

PRONUNCIATIONS

In Pali the vowels are pronounced as follows :

- The short *a* as *a* in *at*
- The long *ā* as *a* in *father*
- The short *i* as *i* in *pin*
- The long *ī* as *ee* in *been*
- The short *u* as *u* in *put*
- The long *ū* as *oo* in *tool*
- The long *ē* as *e* in *table* (always long)
- The long *ō* as *o* in *bone* (always long).

The consonants are mostly as in English ; but *g* is always hard, and *c* is always *ch* as in *church*. The consonants *ṭh*, *ḍh*, *ṇh*, *ṣh*, *ṣh*, *ṣh* are linguals and are formed by bringing the upturned tip of the tongue in contact with the back of the palate.

LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Reduce to meekness the wild motions of the will, and make it thy care to tame the cruel beast. Thou art bound to the will ; strive to unfasten the bond that cannot be broken. The will is thy Eve.

St Bonaventura, *De conversione*.

THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA'S LIFE IS WELL KNOWN AND need be only briefly summarized ; its span of eighty years covers the greater part of the fifth century B.C., but the exact dates of his birth and death are uncertain. Prince Siddhattha, the only son of king Suddhodana of the Sākya clan and of his queen Mahā Māyā, was born at Kapilavatthu, the capital city of Kosala, a district extending from southern Nepal to the Ganges. In saying "king" (*rājā*) it must not be overlooked that most of the "kingdoms" of the Ganges Valley at this time were really republics over which the "kings" presided ; the procedure followed in the Buddhist monastic convocations corresponded to that of the republican assemblies and to that of the trade guilds and village councils.

Until the Great Awakening Siddhattha is still a Bodhisatta, although this is the last of the countless births in which he had already developed those supreme virtues and insights that lead to perfection. As a Buddha, the "Wake" is sometimes referred to by his family name of Gotama or Gautama, and this serves to distinguish him from the seven (or twenty-four) previous Buddhas of whom he was more truly the lineal descendant. Many of the Buddha's epithets connect him with the Sun or Fire, and imply his divinity : he is, for example, "the Eye in the World," his name is "Truth," and amongst the most characteristic synonyms of *Buddha* (the "Wake") are the expressions "Brahma-become" and "Dhamma-become." Many of the details of his life are direct reflections of older myths. These considerations raise the question, whether the "life" of the "Conqueror of Death" and "Teacher of Gods and men," who says that he was born and bred in the Brahma-world and who descended from heaven to take birth in Mahā Māyā's womb, can be regarded as historical or simply as a

myth in which the nature and acts of the Vedic deities Agni and Indra have been more or less plausibly euhemerized. There are no contemporary records, but it is certain that in the third century B.C. it was believed that the Buddha had lived as a man amongst men. It is not proposed to discuss the problem here, and, although the writer is inclined to the mythical interpretation, references will be made to the Buddha as if to a historical person.

Prince Siddhattha was brought up in luxury at the court in Kapilavatthu and kept in total ignorance of the old age, sickness and death to which all mundane beings are naturally subject. He was married to his cousin Yasodā, and had by her an only son, Rāhula. Soon after Rāhula's birth it was realized by the Gods that the time had come for Siddhattha to "go forth" and take up the mission for which he had prepared himself in many previous births that he had for the present forgotten. Orders had been given that whenever he rode out through the city from the palace to the pleasure park, none sick or aged and no funeral procession might appear in public. So man proposed, but the Gods, assuming the forms of a sick man, an old man, a corpse, and a religious Mendicant (*bhikkhu*), appeared. When Siddhattha saw these, to him strange sights, and learnt from his charioteer, Channa, that all men are liable to sickness, old age and death, and that only the religious Mendicant rises superior to the distress which suffering and death occasion in others, he was deeply moved. Straightway he resolved to seek and find a remedy for the mortality that is inherent in all composite things, in all that has had a beginning and must therefore come to an end. He resolved, in other words, to discover the secret of immortality, and to make it known to the world.

Returning home, he informed his father of this determination. When he could not be dissuaded, the king set guards at all the palace gates, and endeavoured to keep his son and heir at home by force. But at night, after taking a last look at his sleeping wife and child, he summoned his charioteer and, mounting his stallion Kanthaka, came to the gates, which were silently opened for him by the Gods, and so rode away. This was the "Great Going Forth."

In the deep forests the prince cut off his royal turban and long hair, unsuitable to a religious Mendicant, and dismissed his

charioteer. He met with Brahman hermits, under whose guidance he led the life of a contemplative. Then, leaving them, he devoted himself alone to the "Great Effort"; at the same time a company of five Mendicants became his disciples, and served him, in the expectation that he would become a Buddha. To this end he now practised far more severe mortifications, and brought himself to the very verge of death by starvation. Realizing, however, that the consequent weakening of his bodily and mental powers would not lead to the Awakening (*bodhi*) for the sake of which he had abandoned the worldly life, he again took up his bowl and begged his food in villages and towns like other Mendicants. At this, the five disciples abandoned him. But the time for his Awakening had come, and from his dreams the Bodhisatta drew the conclusion, "This very day I shall become a Buddha." He ate food into which the Gods had infused ambrosia, and rested during the day. When evening came, he approached the Bodhi tree, and there, at Earth's centre, with his face to the East, he took his seat, where every former Buddha had been seated at the time of his Enlightenment; immovable, he determined so to remain until he had realized his purpose.

Then Māra (Death)—the old Vedic *Ahi-Vṛtra*-*Namuci*, "Holdfast," overcome in the past by *Agni-Bṛhaspati* and *Indra*, but never really slain—perceiving that "the Bodhisatta wants to liberate himself from my dominion," would not let him go, and led his armies against him. The Gods were terrified and fled in alarm; the Bodhisatta sat there alone, with only his own transcendent virtues for bodyguard. Māra's assault with weapons of thunder and lightning, darkness, flood, and fire, and all the temptations presented by Māra's three beautiful daughters, left the Bodhisatta literally unaffected and unmoved. Māra, unable to recover the throne to which he had laid claim, could only retire. The Gods returned, and celebrated the prince's victory; and so night fell.

Entering into ever deeper states of contemplation the Bodhisatta obtained successively the Knowledge of Former Births, Divine Insight, the Understanding of Causal Origination, and finally, at dawn, the Full Enlightenment or "Awakening" (*sammā-sambodhi*) that he had been seeking, and so, ceasing to be a Bodhisatta, became a Buddha, the "Wake." A Buddha is no longer in a category, but innumerable; no longer "this

man So-and-so," no longer anyone, but one whose proper name it would be in vain to ask, and to whom are appropriate only such epithets as *Arahant* ("Worthy"), *Tathāgata* ("True-come"), *Bhāgavā* ("Dispenser"), *Mahāpurisa* ("Great Citizen"), *Saccanāma* ("He whose Name is Truth"), and *Anoma* ("Unfathomable"), none of which is the designation of an individual. The explicit synonyms "Dhamma-become" and "Brahma-become" are particularly noteworthy; for the Buddha expressly identifies himself with the Eternal Law (*dhammā*), that he embodies, and the expression "Brahma-become" must be taken to imply an absolute thesis, if only because the Buddha had been a Brahṃā and Mahā Brahṃā already in previous births and because in any case the gnosis of a Brahṃā is inferior to that of a Buddha. Here and now in the world the Buddha had attained that Liberty (*vimutti*), Despiration (*nibbāna = nirvāṇa*), and Immortality (*amataṃ*), the Way to which he would henceforth proclaim to all men.

But now he hesitated, knowing that the Eternal Law of which he had become the bearer, and with which he identified himself, would be hard indeed for other-minded and worldly men to understand; he was tempted to remain a Solitary Buddha, enjoying by himself the hard-earned fruits of an age-long quest of which the goal had been reached at last. If we are to form any conception of the Buddhist Nibbāna it will be almost indispensable for us to understand the quality of this "enjoyment"; it was "the supreme beatitude of one who had rejected the notion 'I am'; of one who had utterly 'denied himself,' and so 'laid down his burden.'" This was Māra's last and subtlest temptation: that it would be folly to abandon this hard-won felicity and to return to ordinary life in order to preach a Way to men who would neither hear nor understand. But at the Buddha's hesitation the Gods despaired; and their highest, Brahṃā Sahampati, appeared before him, lamenting that "The world is lost!" and pleading that there were in the world at least some people of comparatively clear vision who would hear and understand his teaching. For their sake the Buddha consented, announcing that "the Doors of Immortality are open." Accordingly, he set out to spend the remaining forty-five years of his natural life in "Turning the Wheel of the Law," that is to say, in the preaching of the liberating Truth and of the Way that must be followed if

the ultimate purpose and meaning of life ("man's last end") is to be attained.

The Buddha went first to the Deer Park in Benares, to the five who had been his first followers. He preached to them the doctrine of the Middle Way between the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification: that of the liability to suffering that is in all born beings, the cause of which—appetitive desire (based on ignorance of the true nature of all desirable things)—must be eradicated if the symptom is to be cured; and that of the "Walk with Brahma," which leads to the end of sorrow. Finally he taught them the doctrine of the liberation resulting from full comprehension and experience of the proposition that of one and all of the constituents of the mutable psycho-physical individuality that men call *I* or *myself* it must be said, "that is not my Self" (*na me so attā*)—a proposition that has very often, despite the logic of the words, been mistaken to mean that "there is no Self." The five Mendicants obtained Enlightenment, and there were now six Arahants in the world. When the number of Arahants, "freed from all bonds, human and divine," had risen to sixty-one, the Buddha sent them forth to preach the Eternal Law and the Walk with Brahma, and empowered them to receive and ordain others; so there came into being the Buddhist congregation (*saṅgha*) or order of Mendicants, composed of men who had abandoned¹ the household life and "taken refuge in the Buddha, the Eternal Law, and the Community."

On his way from Benares to Uruvelā the Buddha fell in with a party of young men picnicking with their wives. One of them, being unmarried, had brought with him his mistress; but she had run off with some of the young men's belongings. They were all looking for her, and asked the Buddha if he had seen her. The Buddha replied: "What think ye? Were it not better ye sought the Self (*attānaṃ gaveseyyātha*), rather than the woman?" (*Vin.* i. 23, cf. *Vis.* 393). This answer, accepted by the young men, who subsequently became the master's disciples, is of the utmost significance for our understanding of the Buddhist doctrine of self-denial. We find the very

¹ This abandonment is literally a going into exile (*paḍhajiṭṭā*): the Buddhist view being like Meister Eckhart's, that those poor souls who settle down at home and serve God there are in error "and will never have the power to strive for or to win what those others do who follow Christ in poverty and exile."

Master in whom the work of self-naughting has been accomplished recommending others to seek for the Self—an apparent contradiction that can only be resolved if we clearly distinguish between the “selves” referred to—one to be naughted, one to be cultivated.

At Uruvelā the Buddha resided for some time at the hermitage of a school of Brahmanical fire-worshippers, and performed two notable miracles: in the first he overcame and tamed the furious Serpent (*ahi-nāga*) that lived in their fire-temple; and in the second, when the Brahmans could neither split their wood nor light their fires, he did these things by his supernatural powers (*iddhi*). The final outcome was that the Brahman master Kassapa and all of his five hundred followers decided to “Walk with Brahma” under the Buddha, and were received by him into the Order.

The Buddha then proceeded to Gayāsīa, accompanied by all those, to the number of a thousand, who had by now become his disciples. There he preached the famous “Sermon on Fire.” All sensation, all sensibilia (for example, the tongue and its tastes, the mind and its thoughts), are on fire—the fire of appetite, resentment, and delusion (*rāgo, doṣo, mohō*), birth, ageing, death, and sorrow. This sermon is of particular importance for the understanding of Nibbāna (“Despersion”) in its primary sense: the “going out” of these fires which—with the empirical “individuality” (*atta-sambhava*) of which they are the “becoming” (*bhava*)—cease to “draw” when their fuel is withheld. It is also of special interest because of its very close correspondence to James iii. 6 where “the tongue is a fire . . . and setteth on fire the wheel of becoming” (*ῥὸ γλῶσσοσ τῆσ γένησθεωσ*) just as in the Buddhist context “the tongue is afire” (*jivhā dāhitā*) and “life” is the “wheel of becoming” (*bhava-cakka*). In the New Testament context the formulae are more likely to be of Orphic than of Buddhist origin, but there may be older common sources underlying both formulations.

The Buddha went next to Rājagaha where he preached to King Bimbisāra of Magadha and an assembly of Brahmans and Householders, calling first upon Uruvelā Kassapa to explain why he had abandoned his ritual fires. Kassapa having borne witness, the Buddha preached, and the whole company obtained the “Eye for the Eternal Law,” that is, they understood that “Whatever has had a beginning must also come to an end.”

It must never be forgotten that this apparently simple formula, more familiar in the form,

Of whatever originates causally, the Truth-finder hath told the cause,
And of all these things the Great Ascetic hath likewise explained the cessation.
(*Vin.* i. 41, etc.)

is actually a valid epitome of the Buddha's doctrine and a sufficient means (if one is prepared to act up to all that it implies) to the attainment of Immortality and the ending of all sorrow. Its primary application is, of course, to the understanding and eradication of the causes of the “becoming” of all the mortal ills that the passible “individuality” is heir to: the passing away of appetite, resentment and delusion and consequent arrest of “becoming,” are one and the same thing as Despairation and Immortality, ultimate Felicity (*S.* ii. 117, iv. 251, v. 8; *Sn.* 1095).

In the course of his wanderings, the Buddha returned to Kapilavatthu, his birthplace; and accompanied by a host of Mendicant Arahants begged his food in the streets, where he was seen from the palace windows by Rāhula's mother. To his father's protests the Buddha replied that this had been the rule of all past Buddhas. Suddhodana became a lay disciple, and on his deathbed became an Arahant, without ever having abandoned the household life. In the meantime the Buddha, accompanied by his two chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, and giving his begging bowl to the king to carry, visited Rāhula's mother. She came to him and clasped his ankles and laid her head on his feet; and the king told him that when she had heard that her husband had taken the yellow robes, she also put on the yellow robes, and ate only once a day and followed all the rules of the Buddha's life. Rāhula's mother sent her son to his father, telling him to ask for his inheritance, he being now the heir to the throne. But the Buddha, turning to Sāriputta, said “Give him the monastic ordination,” and Sāriputta did so. So Rāhula received a spiritual inheritance. But Suddhodana was deeply hurt, and said to the Buddha, “When thou didst abandon the worldly life, it was a bitter pain, and so is it now that Rāhula has done the same. The love of a son cuts into one's skin and to the very marrow. Pray grant that in future a child may not be ordained without his father's and mother's consent.” To that the Buddha agreed.

In the meantime, the merchant prince Anātha Piṇḍika had become a lay disciple, and, having purchased at great price the Jetavana Park at Sāvārthi and built there a magnificent monastery, invited the Buddha to take up his residence there, and he did so, making this his headquarters for the rest of his life. The Jetavana, indeed, is a "place never abandoned by any of the Buddhas" (DA. 424; *Bhūv. A.* 298); and naturally the "Fragrant Pavilion" (*gandha-kūṭi*) in which he resided there became the archetype of the later Buddhist temples in which he is represented by an icon. The Buddha was not always in actual residence; this was simply his permanent home, and it is in this connection that the question of an iconography first arises. For the question is asked (in the *Kālingabodhi Jātaka*), by what kind of a symbol or shrine (*ceṭiya*) may the Buddha be properly represented, so that offerings can be made to him in his absence. His answer is that he can only be properly represented during his lifetime by a Great Wisdom Tree (*mahā-bodhi-rukkha*), and after his death by bodily relics; he deprecates the use of "indicative," i. e. anthropomorphic, icons, calling them groundless and imaginative. It is, in fact, the case that in "early" Buddhist art the Buddha is represented only "aniconically" by his evident "traces" (*dhātū*), viz. either by a Bodhi-tree, by a "Fragrant Pavilion," by a "Wheel of the Law" (*dhamma-cakka*), by Footprints (*paḍa-palaṅga*), or by a reliquary Cairn (*stūpa*), and never by a "likeness" (*paṭimā*). When, on the other hand, probably to begin with in the first century A. D., the Buddha was represented in human form it is significant that in its most typical aspect the image is not really the likeness of a man, but reflects the old concept of the "Great Citizen" (*mahā-purisa*) or Person or Cosmic Man, and more directly repeats the established type of the image of a Yakkha—Agathos, Daemon or Tutelary Genius. This accords with the fact that the Buddha is himself "the Yakkha to whom sacrifice is due," with the doctrine of the "Yakkha's Purity," and with the whole background of the pre-Buddhist Sākyan, Licchavi and Vajjian cult of Yakkhas, whose customary service the Buddha himself had earnestly advised the Vajjians never to neglect. As a Bodhisatta he had once been mistaken for the spirit of the tree under which he was sitting; and just as the Buddha was represented at the Jetavana and in early Buddhist art by a tree-shrine (*rukkha-ceṭiya*) so were the Yakkhas, at whose "temples" the Buddha

was so fond of staying when on tour. All these considerations are only fully significant when we bear in mind that *the Yaksa* (Yakkha) of the Vedas and Upanishads had been originally a designation at once of Brahma as the principle of life in the Tree of Life and of the immortal Self that inhabits this human "city of Brahma" (*brahma-pura*) from which the Man as "citizen" takes his name of Purusa; and that epithets "Wake" (*buddho*) and "Brahma-become" (*brahma-bhūto*) are recognized synonyms of Him who is also called the "Great Citizen" (*mahā-purisa*), and is at least once explicitly and often implicitly equated with the universal Self (*D. iii. 84, et passim*).

By this time the number of the disciples had grown enormously, and had come to consist of various bodies of Mendicants (*Bhikkhū*) or Exiles (*Pabbajita*), no longer always "wandering," but often resident in monasteries that had been presented to the community by wealthy lay adherents. Already in the Buddha's lifetime questions of discipline had arisen, and the Buddha's decisions on these points are the basis of the Rule (*vinaya*)—as regards residence, clothing, food, conduct, deportment, induction and expulsion—under which the Mendicants lived. In the community (*saṅgha*) as a whole were to be found a relatively small number of graduate (*asekko*) masters and a much larger number of undergraduate (*sekko*) disciples. This distinction is especially noteworthy in the case of the great disciple Ānanda, the Buddha's own first cousin, who became a mendicant at Kapilavattu in the second year of the Buddha's predicament and after twenty years was chosen to be the Buddha's personal attendant and confidant, messenger and representative and yet was unable to "graduate," until some time after the Master's decease.

Ānanda was responsible for the admission of women to the Mendicant Order. We are told that Mahā Pajāpati, Suddhodana's second wife, and the Bodhisatta's foster-mother after Mahā Māyā's early dormition, begged for admission to the Order, but to her great sorrow was refused. She cut off her hair, assumed the orange robes of a Mendicant, and together with a following of other Sākya women again sought the Buddha; all these women, wayworn and covered with dust, stood and waited at the door of his residence in Veśālī. Ānanda was deeply touched, and presented their case to the Master, who thrice repeated his refusal. Then Ānanda took up the problem

from another angle ; he asked, " Are women, if they abandon the household life and live according to the doctrine and discipline taught by the Truth-finder, *capable* of realizing the fruits of entering the stream, becoming a 'once-returned', or a 'non-returner', or the state of being Arahant ? " The Buddha could not deny it ; and agreed that there should be an Order of Bhikkhunis, side by side with that of the Bhikkhus. But he added that if women had not been admitted to the Order and the practice of the Walk with Brahma, the True Law (*saddhamma*) would have stood for a thousand years, whereas now it would stand fast for only five hundred.

In his eightieth year the Buddha fell sick, and though he recovered temporarily he knew that his end was near. He said to Ānanda, " I am now old, my journey is near its end, I am turning eighty years of age ; and just as a worm-out cart, Ānanda, can be kept going only with the help of thongs, so, methinks, the body of the Truth-finder can be kept going only by medicaments. " Ānanda wanted to know what instructions the Buddha left to the Mendicants ; the Buddha replied that if anyone thought that the community depended on him, it was for *him* to give instructions,— " Why should I leave any instructions regarding the community ? " The Truth-finder had preached the Law in full, withholding nothing, and all that was needed was to practise, contemplate and propagate the Truth, in pity for the world and for the welfare of men and Gods. The Mendicants were not to rely upon any external support, but to make " the Self (*attā*) their refuge, the Eternal Law their refuge "—and so, " I leave you, I depart, having made the Self my refuge " (*D. ii. 120*).

It was at Kusinārā, in the Sāla-grove of the Mallas, that the Buddha lay down to die, assuming the " lion's repose. " A great host of laymen, mendicants and gods of all ranks surrounded the couch, over which Ānanda kept watch. The Buddha gave him instructions regarding the cremation of the body and the erection of a cairn (*thūpa*, *dhātu-gabbha*) to contain the bones and ashes. At the sight of such cairns, erected for Buddhas, other Arahants, or a King of kings, many people would be made calm and happy, and that would lead to their resurrection in a heaven hereafter. Ānanda wept at the thought of not yet being a graduate. The Buddha assured him that he had done well and would soon be " free from the fluxes, " that is, become

an Arahant ; and he commended Ānanda to the company of the Mendicants, comparing him to a King of kings.

" Corruptible are all things composite ; in sobriety work out your goal " ; these were the Truth-finder's last words. Entering at will into each of the four higher contemplative " states, " he emerged from the fourth, and was forthwith wholly despirated.¹ The Truth-finder's death was announced by Brahmā, who realized that the death of all beings whatsoever, even that of the Great Teacher, is inevitable. The well-known lines were repeated by Indra :

Transient are all things composite ; theirs to originate and age,
And having originated, to be again destroyed ; to have stilled them is beatitude.

Anuruddha, an Arahant, pronounced a brief eulogy in which he pointed out that " there was no panting struggle for that steadfast heart, when the Sage, the immovable, found peace. " Ānanda was profoundly moved ; only the younger Mendicants wept and rolled on the ground in their grief, crying out that " Too soon has the Eye in the World gone in. " For this they were blamed by the elder Mendicants, who reminded them that

Corruptible are all composite things, how else ?

The body was cremated, and the relics, having been divided into eight parts, were distributed to the clansmen, who erected eight monuments to contain them.

Thus the Buddha, who for so long as he was visible to human eyes had possessed but could not be identified with all or any of the five factors of personality (*S. iii. 112*), " burst the vestment of selfhood " (*A. iv. 312* ; cf. *Vin. i. 6*). He had long since been an Immortal (*M. i. 172* ; *Vin. i. 9* ; *It. 46, 62*), unborn, unaging, undying (*KhA. 180* ; *DhA. i. 228*). " The body ages, but the True Law does not age " (*S. i. 71*). " The body dies, the Name survives " (*S. i. 43*, cf. *RV. vi. 18, 7* ; *BU. iii. 2, 12*). " His Name is Truth " (*A. iii. 346*, *iv. 289*). " Truth is the Eternal Law " (*S. i. 169*) ; and even now it can be said that " he who sees the Law sees Him (*S. iii. 120* ; *Mil. 73*) by whom the Doors of Immortality were opened " (*M. i. 167* ; *Vin. i. 7*). Let us now ask what was that Law and Truth with which he identified his essence.

¹ *Paritibbāyati* ; here in the sense " died, " although not often used in this physical context.

