sāvatthi in his 79th year and spent the rainy season (vassa) at Rājagaha, from where he moved northward. While on his move, at the age of 80, he passed away quietly at Kusinārā in the Malla Country.

His death has been theme of a long sutta *Mahāparinibbāṇa-sutta*, included in the *Dīgha-Nikāya* collection.

It is impossible to identify what the original Sutta must have been like.

Even the orthodox commentator Buddhaghosha points out portions as late additions. But the last words of the Buddha, namely, 'I beseech you, mendicants, all composite

things are liable to decay: strive with diligence, (हन्द दानि भिक्खवे आमन्तयामि वो वयुधम्मा संखारा, अप्पमादेन सम्पादेशा॥) ('Handa dāni, bhikkhave, āmantayāmi-vo, vayudhammā sankhārā, appamādena, sampādethā) are found elsewhere in the Canon: In the *Sagātha-vagga* of *Samyutta-Nikāya*, which gives a brief account of the Buddha's death, detailing trances and attainments prior to the great decease, in almost the same way is in *Mahāparinibbāṇa-suttanta*, but omitting the conversation, earthquakes and other marvels mentioned in the latter.

Both texts, however, contain a lovely verse attributed to Anuruddha, on the occasion of the Buddha's death which gives us an intimate and eye-witness account of the manner of the Master's Death:

नाहु अस्सासपस्सासो ठितचित्तस्स तदिनो ।
 अनेजो सन्तिमारब्धं यं कालमकारि मुनि॥
 असल्लीनेन चिन्तेन वेदनमज्झ वासयि ।
 पज्जोतस्सेव निब्बाणं विमोक्खो चेतसो अहूति॥

Nahu assāsa-passāso ṭhita-chittass atādino,
 Anejo santim ārabha, yam kālam akāri muni:
 Asallīnena chittena vedanam ajjhavāsaya
 Pajjotasseva nibbāṇam, vimokkho chetaso ahūti.

“His mind was settled: there was no hard breathing in or out. The sage died without a quiver: his goal was tranquility. He endured the pain with a bold mind: even as a flame goes out, his consciousness was freed.”

[The discourse which marked the commencement of the Buddha's career is celebrated not only for its primacy but for its profundity as well. It comprehends the principle findings of the Blessed One as well as the axiomatic framework of his gospel. An ancient authority commends this Sermon as containing the essence of the entire literary output of the Master from the moment of his enlightenment till his passing away.

Peṭakopadesa says: “There is no teaching of the Master outside the scope of this Sermon.” Understandably, therefore, the Sermon is repeated, almost in identical form, as many as five times in the Pāli canon: in the *Samyutta-Nikāya* of *Sutta-Piṭaka* as an independent tract (sutta 11, ‘Sacchamamyutta’); in *Vinaya-Piṭaka* as a part of the ‘Mahāvagga’ section (khandaka 1), in the *Dīgha-Nikāya*, as an annotated appendage to the ‘Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna-sutta’ (32); in the *Majjhima-Nikāya* (‘Sacchaka-vibhaṅga-sutta’); and in the *Anguttara-Nikāya* (‘Tika-nipāta’).

There are at least two well-known Sanskrit versions of this Sermon, one in *Mahāvastu* and the other in *Lalita-vistara*; and no less than five Tibetan versions have till now been discovered. There is extant a Chinese version of considerable antiquity which agrees in, but only in, the essentials with the Pāli sermon. Apart from this devotion of the scholiasts, the Discourse is held in very high regard by the Buddhist laity: it has acquired the status of 'parittā' in religious functions.

This Discourse introduces the young Śākyan ascetic to the world as the supremely wise Buddha with a courageous message for the sorrowing mankind. The audience for that discourse, which was the very first of Discourses which he delivered, who were exerting their utmost to attain the Immortal, the Way, the Light.

The Sermon preserves the name of one of them, Koṇḍañña (Kaundinya), who was the wisest of them and the first to comprehend the Master's discovery. We know from other sources the names of the other four: Vappa (Bāshpa), Mahānāma, Assaji (Aśvajit) and Bhadda (Bhadra). They were the Buddha's former acquaintances: they were also his close associates during his spiritual struggles in the Urvula jungles.

The fact that the Buddha chose them for his first audience and went all the way to Vārāṇasī to tell them about his discovery indicates the high regard in which he held them. It is beyond doubt that they were the main pillars of the Buddha's religion in the early stages; the ancient chronicles narrate the conversion of Sāriputta, the most eminent of the Buddha's disciples, by one of these four, Assaji (Aśvajit).

The background story is narrated in the 'Ariyapariyesaṇa sutta' of the *Majjhima-Nikāya*. When Gotama attained the enlightenment (which made him the Buddha) in Gayā in the present-day Bihar, he was at first reluctant to reveal his profound findings to the ignorant and indifferent mankind. He had beheld the Light after great toil, and the beings beset with love and hate would hardly appreciate it: his findings were subtle and went counter to the ways of the worldlings, who, enveloped in darkness, would decline the revelation.

Owing to the intervention of Brahmā-Sahampati, however, he agreed to announce his gospel for the welfare of the world: "there are those whose sight is not entirely blinded by the worldly dirt, and they would perhaps profit by the gospel."

Having decided to throw open to them the doors of the Deathless. (*amatassa dvāram*), the Buddha began considering who would be worthy enough to receive his first intimations. The five ascetics with whom he had dwelt years ago in Uruvela presented themselves to his mind. That is how he wended his way from Gayā to Banaras in search of them.

The five ascetics had been disappointed by the Buddha's return to normal habits after strenuous exercises of privation. If, with utmost effort and austerity one fails to perceive the great truth, how can comfort and pleasure lead us there? Gotama, in their eyes, had abandoned the path, and given up the struggle. When, therefore, the Buddha came to them, they first doubted his 'superhuman' accomplishment (*uttari-manussa-dhamma*).

But being earnest and open-minded, they soon regained their confidence in him. The Buddha now emerged as a revered teacher (*bhagavā*), as a blessed one (*arahā*), as a perfectly enlightened one (*sammā-sambuddha*).

The discourse is brief, with short, simple and precise statements. But the brevity presupposes on the part of the hearer (*sāvaka*) considerable technical competence. There

are no definitions, nor are any explanations. But we must remember that the Buddha is here addressing a group of earnest and eminent minds, who were thoroughly conversant with the then current philosophical and religious terminology, and who were already adepts in the ascesis.

The main spokesman in the discourse is the Buddha, except for three prefatory sentences and eight concluding sentences (which are in fact formal and later appendages for the *ipsissima verba* of the Master). The speech is distinguished by its directness: it is in all probability as mentioned earlier, an actual lecture, and it savours not of a stylised write-up.

We may reasonably perceive here the very words of the Master as he spoke them, and not a connection of the monastic editors of a later age. Being the first and the most profound of discourses, the thoughtful audience preserved the very words for posterity: the statements were memorised, repeated, cited, redacted, inquired into, and commented upon.

The discourse is known as *Dhamma-chakka-ppavattana-sutta* in the Pali collection, and as 'Triparivartadharmachakra-sūtra' in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. Both expressions,

however, connote the same idea: Setting into motion (*pavattana*) the Wheel (*chakka*) of Dhamma.

Or alternately, Founding (*pavattana*) the Kingdom (*chakka*) of Dhamma. The Sanskrit word for emperor is '*chakravartin*' (*chakkavatti* in Pali), and it implies this idea. The Buddha is sometimes referred to as 'Dhamma-rāja', and his disciple Sāriputta is styled 'Dhamma-senāpati' (Commander-in-Chief of Dhamma).

But the imagery of the wheel being revolved has gained greater currency, and has frequently been represented in Buddhist sculpture and painting. The title in this sense seems to have been borrowed from the Buddha's answer to Upaka's inquiry on his way to Banaras, an episode immediately prior to the delivery of the Discourse: "To set into motion the wheel of Dhamma (*dhamma-chakkaṃ pavattetum*), I proceed to Vārāṇasī etc."

The word 'Dhamma' in the expression requires explanation and consideration, for the word not only admits of a wide variety of meanings, but it forms the very core of the discourse. The commentary on *Khuddaka-pāṭha* refers to the etymological significance of 'bearing up', 'supporting': It

supports (*dhārento*) the individual and prevents his lapse into lower states.

Aśoka in one of the rock-edicts employs the word in the sense of a stand taken, a position assumed (*tishṭanato*). *Mahāniddeśa* interprets Dhamma as a viewpoint, an ideology, a doctrine (*diṭṭhi*), as in the formula: "Well-expounded (*svākkhāto*) by the Master (*bhagavatā*) is the Doctrine (*dhammo*)."

In the discourse itself the word occurs in the sense of 'phenomena' (*dhammesu*), into which the Master developed the insight. Indeed, the functional import of the word comprehends all these connotations and something more. This 'something more' is the idea of a method, a strategy, a path, a way, a means (*paṭipadā* or *magga*). Thus, Dhamma is both a theory and a practical procedure. Dhamma in both these aspects forms the subject-matter of the discourse.

But the word in this sense does not occur in the body of the Buddha's speech: it is clear that the name of the discourse was a later ascription, the original designation being only 'The First Teaching' (*paṭhama-desanā*). The turning of the wheel of Dhamma is referred to in the thirteenth

section of the discourse: “Thus in the Deer Park in Banaras the incomparable wheel of Dhamma was set into motion by the Blessed one.”

This statement of course is not ascribed to the Buddha: it occurs long after “Thus spake the Blessed one.” It is, however, not easy to determine whether the title of the Discourse was derived from this reference, or the reference was instituted because of the title.

The expression ‘thrice revolved’ (*tiparivaṭṭam*) qualifying the insightful wisdom (*ñāṇa-dassanam*) figures prominently in the Discourse, although it is not included in the Buddha’s speech: it even forms a part of the title in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. The commentaries explain that the Buddha revolved in his mind his four-fold discovery thrice, in its three aspects: the truth (*saccham*), the task (*kiecham*) and the accomplishment (*katam*).

The Buddha’s enlightenment consisted of the discovery of four phenomenal principles, which have been described as ‘noble’ (*ariya*): sorrow, origination of sorrow, elimination of sorrow, and the method of elimination.

Each of these obtains in the three aspects mentioned above. The truth of sorrow, the task of understanding sorrow, and the accomplishment of this understanding; the truth of the origination of sorrow, the task of suppressing the origination and the accomplishment of this suppression; the truth of the elimination of sorrow, the task of realising it, and the accomplishment of this realisation; the truth of the method of elimination of sorrow, the task of cultivating the method and the accomplishment of this cultivation.

These four phenomenal principles discovered by the Buddha constitute the special subject of his teaching (*samukkamsika-dhamma*), their clear formulation is the main purpose of the Discourse. They are designated as the ‘noble truths’ (*ariya-sacchāni*): and the Commentaries explain that the nobility of these truths is derived from their being discovered by the Noble One, the Buddha, and from their being recognised by all the noble ones (*ariyās*) in the world.

The four are arranged in an order: “A skilful physician”, says the author of *Vimutti-magga*, “first sees the symptoms of a disease, then hears the cause of it, and then seeing the necessity for the cure, prescribes a suitable medicine: even so these principles”.

The first three are theoretical in import, while the fourth one is essentially practical. And the Discourse naturally expatiates on this truth, which is the method (*naya*), the road (*magga*), the path (*paṭipadā*) for eliminating sorrow and obtaining emancipation.

The idea of Path is old: even Yājñavalkya mentions it (*panthā*). But the Buddha affirmed that it is in successive steps (*paṭi-padā*, 'step by step'): it is a course contributing to progress (*vaḍḍhanaka paṭipadā*) as explained in the commentary to *Majjhima-Nikāya*.

The Path is closely related to the pilgrim and his progress: the Buddha is a Path-finder and a guide on the Path. The constituents of this Āryan Path as enumerated by the Buddha are eight in number (*aṭṭhaṅgika*): Right views, aspirations, speech, action, vocation, effort, attention and concentration.

This enumeration, which occurs twice in the short Discourse, is of immense importance: it is in fact the Buddha's own system for facilitating the pilgrim's progress towards Insight, Tranquility and Enlightenment. The Buddha

chooses to describe this Path of Eight Aspects as the 'middle way' (*majjhimā-paṭipadā*): eschewing the extremes, the Master indicated the golden mean.

The extremes are the absorption in the worldly delights and the employment of severe privations as means to achieve spiritual ends. The former is vulgar and the latter wearisome, while both, according to the Buddha, are ignoble (*anariya*) and futile (*anttha-samhita*, lit. 'not leading to the Goal'). The Master himself had perhaps followed both these extreme methods, the former as a prince in Kapilavasthu and the latter as an ascetic in Uruvela, and had experienced their utter futility. He obtained the enlightenment only when he steered clear of these 'ends' (*ante*) or extremes.

The Discourse, far from being a string of high-sounding injunctions and expostulations, is a simple narration of how the remarkable Śākya attained to the incomparable and complete Enlightenment (*anuttaram sammāsambodhim*). The Buddha here speaks about his own discoveries of the four truths, the three aspects of each truth thus making a twelve-fold structure, (*dvādasākāram*), and the middle Path with eight aspects.]

The Indian tradition describes the Buddha as an advocate of the analytical method (*vaibhajya-vādin*), and this description is amply justified by the discourses preserved in the Pāli canon. His very first Discourse is an excellent specimen of his consummate analytical skill.

It is remarkable that this short speech involves the fundamental principles of axiomatics, so familiar to the scientific mind in the contemporary world. Shorn of the ethical and metaphysical ideas that were later read into the simple statements, the Discourse formulates certain postulates, derived no doubt from observation and experience, and seeks to construct a theoretical structure explaining the inter-relationship among the postulates.

It is also remarkable that the Buddha did not stop at mere intellectual edification: his interest was essentially practical. He was moved by compassion for the suffering humanity, and was in fact showing a method, a way, for the eradication of suffering. Thus the postulates that he enunciated have an operational aspect. The postulate that he enunciated have an operational aspect: the postulates is not merely a statement of facts, but it indicates a necessary operation.

The commentators have compared the Buddha's method with the physician's programme: they emphasise that diagnosis of a disease on the basis of symptoms is invariably attended by a prescription for the removal of symptoms. A postulate thus is both factual and functional.

Further, the Buddha carefully avoids impersonal abstraction in the postulates. A postulate to be significant should carry the conviction concerning the possibility of its attainment. The Buddha draws on his own personal experience and introduces a demonstrational aspect in the postulates: had he not himself by his own effort, experienced the validity of the postulates?

He not only understood the truth of the postulates, and appreciated the necessity of particular operations with regard to them, but also put to test in his own life those operations and obtained the fulfilment thereof. He could thus speak with absolute authority and confidence about the postulates he had formulated.

In the Discourse, he enunciates four postulates:
(1) Suffering in life is a fact; (2) It originates under certain

conditions; (3) It is eliminated under certain other conditions: and (4) There obtains a method by which it is eliminated. Based on these postulates, the Buddha set out to teach this method for the benefit of mankind. Illustrating the Buddha's design, the second century author of *Vimutti-magga* (Upatissa) writes:

“Just as a skillful physician first sees the symptoms of a disease, then hears the cause of it, and then seeing the necessity of the cure of the disease prescribes a suitable medicine: so the four Truths may be known as coming in the same order.”

It is not surprising that the Buddha is described in the ancient texts not as a philosopher but as physician: his heart was troubled with the ills that mankind was heir to, and he did not care to theorise about it except in so far as the method required a rational foundation. The importance of the Buddha to mankind is exquisitely illustrated by a venerable monk of Thailand: (cited in Bapat, P.V.: *Vimutti-magga and Visuddhi-magga*, Poona, 1937, p.110)

".... the Lord Buddha is like a physician who removes the arrow of doubt. It is as though we have suffered from a disease for many years and have tried many remedies, without success. Then we meet an able physician who tells us that he also used to suffer from the same disease, but by the taking of certain medicines he was cured, and further that he has given the same remedy to many others who suffered from this disease, and they also were cured. He then suggests that we take this medicine ...so that we may become completely cured. In such a case, should we not obey him?"

(Chao Khun Upādi Gunupamāchariya Sirichando: "Meditation for calm and Insight", *The Middle Way*, 1961, Vol. XXXV, No.4, pp.127-133)

Having analysed the problem of suffering in terms of the four postulates, the Buddha subjected each postulate into a further analysis into its triple aspects: factual (*saccha*), functional (*kiccha*) and demonstrational (*kata*) - mentioned above. He considered (in the ancient expression 'turned over in his mind', *parivattā* from the root *vṛt*, 'to turn', 'to proceed') the four postulates in their three aspects, thus

obtaining twelve propositions (ākāras) ('tiparivaṭṭam dvādasākāram'):

- I. (1) Suffering in life is a fact.
(2) Suffering in life as a fact must be understood.
(3) Suffering in life as a fact was understood (by me).
- II. (4) Suffering originates under certain conditions.
(5) The origination of suffering must be overcome.
(6) The origination of suffering was overcome (by me).
- III. (7) Suffering is eliminated under certain other conditions.
(8) The elimination of suffering must be realised.
(9) The elimination of suffering was realised (by me).
- IV. (10) There obtains a method by which suffering is eliminated.
(11) The method for the elimination of suffering must be cultivated.
(12) The method for the elimination of suffering was cultivated (by me).

It can be seen that each of the four postulates has three aspects, and each aspect of each postulate has four

propositions. In terms of the three aspects, viz., (a) the factual (or the Fact), (b) the functional (or the Task) and (c) the demonstrational (or the Accomplishment), the propositions may be summarised:

- I. (a) Suffering (*dukkham*)
(b) Suffering to be understood (*pariññeyyam*)
(c) Suffering understood (*pariññātam*)
- II. (a) Origination of unhappiness (*dukkha-samudayam*)
(b) Origination of suffering overcome
(*pahātabbam*)
(c) Origination of suffering to be overcome (*pahīnam*)
- III. (a) Elimination of suffering (*dukkhan-nirodham*)
(b) Elimination of suffering to be realised
(*sacchikātabbam*)
(c) Elimination of suffering realised (*Sacchikatam*)
- IV. (a) The method of elimination (*dukkhanirodhagāminī-
paṭipadā*)
(b) The method of elimination to be cultivated
(*bhāvetabbam*)
(c) The method of elimination cultivated (*bhāvitam*)

There is an alternate rearrangement of the propositions suggested by the scholiasts, in terms of three 'revolutions in the Master's mind' (*parivarta*), the same as the aspects:

- I. The First Revolution (The Facts):
 - (a) Suffering
 - (b) Origination
 - (c) Elimination
 - (d) The Method of Elimination
- II. The Second Revolution (The Tasks):
 - (a) To be understood
 - (b) To be overcome
 - (c) To be realised
 - (d) To be cultivated
- III. The Third Revolution (The Accomplishments)
 - (a) Understood
 - (b) Overcome
 - (c) Realised
 - (d) Cultivated

The Buddha claims competence to teach this gospel because he had understood what was to be understood,

overcome what had to be overcome, realised what was to be realised and cultivated what was to be cultivated - and thus was a Buddha.

अभिज्जेयं अभिज्जातं भावेतब्बं च भावितम् ।

पहातब्बं पहीनं मे, तस्मा बुद्धोऽस्मि ब्राह्मण ॥

Suffering or rather the removal of Suffering, forms the *leit motif* of the Buddha's gospel: and it is certainly significant that the very first of his utterances was so thoroughly preoccupied with Suffering. He had no doubt been absolutely emancipated from all Suffering when he obtained the Enlightenment in Gayā; but he was alerted to the phenomenon of Suffering in the world, and he expected every one of his disciple to turn out to be, like himself, an 'ender of Suffering'. Hence his exhortation:

दुक्खस्सन्तकरो भव ।

It was thus but natural that the Buddhist thought, at least during its early phases, was concerned primarily with suffering and its analysis as preliminary to its removal. The ancient collection of thirty treatises, known as "The Path to Analysis" (*Paṭisambhidhā-magga*), included in the *Sutta-piṭaka*, takes up the topic (*paṭiniddesa*) of suffering for definition,

description and analysis, closely following the enumeration in the First Discourse.

(For an exposition of this account cf. Ledi Sayadaw: *Catusacca-dīpanī*, Eng: tr. "The Light of the Dhamma" Burma, Vol.5, No.4 and Vol.6, No.1).

Each of the four postulates in this account is explained as having four characteristics thus making sixteen descriptive definitions.

I. Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of being oppressive (*pīḷam*);
- (b) has the characteristic of being generated by a set of conditions (*saṅkhata*);
- (c) has the characteristic of burning up (*santāpa*); and
- (d) has the characteristic of incessantly changing (*vipariṇāma*).

II. Origination of Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of organising the predisposing factors (*āyūhana*);
- (b) has the characteristic of continuous loading (*nidāna*);

- (c) has the characteristic of engendering association with Suffering (*samyoga*); and
- (d) has the characteristic of obstructing freedom from Suffering (*palibodha*).

III. Elimination of Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of freeing one from Suffering (*nissaraṇa*);
- (b) has the characteristic of freeing one from disturbances (*paviveka*);
- (c) has the characteristic of a condition which no longer dissolves or disintegrates (*amata*) ; and
- (d) has the characteristic of not being generated by a set of conditions (*asaṁkhata*).

IV. The Method of Eliminating Suffering;

- (a) has the characteristic of tending towards freedom from suffering (*niyyāna*);
- (b) has the characteristic of bringing about the state of Arahattā (*hetu*);
- (c) has the characteristic of affording insight into the reality (*dassana*) ; and
- (d) has the characteristic of mastering oneself (*ādhipateyya*).

We see from the above table that Postulate I and Postulate III refer to exactly opposite phenomena: and Postulate II and Postulate IV refer to exactly opposite processes. Postulates I and II pertain to the actual world of common human beings, whereas Postulates III and IV envisage a possibility, an ideal state.

Postulate I is necessarily implied in the rationale of every Indian religious system or philosophical discipline. And Postulate III is the goal of all religious life in India, at any rate it is the ideal held out by the Upanishads and in the Jaina system.

These two postulates in fact belong to the pre-Buddhist tradition, and the Master had already absorbed them during his pre-*bodhi* days. Postulates II and IV represent the Buddha's original contribution to Indian culture, the former being his philosophical standpoint and the latter his religious system.

It is significant that in this ancient axiomatics, happiness (*sukha*) is not mentioned as an opposite of Suffering or as an ideal state for aspiration. In the Buddha's scheme of analysis happiness is not a reality at all. Suffering is the

reality, but when it is eliminated we find quiet, wisdom and freedom as positive gains - and not happiness. Postulates III which refers to the precise opposite of Suffering, is said to be equivalent to *Nibbāṇa*, and its characteristic is described as 'Quiet' (*santi*). (See Buddhaghosha's *Visuddhi-magga*, ed. D. Kosambi, 16, 66, p.355) The Buddha's ideology recognises only the elimination of Suffering, and not the generation of happiness here or hereafter.

What now is Suffering? It is a phenomenon which is universal in its occurrence (*sabba-satta-sadhāraṇa*), and is readily identifiable (*suviññeyya*) by its characteristic of causing discomfort, trouble (*bāḍhanā*). It is felt as 'burning heat' (*santāpanā*) and it excites the organism to activity (*pavatti*).

The mediaeval scholiast, Buddhaghosha, derives the Indian word for Suffering, *dukkha*, from two concepts: bad (*kucchita*) and vulgar (*tuccha*). The ancient expositions liken Suffering to 'burden', and to 'disease'. The First Discourse itself offers illustration: the process of being born, getting old and worn out, decay and death, illness, association with the undesirable, dissociation from the desired, failure to obtain the aspired object.

These are included in the category of 'Objective Suffering' (*vatthu-dukkha*), while the category of 'Subjective Suffering' (*sabhāva-dukkha*) includes feelings of misery, agitation, moods of depression and so on. (See Upatissa's *Vimutti-magga*.) In any case, suffering is natural to beings as well as thoroughly undesirable.

Origination is defined by the eminent Burmese scholar-monk, Ledi Sayadaw, as "the cause of ever continuing this psychophysical process of experience": and it is equated with craving (*taṇhā*), which is recurrent. Craving is the deep seated organismic state which tends to form unbroken series (*anupaccheda*). It is unitary as 'egoity' (*abhimāna*), but assumes a three-fold form as attachment-aversion-ignorance (*rāga-dosa-moha*).

The ancient expositions liken the Origination to 'the taking up of a burden' or 'to the cause of a disease'. Elimination of Suffering has the character of 'quiet' (*santi*) and is tantamount to Nibbāṇa. The word for elimination (*nirodha*) is explained by Buddhaghosha as 'the absence of the flood (*rodha*) of Suffering': it is cessation (*atthagama*), detachment (*virāga*), freedom from craving (*mutti*) and getting

uprooted from the normal world of craving and Suffering (*anālayo*).

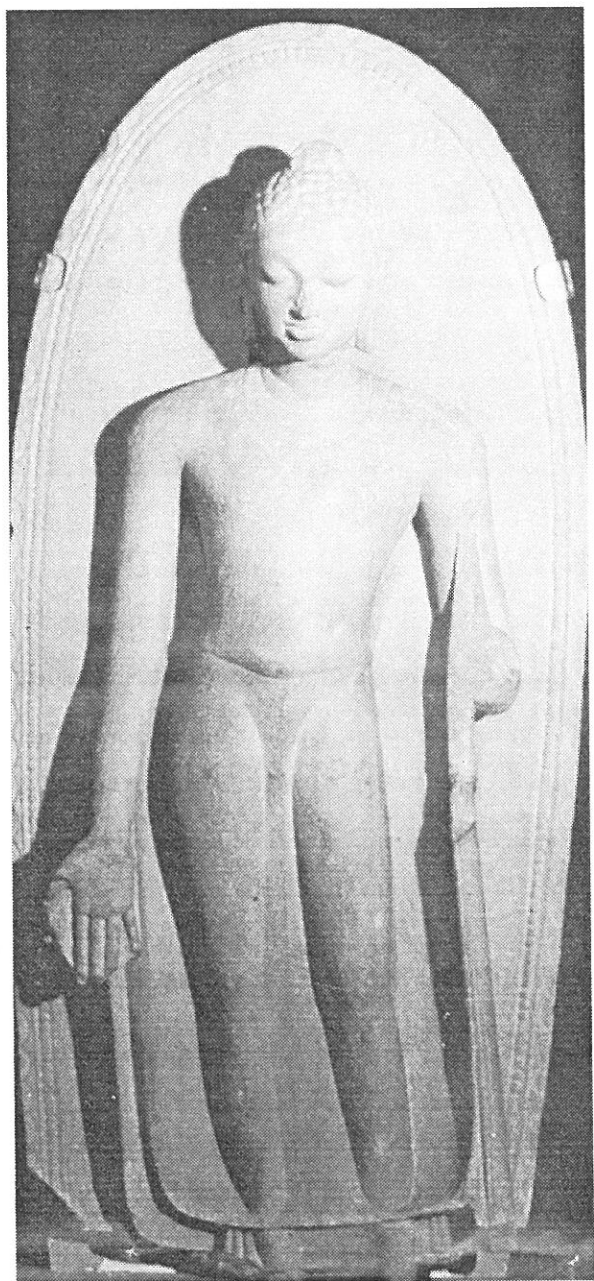
This state is likened to 'the putting down of the burden' or to 'the cure of the disease'. But is this merely a happy dream of a desolate soul? Is it unreal like the horns of a hare? It is of course not a reality for the worldlings: but it becomes a reality when one undertakes to shake off the Suffering, understand the Origination, appreciate the Elimination and apply himself to the Method.

The Method is what leads to an expected end (*niyyāna*): and it is likened to 'the technique of putting down the burden' or to 'the therapeutics'. And this is what Dharma really means.

GĀTHĀ-ŚATAKA
also called
TELAKAṬĀHA - GĀTHĀ
(BEING THE SONG OF A MONK IN THE CAULDRON OF OIL)

This is a little-known text consisting of a hundred verses, belonging to the non-canonical Pāli literature. A Gāthā is an ejaculatory verse, often in spirit identical with the Udāna. This Gāthā, is so called because its author is supposed to have sung it while in a cauldron of oil (telakaṭāha). It is of comparatively recent date - the tenth of the eleventh century A.D. - its plot being laid in Ceylon, and in the time of Kalyāṇi-Tissa who is considered to have lived in the century previous to the Christian Era. And the style betrays immense influence of classical Sanskrit literature. The meter of the work is *Vasanta-tilakā* a variety of *Śārkārī*.

Unlike most of the canonical texts this *Gāthā* lacks the personal background, although tradition has preserved a story preceding it. There is no mention in the text of any contemporary personage, and the king of Ceylon, who is freely praised, is not mentioned by name.



The text does not contain any direct or indirect reference to the story which by tradition is linked with the *Gāthā*. And it is open to suspicion that the story might likely have been a later invention. The story is mentioned in *Mahāvam̐sa* and *Rasa-vāhinī*. The story, however, is as follows:

During the years 339-383 of the Buddhist Era there ruled in Ceylon a king, Kalyāṇi-Tissa, with Kalyāṇi (perhaps modern Kelāniya) City as capital. There was a royal chaplain, monk Kalyāṇi-Thera. Under the care of this Thera was left the early education of the younger brother of the king, Uttiya. This Uttiya was taught so zealously by the Thera that even the handwriting of the pupil was exactly modelled after the teacher's.

In due course, Uttiya became the *yuva-rājā* and there then grew up an unbecoming relationship between Uttiya and the Queen. The king came to know of this and ordered Uttiya's arrest. Uttiya, however, scented trouble and fled.

Later one day, Uttiya in exile sent one of his men in the disguise of a young monk with a message of love for the Queen written on a *tāla*-leaf with his own hand. This messenger waited for an opportunity and entered the palace

synchronously with Kalyāṇi-Thera, the palace guards mistaking him to be an invitee of the king. The king, however, imagined that he was the Thera's new pupil and attended on him with respect without any further curiosity.

When the time for departure of the guests came, the Queen entered to pay her respects to the visitors: and the young pretender seized this opportunity to drop, unnoticed as he thought, before the Queen the inscribed *tāla*-leaf which he was hiding in the folds of his garment.

The king, however, observed it and taking it the scanned the message. Uttiya's handwriting was mistaken by him to be the Thera's, and the presence of the Thera confirmed the mistake.

The king's indignation knew no bounds, and he forthwith ordered the Thera to be killed by dropping him in a cauldron of boiling oil. The Thera, however, was quiet and serene, freely forgave the king for the error and considered his misfortune a result of his past *karma*. The story has it that while undergoing this torture, the Thera sang this Gāthā as a sermon for the benefit of those nearby, at the end of which he passed into parinibbāṇa.

This text is a sort of exercise in the '*asubha-bhavanā*' or meditation on the foul nature of phenomena. When a novice enters the Order he is closely studied by the preceptor, who gives him a subject for meditation in keeping with the entrant's temperamental proclivity. The novice then retires to a quiet, secluded spot such as the monastery-cell or a jungle-retreat and intently contemplates on that subject.

As many as forty such subjects were popular: ten pleasing subjects such as the elements and colour; ten reflections on the Buddha, dhamma, saṃgha, morality, generosity and so on; ten higher states such as love and compassion; and finally ten disgusting themes concerning the corpse. By instilling disgust and aversion for the worldly phenomena it was sought to fix the mind of the novice in the truth beyond phenomena.

This *Gāthā* is in all probability the recorded result of some monk's reflection on the disgusting theme. The *leit motif* of the work is death, and we are reminded of the Buddha's exhortation in the *Chakka-nipāta* of *Aṅuttara Nikāya* to meditate on death (*maraṇa-sati*) so as to enter the deathless (*amatogadham*): it is interesting to note that the *Gāthā* concludes with the expression '*amatādhigamāya*'.

The canonical Pāli texts give us, in the words of Oldenberg, “an accurate picture of the world as it presented itself to the eye of that monastic fraternity, the grim world of origination and disease which goes on like clockwork in an ever uniform course and behind which rests the still deep of *Nibbāna*,” which we have in the *suttas*. There is monotony alright, but it is not ‘sublime monotony’ as the Pāli canon. In comparison with the *suttas*, the *Gāthā* is a very inferior work.

There is a free play on the favourite beliefs, sentiments and superstitions of the people in order to scare them away from natural, indifferent life; Indeed a person of feeble intellect who studied this text might well be scared out of his wits. There is no attempt at argumentation, there is no logic. There is not even a nicety of style or commendable choice of expressions: repetitions of similes and phrases tire the reader. At times, however the verses flow magnificently like the river Gaṅgā, but quite often effort is in evidence. Not seldom obscurity of intent looms large.

But the text ably fulfils its supposed purpose - of being an exercise in the ‘*asubha-bhāvanā*.’ There is a cool—even cold—consideration of the normal ills of life, and the reader

might indeed be persuaded to see sense in leading a life of virtue. While in the text itself we find only scrappy bits of information about the gospel of the Buddha, it revokes the painful problem that tore Gotama away from home. The themes that are dealt with are death, transience, need for detachment, the foul nature of the human body, anattā, morality, violence, and the *paṭiccha-samuppāda* doctrine.

In short, while judging the merits of this text, we need remember the scriptural remark: ‘Atthaṃ hi Nātho saraṇam avoca, na vyañjanam’, - “it is the intent that is important and not the expression.”

GĀTHĀ-ŚATAKA
or
TELAKAṬĀHA - GĀTHĀ

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

1. *Laṅkissaro jayatu vāraṇa-rāja-gāmī:
Bhoginda-bhoga-rucirāyata pīṇa-bāhu:
Sādhūpacāra-nirato guṇasannivāso,
Dhamme thito vigata-kodha-madāvalepo.*
2. *Yo sabbaloka-mahito karuṇādhivāso,
Mokkhākarō ravikulambara-puṇṇa-cando,
Neyodadhiṃ suvipulaṃ sakalaṃ vibuddho,
Lokuttamaṃ namatha taṃ sirasā munindaṃ.*
3. *Sopānamālamamaṃ tidaśālayassa,
Saṃsāra-sāgara-samuttaraṇāya setuṃ,
Sabbāgatibhaya-vivajjita-khemamaggam.
Dhammaṃ namassatha sadā Muninā paṇītam.*
4. *Deyyaṃ tad'appamapi yattha pasannacittā,
Datvā narā phalamulārataṃ labhante:
Taṃ sabbadā Dasabalen'api suppasattham,
Saṅghaṃ namassatha sadāmitapuññakhettaṃ*

5. *Tejobalena mahatā ratanattayassa,
Lokattayaṃ samadhigacchati yena mokkham;
Rakkhā na c'atthi ca samā ratanattayassa,
Tasmā sadā bhajatha taṃ ratanattayaṃ, bho!*
6. *Lankissaro parahitekarato nirāso,
Rattimpi jāgarato karuṇādhivāso:
Lokaṃ vibodhayati loka-hitāya kāmam:
“Dhammaṃ samācaratha jāgarikānuyuttā.”*
7. *Sattopakāra-niratā kusale sahāyā,
Bho! dullabhā bhuvi narā vigatappamdā,
Lañkādhīpaṃ guṇadhanam kusale sahāyam,
Āgama sañcaratha dhammam'alam-pamādam.*
8. *Dhammo tilokasaraṇo, paraṃ rasānam
Dhammo mahaggharatano ratanesu loke;
Dhammo have tibhava-dukkha-vināsa-hetu,
Dhammaṃ samācaratha jāgarikānuyuttā!*
9. *Niddaṃ vinodayatha, bhāvayath' appameyyam,
Dukkhaṃ aniccamapi, c'cha anattataṃ ca:
Dehe ratim jahatha jajjarabhājanābhe,
Dhammaṃ samācaratha jāgarikānuyuttā!*

10. “Okāsamañña mama n’atthi, suve karissam
Dhammam” - ittalasatā kusalappayoge;
Nālam, tiyaddhisu tathā bhuvanattaye ca,
Kāmam, na c’atthi manujo marañā pamutto.
11. Khitto yathā nabhasi kenacideva leḍḍu,
Bhūmim samāpatati bhāratayā khaṇena;
Jātattameva khalu kāraṇam ekam eva,
Lokam sadā nanu dhuvam marañāya gantum
12. Kāmam narassa patato girimuddhanāto,
Majjhe na kiñci bhayanissaraṇāya hetu;
Kāmam vajanti maraṇam tibhavesu sattā,
Bhoge rati pajahathā pi ca jīvite ca.
13. Kāmam patanti mahiyā khalu vassadhārā,
Vijjullatā vivata-megha-mukhā pamuttā;
Evam narā maraṇa-bhīma-papāta-majjhe,
Kāmam patanti, na hi koci bhavesu nicco.
14. Belātaṇṇe paṭutaroru-taraṅga-mālā,
Nāsam vajanti satatam salilālayassa;
Nāsam tathā samupayanti narāmarāṇam,
Pāṇāni dārunatare maraṇodadhimhi.

15. *Saddho'pi so rathavarassa gajādhipēhi,
Yodhehi cāpi sabalēhi ca sāyudhehi;
Lokaṃ vivañciya sadā maraṇ'ūsabho so,
Kāmaṃ nihanti bhuvanattaya-sālisandaṃ.*
16. *Bho! mārutena mahatā vihato padīpo,
Khippaṃ vināsamukhaṃ eti mahappabho'pi;
Loka tathā maraṇacaṇḍa-samīraṇena,
Khippaṃ vinassati narāyu-mahāpadīpo.*
17. *Rāmajjuna-ppabhuti-bhūpati-puṇḡavā ca,
Sūrā raṇa-mukhe vijitāri-saṇḡhā,
Tepī'ha caṇḍa-maraṇogha-nimugga-dchā,
Nāsaṃ gatā: jagati ke maraṇā pamuttā?*
18. *Lakkhī ca sāgarapaṭā sadharādharā ca,
Sampattiyo ca vividhā api rūpasobhā;
Sabbā ca tā api ca mitta sutā ca dārā,
Ke vā'pi kaṃ anugatā maraṇaṃ vajantaṃ?*
19. *Brahmā-sura-gaṇā ca mahānubhāvā,
Gandhabba-kimnara-mahoraga-rakkhasā ca,
Te cāpare ca maraṇaggi-sikhāya sabbe,
Ante patanti salabhā iva khīṇa-puñṇā.*

20. *Ye Sāriputta-pamukhā muni-sāvaka ca,
Suddhā sadāsavanudā paramiddhi-pattā;
Te cāpi maccuvalabhā-mukha-sannimuggā,
Dīpāsi vā' nilahatā khayatām upetā.*
21. *Buddhā pi buddha-kamalā'mala-cāru-nettā;
Dvattimsa-lakkhaṇa-virājita-rūpa-sobhā,
Sabbāsavakkhayakarā'pi ca loka-nāthā,
Sampāditā maraṇa-matta-mahāgajena.*
22. *Rogāturesu karuṇā na jarāturesu,
Khiḍḍāparesu sukumāra-kumārakesu;
Lokam sadā hanatī maccu-mahāgajindo,
Dāvānalo vanam'ivāvirato asesam*
23. *Āpuṇṇatā na salilena jalāsayassa,
Kaṭṭhassa cāpi pahutā na hutāsanassa;
Bhutvāna so tibhuvanam'pi tathā asesam,
Bho! niddayo, na khalu pītim upeti maccu.*
24. *Bho! moha-mohitatayā vivaso adhañño,
Loko patatyapi hi maccu-mukhe subhīme;
Bhoge ratim samupayāti vihīna-pañño,
Dolātaraṅga-capale supinopameñje.*

25. *Eko'pi maccur abhiantum alam tilokam,
Kinniddayā api jarāmarañānuyāyī,
Ko vā kareyya vibhavesuca jīvitāsam
Jāto naro supina-saṅgama-sannibhesu?*
26. *Niccāturaṃ jagad-idaṃ sabhayaṃ sasokaṃ,
Disvā ca kodha-mada-moha-jarābhibhūtaṃ,
Ubbegamattam'api yassa na vijjati ce,
So dāruṇo, na maraṇo, vata taṃ dhiratthu!*
27. *Bho! bho! na passatha jarāsidharaṃ hi maccu
Māhaññaṃ mānamakhilaṃ satataṃ tilokam,
Kiṃ niddayā nayatha vītabhayā tiyāmaṃ?
Dhammaṃ sadā'savanudaṃ carath'appamattā!*
28. *Bhāvettha bho! maraṇa-māra-vivajjanāya,
Loke sadā maraṇa-saññaṃ mimamya tattā:
Evañ hi bhāvanaratassa narassa tassa,
Taṇhā pahīyati sariragatā asesā.*
29. *Rūpaṃ jarā piyataraṃ malinī karoti,
Sabbam balam harati attani ghora-rogo:
Nānū'pabhoga-parirakkhitaṃ attabhāvaṃ
Bho! maccu saṃnarati, kiṃ phalam attabhāve?*

30. *Kammānilāpahata-roga-taraṅgabhaṅge,
Saṃsāra-sāgara-mukhē vītate vipannā,
Mā mā pamādam akarittha! karotha mokkham!
Dukkhodayaṃ nanu pamādamayaṃ narānaṃ.*
31. *Bhogā ca mitta-suta-porisa-bandhavā ca,
Nārī ca jīvitasamā api khattavattthu,
Sabbāni tāni paralokamito vajantaṃ,
Nānubbajanti, kusalākusalaṃ ca loka.*
32. *Bho! vijju-cañcala-tare bhava-sāgaramhi,
Khittā purā-kata-mahāpavanena tena
Kāmaṃ vibhijjati khaṇena sarīra-nāva,
Hatthe karotha paramaṃ guṇa-hattha-sāraṃ.*
33. *Bho! vijju-cañcala-tare bhava-sāgaramhi,
Khittā purā kata mahāpavanena tena,
Kāmaṃ vibhijjati khaṇena sarīra-nāvā,
Hatthe karotha paramaṃ guṇa-hattha-sāraṃ.*
34. *Rantvā sadā piyatare divi devarajje,
Taṃhā cavanti bahudhā api khīṇa-puñṇā,
Sabbam sukhaṃ divi bhuvī'ha viyoga-niṭṭhaṃ,
Ko pañṇavā bhava-sukhesu ratiṃ kareyya?*

35. *Buddho sasāvakagaṇo jagadekanātho,
Tārāvalī-parivuto 'pi ca puṇṇa-cando,
Indo pi devamakuṭaṇkita-pādakaṇṇo,
Ko phena-piṇḍa na samo tibhāvesu jāto?*
36. *Lilāvatamsa-samapi yobbana-rūpa-sobhāṃ,
Attūpamaṃ piyajana ca saṃpayogaṃ,
Disvā ca vijju-capalaṃ kurute pamādaṃ,
Bho! moha-mohita-jano bhava-rāga-ratto.*
37. *Putto pitā bhavati, mātu-patīha putto,
Nārīkadāci jananī ca pitā ca putto,
Evaṃ sadā viparivattati jīvaloko,
Citte sadāticapale khalu jāti-raṅge.*
38. *Rantvā pure vividha-phulla-latā-kulehi,
Devā pi nandana-vane sura-sundarīhi,
Tevekadā vitata-kaṇṭaka-saṇkaṭesu,
Bho! koṭi-siṃbali-vanesu phusanti dukkhaṃ,*
39. *Bhūtvā sudhannam api kaṇcana-bhājanesu,
Sagge pure suravarā param'iddhi-pattā,
Te cāpi pajjalita-loha-gulaṃ gilanti,
Kāmaṃ kadāci narakālaya-vāsabhūtā.*

40. *Bhūtvā narissara-varā ca mahim̐ ascesam̐,
Devādhipā ca divi dibba-sukham̐ surammam̐
Vāsam̐ kadāci khura-sañcita-bhūtalesu,
Te vā mahāratha-gaṇānugatā diviha.*
41. *Devāṅganā-lalita-bhinna-taraṅga-māle,
Gaṅge mahissara-jatāmakuṭānuyāte,
Rantvā pure suravarā pamadā-sahāyā,
Te cā'pi ghoratara-vetaraṇim̐ patanti.*
42. *Phullāni pallava-latā-phala-saṅkulāni,
Rammāni nandana-vanāni manoramāni,
Dibbaccharā lalita-puṇṇa-darī-mukhāni,
Kelāsa-meru-sikharāni ca yanti nāsam̐*
43. *Dolānalānila-taraṅga-samā hi bhogā,
Vijjuppabhāticalāni ca jīvitāni:
Māyā-marīci-jala-soma-samam̐ sarīram,
Kiṃ jīvite ca vibhave ca kareyya rāgam?*
44. *Kiṃ dukkham atthi na bhavesu ca dāruṇesu?
Satto'pi tassa vividhassa na bhājano ko?
Jāto yathā maraṇa-roga-jarābhibhūto,
Ko sajjano bhava-ratiṃ pihayeyya bālo?*

45. *Ko vā'pi pajjalita-loha-guḷaṃ gahetum
Sakko kathaṃcidapi pāṇi-talena bhīmaṃ?
Dukkhodayaṃ asuci nissavaṇaṃ anattam,
Ko kāmayetha khalu dehamimaṃ abālo?*
46. *Loke na maccu-samam atthi bhayaṃ narānaṃ,
Na vyādhi-dukkha-samam atthi kiñci dukkhaṃ,
Evaṃ virūpakaraṇaṃ na jarāsamānaṃ,
Mohena bho! ratim upeti tathāpi dehe.*
47. *Nissārato nala-nalī-kadalī-samānaṃ,
Attānaṃ eva parihaññati attaheto!
Samposito'pi kusaḥāya ivā'kataññū,
Kāyo na yassa anugacchati kālakerā.*
48. *Taṃ phena-piṇḍa-sadisam visasūlakappaṃ,
Toyānalānilamahī - uragādhivāsaṃ,
Jiṇṇālayaṃ'va paridubbalam attabhāvaṃ,
Disvā naro katham upeti ratim sapañño?*
49. *Āyukkhayaṃ samupayāti khaṇe khaṇe pi,
Anveti maccu hananāya jarāsi-pāṇī,
Kālaṃ tathā na parivattati taṃ atītaṃ,
Dukkhaṃ idaṃ nanu bhavesu vicīṭanīyaṃ.*

50. *Appāyukassa maraṇaṃ sulabhaṃ bhavesu,
Dīghāyukassa ca jarā vyasanañc'anekaṃ,
Evaṃ bhava ubhayatopi ca dukkhameva,
Dhammaṃ samācaratha dukkha-vināsanāya.*
51. *Dukkh'agginā sumahatā paripīlitesu,
Lokattayassa vasato bhava-cārakesu,
Sabb'attanā sucaritassa pamāda-kālo,
Bho! bho! na hoti, paramaṃ kusalaṃ cinātha.*
52. *Appaṃ sukhaṃ jala-lavaṃ viya bho! tiṇagge:
Dukkhaṃ tu sāgara-jalaṃ viya sabba-loke;
Saṅkappaṇā tadapi hoti sabhāvato hi,
Sabbam tilokaṃ api kevala-dukkhaṃ eva.*
53. *Kāyo na yassa anugacchati kāya-heto,
Bālo aneka-vidhaṃ ācaratīha dukkhaṃ:
Kāyo sadā kali-malākalitaṃ hi loke,
Kāye rato avirataṃ vyasanaṃ pareti.*
54. *Milhālayaṃ kali-malākaram-āmagandhaṃ,
Sūlā-'si-salla-visapannaga-roga bhūtaṃ,
Dehaṃ vipassatha jarā-maraṇādhivāsaṃ,
Tucchaṃ sadā vigata-sāraṃ imaṃ vinindaṃ.*

55. *Dukkhaṃ aniccam asubhaṃ vata attabhāvaṃ,
Mā sañkilesaya, na vijjati jātu nicco,
Aṃbho na vijjati hi appamaṇīha sāraṃ,
Sāraṃ samācaratha Dhammaṃ, alaṃ pamādaṃ.*
56. *Māyā-marīci-kadalī-naḷa-phena-puñja,
Gaṅgā-taraṅga-jala-bubbula-sannibhesu,
Khandesu pañcasu chalāyatanesu tesu,
Attā na vijjati hi, ko na vadeyya bālo?*
57. *Vañjhāsuto sasa-visāṇa-maye rathe tu,
Dhāveyya ce cirataraṃ sadhuram gahetvā,
Dīpaccimālam iva taṃ khaṇa-bhaṅga-bhūtaṃ,
Attā'ti dubbalataram tu vadeyya dehaṃ.*
58. *Bālo yathā salila-bubbula-bhājanena,
Ākaṇṭhato vata pibeyya marīci-toyam,
Attā'ti sāra-rahitaṃ kadalī-samānaṃ,
Mohā bhaṇeyya khalu dehamimaṃ anattaṃ.*
59. *Yodumbarassa kusumena marīci-toyam,
Vāsaṃ yadicchatī sa khedaṃ upeti bālo,
Attānam eva parihaññati atta-heto,
Attā na vijjati kadācid apiha dehe.*

60. *Poso yathā hi kadalīsu vinibbhujanto,
Sāraṃ tadappam apī nopalabheyya kāmam,
Khandesu pañcasu chalāyatanesu tesu,
Suññesu kiñcidapi nopalabheyya sāraṃ,*
61. *Suttaṃ vinā na paṭa-bhāvam ihatthi kiñci,
Dehaṃ vinā khalu koci m'ihatti satto
Dehaṃ sabhāva-rahitaṃ khaṇa-bhaṅga-yuttam
Ko attahetu aparō bhuvī vijjatiha?*
62. *Disvā marīci-salilaṃ hi sudūrato bho!
Bālo migo samupadhāvati toya-saññī;
Evaṃ sabhāva-rahite viparīta-siddhe,
Dehe pareti parikappanayā hi rāgaṃ.*
63. *Dehe sabhāva-rahite parikappasiddhe,
Attā na vijjati hi vijjum iv' antalikkhe,
Bhāvettha bhāvana-ratā vigatappamādā,
Sabbāsava-ppahāṇāya anattasaññaṃ.*
64. *Lālā-karīsa-rudhirassu-vasānulittaṃ,
Dehaṃ imaṃ kali-malā-kalilaṃ asāraṃ,
Sattā sadā pariharanti jigucchaniyaṃ,
Nānā sucīhi paripuṇṇa-ghaṭaṃ yatheva.*

65. *Nhatvā jalaṃ hi sakalaṃ catu-sāgarassa,
Meruppamāṇamapi gandhamanuttarañca
Pappoti neva manujo hi suciṃ kadāci,
Kiṃ bho! vipassatha guṇam kimu attabhāve?*
66. *Dehantadeva vividhāsuci-sannidhānaṃ,
Dehantadeva vadha-bandhana-roga-bhūtaṃ
Dehantadeva navadhā paribhinna-gaṇḍaṃ,
Dehaṃ vinā bhayakaraṃ na susānamatthi.*
67. *Anto-gataṃ yadi ca mutta-karīsa-bhāgaṃ,
Dehā bahim, aticareyya vinikkhamitvā,
Mātā-pitā vikaruṇā ca vīnaṭṭhapemā,
Kāmaṃ bhaveyyu kimu bandhu sutā ca dārā?*
68. *Dehaṃ yathā nava-mukhaṃ kimi-saṅgha-gehaṃ,
Maṃsaṭṭhi-seda-rudhirā-kalilaṃ vigandhaṃ,
Posenti ye vividha-pāpam ih'ācaritvā,
Te mohitā maraṇadhammam aho vat'evam!*
69. *Gaṇḍūpame vividha-roga-nivāsa-bhūte,
Kāye sadā rudhira-mutta-karīsa-puṇṇe,
Ye ettha naṇḍati naro sasigāla-bhakkhe,
Kāmaṃ hi socati parattha sa bālabuddhi.*

70. *Bho phena-piṇḍa-sadiso viya sāra-hīno,
Mīlhālayo viya sadā paṭikūla-gandho,
Āsivīsālayanibho sabhayo sadukkho,
Deho sadā savati loṇa-ghaṭe'va bhinno.*
71. *Jātaṃ yathā na kamalaṃ bhuvi nindanīyaṃ,
Pañkesu bho asuci toya-samākulesu,
Jātaṃ tathā parahitaṃ'pi ca dehabhūtā,
Tan nindanīyaṃ iha jātu na hoti loka.*
72. *Dvātiṃsa-bhāga-paripūra-taro viseso,
Kāyo yathā hi nara-nāri-gaṇassa loka
Kāyesu kiṃ phalam ih' atthi ca paṇḍitānaṃ
Kāmaṃ tadeva nanu hoti paropakāraṃ.*
73. *Posena paṇḍita-tarena tathā'pi dehaṃ,
Sabbattanā cirataraṃ paripālanīyaṃ
Dhammaṃ careyya suciraṃ khalu jīvamāno,
Dhammo have maṇi-varo iva kāmado bho!*
74. *Khīre yathā suparibhāvita-osadhaṃ hi,
Snehena osadha-balaṃ paribhāsate'va:
Dhammaṃ tathā iha samācaritaṃ hi loka,
Chāyā'va yāti paralokam ito vajantaṃ*

75. *Kāyassa bho! viracitassa yathā'nukūlam,
Chāyā vibhāti rucirāmala-dappaṇe tu,
Katvā tatheva paramaṃ kusalaṃ parattha,
Sambhūsitā iva bhavanti phalena tena.*
76. *Dehe tathā vividha-dukkha-nivāsa-bhūte,
Mohāpamādasagā sukhasañña-mūlhā,
Tikkhe yathā khura-mukhe madhu-lehamāno,
Bālhaṇ ca dukkham adhigacchati hīna-pañño.*
77. *Saṅkappa-rāga-vihate nirat' attā-bhāve,
Dukkhaṃ sadā samadhigacchati appapañño
Mūlhassam eva sukha-saññaṃ ih' atthi loka,
Kiṃ pakkameva nanu hoti vicāramāṇe?*
78. *Sabbopabhoga dhana-dhañña-vissesa-lābhī,
Rūpeṇa bho! sa-makaraddhaja-sannibho'pi,
Yo yobbane'pi maraṇam labhate akāmaṃ,
Kāmaṃ parattha para-pāṇa-haro naro hi.*
79. *Yo yācako bhavati bhinna-kapāla-hattho,
Muṇḍo dhigakkharasatehi ca tajjayanto,
Bhikkhaṃ sadāribhavane sakucclavāso
Dehe parattha para-vitta-haro naro so.*

80. *Itthī na muñcati sadā puna itthi-bhāvaṃ,
Nāri sadā bhavati so puriso parattha,
Yo ācareyya para-dāraṃ alanghanīyaṃ,
Ghoraṇ ca vindati sadā vyasanaṇ c' anekamaṃ.*
81. *Dīno vigaṇḍha-vadano ca jalo apaṇṇo,
Mūgo sadā bhavati appiya-dassano ca,
Pappoti dukkham atulaṇ ca manussa-bhūto,
Vācam musā bhaṇati so hi apaṇṇa-satto.*
82. *Ummattakā vigata-lajja-guṇā bhavanti,
Dīnā sadā vyasana-soka-parāyanā ca,
Jātā bhavesu vividhesu virūpa-dehā
Pītvā halāhala-vīsaṃ'va suraṃ vipaṇṇā.*
83. *Pāpāni yena iha ācaritāni yāni,
So vassa-koṭi-nahutāni anappakāni,
Laddhāna ghoramatulaṃ narakesu dukkhaṃ,
Pappoti c'ettha vividha-vyasanaṇ c'anekamaṃ*
84. *Lokattayesu sakalesu samaṃ na kiñci,
Lokassa santikaraṇaṃ ratanattayena,
Tam tejasā su-mahatā jīta-sabba-pāpo,
Sohaṃ sadādhigata-sabbasukho bhaveyyaṃ!*

85. *Lokattayesu sakalesu ca sabba-sattā,
Mittā ca majjha-ripu-bandhujanā ca sabbe,
Te sabbadā vigata-roga-bhayā vi-sokā,
Sabbam sukham adhigatā muditā bhavantu!*
86. *Kāyo karīsa-bharito viya bhinna-kumbho,
Kāyo sadā kali-mala-vyasanādhivāso,
Kāyo vihaññati ca sabba-sukhan'ti loke,
Kāyo sadā maraṇa-roga-jarādhivāso.*
87. *So yobbane'ti thavire'ti ca bālake'ti,
Satte na pekkhati, vihaññtir eva maccu,
Soham thito'pi sayito'pi ca pakkamanto,
Gacchāmi maccu-vadanam niyatam tathā hi.*
88. *Evam yathā vihita-dosam idam sarīram,
Niccām va taggata-manā hadaye karotha!
Mettam parittam' asubham maraṇassatiñ ca,
Bhavetha bhāvana-ratā satatam yatattā!*
89. *Dānādi-puñña-kiriyāni sukhūdayāni,
Kavā ca tam phalam asesam ih' appameyyam,
Deyyam sadā para-hitāya sukhāya c'eva,
Kim bho! tadeva nanu hattha-gatam hi sāram.*

90. *Hetum vinā na bhavatī hi ca kiñci loka,
Saddo' va pāṇi-tala-ghaṭṭana-hetu-jāto,
Evam ca hetu-phala-bhāva-vibhāva-bhinno,
Loko udeti ca vinassati tiṭṭhatī ca.*
91. *Kammassa kāraṇa-mayaṃ hi yathā avijjā,
Bho! kammaṇā samadhigacchati jāti-bhedam,
Jātiṃ paṭicca ca jarā-maraṇādi-dukkham,
Sattā sadā paṭilabhanti anādi-kāle.*
92. *Kammaṃ yathā na bhavatīha ca moha-nāsā,
Kammakkhayā' pi ca na hoti bhavesu jātī,
Jātikkhayā iha jarā-maraṇādi-dukkham,
Sabbakkhayam bhavanti dīpa iv' ānilena.*
93. *“Yo passatī'ha satatam Muni-dhamma-kāyam,
Buddham sa passati naro” iti so avoca,
Buddham ca dhammam amalam ca tiloka-nātham,
Sampassitum vicinathā'pi ca dhammatā bho!*
94. *Sallam'va bho! sunisitam hadaye nimuggam,
Dosa-ttayaṃ vividha-pāpa-malena littam,
Nānā-vidha-vyasana-bhājanam-appasannam,
Paññāmayena balisena nirākarotha!*

95. *Nākampayanti sakalā pi ca loka-dhammā,
Cittam sadāpagata-pāpa-kilesa-sallam,
Rūpādayo ca vividhā visayā samaggā,
Phuṭṭam'va meru-sikharam mahatānilena.*
96. *Samṣāra-dukkham aṅaṇeyya yathā Munindo,
Gambhīra-pāramita-sāgaram-uttaritvā,
Ñeyyam abodhi nipuṇam hata-moha-jālo,
Tasmā sadā parahitam paramam cinātha!*
97. *Ohāya sodhigata-mokkha-sukham paresam,
Atthāya sañcarī bhavesu mahabbhavesu,
Evam sadā parahitam purato karitvā,
Dhammam mayā' nucaritam jagatatthameva.*
98. *Laddhāna dullabhataṇ ca manussa-yonim,
Sabbam papañca-rahitam khaṇa-sampadaṇ ca,
Ñatvāna āsava-nud ekahitaṇ ca dhammam,
Ko paññavā anavaram na bhajeyya dhammam*
99. *Laddhāna Buddha-samayaṇ ati-dullabhaṇ ca,
Saddhamma-maggam-asamam sivadam tath'eva
Kalyāṇa-mitta-pavaram mati-sampadaṇ ca,
Ko buddhimā aviratam na bhajeyya dhammam.*

100. *Evam'pi dullabha-tare vibhave su-laddhā,
Macchera-dosa-viratā ubhayattha kāmā,
Saddhādi-dhamma-sahitā satat'appamattā
Bho! bho! karotha amatādhigamāya puññam!*

SONG IN THE CAULDRON OF OIL

Obeisance to him, revered, worthy and completely awake

1. Hail Lord of Lankā! graceful of gait as king of elephants, thy arms stout and fair as the serpent's frame, engaged art thou in honouring the good, a repository art thou of qualities excellent, in Dhamma art thou rooted, gone from thee are anger and arrogance.
2. To him who is honoured by all world, and in whom dwells affectionate mercy, (who is even as) a storehouse of emancipation, the full-moon in the sky of the race of Sun, who knoweth to cross the immense and entire ocean of this knowable world, the best of men and foremost of ascetics, to him bow with thy head touching his feet.
3. An excellent flight of steps to the world of gods, the bridge for crossing over the ocean of saṃsāra, the safe course rid of all harm, and taught by the Sage- (such is) Dhamma which must be honoured for ever by thee.

4. Giving to which with a quiet mind even a little gift, the person obtains fruits rich and abundant, acclaimed for ever even by the Possessor of the ten powers, and field of boundless merit - Such is the Order: honour it ye.
5. By the great powers of efficacy of the three Jewels, the three worlds enter into emancipation: a safety like unto the three Jewels exists not, seek ye, therefore, (O folk!) ever the three Jewels.
6. Without a selfish desire the Lord of Lankā is engaged but in achieving the good of others, awake all night, a store of mercy, he wakes up the world for its immense good: "Being wakeful (ye folk!), practise the Dhamma."
7. Oh! scarce indeed on earth are persons, who, rid of carelessness, are engaged in the good of beings and are a help to deeds of merit. Follow the example the king of Lankā, whose virtues are his wealth and who is a friend of meritorious deeds, and practise Dharma. Enough of indifference!
8. Dharma is the refuge of the three worlds, (it is) the best of tastes: amongst the jewels in the world, Dharma is the most priceless: Dharma (it is that) becomes the

instrument of destruction of the ills of the three worlds:
practice (ye, therefore,) Dharma, being ever wakeful.

9. Drive away sloth, make, become the immeasurable (i.e. Nibbāṇa). Know ye what is sorrowful, transient and without substance: withdraw (thy) interest from the fragile body and, being watchful, practise ye Dharma.
10. "Lesiure I have none today, to Dharma tomorrow will I attend" - this sloth concerning deeds of merit is not right. For in all the three worlds there is not any person whom death does not touch.
11. Like unto a ball thrown by one into the air, which comes down to earth the very next moment because of its weight, folk are certain to die, just because of the fact that they were at all born.
12. For him who is falling down from the hill-top, what could there be on the way to relieve him of his fright? In all the three worlds beings die. Leave the lust for pleasures and for life.
13. The torrents of rain descend on earth: even so the lighting flash emerging out of clouds. Likewise' men fall

into the terrible abyss of death: there is none in the world who is eternal.

14. On the ocean beach' mighty waves arise only to find their end in the vast ocean: even so the lives of men and gods arise only to find their end in the woeful ocean of death.
15. This death, the bull, will steal into, and destroy at will, the field of crops which is the three-fold world, though armed, it may be, with excellent chariots, riders on elephants, soldiers, army and ornaments.
16. Oh! Like unto a lamp blown out, or by a strong breeze even the brightest light going out, so the great light of man's life is put out in the world by the ferocious wind of death.
17. The heroes who vanquished foes on the battle-front long Rāma, Arjuna and other kings and chiefs, even they were battered in the inexorable floods of death and were destroyed: who on earth is free from death?
18. Be he a millionaire, who has a sea of garments, whose is land and mountains, wealth of diverse sort and glory

of form: but will all this, aye, will friends and sons and spouse, follow anyone who enters into death?

19. The great beings such as the Brahmā, the gods, the demons, gandharvas, kinnaras, the great serpents, the evil sprites and all others will, in the end, - denuded of merit - fall like fireflies into the flames of burning death.
20. The sages and disciples who were pure, ever free from depravities, and possessors of great supernatural powers - such as Sāriputra - even they are burnt in the fires of death; like unto lamps blown out by wind, they have ceased to be.
21. Even the Buddhas, the awakened ones, with eyes fair and pure like the open lotus, the form glorious with the possession of thirty-two signs of greatness, who have suppressed all depravities and are lords of men-even they have been gathered up by this mighty elephant-in-rut, death.
22. The mighty elephant, death, destroys the world ever, like unto a raging fire in the woods: he has no pity for the diseased, nor for those suffering from old age, nor yet for the tender children playing about.

23. The ocean is not content with the waters: the fire is never satisfied by the numerous logs of wood which it quickly devours. Even so death, O folk, having swallowed the three worlds is still hungry! It is without pity, death has no compassion whatever.
24. Alas! The hapless fool, distracted by the allurements of worldly pleasure, falls into the terrible jaws of death: and the unthinking dunce longs for enjoyments and finds delight in those which are fickle like the swinging waves.
25. The one death is sufficient to swallow the three worlds. What comes of running after old age and death? Which man that is born would aspire to live in this world of destruction - which is like unto a union in dream?
26. Ever anxious is this world, afraid and sorrowful: should one not feel agitated at heart having seen this world torn by passion, pride, delusion and decay, contemptible is he! This insensibility is monstrous, not death.
27. Oh! ye folk! See ye not that death, armed with the sword of age, is ever cutting down the three worlds? Sleep ye then three watches of the night without a

concern? Practise *Dharma* which washes the sins, ever being watchful.

28. With concentration, be mindful ever of this 'sign' of death in the world - so that the Māra of death might be driven away. For the person who thus is mindful all cravings that are rooted in the body wither away.
29. Age defiles the sweet form, deadly diseases rob one's strength. Yea, that egoity which is (built up and) guarded by diverse pleasures, the death cuts down! To what end is egoity?
30. Ye, folk ! who have stumbled into the fray of *saṃsāra*, troubled with the waves of disease and wasted by the wind of karma-be not careless! Attain to emancipation! For men to be negligent is to arouse sorrow.
31. Pleasures, friends, sons, retinue, relatives, the woman dear as oneself and wealth in land - none of these will accompany him who leaves this world for the yonder world: only good and bad accompany him.
32. Oh! In this ocean of *saṃsāra*, short-lived as the flash of lightning, this boat of life is tossed about by the prior

karmas - and is shattered to shreds in a moment. Make available at hand the wealth of virtue, the best treasure.

33. This egoity here, guarded though it be in various ways, breaks in sooth - even as fragile plate: practise Dharma, which lays the foundation of heavenly state. Dharma practised well will yield fruits even here.
34. Even the gods, having enjoyed in the heavenly realm of gods the sweet pleasure, fall away from it when their merit ceases. On earth or in heaven, all pleasure is bound to end after a while. Which wise person, then, will hanker after worldly pleasures?
35. The Buddha, the one teacher of the world, surrounded by disciples though he be: the full-moon with the host of stars attending on it: Indra at whose lotus feet the gods bow with their heads - oh, who that is born in the three worlds is not like a lump of foam?
36. Youthful splendour is unstable like unto the sportive waves: union with folk dear to oneself is short-lived as a flash of lightning - Even perceiving thus folk remain careless. Yea, men, immersed in craving for life, are indeed deluded!

37. The son becomes the father, the master of the mother, the son: woman will in due course become mother' and father son. Thus on this stage of birth (i.e. existence), always fickle, the world of beings constantly changes.
38. Even the gods, having enjoyed pleasures in the company of heavenly damsels in the Nandana-garden, fair with manifold flowers and creepers, will one day experience sorrow in the Koṭi-simbala desert of hell, torturous with thorns.
39. Even the almighty gods, who, by dint of their great supernatural faculties, live in heaven, tasting nectar from golden plates, must in due course dwell in the abode of hell, swallowing red-hot iron balls.
40. The great monarchs, lords of men, who followed by the host of fine chariots live in heaven, must sometime dwell on this knife-struck earth' even as the great gods do after enjoying the celestial pleasures sweet.
41. Even the great gods, enjoying themselves in the company of lovely women in the sweet, scattering streams of the celestial Gaṅgā coming out of the tresses of Śiva's hair, will eventually fall in the gruesome river of hell, Vaitaraṇī.

42. Even the mount Kailasa-splendid now with an array of blossoming flowers, creepers and fruits: and gardens fair and charming as the Nandana-groves: and valleys with lovely shades and glaciers - will one day be doomed.
43. Like swing, like fire, like wind, like waves fickle are enjoyments: our lives are transient like a flash of lightning. Like magic, like mirage, like moon-in-water is this body- without a substance. Who then would love life or prosperity?
44. In this terrible world, which sorrow is not? And which creature is there that is not a victim to this manifold ill? Which wise man would then be foolish enough to long for worldly pleasures-born as he is, and pursued by death, disease and age?
45. Who can ever contrive by whatever means to hold in bare hand the red-hot iron ball? Who being wise will long for this body, the source of sorrow, unclean, foul and without essence?
46. There is no fear in the world for man like unto death, no sorrow like unto the sorrow of disease; nothing

deforms as age does. Oh! it is delusion that brings interest in the body.

47. This body is without substance like the interior of the bamboo shoot or the plantain-stem; for its own sake it kills its very self. Being well-tended, it is like an ungrateful friend: it never follows one who dies.
48. Seeing it (the body) - as similar to a ball of foam, as dangerous as a poisonous dagger, as the abode of snakes in the shape of water, fire, air and earth, and as weak and without substance like a dilapidated building - how can any man with wisdom get to love it?
49. Moment by moment life draws towards its end; death follows with the sword of age in hand, to finish; time once past never returns - Oh! this is suffering in the world. Ponder ye on it.
50. Easier it is for one with few years to die, for one who lives long in the world has in store old age and a multitude of woes. Both are, thus, sorrowful only; practise *Dharma* in order to erase suffering.

- 51 When the three worlds wriggle in tormented by the huge fire of suffering, Oh! it does not becoming of men to neglect and delay deeds of merit. O ye folk! Seek the highest good.
- 52 Yea! In all the world, happiness is little, like a water-drop on the tip of a blade of grass; but suffering is immense like water in ocean. Even that little happiness is due to our imagination; for , by its very nature, all the three-fold world is but mere suffering.
- 53 For the sake of this body, which however does not follow him after death, the fool in many ways creates suffering. The body in the world is always unclean and sinful; one who relishes it invites unending suffering.
- 54 An abode of filth, a mine of sin and dirt, a dagger, a sword, an arrow, a poisonous serpent, full of disease, a haunt of death and old-age, bereft of substance, mean and contemptible: realise the body to be thus.
55. Indeed this body is suffering, transient and unwholesome; force not in it egoity. Nothing, in fact, is eternal, and in

this even a little of essence exists not. Practise therefore *Dharma* which is the essence; enough in indifference!

- 56 Like magic, mirage, plantain-stem, mass of foam, waves of Ganga, water-bubble - in all the five aggregates and six realms, self exists not; which fool says not thus? (i.e. even a fool would accept this).
57. Son of a barren woman seated in a chariot carved out of the horns of a hare holds the reigns and rides for long! - likewise folk call this frail body, fickle every moment like the strings of flames of fire, self.
- 58 Like the fool longing to drink to his heart's content the water of the mirage with water-bubble as cup, even so it is by delusion that one speaks of this body, without substance like unto the plantain-stem and non-self, as self.
59. The fool who seeks to find fragrance in the *Odumbara* flower' or water in the mirage' gets only suffering; for the sake of self he mutilates himself - never in the body self is.

- 60 Like unto the person who splits open the plantain-stem and finds no substance there whatever, one would find no substance whatever in the five aggregates or six realms - they are empty.
- 61 Cloth can never in any measure be had without thread; likewise apart from body there could be no substance whatever here. And body is without the nature of self, it changes every moment. For the sake of self what other thing can exist here?
- 62 On sighting water in a mirage from a distance, the foolish deer mistakes it for real water and runs towards it; even so the fool mistakes for self this body, which lacks the nature of self and ends in results contrary to one's wishes, and manufactures an attachment for it.
- 63 In this body, without the nature of self and resulting from aggregation, self exists not - even as lightning exists not in the sky. Oh ye-folk! leave aside indifference and engage yourselves in realising the 'sign of non-self', for cutting asunder all depravities.

64. Beings always cling to this body, contemptible, without essence, studded with the dirt of sin and containing evil, smelling filth such as faeces, blood and sweat - like unto a pot filled to the brim with waste.
65. Bathing in all the waters of the four oceans or in the excellent fragrance of the Meru mountains never makes one clean. What merit then do ye, O folk! find in this notion of self in body?
66. This body indeed is the home of manifold dirt; this body it is that has death, bondage and disease; this body in sooth is torn by a nine-fold calamity - apart from this body, there is not a cemetery more dreadful.
67. In case the hideous parts like urine and faeces that are inside the body are taken out and presented outside the body, even the mother and the father would loose pity and affection - not to speak of friends, sons or wife.
68. The body is the nine-fold haunt of a host of worms; it is studded with flesh, bones, sweat and blood-stinking. Yea! astonishing it is how deluded these men are that nourish this victim of death by a variety of sins!

69. The person who relishes this body which is like an ulcer, the home of various diseases, ever full of blood, urine and faeces, and the food of wolves, will elsewhere (i.e. later) regret - he is indeed foolish.
70. Ye folk, the body is without a substance even like the ball of foam. It ever stinks like the place where faeces are collected, it is fearful and sorrowful even as the ant-hill where snakes reside - it leaks like a broken pot of salt.
- 71 In the world, a lotus flower, born as it is in watery filth, is not condemned. Likewise, it is not to be condemned by men if the good of others is achieved through the body.
- 72 In this world of hosts of men and women, it is extraordinary (i.e. rare) indeed that the body is perfect in all the thirty-two aspects. What then is the fruit in the body of wise men? It, however, makes for the good of others.
- 73 In fact, the very wise men must make the best efforts to preserve his body for a long time. And so long, living, he would practise *Dharma* - for *Dharma*, O folk, is like the wish-satisfying gem.

74. Like unto the medicine concocted in milk expressing its efficacy in ghee, the *Dharma* practised here on earth will follow the one who practises from this world to the yonder world, even as a shadow.
75. Like the proper reflection of a well-made body appearing in the fine, clean mirror, ye folks, the highest good done here will appear elegant by the result thereof elsewhere in the yonder world.
76. The fool (i.e. of inferior wisdom) who seeks pleasure in this body, which is but the abode of diverse ills, gets into the clutches of delusion and carelessness and suffers sorrow - even as the fool who licks honey from the sharp blade of a knife.
77. The person with little sense invariably gets only sorrow by accustoming himself to perceive the body as self and indulging thus in resolves and desires. In this world it is only for a fool that the notion of happiness exists - on reflection, does not this become clear (*lit. ripe*)?
78. The person who takes away the life of another will in the next birth die in the very prime of youth although reluctant,

be he fair in form like Eros, or be he in possession of all means of enjoyment, wealth and food.

79. The person who robs another of his belonging, will elsewhere (in the next birth), become a beggar, a shaveling, with a broken skull in hand, shamed with a hundred shouts of 'Begone!', in torn rags, begging at the doors of his enemies.
80. The person who transgresses and commits a sexual offence will, if a woman, never get over womanhood in successive births, and, if a man, be born (in the next birth) as a woman; (that person) gets always manifold miseries of a horrid type.
81. The thoughtless person who utters falsehood will be reborn as man and suffer immense hardship by becoming poverty-stricken, with stinking mouth, slothful, foolish, dumb and horrid of countenance.
82. The foolish persons who drink liquor which is like the *Hālāhāla* poison, will be reborn on earth diversely with deformed bodies, as lunatics, without a sense of shame, poverty-stricken, and ever immersed in worry and suffering.

- 83 The sins committed here will procure for the sinner terrible and immense suffering and a multitude of worries for ten thousand long years in hell.
84. There is not in all the three worlds an instrument of peace for the world so effective as the three jewels. Let me, by the great power of the three jewels, conquer all evil and obtain all happiness.
- 85 May all the beings in all the three worlds, may friends, foes, relatives and all, be always joyful, obtaining all happiness, and being free from ill and fear and woe!
- 86 Like unto a broken pot filled with filth is this body, always an abode of sin, dirt and worry it is; it languishes in anxiety seeking to find all happiness in the body itself; and it is ever a haunt of death, disease and old age.
- 87 Death never considers the beings thus: 'this is a youth', 'this is an elder', 'this is a boy'; it but strikes down. Thus it is certain that I, sitting, sleeping or walking, will enter into the jaws of death.
88. With mind bent on it, take this thought ever to heart - that this body is studded with ill. Engage yourselves in

cultivating love, lightness, insight into ill, and mindfulness on death, always focussing your thoughts.

89. Having done meritorious deeds that bring about happiness such as charity, one obtains here wholesome and immeasurable fruit. Give in charity always so that others might be well and happy. Why, ye folk, that is the treasure in hand.
90. Without a cause nothing in the world happens - as sound is caused' for instance' by the clapping of hands. Even so this world, being diverse in cause, effect, creation and destruction, springs up, endures and collapses.
91. Even as Ignorance (*avidyā*) is causative of Action, yea! by action spring up multifarious births. And conditioned by birth, the creatures come to have, from time without beginning, suffering like old age and death.
92. Ignorance being destroyed, Action does not come to be; likewise action passing away, birth in the world does not come to be; and by the cessation of birth is achieved the entire passing away of all ills such as old age and death - even as by wind, light is extinguished.

93. 'That person who always sees the form of *Dharma* taught by the Sage (i.e. Buddha) sees the Buddha', thus said the Buddha. Therefore, ye folk, learn to see the *Dharma* which is pure and the Buddha who is Teacher of the three worlds. This is *Dharma*.
94. By means of the hook of wisdom remove the sharp dart that has struck in the heart - the dart of the three passions, smeared by the dirt of manifold sins, source of diverse worries, and highly tangled.
95. All the worldly factors and all the diverse objects such as form are incapable of disturbing the mind from which the dart of the defilements of sin has been removed - even as the strongest gush of wind cannot shake the mount Meru.
96. Even as the leader' the Buddha, crossed beyond the ocean of samsāra with its countless ills, as well as the calm sea of the stages of perfection, and from the net of delusion cut asunder, taught the excellent wisdom - always strive for the highest good of others.
97. Having set aside the bliss of emancipation that he had won, the Buddha wandered in this fearsome world for the

welfare of others. Likewise ever putting in front the consideration of the good of others, I must practise the *Dharma*, for the welfare of the world.

98. Having been born as a human being - rare as it is - and having known that this world is empty and transient' and knowing also that the *Dharma* is the one means of purging out depravities - which man with wisdom would not practise this *Dharma* supreme?
99. Being fortunate as to live in the era of the Buddha, having also known the peerless and auspicious path of good *Dharma*, and having realised the *Dharma* to be the excellent and benevolent company, and also to be excellence of wisdom - which man with intelligence would not ceaselessly practise *Dharma*.
100. Yea, people! having got into this rare piece of good fortune, desist ye from jealousy and hatred, and from craving in both places, acquire excellent qualities such as faith, be ever watchful, and practise deeds of merit so as to obtain Nirvāṇa.

GLOSSARY

(Numbers refer to Stanzas)

2. *ravikulambara-puṇṇa-cando* refers to Gotama the Buddha, who, a Śākya by clan, is supposed to have descended from Okkāka (Skt. Ikṣvāku), in the Sun-race.
4. *Dasabalena*, also refers to Gotama the Buddha.
5. *ratanaṭṭaya*, three jewels (for adoration) are the Buddha, the *Dhamma* (the doctrine he preached) and the *Saṅgha* (the order of monks he founded).
7. *vigatappamādā*, literally *appamāda* means “non-infatuation- i.e. ever-present mindfulness in doing good” (Nārada Thera).
9. *bhāvayath’appameyyam*, *appameyya* refers to Nirvāṇa the goal of the Buddhist discipline; *bhāvanā* is development, or cultivation, equivalent to the Hindu *sādhana*. *Dukkha*, *anicca*, *anatta*, the three key dogmas of Buddhism.
10. *kusalappayoge*, ten kinds of meritorious deeds are recognised: “(1) generosity, (2) morality, (3) meditation,

(4) reverence, (5) service, (6) transference of merit, (7) rejoicing in (others') merit, (8) hearing the Doctrine, (9) teaching the Doctrine, and (10) straightening one's right views."

bhuvanattaye, the three worlds are kāma, rūpa., and arūpa-worlds.

17. *Rāmajjuna-ppabhutī*, Rāma, the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and adored by the Hindus as an incarnation of God: Arjuna, one of five Pāṇḍava brothers, of the *Mahābhārata*.
20. *Sāriputta*, one of the foremost disciples of the Buddha. Āsavanudā, āsava is taint, defilement, depravity. Three of them are recognised: kāmāsava, sensuous pleasure; bhavāsava, individually; and avijjāsava, ignorance. Iddhi, magical powers: the name of Mahā-moggallāna is associated with this faculty.
25. The meaning of this verse is obscure.
28. maraṇa-saññaṃ, among forty subjects of meditation, ten pertain to corpses. It is an exercise in *asubha-bhāvanā*, with the purport of evoking disgust. *Maraṇa-māra*, Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamucchaya* mentions four Māras: Khanda-māra (m. of elements of being);

Kilesa-mara (m.of sin); Maraṇa-māra (m.of death); and Devaputta-māra (m.of gods). Māra is evil personified.

Taṇhā, craving is threefold: *kāma-taṇhā*, sensual pleasures; *bhava-taṇhā*, life and individuality, *vibhava-taṇhā*, pertaining to the theory of Nihilism.

30. *kamma*, according to Oldenberg, “power which determines the course of the migration of the soul from one state of being to another”; Ananda Coomaraswamy takes the word to signify that “the order of nature is not interrupted by miracles”; it is not a metaphysical concept.

mokkha, emancipation, escape from the cycle of *saṃsāra*, i.e. *nirvāṇa*.

33. *Dhammaṃ*, has many meanings: order, phenomena, law, norm, duty, teachings of the Buddha, etc. Here, however, it means deeds of virtue.

37. The first half of the stanza is slightly incoherent.

38. *nandana-vane*, in the lovely garden of gods in *Sagga* or heaven.

koṭi-simballi-vanesu, the gruesome garden in *Niraya* or hell.

41. Gaṅge, etc. refers to a Hindu myth concerning the descent of the holy river Ganges from heaven to earth on the entreaties of king Bhagīratha. Vetaraṇī, dark and fearsome stream in hell.

42. Kelāsa, the top-most peak of the Himālayan ranges, considered as the haunt of gods, especially of Śiva.

56. *Khandesu pañcasu*, grasping aggregates (*upādāna-*), five in number: body (form), sensation, perception, *sankhāras*, and consciousness. These are the constituent parts of a being; and they are described as but states (in Pāli: rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā and viññāṇa).

chaḷāyatanesu, objects of sense, six in number: form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mental phenomena.

63. *bhāvana-ratā*, bhāvanā is cherishing moods; they are five in number: loving kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathy (*muditā*), indifference (*upekkhā*); and meditation on the foul nature of things (*asubha-bhāvanā*).

84-85. These verses express the '*paṇidhi*' or resolve of the Buddhist.

90-93. These three verses state the principle behind the Buddhist theory of '*paṭiccha-samuppāda*' or the

causal nexus of being, the principle of determined origination. The basic idea is: "That being present, this becomes: from the arising of that, this arises. That being absent, this does not become, from the cessation of that, this ceases" (*Majjhima Nikāya*, ii,32). The series of phenomena, however, are arranged in a wheel of causation: Ignorance - *sañkhārās* - consciousness - mind and body - sense organs - contact - sensations - craving - attachment - coming to be - birth - old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, evil, grief, despair. "Such is the uprising of the entire body of evil."

91. *avijjā*, the first link in the above series. The *Sammādiṭṭhi-Sutta* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*) defines it as "not to know the four noble truths"; *Samyutta Nikāya* interprets it as "not to know that everything must have an origination and cessation."
94. Cf. "Attadaṇḍa-Sutta" (*Sutta Nipāta*), 4, 15, 4.
96. *pāramita-sāgaram*, stages in spiritual perfection, or transcendental virtues, six in number - charity, morality, patience, energy, meditation and wisdom.

APPENDIX I

THE LAND WHERE THE PLOT OF THE POEM IS LAID

‘CEYLON’ the old name for Śrīlaṅka, is the corrupt form of the Sanskrit ‘Sinhala’. Of immense antiquity, this island was and has been a segment of the greater Indian Culture.

The great moment in the history of his lovely island was when in 308 B.C. Mahendra, the recluse son of the illustrious Indian Emperor Aśoka, and Saṅghamitrā, his sister, arrived in Mihintale. These renunciants under the discipline of Gotama the Buddha were in fact deputed by their noble sire to spread the gospel of Buddhism in this island.

The island responded marvellously to these Indian missionaries, with the result that the country in time became overwhelming rigidly and piously Buddhist.

The island city that is most intimately associated with the rise and spread of Buddhism is Anurādhapura, founded in the year 368 BC. and named after prince Anuradha, whose

settlement it was. The city is justly held in great reverence by the Buddhists. In and around this ancient and sacred city are located and important Buddhist shrines and monasteries. It might with some truth be said that Buddhism in this island was concentrated in Anurādhapura.

The emperor Devānāmpriya Tissa, who received this new faith requested Aśoka to make a gift of some of the corporeal remains of the great master whose faith was inspiring the island with immense enthusiasm. When they were sent to the king built sacred memorials over them. Such memorial mounds or repositories are termed Dāgabās (Skt. Dhātugarbha), i.e. relic-containers.

Over a piece of the collar-bones of the Buddha was built Thūpārāma Dagaba, soon after the arrival of Mahendra. A few months later, a sapling of the famous bodhi-tree at Buddhā-Gayā (sitting under which Gotama became the Buddha) was brought to the island and was planted with great pomp and ceremony at Anūradhapura. The tree, well over 2000 years in age, is described as the oldest tree in the world. Later, fifty similar bo-saplings were planted in close proximity, and the site is known as the Bo-Maluwa, held in high honour and deep reverence by the multitudes.

Duṭṭha-Gāmani, a descendant of this king, Tissa caused the erection of the Mirisaweti and the Ruwanweli Dāgabas, containing the relics of the Buddha, and the Loha-Mahā-Prāsādaya, a magnificent monastery for the monks in the city of Anurādhapura.

Abhaya-Vaṭṭagāmani, who became king in 89 B.C had a vihāra built, and it was called, after himself, Abhaya-giri. This 'gigantic solid work of bricks..... plastered with a thick coating of lime plaster', originally 400 ft. high and 1,150 ft. in circumference, extolled in superlatives by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian, stands today desolate, with its high tower damaged in 1882, and with impenetrable wild vegetation all round.

In the vicinity of Anurādhapura stands on a mount the memory of the Jetavanārāma Dāgaba, once a splendid and spacious monastery of great engineering skill. Its royal authors were Mahāsenā (who ascended the throne in 265 A.D) and his son Siri-Meghavarna. Mahāsenā's queen caused the construction of the Laṅkārama Dāgaba, a moundish structure 150ft. in circumference, encircled by elaborately and dexterously sculptured pillars, not more than 40 of which are extant at the present moment.

Isurumuni-Vihāra in Mihintale is a temple carved out of rocks, containing images of the Buddha, and overlooking Mihinda-Guhā, the cave in which the monk Mahendra meditated. Built during the reign of King Devānāmpriya-tissa and long neglected, it was renovated in modern times by the labour of a monk of remarkable zest and vigour, Saṅgha-rakkhita.

Monuments of less renown in and around Anurādhapura are Anula Chetiya, containing the relics of the first nun of Ceylon; Saṅghamitrā- Chetiya, containing the remains of the Theri Saṅghamitrā (daughter of the emperor Aśoka); Ambastala-Dāgaba, wherein are preserved the remains of Thera Mahendra; Mahāsaya-Dagaba containing the 'ūrna-roma' relic of the Buddha; Dālada-Maligawa or the Tooth-relic Palace; the sites of Asiggahaka, Chullanaga, and Mahāpaduma Pariveṇas - educational institutions; the cave Rājagiri-leṇa; the Sigiriya rock; Kuja-tissa vihāra, and numerous other small shrines.

Spots of bewitching beauty, these are hallowed by their pious associations with the creed of the greatest of Indians and best of men, Gotama the Buddha. Behind the ruins of these shrines, there lurks the indestructible cultural fellowship of India and Śrī-laṅkā.

APPENDIX II

THERAVĀDA IN 'BURMA'

In Śrīlankā, Burma and Cambodia, the religion has practically retained its theravāda flavour in doctrine as well as in discipline. Buddhism is principally a monastic religion, and although for its prevalence state support and royal patronage contributed much, the retention of purity is due to the ardour and energy of the community of monks (*bhikku-saṅgha*), who have remained loyal to the Master through generations, resisting the numerous vicissitudes of history and civilization.

In Burma today, out of a population of seventeen million, about ninety percent are Buddhists; there are some 80,000 monks, and some 5,000 nuns; the total number monasteries runs to the tune of 20,000. In Rangoon alone there are 500 monasteries, housing 6,000 monks, and in Mandalay 400 monasteries with 10,000 monks*.

Burma is known to India from the earliest times as *Suvarṇa-bhūmi*. The royal history of Burma, known as *Maha-*

yazawin, traces the lineage of the early Burmese kings to the Indian immigrant princes of Kapilavastu, who settled down on the banks of Irrawady river. The advent of Buddhism in Burma thus goes back traditionally to the days of the Buddha himself. From time to time since then, bands of Indians have trickled into various parts of Burma, mostly by way of Manipur, and have settled there.

After the Third Great Council during the days of Emperor Aśoka, the chairman of the Council, Moggaliputta-tissa sent two very holy monks, Soṇa and Uttara, to Burma for spreading the word of the Buddha. But the written Tripiṭaka texts were introduced to Burma from Śrīlanka in the Fourth Century A.D.

By about 450 A.D., the great Buddhist philosopher, Buddhaghosha, probably a native of the Āndhra province of our country, went to Thaton (a district in the Sittang tract of Burma) from Śrīlankā, and was responsible for the spread of Buddhism in all its purity in Burma.

While the Thaton Kings readily recognised Buddhism as a great religion, the Pagan Monarchs, the kings of Pegu (in Irrawadi delta) actively interested themselves in its spread. King

Thenga Yaza, who founded the Burmese Era in A.D. 639, actually became a monk.

The Burmese chronicles record corruption in Buddhist religion during the period of confusion that prevailed prior to 1010 A.D. It was in 1010 A.D. That the great Burmese hero, Anawarta, a contemporary of William the Conqueror, became the king of Pagan (Upper Burma). At the instance of a holy monk from Ceylon, named Araham, he expelled the corrupt monks, and sought from the king Manula of Thaton, a copy of the Pāli scriptures in order to decide the true faith. King Manula, however, refused, whereupon the Pagan king destroyed Thaton and brought both learning and people to Pagan.

He built temples and pagodas in the most ornate style, and the Pagan is even to this day celebrated for its beauty and splendour. Kyanyit-tha, a son of this celebrated king, continued his father's interest in Buddhism, and built the famous Ānanda Pagoda, 'the earliest and the most impressive of the great temples' in Pagan.

Later Burmese history is full of conflicts, invasions and battles; Sinhalese, Chinese, Mongols, Shans and Portuguese entered the scene and contributed liberally to the confusion.

In 1783, however, Bodawpaya became king and built the new capital, Amara-pura. He annexed Arakan and brought from that province the now famous image of the Buddha, Mahā Myat Muni and installed it in a specially built Pagoda near Mandalay. Buddhism again flourished.

The English were actively interested in Burmese affairs since 1709 and finally occupied the country in 1886. Meanwhile in 1853, Mindon Min became king, and built Mandalay. He is described by historians as 'the best king Burma ever had' 'and he got his early education in the monasteries. He convened the Fifth Great Buddhist Council (the first in Burma), in order to codify the word of Buddha, and had the entire scripture inscribed on seven hundred and twenty-nine marble slabs.

After him came the last of Burmese kings, Thibaw, who called upon his subjects 'to drive the British into the sea', but he was taken prisoner in 1861 by the British. For about seventy years after the overthrow of Thibaw, Buddhism was neglected. The custom of the Government conducting the Pāli examinations, prevalent for 300 years during the reigns of Burmese kings from Thalun to Thibaw, was dropped soon after the British annexation. With this disappeared the state recognition of the Buddhist religion.

During the dark period of British rule in Burma, Buddhism lost the royal patronage; but the faith of the people was kept alive and robust owing to the untiring zeal and model living of the community of monks. They laid a very firm foundation for the word of the Buddha in the minds of people.

We might in this connection acquaint ourselves with the name of one of the most outstanding monks Burma has ever produced, viz. U Nyāṇa, better known as *Ledi Sayadaw*. Born in 1846 at Saing-pyin village in Monywa district, he became a full *bhikkhu (upasampanna)* when he was 20, under Sayadaw Salin U Paṇḍiccha. He later studied at the feet of the most renowned of the monks of that day, Sudasana, the San-Kyaung Sayadaw of Mandalay.

When he was thirty-four, he wrote his first work, *The Manual of Perfections (Pāramitta dīpanī)*. During the reign of king Thibaw, the Government appointed him as a lecturer in Pāli at Mahājotikārāma monastery at Mandalay.

After the fall of Thibaw, he retired in 1887 to a place north of Monywa and established his Ledi-twaya monastery. His name was already celebrated throughout the land, and now the monk-students crowded into his monastery from all parts of Burma.

Later he started touring the country, propagating the Buddha's word, and establishing *Abhidhamma* classes and meditation centres.

For popular edification he composed numerous metaphysical rhymes, and wrote more than fifty manuals in Pāli and Burmese. In 1911, the Burmese Government conferred on him the high ecclesiastical title of *Aggamahāpaṇḍita* ('The foremost of Great Scholars'). The University of Rangoon conferred on him the degree of D.Litt (*Honoris causa*). Unfortunately, in later years, he became blind, and passed away at the age of seventy-seven. His memory has lingered in the minds of Burmese people as a powerful pillar of Buddhist religion in Burma.

After Burma's attainment of independence, especially after 1952, Buddhism secured again the state patronage. The national Government headed by U Nu sponsored a series of religious legislations in order to promote Buddhist religion in a concrete manner. As long ago as 1949 the Burmese Parliament passed the *Vinacchayathana Act*, setting up Saṅgha Councils and exempting monks from appearing before ordinary lay courts.

Next year, the sacred language of Buddhists, Pāli, was made a compulsory subject in all schools, and the Pāli University was established with many constituent colleges throughout the country. According to the *Pāli University and Dhammachariya Act* of Burmese Parliament, if any monastery had ten or more students, the Government recognised it as a Pāli College and granted sixty kyats per month to the principal *sayadaw* and each of the three instructors (*kathika sayadaw*). The monastery was also eligible to an annual grant of five hundred kyats to meet miscellaneous expenditure. There are today in Burma forty-two colleges of this type with a strength of 600 students and with 211 *kathika sayadaws*. The Pāli Education Board was also set up with 15 monks and 19 laymen as members.

- (written in 1959)

In 1950 with another act, the Burmese Parliament established the *Buddha Sāsana Council*, in order to organise the promoters of the faith into some sort of parliament of *Sāsana* (the Buddha's gospel). All religious measures by the Government are undertaken through this council. The President

* This was written in 1959.

of the Union of Burma, Dr. Ba U became the Patron of this Council, Thado Thiri Thudhamma Sir U Thwin, the President, the Chief Justice of Burma, U Thein Maung the Vice-President and the Attorney-General of Burma, U Chan Htoon, the Honorary General Secretary. One of the most conspicuous accomplishments of this Council was the planning of the Sixth Great Conference of elder monks (*Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana*).

The Council convened a meeting of the Advisory Council of Elders (*Ovādachariyanāyakas*) on 11th February, 1953 and decided to hold a conference of all the competent and eminent monks belonging to the Theravāda School of Buddhism, in order to ascertain the genuine teachings of the Master as well as to take necessary steps to make the Gospel endure for another 2,500 years.

The Government headed by the pious and powerful Prime Minister, U Nu, eagerly promised all co-operation. At the instance of the Government a conference hall, called *Mahā Pāsāṇa Guhā*, was constructed about two miles away from Rangoon near Kaba Aye (World Peace Pagoda), at a total cost of about ninety-one lakhs of rupees.

The Hall, which took fourteen months to completion, is a marvel of architecture, and can accommodate 10,000 persons. The opening ceremony of the Conference took place on the 17th of May (*the Vesākh day*), 1954. Five hundred very eminent *bhikkhus* of Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia and Siam (called *Sangītikāraka-Bhikkhus*) commenced their deliberations and completed the recital of the first part of the scripture, *Viz. Vinaya*, on the 6th of July the same year.

The second session of the Conference began on the 15th November 1954 and came to a close on the 30th of January 1955. The third session started its deliberations on the 28th of April 1955 and continued for the next three months. The fourth and the final session was held during May of 1957 when the 2,500th anniversary of Buddha Jayanti was celebrated all over the world.

In these four sessions, the entire *Tripitaka* Canon was carefully examined in order to weed out the possible textual errors and interpolations. As a standard of comparison was taken the texts recognised as correct by the last Great Council held in 1871, and which were caused to be inscribed in the Burmese script by King Mindon on marble slabs. As texts for

consideration, they have the Canon in the Sinhālese script, the Siamese Tipiṭaka and the texts published by the Pāli Text Society of England. The revised and finalised texts were printed in Burmese, Devanāgarī and Roman scripts.

As the first President of the Conference was elected an old monk of great celebrity, Revata Mahā Nāyaka Thera or the Nyaungyan Sayadaw, the recipient of the highest of ecclesiastical titles, Mahā-dhamma-rājaguru, Mahāraṭṭha-guru, Sāsanavasa and Agga-mahā-paṇḍita.

The Sixth Conference was indeed his suggestion. He fulfilled his office with remarkable tact and dignity through its earlier sessions; but in 1955 he breathed his last, thus not living to see the fulfilment of his dream. His place as President was later fittingly filled by the chief of the Cambodian monks of the *Mahānikāya* order (*Samgharāja*), *Samdach Preach Mahāsumedhādhipati* Jotānyāṇa *Mahānāyakathera*.

Over seventy, this monk was highly venerated not only for his profound scholarship but also for his saintly disposition. Besides Pāli, he is conversant with Sanskrit, Siamese, Laotian, French, English, Burmese and Singhālese. He was energetic,

ceaselessly engaged in his daily round of research and exposition.

Among the other leading monks who strove with zeal to make this Conference a success may be mentioned the ninety year old monk U Suriya, the *Samgharāja* of Laos, Bhaddanta Nāgavaṃsa, U Uttama Mahāthera, Nandisena Thera, Vichittasāra Mahāthera, Javana Mahāthera, U Sobhana Mahāthera and Buddhadatta Mahāthera of Ceylon.

Vichittasāra was indeed a remarkable man. He could freely recite the entire Buddhist canon (about eleven times the length of the Bible) without any slip anywhere, backwards as well as forwards, and he could expound any section thereof with reference to the entire non-canonical literature of glosses, commentaries and notes. He is celebrated throughout the country as *Tipiṭaka-dhara* (the Bearer of the Canon), and *Dhamma-bhāṇḍāgārika* (the Treasurer of the Gospel).

Sobhana Mahāthera, better known as *Mahasi Sayadaw*, was perhaps the most famous of South East Asian Monks. He was a saint of great attainments, and was in charge of the practical aspects of Buddha's Gospel, *Paṭipatti-sāsana*, in the

Buddha Sāsana Council. He established many meditation centres, the headquarters being the *Thathana Yeiktha* at Kokine, Rangoon. The meditation classes conducted here attracted enthusiasts from all parts of the world. This monk was a leading authority in the Vipassanā system of meditation.