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HERITAGE OF BUDDHA

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The Story of Siddhartha Gautama

by Celina LuZanne

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FOREWORD

I have been asked how I became interested in the mysticism of the East. I suppose, researching some years ago on a story paralleling Biblical and secular history awakened the interest and a perception that Christianity was of such origin, but my search for Yogi knowledge began after an experience in Steinway Hall, New York City.

It was during the second world war when I was working as a "Gray lady disc jockey" in a fort hospital near my home town that I began to observe the psychiatric wards and the effect of music on the mind. Studying Music Therapy approaches back to Pythagoras, I began to believe that there was a harmony of soul and mind to be found. And, upon receiving literature from a New York group performing "miracles with music" I set out for that city to search and while waiting for an interview with the director of the group there in Steinway Hall I looked through the open door to another opened door where students were being greeted by a good-countenanced, young-faced, white-bearded Indian, his long hair graced with a neatly folded orchid colored turban, his robe a brighter silk. . . . The students reflected the peace I saw in that calm face, and I said, "There—that man has what I'm seeking. . . . I wish I could listen in on his lecture."

I was informed that my interview would be an hour away—and why not? I moved to the end of the line, behind an elegantly-dressed, kind colored woman who said I should do as she, sign the slip of paper on his desk—which I thought was but registering for the lesson. She took me in charge, sitting behind me and poking me each time I relaxed from the lotus posture which was necessary to the proper breathing in the exercises, "Pranayama,"

—breathing for "vital life," for clear thinking which would vitiate healing and project to happiness.

My schedule of Music Therapy conflicted and I did not return to the class of Pranayama. The dear old Indian observed me in the hall and in kindness that made me feel I had truly erred said, "I expect you to come to my class, for you know it is free and you signed for it, and one should do that which one bargains for." (I had signed for the course, unknowingly.)

Yes, I liked his straight-forwardness too and felt envious of it, desirous for that fearless power which gives courage in all situations to express my mind. After that I read of Yogism at the library, and chancing on the knowledge that Jesus and Buddha were of the Yogi doctrine, that the six-tusked star heralding the Buddha, a half millenium later foretold the birth of Jesus, I set out to unearth Buddha from the maze of oriental symbolism and superfluous diffusion. I understood the reason for the dearth of westernized Buddha stories—it took patience. But, the effort was rewarded in ecstasy—here, with but one dramatic liberty, that of presuming the "dark prince" was a half-brother instead of the "cousin from the south" as history relates, was a story with all the ingredients of a modern story—murder, incest, intrigue. . . . And here was the "Way of Truth" foundation of many Inspirational books of today which fill the present need. . . . And in clear thought I saw Buddha's way converge with the Jesus Mount-path —Jesus and his Fatherhood was in a sense the same as Buddha and Infinite Mind—Jesus but put in practice the healing of the Buddha ideology, Mind Healing; their "Power" was the same!

And shall we not see when fears and prejudices are finally lifted that East and West are "one" as clearly we shall know in the new science horizon—all of life is at oneness with Immutable Mind—or God.

"Man has no fate except past deeds;
No Hell but what he makes;
No Heaven too high for those to reach
whose passions sleep subdued."

From, Light of Asia,
Edwin Arnold

HERITAGE OF BUDDHA

Chapter 1

Kapilavastu supined as heat from the mid-day India sun provoked listlessness. From the lowest ayah to the most eminent of the Sakya family, impassiveness seeemed a bequeathed right which came with being a part of this rich and esteemed province, itself set tranquilly in the foothills of the peaceful Himalayas.

The palace of Kapila, with its many joined residences of the Ikshvaka family and ministers of the government, was as a standing, sleeping elephant in the sun: the many ornately adorned entrances as arched spans of the beast's heavy limbs decorated with bright trappings, glittering gaudily; the minaret-roofed third story an ornamented howdah with jewel-framed views of the white, sacred mountains, which were enjoyed by the king's wives who had apartments there.

King Suddhodana, ruler of this small, but wealthy province was reputed among his people to cohort with the gods of the sacred mountains, and he was called Pure Rice by them for once he had said, "The mantle of the mountains is the peace of the gods which moves down at command of Suyra into our valley to make our rice to grow and to bring us into a closer relationship with the Devas." But Pure Rice had not truly experienced a close relationship with the divine; the peace he knew and which was manifest throughout his kingdom was a surface bliss, —bought with profuse wealth, and it was not satisfying.

When middle years brought material gain, and there was no need of aggressions to fill his coffers, when he was tired of the pomp of court life, the ruler of Kapila turned his attention toward good government and to ways of making his people happy. He married the daughters of the raja of the adjoining province to settle a dispute over the water supply of the river Rhoni, and he settled to a modicum of peace amid plenty.

Rich deltas made by the river silt produced crops of rice, millet and poppies which brought more wealth; and with excess of everything which the market exchanges offered, the ruler and his people basked in luxuries—eating, drinking and lying in pavilions. They had become a people debauched and degraded. Pure Rice, seeing this, pondered on ways of improvement, but no initiative held long counter.

Lured by delicious delicacies which his young wives prepared for him, the raja of Kapila had become dull and slothful, given to much dreaming and opiate transfigurations. Somnolence and sluggishness were lazy guards that allowed the oleaginous to take over his Ayran characteristics. His broad shoulders had no distinction, except that they topped a mountain of paunch; his fine forehead and well-shaped nose likewise surmounted double chins covered by a heavy beard. But he had no will to halt his appetite for rich foods; he continued to overeat and complain to his ever attentive wives.

Maya, the eldest wife who was wise and dutiful, listened to his ailments and made much to do of his whims. Pati, the younger, while attentive to his needs, looked upon him as an indulgent old fool unable to control himself. He had about put aside the dark, specious Pati, saying that her savage love was earth-limited, while Maya inspired him to "search the paths of the gods."

In the light of the new ambition, to find a better way of life for his people, he came upon a truth—, self-indulgence led to spiritual want. He observed holy men on his mountain hunting trips, and at the gates of his own province—and he wondered

what great impelling inspiration made them willing to give up everything "to find ecstatic peace." He gave generously when these men in yellow clouts stretched their cups before him, for he admired their great faith in seeking the "good life."

He gave large sums to unfortunates and made excessive gifts to the temples, hoping to obtain new identifications of soul. Still, his people who identified their souls with their bodies only progressed senseward. He left the influence of the zenanna women, and abandoned altogether Pati's voluptuousness—and he felt that he had made a step in growth from the temporal, yet he had gained no footing in the spiritual.

He looked at the high, white mountains and envied the imagined peace they provoked. The bardo, home of the gods! To be at one with the Infinite Mind of Creation. . . . These altruistic ambitions sank always in the mire of despondency—something greater than himself would have to lift him to Nirvana, the state of bliss and eternal release from life's passions. Perhaps through Maya—he would find the way.

Maya came from the temple one morning and said, "I have performed the Sraddha worship; I have measured the asok tree and my lord, I hope I may bring joy to you." Then, one day she said, as they stood by the lotus pool, "The physician from Benares informs me—I am to have a child, my beloved."

This dazed Pure Rice more than any opiate had ever effected. . . . Maya to have a child! Thoughts of becoming a father provoked ambition such as he had never known. "My son must not be like these excessive swine," he declared as lords with wine cups in hand came into the court. "Indulgence—defilement! I must make Kapila a better province for my son to inherit!"

That morning in the long courtroom where he directed affairs of the kingdom, he vowed to improve the land and trade. He turned to his ministers, "Go, search—ask the priests of the temple how to better our province in the sight of the gods." He moved uneasily in his gold throne chair as he said it, for his

spiritual adviser Asita, the Brahman was on a stool at his feet, reminding that "All, all is vanity under the sun." He thought of another chair, that might one day be on the round of the dais below—a small golden chair. Hai, it had to be a son, Maya's child —he would have it no other way. . . . And he would give his son the best teacher in the land, to show him how to rule as the gods would favor.

Such hopes were spoken of throughout the months of pregnancy. If Maya's child was a son to inherit the kingdom—then the kingdom must be ready to receive him. He went to extremes in imposing penances on his people. "I will force them to be good!" he vowed, and had them put into prison for theretofore insignificant offences.

He had men whipped for adulterating the ghee which was sold at the temple to pour on the idols. He had men stoned for theft. He would ride in his chariot at high speed to the farthest corner of the province to settle a disturbance. And in settling improper activities, he was becoming sadistic. His people began to fear him and say, "An evil soul possesses him!" and "He is losing his reason, and will go mad, then what will our province come to?"

Throughout the changing character of her husband, Maya, who had more intuitive reasoning as to what was sought, kept a devotee's alertness for new ideas to suggest to him. That warm day when they stood on the broad, veined-marble steps of the palace, when she was taking her leave to go back to the Koli home for her child to be born, she said a beautiful thing. They were standing together under the agate-studded arch of the main palace entrance, looking out across the expanse of hazy sky—over the Himalayas when she said, "As I long to be with the parents that gave me birth, as I bring forth new life—so does the progenity of the perfect within us long for the oneness with the gods, as is manifest in the cloud-enveloped sacred symbols yonder."

He looked down at her in awe, and considered how very wise she was. He studied her dark, serious eyes, hoping for greater

revelation. Maya had in a measure found the serenity he sought. Her tolerance and kindness manifested it; her ability to possess his every desire proved it—she had something he needed badly—peace of soul and the power it brought. He turned from her and looked up at the mountains. As far away from the right path to peace he had been as the tallest peak of snow against the clouds. . . . But, it was too late now to ask her to sit down and impart the wisdom the months of harboring and planning for a new life had taught her. The chariot was waiting to take her to the Koli palace for her child to be born.

She looked at the snow peaks as if their brilliance hypnotized her and awed her, and Pure Rice looked at her in alarm. He noted the attraction and realized the spell made her truly long to go to be with the gods believed to dwell there. He clutched her arm suddenly, to interrupt the trance—she must not desire to go from him to—death. He pulled her from the clear view of the mountains, down the azalea walk beyond the court noises. With his arm around her they walked in peaceful amity with each other, in glowing hopes for the child to come; in assurance that their lives would be at last in divine relationship.

They stood and looked at the chariot beyond the somnolent palace court, its gold inlay sparkling in the tropical sun. Pure Rice suddenly hated Channa, the charioteer for taking his Maya away from him. "Son of a dog! Lowest of life . . ." he said clenching down on his opium pipe. "He will wrest my beloved from me!"

Maya laughed lightly, but she understood that the words uttered were not mere attempts at jocundity, to alleviate the seriousness of parting. "He is your most faithful charioteer. He but waits to do your bidding, and that is what is to make me happy. I will return soon, my lord, my priyaji!"

Channa, as much a part of the Kapila palace as the massive cobra and goddess-designed columns supporting its numerous balconies, waited patiently with whip in hand. He knew that the time was short, that although the queen wife should be on her way to

Koli, eleven miles away, there would be time for intimate farewells. He sat motionless, as if asleep, not hearing the sacred vows spoken. "The mountains are as one, as we are one, my beloved, and we shall be closer together when our child comes to bind us in the blessedness of parenthood." Maya closed her purple-stained eyelids, suppressing pain, "I do pray it is a son, for your sake, my lord."

She then looked past him at the open sky, at the smooth symmetry of flying swans, moving toward the coolness of the mountains, "The Devas of the celestial abode will guide the wheel of birth. I obtained that promise at last full moon . . ."

"Priyaji! My loved one!" he said in trembling voice, and then in fearful apprehension he noticed her face, "My Maya, the birth pains are close upon you!" And the peace of the palace was disrupted at the outburst. "Go, at once! Channa, make haste! Your life, if you do not get her there in time!"

She lifted her jeweled hand to his face, "My lord, be calm and abiding . . . All will be well . . ." And with a laugh, she turned to gesture toward the chambeli bowers. "See, how your loud voice arouses all things from repose!"

The parrots and monkeys were awakened from their apathies, chattering wildly and stopping the incoming of the sunbirds to the flowering shade.

"I cannot bear to have you suffer to give me a child," he said as he helped her into the chariot. "I will be miserable, knowing what you go through—."

Maya touched her delicate, jeweled forefinger to his nose, "I wish our child to have the Ayran nose, and he must also have the Ayran mouth. I fear our Koli folk are a little mixed with the primitives—such noses, and sun-browned complexions. My child must have the golden hair and skin of a true Ayran like the Ikshvaka beauty!"

The charm of Maya took his mind so away from practical things, but he observed as she got in the chariot that no waiting woman

was to attend her, "Where, where is the ayah?" he asked in alarm.

"I dislike women servants, beloved," she said attempting to smile, but succeeding in impressing that pain was present within her. "It—it is but a short trip. I can make it—and in my father's house I will be besieged with servants."

"But you—in pain, someone should go with you. Pati—, it is she who should make the trip with you. I shall bid her at once!" He gestured excitedly.

Maya arrested his beckoning hand, "No, my love, I planned it so that she would be with you. Since you bargained with my father for us as wives, I have known you preferred me, and I have been wildly glad of it. But, now as I go through this period of childbearing, I am pleased that you have Pati's arms to go to." She gestured toward the third balcony where Pati stood smiling enviously, and she called out to her light-heartedly, "Achala! Make him forget his seriousness, my sister."

"I shall see after our petulant Sakya lord," Pati answered, and Pure Rice thought her voice as strident as the honking of swans overhead.

Channa was raising his whip, but the king moved to stand between the chariot wheels. "My love, I shall take more gifts to the temples, and invoke the gods in your behalf. Oh, my rimpoche, I shall ask Vayu to lift these wheels over the rough roads and blow only scented breezes for my beloved. . . ."

Maya clutched the tassel of her sari in her hand and attempted to smile, "This is the season for calm weather, my love. . . . Know you not this is the eighth day of the fourth moon?" She then settled back with a wincing of pain— "Hasten, oh Channa! Hasten!"

"Your father will have a doctor from Benares to attend you there. There are some very wise men settled in the sacred city who trained in Alexandria. All will be done for you that the gods have given to man to work with." Pure Rice moved back reluctantly yet reaching still his arms to touch her, consoled, "All

things planned will work well, my rimpoche . . ." he called as the chariot sped away.

Maya was gone. The wheels of the chariot, bearing her away hummed a wailing chaita, a sad summer song, bemoaning the coming of winter. . . . The gods would surely make some special effort to withhold her suffering. . . . And he turned to a servant bidding gifts to be taken to the temple immediately, with this request. Standing there watching the curve of the palace ground where the chariot went out of sight, he was at one with her suffering, for his soul was filled with apprehension and fear. . . .

He walked down the drive toward the open road trying to think clearly on things of mystery. A poignant realization, more rational than any thinking that had dominated his mind lately, came as he walked . . . suffering was a part of this world. It came with birth. It pressed through life as a loathsome kurtcha's strangling. . . . It held with tense grasp until—death released it . . . and, this corporeal being was no more afterwards? "Oh, Vayu, waft perfumes of sandalwood and blooming flowers. . . ."

Remembering the rough river roads brought to mind the meeting with the ministers which was past due. Hai, he must go and institute a plan for digging kankar to improve the roads of the province. He must go to the meeting hall at once.

He turned, glancing at the third story balcony where Pati in becoming sari leaned against a giant column. A warm racing of anticipation set apprehension aside for the moment. Then reason halted the two. He went with determined steps to the assembly room, but took his place uneasily.

The ministers were waiting, lounging their corpulent bodies comfortably on couches in a semi-circle around the room. The young lords, leaning against the stairway listened critically. The adviser-priest was on the earth stool below the throne chair. Pure Rice looked about, commanding quiet with his bold countenance and moved to his place.

The matter of digging kankar to improve the roads was exe-

cuted without delay and the meeting lolled into its usual boring "affairs of the kingdom." The most trite complaints, such as infringements of pasturage rights to the major problems dealing with the Ayran kingdoms, Magdha to the east and Kosala to the west were discussed. There was much exchange with caravans from China and Babylon—Kapila's opium, rice and millet bought brass, fabrics and ivories in abundance.

The ministers bragged that the older civilizations were crumbling under Ayran power. Pure Rice listened to a debate as to what the future held for Kapila and tried to break through with suggestions concerning the acquiring of moral growth—but he leaned back despairing that there was—no interest in learned truths—and he, himself weak and worried over a greater matter lapsed into selfish thoughts. The challenge was obliterated with fanciful imaginings:

In a small golden chair on the step below the dais his son would sit one day and listen—and learn to become a ruler. He must become the greatest raja of all the kingdoms—and as the prophecy had said—to rule over the other kingdoms as the greater light over the lesser. . . . Ah, Maya's child must be given a soul with the brightness of Indra's rays—and a body to arouse the envy of the gods of the celestial! A subtle memory of Maya's words crept in his thoughts—"My son must have a bow mouth and a beaked nose—." Like himself. . . . Hai, it would be like living his life all over again . . . and having opportunity to through his son—effect the things he wished he might have. . . . He would go away into the customary retirement when he had brought the rajkumar to the age of the needed wisdom to rule—and he would leave it to him to guide to greater prosperity. Hai, before the son of Maya should take over the scepter, Kapila must be made a great province filled with worthy subjects as well as abundant wealth.

The dreaming king awakened to raucous laughs of the ministers,—the meeting was degenerating into a joke session. He quickly brought it to a close in angry condemnation and moved

to the court in quick steps, bellowing reproof to any minister or lord attempting to talk to him.

He looked up at the third-story balcony of his dwelling. Pati was there, freshly bathed and dressed in fragrant sari, waiting for him. . . . He was free to go to her. . . . He had not been to her apartment in many moons and Maya had accused him of neglecting her younger sister. . . . He moved as if to go to her. . . . A servant placed his opium pipe in his hand, and—he turned instead to walk in the garden—to dream of the rajkumar-to-be.

The grounds were bright with flowers, and flashing sunbirds darted in and out of the trees. Parakeets were swinging on the jasmine coils. The blue pools found a matching color in the sky. He looked beyond at the fields. Poppy-carpeted slopes were like the arms of the white-draped mountains. He gazed at the mountains. . . . Was the peace and beauty of the devas abode akin to the beauty of the garden and fields? Whatever—peace-inspiring in the world must be there also. If there was only someone to guide him in knowledge of the Infinite world. . . .

But deep thoughts gave way to observation of fields with monetary appraisal. The sun was coaxing the milky sap from the poppy bloom-heads that the farmers had bared with their notched jabbers in the early morning. Now they sat in the trees and scared birds from the rice fields. At sundown they would collect the opium gum, and he would be finding his way to Pati's apartment, groggy from smoke and drink. Beneath a tree with his pipe. What a good feeling it brought! Next would come fanciful imaginings and later—deep sleep—in the arms of Pati tonight, for Maya was away. Maya was away.

Such imagining that associated with Maya! He cursed the drug, but continued to puff at the long-stemmed hookah. He knew that the habit had grown on him, as it had on so many of his people, and he was aware that the constant use of opium would bring physical, mental and moral deterioration. But, he, like all of

humanity, was frail, helpless against it. "And I wish to be pure, as my subjects believe me to be."

He could not control desire for opium, but he would not withhold indulgence when food was offered. He saw a servant placing fruits and wines on the terrace and his steps quickened. He handed his pipe to a servant, and another attendant held a china bowl for him to bathe his hands—then he began to "devour" a pomegranate, the juice of which spat out on his purple coat.

As he ate, his wide blue eyes took in all that went on about the palace. He was not pleased with the looks on the faces of the lords and ladies for they should be most anxious—Kapila was expecting an heir!

Pati was not even concerned. She lay outstretched on a charpoy on the second balcony lounging lazily—awaiting him. Black Dravidian hands moved plumed fans over her. Her freshly oiled black hair caught the sun as the plumes moved back and forth. He remembered how beautiful she was and that she was wishing him to come, but he did not desire Pati. He preferred to dream of Maya and the child she would give him.

Pati would have a table waiting in her apartment for him to join her in the evening meal. Notes of the sitar came from the zenanna—lords were going in to lie with the women of the pavilion. Lust was to be satisfied, the same as hunger. He raised to look at Pati's face, and he could see she had a rose in her hair. . . . Once he and Maya had walked in the court and looked upon Pati lying there like that and she had said, "Look you upon a Koli who is very beautiful, who has a figure to vie with the forms of the goddesses carved there. . . ." And what was it she had said . . . about the rose in her hair? Hai, she said—"My lord, a rose tops yonder balcony with grace, far more elegant than all the combined beauty of the roses climbing to her there. . . ."

But he concentrated on the rose vine filled with white blossoms and he tried to imagine how it climbed skyward to be at one with the clouds—as he longed to be one with the Infinite. . . . He

moved with unsteady stride to the other side of the garden, trying to forget freshly-oiled hair with the white rose against the bright silk headrest of a golden couch. But he remembered as he walked how her sari had been thrown back from her breasts, how she resembled indeed the carved naked goddesses of the pillars supporting the balcony. . . . Fool . . . Pati's animation offered more gratification than any seeking of solace of soul today. . . . And yet he moved toward his rice fields.

He was aware of the beauty of the flowers and birds as he passed through the gardens. . . . "Beauty—ought to be enough for my son to inherit . . ." he said aloud, and was most startled at his statement. . . .

"Going over to see our rice fields, my little rajkumar. . . ." Fool. . . . It might be a girl baby. . . . And then what? Just more riches for the coffers. Some ruler would have to offer a lot for Maya's child. . . . But, such idle imaginings. . . . It was to be a boy. . . . It would have to be. . . . "My son would love to look out with me to watch the rice blooms. . . . Paddy for my people. . . . Wouldn't he like the colors in the chaff when paddy is ripe . . . yellow, red, black, white . . . ?"

He tried desperately to allow sane thoughts to break through the orgy of mental haze. Waving his arms toward the fields, right and left, he mumbled, "All of this to be my son's. Rice and opium. Rice and opium. Strength and appeasement . . ." Strength and appeasement—about all any people needed.

When the prayer drums sounded, he moved to the corridor to hear the voice of Asita in the shrine room leading the worship for the evening. "Ye mighty Sons of Heaven take notice of the desires of the supplicants. Take us as a dear father takes his son by the hand, oh ye gods for whom the sacred grass is trimmed." Even the wonderful words were of the coming rajkumar. . . . Then the voice of the Twice-born droned as background to—a father walking in the gardens, hand in hand with a young prince.

Asita's words were as dull platitudes, and the trident on his forehead, the mark of Siva, the destroyer—became but a blur.

After the prayers and devotions the palace leaped from its lethargy to sensitive abandon. Pure Rice aroused and gulped more wine. Wine would steady him so he could climb to Pati's apartment—where a table of food was set for him. He got up staggering, and two attendants helped him up the stairs. He stumbled to a bench by the balcony rail of the third floor landing. "Come, come here, my Pati!" With heavy gesture he referred to the entertainment in progress on the court below. Nautch girls in elaborate costumes moved in a lively village dance to the accompaniment of lutes and sitars, while members of the Ikshvaka family, lords and ladies alike watched but did not see. It was a nightly "boring spectacle."

Pati came slowly and with heavily-machited eyes looked down disdainfully upon the dancing girls, and commented upon the hollowness of clinking glass bangles on ugly limbs. "They are repulsive!"

The applause from the court below when the song was finished sounded "wooden, as farmer's clappers in a rice field." Now a hired musician was bowing with his instrument in hand, and making ready to play.

"But—" the king insisted as the sound of an esraj solo floated to them there—"music and dancing—a young prince should enjoy, do you not think—?"

"The young lords below—seem unmoved—" Pati said coldly. "And—the girls on the mats behind the portieres have scorn on their faces. . . ."

The king looked closer—, "Hai—they are unhappy, all of them—as will my son be—. Pati,—look across the fields yonder—all that is his to possess—when he is of age—all his to inherit."

"And likewise the Ayran vices—as below, my king—" the dark wife said haughtily. "Ayran vices—wine, women, and gambling. . . ."

Now the girls were back—singing in hoarse, over-strained voices, their unhappy faces forcing smiles. . . . "Need something new around here—something new—but now I need food. Pati—let us go inside. . . ."

Pati's apartment was the gayest in the palace. Its walls were mother-of-pearl in bold relief of bird and lotus design. Bear skin rugs, coverings of gold cloth, golden vases and ornaments enhancing inlaid furniture bespoke her desire for luxuries. He glanced from side to side and made his way to a table where food was spread. "Broiled pheasant breast, sweetmeat dainties and tempting white grape wine!"

Pati moved to a couch and reclined gracefully, throwing back her sari from her limbs. Pure Rice looked upon her and thought how the red of her garment accented her dark beauty—went well with her shining oiled hair. . . . Adorned with heavy bracelets, anklets and nose jewels—she was more beautiful than Maya—perhaps. . . . "How much did I pay your father for you—? Oh—that's right—You're worth it. Walk before me, Pati!" He tensely watched her glide to the balcony and back to the couch where she flung her sari and lay down, posing her naked beauty. . . . "Hai, worth it! You're a beautiful woman, Pati—." He continued to speak of her beauty, his mouth full as he talked.

The wine was gulped laboriously. He rose to go to the couch. "I'm a fool to stay away from such a woman. . . . Such a woman!" He moved to the couch, weaving drunkenly.

"It has been ten moons since I have had the wife's privileges, my lord—. I am honored with your presence—. I had hoped to be the first to give you a son, my lord. . . ." Her eyes lowered as he sat on the foot of the couch, leaning forward.

"Didn't know—. Didn't know you cared about being a mother. Such a change in your figure and all." Pati turned away from him when his beard touched her face. He took her face in his hands, "Look at me, Pati! Do you want a child only because of Maya? To share in my wealth? Or would it really make you happy?"

There was a silence; only the flashing eyes answered. Pure Rice reflected, "Maya used to say—happiness is a star to brighten the ways a soul should go. . . ."

"I think she was quoting, my lord," the black eyes flashed. "I too am familiar with many quotes. Our father is a well-read man, and well traveled. In the days when he was unburdened of debt—"

"No words now about how I'm responsible for your father's ill fortunes!" The king's voice rose, "I paid plenty to keep him from want once—he should have used it wisely. I have my own territory to see after—and I am going to make it the most prosperous of all the provinces—for my son shall become a great ruler!"

"How do you know it will be a son?" Pati mocked. "You may have to wait for a son from my womb, my lord. . . ." She closed her eyes, "Oh Vayu—grant a son—. By all the gods of the sacred mountains, I must have a son!"

Pure Rice impulsively got up and stood defiantly at the doorway, gesturing with his fist toward the white mountains, "A son, do you hear, you demon Siva!"

Pati was at his side instantly, tugging at his arm, coaxing him irately, "Don't you know that the destroyer might come? Stay your words, my lord!" And she began drawing the curtains of her apartment.

"Not afraid, are you, wife?" The raja's voice was rounded, then it changed to straight inflection. "I would not wish a child of mine to be afraid, Pati! If you expect to birth a son for me, change yourself first—for there are many things in you I should not wish repeated in my family. But—we shall not mention them tonight, love. It has been some time since I have been here, so it should be a pleasant visit. Maya and I had interesting discussions; our more enjoyable evenings were when we discussed broadly the aspects of life's most enjoyed energy, love. What do you know of love, Pati?"

The black eyes of Pati came together with tightened lids, then

opened quickly as her alert mind remembered a quote, "Love is evasive. When it is offered, we should grasp it and keep it as an amulet to wear."

The king did not hear; he had lapsed into dreaming of the coming rajkumar. "I shall adore him, Maya's child, for she is so perfect—you know, my son shall be. Let us give our affections to him—you too, as if he were your son—for you are fond of your sister, aren't you?"

Her eyes were flashing again, Pure Rice noticed, as the well-rounded words of disdain stabbed, "I hate my sister, and my son will hate her son!"

Soberness brought perception. Pure Rice raised on his elbow and looked at the dark face of Pati. "And you hate me, also. Why? Haven't I given you enough?"

"I hate you not, my lord," she replied contumely, moving closer to him on the couch. "Your gifts have been excellent, my lord. . ."

"Then, you should not look at me—thus. Remember what it was in the marriage ceremony? Your eyes must be kept free of anger and you are to administer to thy husband's happiness."

"I shall comply willingly to my husband's—requests. . . ."

His breath fell heavily against her ear. "Let thy mind be cheerful and thy beauty bright, it said—my Pati—remember?" His greasy beard brushed against her shoulder.

"I remember it, every word, my lord."

"Repeat it, Pati—. Maya used to say it to me as she lay in my arms . . . 'Be not parted for a hundred autumns' it said—'I shall form with thee a blest alliance.' A wedding ceremony should be remembered at times like this—."

He raised his head and looked at her. She closed her eyes so that he could not see the jealousy his words aroused. "What were the ceremonial words, my rimpoche?"

He recognized a resolution in her voice as she spoke, withholding herself from him, "I am to be happy and prosperous in my lord's house, over his house, his sons and daughters rule su-

preme—. It said 'Closely unite thy body with this man—so you shall both be full of years—and fulfill thy destiny—which is to bring forth valiant sons.' " Then she relaxed submissively.

During the hours which Pure Rice spent in the quarters of her younger sister, queen Maya was seeking the will of Vayu, god of wind to send messages to him. The chariot had reached Lumbini park on the river road where the two girls from the Koli palace "used to come to play" as children. Maya lay beneath a jasmine screen with up-turned face and cried out piteously, "Oh, god of the winds, go tell Pure Rice—to send help. Help. . . . Go quickly, Channa. . . . Fetch the physician from my father's house. . . . At once! I cannot bear jolts of the rough road. Go—hasten, my Channa. . . . I will lie here in the park—until he comes. . . ."

Remembering the threat of the king, "to have him killed if anything happened to her,"—Channa placed the queen on a mound of earth and hurried away toward the Koli palace.

It was such a short ways to the Koli territory, but Maya felt she could not travel it. She had been accustomed only to luxuries and ease—and suffering was something she had not experienced. . . . Wind from the river Rhoni stirred a sea of flowers, purple, red and white. . . . Wind among the azaleas and rhododendrons. . . . She cried loudly through the forest. "Beloved, Pure Rice, come! Oh Vayu—come hither with thy divine presence and give me ease. . . . Send messengers to my beloved. . . . Send help, divine one. Help!"

Footsteps were on the walk! The wailing ceased and the queen lifted her head to see the help that had come,—an old woman, ragged and filthy, accompanied by a younger girl of no less repulsiveness. Through curiosity, in answer to the cry for help, they moved closer to look into the face of the queen. . . .

"Look you, my daughter—this woman is of high caste, but she must suffer the same as you. . . . The gods have decreed it. . . . When we follow the desires of the flesh, we suffer. Shabash!"

The raspy voice grew a little kinder as she bent over the one

in travail. "It is well you call upon the gods, for none other has been sent you than the hands of a well-trained dhai."

Maya said in weak voice, surprise more prevalent than gratitude, "You—you help with child-bearing?"

"I said I was a dhai, didn't I?" Then the woman turned to her daughter, "She must be of the Kapila pavilion. Why didn't she stay where they have a dhai to look after her?" And to Maya she said, bending over, "No need to call on the raja. If he could be with all his subjects who would call on him—he'd have no time to make government. . . ."

Prayers came with groans. "Oh mighty Siva, stay thy hand!"

The guttural voice of the dhai interrupted, "Go, daughter and fetch the rag of quince seed on the shelf by the door. . . . And the snake skin over the door. I must have something to attract the gods."

"What do you plan to do?" Maya protested weakly, raising herself.

"Lie down!" The harsh voice startled the birds from their nests in the talis tree. "Have no qualms. I am well trained in child delivery and I will have your belly empty of its load in time. . . ." She began to knead with her fists.

Ignoring the painful cries, the woman talked as she kneaded, "This is the first step to loosen Siva's grasp. . . . And the scales and fangs of the snake skin will be after vexing release. . . . Hold still, I say!"

The queen's screams penetrated the wind-driven park as the woman began to butt with her head, standing Maya against the talis tree. "It is as much discomfort to me, Jetsuma," she said. "But for the raja, I would have passed you by. . . . He bids us do kindness one to another. . . . In the name of holy Pure Rice, I perform this act." She threw the suffering one to the ground and began to walk on her with bare, bony feet.

The girl returned with the filthy rag of quince seeds and the snake skin wrapped around her brown arm. The evil-eyed one

snatched the bag and quickly wound the snakeskin about it. "If these bring no results, I shall try balls from the hollyhock roots. . . ." She paused in the painful applying of the charms—and looked out across the pasture. "Achala! Is that not a goat I see? Hai, goat hair is the better. Go, daughter and fetch me a handful of goat's hair. . . ."

The girl obeyed.

The moaning Maya tried to protest. The dhai forced her down again. The weak lips entreated, "Go away, leave me."

"Hear that, daughter? As I get her about ready to deliver she says, 'go away'. . . And if this don't effect it, we'll try the monkey's skull on the—table, by—the door."

"Oh—beloved Pure Rice. . . ." The rana cried as the rough hand tore her.

"She keeps speaking of the raja," the girl offered. "She must be a dancer in the palace. . . ."

Turning to the younger girl, the arrogant one chided, "Don't get ideas you'd like to run away and be such. You're bought. Paid for. . . ." Then the raspy voice shrieked against the wind as a horny hand held the goat's hair up toward the sky, "We call down with worship the god with braided hair and blazing form. . . . Come forth, grant us shelter!"

The young girl, who had been bought by an old man, looked on in horror, waiting to be sent for the monkey skull. But her mother was well pleased with the regular pains effected. "Get ready to write the gutli; the wee one will be crying soon for its first food."

The old woman and girl went in search of such a paper to write the magic words on, the lucky coil to be given the new-born infant, and Maya realized she was left alone. She raised her suffering-spent body to a sitting position. As she did, she heard the sound of chariot wheels above the winds, "Oh Vayu, do grant life!"

Chapter 2

At news of the child's birth, and upon the word that it was a male child, the Kapila king enthusiastically sent out a decree over the province, "high festival" should be kept, honoring the rajkumar which the gods had bestowed upon the kingdom. It should be a time of good will and peace. There should be no covetous spirits prevalent in the land and none should be at enmity. Soldiers should make no wars. "Proclaim throughout the kingdom, a royal son is born!"

Immediately, gifts to the needy of the kingdom and to the royal kinspeople alike were sent out. Sheep, horses, elephants, according to the moment's fancy. . . . In extreme benevolence gifts were sent to the temples, and Pure Rice was happier than he had been all his days. This happiness made him forget the need for drink and opiates.

New teakwood furniture was sent to Maya's apartment. A cradle of carved ivory was waiting, ready for the heir upon arrival and indeed all Kapila was keeping high festival that fifth day when the child was brought through the streets beside its mother on a painted palanquin. Every house was banner-draped, and every door was decked with garlands. People in holiday attire poured from the houses and filled the streets as the sounds of the procession neared.

Drummers, jugglers, magicians, charmers, musicians, all came

in ecstatic file, tramping joyously the bright flowers strewn before them on the street. The people cried out bantering and joking, saying good times were ahead. When the palanquin approached, they cried, "Shreemati!" and "Jetsuma!" in address to the queen. Then to the young prince beside her, in elated unison rose the salutation, "Jai, Jai-Rajkumar!"

On through the palace gates, the procession went, and the crowds followed, eagerly trying to catch a glimpse of the royal child, richly adorned and resplendent with unguents. On to the palace the crowd surged to watch the presentation of the royal son to the proud king.

Sephalia wreaths were hung along the way the golden canopied palanquin was brought. Royal pennons were waving from the palace walls. Inside, incense braziers sent up fragrant odors of sandal wood. . . . The king was waiting in his most expensive robe, a most elegant turban was caught in place with a large emerald—. Immeasurable pride and joy, which had helped to keep sobriety, now vexed him to cry out commandingly, "Bring me wine. I need strength to meet this, the greatest hour of my life!"

When the loud cries of "Jai, Jai! Rajkumar!" were within his court he ran to meet the procession with outstretched arms, great joy filling his soul. His hands shook with palsic tremor as he reached eagerly and joyously to touch flesh of his flesh, "Ah, complexion of Devas down and eyes like the new moon!" His hands came together in child-like pleasure as he realized his son was Ayran. His beautiful golden-haired son!

Kings from adjoining provinces, wise men from China enroute to Tibet, merchantmen from the Babylon cavalcades coming forth, brought gifts to the new-born prince. Gifts of jade and nard, woven-webbed turksies, waistcloths of silk, decorated with pearls. . . . Words of these men aroused such hope, "Thou mighty redeemed monarch," they said. And he remembered the saying that a man begetting a son would save himself and the following seven generations. . . . Save them from the purgatories. . . . "Then our

son is to be a virtuous son! What say the wise men? Does my son manifest fulfillment of prophecy?"

"He has the markings of the Tathagata," he was told. "He will attain Buddhahood!"

And for the first time he looked at Maya, "The gods have answered—." He lifted his shoulders and moved back a step—"Maya!" Her face was as a corpse! "Maya, my beloved!"

Her voice was unsteady, but tender and filled with devotion, "As I wished to be with my parents when I brought forth new life, so now, I wish to be with my husband—in death."

Pure Rice grasped the side of the palanquin and fell to his knees. Death? His bleary eyes looked first at Maya and then at the child. Death—! "The gods have betrayed me! The Gods have received my many gifts and yet they threaten the life of my dearest possession. . . . Maya, my rimpoche!"

Pati, who stood near, looking upon the mother and child, now spoke for the first time since their arrival, and her voice was colorless. "The gifts were bestowed upon the gods asking for a rajkumar, not for Maya. The gods have given an heir to Kapila. . . ."

Pure Rice comprehended. "More gifts must go to the temples at once!" He motioned for the request to be effected. For a space of time he knelt beside the palanquin. And then he became conscious of the pounding of drums. . . . The constant beat of drums. Deafening drums!

According to custom, drums were being beaten incessantly to keep the bhuts away from the new born infant. Evil spirits were supposed to come and steal away the soul of the new-born. . . . But, what—what of the soul of Maya? "Maya, my beloved?" Pure Rice gasped, rose to his feet, rocking his huge frame back and forth as he listened.

The celebration noises became unbearable in his ears. He looked over at the strained face of the rana, Maya, and then went down the steps shouting, "Let the celebration cease! There must never be celebrating within these gates again!"

He ran frantically from one guard to the other, "Go, do you hear my command! Go to every street in the town, every corner of the province, crying, 'Take down the silken banner. . . .' Close the gates, all celebration must cease." He ran back inside the court. His voice sank to a low whisper. "My Maya—is dying—." To the bearers of the palanquin he said, "To the queen's chamber with her—quickly, easily. . . ."

He followed along behind as they moved up the stairs, Pati and the Koli king following also. When one of the bearers jerked a little or stumbled slightly, Pure Rice stormed out, "Easy, I say!"

The Koli king, father of the dying woman spoke more quietly, as they walked down a hallway to the rana's newly decorated quarters, "We shall sacrifice to all the gods of the celestial!"

The weak one looked up, pleading, "Hai, to Yama!"

Pure Rice hearing her request, groaned, "Yama—god of death!" He stared at Maya until Pati touched his arm.

"Send for the holy water from the sacred river," Pati was saying. Holy water was used in the last rites—before death. Maya was dying—dying!

"Water from the Ganges!" he turned and shouted to a servant, "At once!" But, he quieted his voice as he turned and watched them placing his beloved tenderly on her bed—then lifting the child from the palanquin to an ivory cradle beside her. "I can never live without her."

Pati leaned over Maya's bed and said dutifully, "We shall see after the child, no fear."

Maya smiled with her eyes, "He is—beautiful, isn't he?"

"Ayran, every feature," Pati assured.

Maya spoke slowly, appealingly, "You will also serve our beloved lord?"

At this, the raja rushed to the bedside, but the physician from Benares who had followed the procession was entering the room, with an attendant, saying, "No talking; and all must leave these quarters!"

It took insistence from Pati and her father, the Koli king to get Pure Rice from the bed of his dying wife. He defied the physician whom he felt was to blame for the condition of Maya. And finally when he and his father-in-law were seated opposite each other on marble benches beside a lotus pool of a cloistered terrace, he said, "You—you let them kill her—and she holds my only happiness. If you but loved your daughter half as much as I—you would have found a better physician."

Then, the old contention concerning wealth which the Koli ruler had accepted from Kapila and "flung to the winds" became a part of the accusation, "You know not how to direct any affair!" Pure Rice snarled.

Pati came between with commanding gesture, indicating that their voices were heard in the sick room, and the two sat and looked at each other in reproachful stares. The holy man, Asita bowed before them, his "twin threads" slightly awry, "None but the Heavenly teacher of Enlightenment which was to come, has come. His body, golden in color and eyes like the new moon; these characteristics foreshadow most excellent wisdom."

The grandfather looked questioningly at the Brahman of wisdom, "Have these miraculous signs not occurred in former royal families?"

The red marks on Asita's forehead blended with his face as he talked excitedly, "Say not so, say not so. Two former rishis begat excellently endowed sons, one skilled in the making of royal treaties, and one Atri who was able to control disease, and then there was one who comprehended the heretical systems. And Canaka, without a teacher acquired the power of abstraction."

"But not one has come to the supreme enlightenment, until my offspring?" The Koli king queried. "You but speak to worm your way into our affections! Be gone!" And the ebony cane came down with force on the tiled floor. "I hate pretense!"

The Kapila king stormed, "Let the holy man speak! He speaks truth! My son is the greatest born into the world! Say on, Asita!"

But Asita saw that he was failing in conciliatory powers. He knew of the Koli king's "spells" when he got excited, and he decided his speech was more harmful than good. He observed the trembling hands on the ebony staff and he read the bleary eyes as a sign of impatience; he knew he must not continue in more detail. He took leave with a gracious bow to both monarchs saying, "The child shall indeed become a Tathagata, and you shall experience true joy in your hearts, oh most fortunate ones—joy that shall live forever and banish sadness and anxiety. . . . I have observed the signs."

"What signs?" Pure Rice called out as Asita moved away.

The doctor was coming to them now, "I will explain, if I may, your honor. . . ."

"You have much explaining to do," the Kapila king said, sternly.

Pure Rice studied the doctor's face with fiery intensity as he listened to his words, "The doctors of Alexandria have explanation for it—and I believe your Brahmin here has another, but to me it is a peculiar marking of this particular child, that of webbed toes and fingers. . . ." There were quick interchanges of concern between the two kings and differences were forgotten when the doctor said—, "But there is something else which is a worse handicap still,—not an injury that might have been inflicted prior or during birth, but I believe it to be inherited—, the child will never be able to turn its head without turning its body also. It has a stiff spine."

The silence was heavy with insinuations. Finally the doctor continued, "That I would leave as it is—for fear of a fatal step, but I would recommend an operation on the fingers and toes. . . ."

Pure Rice looked at him with narrowing brows, "I will have no more of your operations. You have killed my wife!" His voice was threatening.

The Koli king intervened, "Let us have no ill thoughts on this beautiful morning of singing birds. Abide the knowledge that

the gods are awaiting a loved one in this house—. The doctor performed an operation which is accepted by the school of Alexandria, authority of the world, that of opening the side and taking the child, so there is no chance that he could have caused injury to the child. . . . All damage to Maya was already done by a common dhai who found her on the road where she lay, she having begged the driver of the chariot to leave her there, to avoid suffering pain over the rough roads. Channa did only as he was bidden. The doctor did only as his wisdom directed."

"I shall wait here, however, and try to repair the damage as done by the dhai," the doctor said. "I did as I could under the circumstances, my dear raja. I know she is very dear to you. . . . I know also that the child shall become more dear because of his infirmities. . . .I trust that he indeed will become a great rishi." The doctor went on calmly, "The good rana has said I have done what I could. She has given me her blessing. If I never have yours, oh most noted monarch, I shall feel that my act has been accepted by the gods."

The night went by in praying silence. None had slept in the palace when the voice of Asita resounded through the corridors, "Rise, our life, our breath, the darkness is gone and light approaches! Ushas has opened a path for the sun. Mother of gods, mirror of the Infinite, banner of sacrifice, shine forth. . . . Arise, give ear to our prayers, thou Giver of all good things."

Time for the morning worship came. After all of the household was assembled, the queen was brought, together with the child, although her face of pain made no indication of showing she understood, and was taken from one shrine to another: Varuna, deity presiding over the sky; Indra, lord of Heaven; Agni, god of fire, Vayu, lord of winds; Vavitra, dawn; Soma, lord of sacrificial drink and Yama, god of death. As the wreath of blue smoke lifted from the altar of Agni, god of fire, Pure Rice found a welcomed distraction from the solemnity of the worship and sadness of the occasion. A hymn was chanted by the worshippers, "Thou reignest

by thy own nature over the heavenly and over the terrestrial as a kind friend to men, not to be led astray—sitting in the midst, the lovely one in the house. . . ." The phrase, "lovely one in the house" could but refer to the infant Artha. "Oh my lovely one—" the raja cried out, "what could be more wonderful—than a child in the house?" More joy would follow its tiny, racing feet than a horde of dancing girls. And he visualized himself watching the child at play—with Maya beside him. Then poignantly he came to himself, with an emptiness of soul he looked back at the wailing ones. . . . There was Maya before the shrines for the last time. The gods had decreed that she be taken from him.

In all things he had prospered. Flocks and herds had increased four-fold. After all bargains he had become richer. He would give everything if he could bargain with the bardo—but he had heaped wealth at the feet of the temple gods, and the gods were to betray him. The life of Maya could not be purchased. He cursed the gods, and he cursed his wealth, and he sat dejected, bemoaning fate.

The Koli king came to comfort him. "I pray you, blame not the gods for this act. This is a world of cause and effect. The gods must do their work through things of the world, and men."

"Go you from me!" Pure Rice sneered.

"I would stay and have you see me—as an example of grief. I felt the same as you when my beloved rana was taken—and grief made of me a miserable, wretched and ill man. I am the result of grief. As Maya is—from maltreatment." As the older king spoke, Maya's palanquin approached. "Ah, her face now is the same as the face I worshipped—and it is as now I—give them both back—to the gods—, my rana and daughter!"

He clutched at the opal-beaded portiere near to where he stood, as he gasped in pain. Pure Rice went to him, catching his arm as he fell forward. The doctor also ran to aid, and the old king of Koli commanded attention of all the worshippers. . . . "The gods are angry this day!" they observed, and the petitioning ceased.

Maya was taken back to her apartment in a dying condition.

The doctor said that the Koli king would recover, although he would have recurring attacks—but Maya was destined to die this day. "The power of the gods is greater than my skill. I leave her in the hands of the priests."

Now, Pure Rice knew that the gods were deaf to the ears of mortals, that there was no use to cry to the sacred mountains for solace. After all he had given at the altars. He went to an aperture that offered a view of the mountains, with the thought of—crying out curses to the gods—but he saw a swarm of large butterflies going toward the Himalayas—colors of jacinth and lazulite mosaiced against the sky—soft-winged butterflies. In some such way soon—Maya's soul should go.

He went into his dafter and sat for some time with his head in his hands. The voice of Asita in his ear forced thoughts away from the "Humph!" and "Phat!" sounds of the priests defying the evil spirits—which had surely entered this house. But, Asita was saying, "The child will compensate for the loss your soul will know. He will surely reach the state of Samyak-Sambohdi. If he be induced to engage in the things of the world, he will indeed be a universal monarch, recognized over all the great earth, uniting all other kingdoms in his sway as the lesser lights beneath the sun."

And then Asita said, "But, if he seek a dwelling among the forests, with single heart searching for deliverance, he will arrive at perfection of true wisdom and he shall become illustrious throughout the world as the great deliverer. Ah, great one, this is the better choice; pray that your son shall accept the yellow robe. Pray—"

"And refuse all this I have to offer?" Pure Rice rose and gestured wildly. "All that I have sought to accumulate—but to give to him who should come to inherit my kingdom?" The broad palms were rubbed together, and the rounded shoulders leaned forward; the incensed king crouched tiger like, as if to spring at Asita's throat—, "I will not allow you to prophecy in my house!"

Pati, coming to go to the death chamber with her husband,

stepped between the two men and received the blow which was aimed at Asita, although it relaxed before any harm was done. Pure Rice caught her in his arms—, "My Pati!—oh, my rimpoche—I meant not to harm you." A feeling of endearment for her, the first he had experienced, came with the thought that he might have hurt her."You—you are all I have left—, you and—the child."

Staring at the fleeing holy man, he explained, "But—he was prophecying my son should accept the hermit weeds!"

Pati was not consoling. "If, when he comes to be an admi, if that is his ambition I shall agree that it is well—as will you when you come to your senses. Is not the present filled enough with sorrowing without adding fears of the future? Come, you owe my sister the respect of your presence as her soul goes from this world."

For the first time Pati felt close to Pure Rice. That morning when she fried puri cakes, she abhorred the task and lamented being left alone to supply food to satisfy his enormous appetite. But now she looked compassionately upon him as he reached for her arm, and she said, tenderly as she knew, "Come, my lord."

The purhoits were performing the death rites and the crying infant was brought into Pati's apartment. The second wife looked at the ivory cradle as it went through her doorway, and she turned to the raja, "Is this the way the wedding ceremony must find meaning? Her son to be 'my son'?"

The raja did not answer for the priests' chant commanded his attention, "Grieve not over destiny. Safe shalt thou come when thou are quit of flesh. Of that which is born, death is certain—of that which is dead, re-birth is certain. Therefore, grieve not over destiny."

The earthen vessel, bearing sacred water from the Ganges was brought forth, and his cry of grief halted the mourning momentarily, "Drink it, my Maya—it is all we know, what the priests tell us—, drink it!"

The parched lips moved when the water touched them, as if the dying one had heard.

The deep intoning of the priests' rites reached the courtyard where scores of loyal subjects had gathered to be near when news of the rana's death came. "Giver of breath, of power and vigor, he whose commandments all created gods acknowledge, the lord of death, Yama, hear us. Yama, whose shade is life immortal, hear us." And the crowd was respectfully and thoughtfully silent, each was communing with his own conscience and vowing to make ready to meet—Yama.

The scriptures muffled through the purhoits' beards, invoked sober thoughts in the mind of Pati as she listened, bent over the ivory cradle, "Women are sent forth to be mothers. To die, performing duty is no ill." And as the grass wreaths were passed by the priests to ward off evil, she accepted one around her neck, and felt it as a bond of her dying sister, whose child she was to rear. "I will, I will serve the child, Maya—" she said to herself, "but, the time shall be when I shall also serve flesh of my flesh—for now, I have our lord, all to myself!"

She held herself in control as many women receiving the fragrant wreaths collapsed. As Yama's epitome in verse rang out, "The soul is not slain when the body is slain, and those who would try to glimpse the soul on this earth are those likely to escape the outward death," she winced uneasily.

The curtain of the death couch was drawn. The clinking of the pearls embroidered on the gold cloth was heard as a tinkle of a bell from the Infinite world. All was very quiet, listening as the breath of Maya became less audible—and then was heard no more. The large frame of the prostrate king, bent forward, his turban most touching the curtain—was shaking with convulsive sobs.

Channa, the last of the servants to receive the darbha ring brushed past him and caused the glassy eyes to look up—. No word was spoken. But Channa was remembering the king's words

—threatening his life if anything harmed the rana—. The groom only looked into the wild eyes with compassion—and the king that at other times would have stormed out—sat silent, staring at the curtain.

The curtain was moving—at the head of the couch. . . . Priests were changing the garment of the dead one—backwards to allow the exit of the evil spirit. . . . Now, they were at the foot of the couch—as they performed the age-old custom of tying the two large toes of the corpse. And finally the curtain was still. . . . The mourning cry of, "Hari-bol!" went up. "Hari-bol!" It grew louder as voices added from the cloistered square—and it augmented with cries yet from the courtyard, "Hari-bol!" But Pure Rice remained inarticulate.

Pati, having quieted the infant, was now back in the doorway of Maya's room. She did not join in the mourning—she stood looking at the tragic figure of the king. She knew he wished to cry out against the gods, against any who said it was the will of the gods—. She knew this was not his nature to sit silent and somber—like an immovable image of a cursed god. It was not his nature to hold his emotions, thus—. He was remembering that a good Hindu was preordained to be dispassionate? No— No— something terrible was wrong with Pure Rice. She went over and touched his arm—. The look he gave her made her afraid, and she moved away from him.

He sat in silence—throughout the remaining day, until sundown when the funeral procession was about to go to the corner of the grove for the final rites. A priest came to lend courage, saying, "Death is but the door to open the way to infinite peace—" The priest coaxed him to rise and go—down the azalea path with him—although he realized the futility of trying to penetrate to the core of grief in that frozen silence. Down to the place of the ghat where the mourners had halted with the body of Maya, the priest and raja moved slowly—in halting steps.

The sun was momentarily a fire on the brow of the mountains

and the night stars filling the skies were as sparks from it. . . . At the end of the path—soon, another fire would flare. . . . There was the pyre decked with fresh flowers, a piece of fibre rope and an urn beside it. . . . Pure Rice gazed upon it with unseeing eyes as the body of Maya was placed there.

This was not really his beloved that he looked upon—for the last time. . . . No, Maya's limbs were supple and her face beamed with animation. . . . "Know you not this is the season for calm weather?" she had said bright-eyed and joyful—only a few days before. Ah, that day when she went away he had felt the premonition of this awful thing that was to happen to her. . . . This thing that held her here—not because of the cord the purhoits were binding her with—but Maya was held in the confines of death. . . .

"Obeisance to the Lord of the Universe. Show us the path of bliss." The droning of the priests fell on the heavy-scented night air as a great humming of bees over flowers. . . . Maya was a flower of enlivening fragrance. . . . This was not she—on the hard pyre—where the priests were spreading the five products of the sacred cow in the Pancha-gavya rites. This was but the face that had been hers—and to remember it he must go closer to look upon it—to look upon it.

As he stepped forward a priest placed rice in his hand. . . . What must he do with rice? Then he remembered, each member of the family was to place a grain in the mouth of—the corpse—and utter a prayer—for—Maya. . . . . He was first. . . . . The last words of the priests were yet in his mind—"Oh, Lord of the Universe—show us the path to bliss. . . . " This admonition beat against his brain as the kinspeople went forward with their grains and prayers. How could he ever find bliss without Maya—? There could never be any happiness for him again.

Now a priest was placing a torch in his hand—handing a lighted torch to him? Hai—the husband of the deceased always—set-off the fire—on the pyre. . . . It was he—who must do this—this to Maya. . . . He stumbled forward, almost falling against the

flower-banked pyre—then somehow the torch fell from his grasp and—the conflagration started. . . . The blaze was consuming the flowers—now touching the sari of Maya—"Maya!" he cried in loud voice against the cries of "Hari-bol!" and he turned and ran from the burning ghat as a wild animal coming suddenly upon a forest fire. He ran madly into the path and down the court walk, screaming out denunciations to the gods for taking his rana away from him. He went on up the stairs—three flights of them—to the apartment of Pati—where the child was, and he fell before the ivory cradle—, "My son, my beautiful son. . . ." he said in an almost inaudible whisper.

Then a new empowering force possessed him and he rose to his feet again filled with vigor. He pushed aside the guards and lords closing about him and he went to the balcony where the group of subjects could be seen anxiously crowding, pushing forward up the steps of the palace—then the big voice commanded, "Hear, all of you! Subjects, family, servants—all of you over whom I have the power of death—, I will have you killed if you disobey this order . . . !"

Every face turned in tense gaze—upward, looking in fear upon their king, they waited to hear the decree:

"The gods have shown their power; now I shall show mine!" The strong voice of the raja thundered as a blast from an erupting volcano, and the people cringed in fear and stepped back as he moved closer toward them. They listened, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, as if they envisioned what their mad king might do—if they disobeyed. . . . "My son must never look upon death!"

The people stood as acolytes at the foot of a high place when their guru called forth the gods in array. Pure Rice was as a threatening god of destruction, defying and warning—, "Hear, all of you—, my son must not know of death!"

Chapter 3

Simultaneous with the cry of the holy man waking the palace to life, came sounds of life in the garden bowers. Plump-necked parrots, parakeets and many smaller birds were noisy in vines and trees. Playful monkeys chattered in high voice. A flock of white peacocks cackled and strutted on the lawn. Swans dived in loud splashes in the lake. Two young princes with their pet mongoose were noisy beside the lotus pool.

Everywhere on the grounds of the Kapila palace, things were bright and lovely, for every flower on every stalk stood prim and fresh. The gardeners had been out since the sun but reflected its light over the scallop of mountains, at their task of destroying all signs of death in the gardens. Dead blossoms of moonflowers, rhododendrons, laurel, roses, moghras . . . all were picked carefully and thrown into a bonfire beyond the hedge. Even the tall rose vine that climbed to the third story was pruned daily . . . for the king had decreed death if but a petal was left on the ground for Prince Siddhartha to find when he came out.

Channa, the charioteer, who was as fond of the young prince as he was of the king, came before his work in the stables began, to assist in the chore of the gardens, and to lend courage. . . . "The old raja would never have one put to death for such a small offence. . . . Has he not sworn many times against my life—but ya haven't had to pluck me down to the ghat yet, have ya?" Yet,

secretly, Channa wondered if some day the old ruler might not go completely out of his mind and effect such an order.

Asita, the holy one, adjusted his "twice-born" cords and bowed with bared head, to the four quarters of earth, entreating the gods —as he threw rice, invoking good will from all the gods of the celestial—and all the winds that blow, "Hold off evil from the sky and the earth beneath. . . ." This was a very special day, no evil must cloud any of Kapila territory, on the birthday of the young prince Siddhartha.

Unmindful of the wreath of blue smoke beyond the blue ganthi border where the dead blossoms were losing identity in ashes, the two young princes walked about examining with keen interest the growing things of the garden. Young Artha, in short white silk kurta and pearl-studded vest, his golden hair neatly coiled and set with jewels was very delicate-looking beside the no less beautiful younger prince Devad in an elegant waistcoat of red with real rubies bordering its hemline which his ama, rana Pati had selected to enhance his handsome dark face.

"Let us fish in the pool," Devad asked as Channa passed by.

A leopard skin was brought for them to lie upon and watch the fish nibble at bait on golden hooks. . . . The wise Channa stayed to bait their hooks, he said—so that their dainty hands would not be mussed, but he had a better reason which he did not disclose. If a fish should be caught, he must not allow it to die in sight of young Artha. If the pet mongoose should decide to kill a snake or something—he would be on hand.

"Artha cannot bait hooks and do things well with his hands, can he?" Devad said.

Lest there was more mention of the deformity, Channa quickly changed the subject, "Say, this is his eighth birthday, we ought to be doing something very special today. Every day you fish in the lake, or play a game with your opal chessmen, or you go to archery—or ride horses. . . . What could we do out of the ordinary today?"

They tried to think of something nice. Artha finally said, "The children are coming with gifts for me, that will be nice—. I will be happy to have my cousins all together with me. . . ."

Thinking of the many gifts that Artha would be exclaiming over, Devad said—"I've a new bow and arrow—and can I shoot the mark? I will be eight my next birthday, but I am as large as you, if I am not as old. . . ." He flexed his muscles, "And you say yourself I am a better horseman than you. . . ."

Artha smiled, "But cousin Ardjuna is yet a better rider. . . ." He looked at the fishes in the water for awhile. Then—"Asita says the more birthdays I have, the more wise I shall be. . . ."

Devad laughed, "He thinks he is old, doesn't he?"

"What's old—?" Artha asked.

"I know—and I'm only seven." Devad bragged, taking the mongoose in his arms, "I know!"

And then as Channa nudged him he said, "You have so many gifts, I'll have Monny myself!"

Artha nodded, "I can love it without claiming it, can't I, Channa?" He relinquished the mongoose to Devad.

Devad was contentious, "You claim ama Pati—but she is my true ama."

"I know; she told me so. . . ." Artha became thoughtful.

"Did she tell you of your ama?"

"My pitri did; she is away in a beautiful new place and is very happy—. Oh, I must go ask something of Asita which he promised as a special treat today. . . ." Artha smoothed the pleats of his kurta and went across the garden. Devad followed. . . . Channa was left behind to think of something special to celebrate a birthday. . . .

"I had not forgotten, my young prince—, come let us sit on the ground and I shall tell of the day you were born." Asita invited as he sat on the ground and motioned for the princes to sit beside him. They copied, folding their legs under them, and placing their hands on their knees in the lotus posture. Asita began:

"Not even in the days when Manu begat a child called Brilliancy of the Sun had so great a prosperity been in the land —all because of your birth. All wickedness came to an end, no covetous spirit prevailed among the people and the rule of purity was practiced in all things. . . ."

"But—about being born—" Artha prompted.

Devad looked up piqued, "I was born also. . . ."

"But, prince Siddhartha's birth was very special, for it is he who shall become our raja some day. . . ." Asita said kindly.

"I could be ruler, if it were not for him. . . . If anything ever happens to him, I will, my ama said so!" Devad informed and Asita looked astonished.

"But—but we wish nothing to happen to our beautiful prince, do we?" Channa kissed the deformed hands. . . . "Oh, nothing must happen ever to Siddhartha. . . ." And he went on to tell of the day of the birth of the rajkumar, when many people brought gifts.

"My illustrious pitri also gave gifts, did he not?" Devad asked.

"That he did, to kinspeople, to ministers and to the poor. Whatever things were needed over the kingdom were supplied that day. The prisons were emptied and all the poor fed. Oh, it was a great day in the land. . . . But now, let us learn to meditate upon good things for the future of our prince. . . ." Asita placed before the boys, pieces of gochmen wood and showed them how to make their spines erect so pure thought could effect power. . . . "I wish you to learn early to seek truly a state of pure thought and nonviolence. . . . We must seek early to know of things of the spirit for the spirit teaches the mind and the mind—masters the body. . . . Now, come, look upon the wood—" But the boys were not still and Asita became fretted, "You have a birthday celebration in your thoughts today; we shall try tomorrow. . . ." And he kissed the hands of Artha again, repeating praise of such beautiful symbols.

Devad mocked as Asita went across the garden, "Such beautiful

hands!—You know what they remind me of? Crane's feet. . . . Crane's feet are webbed together. . . . Well, the swans' are too—and—say, that ought to make you a good swimmer! Let's jump in the pool and see how good you are. . . . Better, let us run away to the river—the Red river! Or maybe to the river Rhoni and the big dam—that would be very special for your birthday!"

The thought was tempting, but Artha decided, "It would cause so much concern. They would send out searchers for us. . . You see, I suppose they worry over me because they want me to be ruler for them some day. . . . Devad. . . ." Artha hesitated, "you can be it, if you want to so much as your voice seemed to say awhile ago. . . . I don't care to be like our pitri—always meeting with ministers and merchantmen, never having time to enjoy beautiful things. . . . I'd rather be like little Ananda; our little cousin is so happy and free—. Aren't you very fond of Ananda too? I think he is a rimpoche!"

Devad ignored the deviation from the subject, "Someone should grow up to be a good raja around here. You know how they say—our pitri hasn't been right since he set fire to your ama Maya's pyre. . . ." Devad knew he was divulging a secret.

"What is a pyre, Devad?"

"A stack of wood that burns people. . . ."

"What is 'burns,' Devad?"

Channa overheard and Devad squirmed as he motioned for him to come near, "I must talk with you, young prince. . . ."

"Talk with me, too—Channa, it is my birthday you know. Have you thought of something pleasant?" Artha said, coming up also.

Channa plucked his beard— "A ride—in the ekka?"

This was interesting diversion; they rode in the small chariot every day. . . . "Would you take us way up in the mountains where there are bears and tigers?" Devad urged.

"And leopards—?" Artha added, "We have bear rugs and leopard rugs, you know—. But, we must not go away when our noble cousins are coming. . . . There will be Ananda and Arhina,

Anuruddha, Kippy and all—so many could not ride in an ekka."

"For your birthday, they would ask for a mahout and a big white elephant—and for all the cousins to go with us on an excursion in the forest." Devad had thought of something very wonderful. Channa agreed to ask the king, and if the king said they could—well, he would make the plans. . . .

The boys were glad, and as the other children came with servants behind bearing gifts, they joined in the anticipation of a "ride to the mountains in a howdah—."

The gifts were taken to the spacious front hall and opened by the grateful eight-year-old. Arhina, his favorite girl cousin had brought him an ornament for his hair—; Kippy, a carved trinket box; Ananda, gold fishhooks. The small cousin quoted a paligan, "Long may glory ever win for thee. . . ."

Devad laughed derisively, and Artha ran to place his arms around Ananda.

"He is my favorite! I love him very much." The young prince looked around at the others, "Of course, I love all of you—well—. I did not mean that. . . . It is, I feel so good when Ananda is near."

Arhina came to his side, "Of course, everybody loves everybody! And we are not going to have any differences today, for we must be very glad on your birthday. . . ."

"I love you very much, too, Arhina. . . . You say such nice words," Artha began. . . . Then they looked up to see Channa coming from the stables with a big white elephant, a mahout on its snout, "Look, here comes our ride to the mountains! Now, we shall all be happy!"

"And here comes the raja!" They cried happily, as Pure Rice approached, swaggering.

The king was smiling, and the times he smiled—they loved him. His voice was jovial also, "So, the young rajkumar wishes a voyage on the white elephant today? He may have it." He gestured toward the white beast decked in costly trappings with banners of green and gold, Kapila's royal insignia. "It will be a

privilege for the people to see how handsome you are on your eighth birthday. . . . I shall ride with you through the streets."

"But," Devad objected, "we were going to the mountains for an outing. . . ."

The king's voice changed to sternness, "I do not wish my son to go to the mountains!"

Artha did not understand, "But—from here the mountains seem very nice."

"I know, my son—" the king explained—"but there are—dangerous passes. Besides, you would not disappoint your subjects—they are awaiting your parade."

"No—I must not be a disappointment to the people. . . ." Artha turned to the children, "My pitri will arrange for other white elephants so you also may be in the parade. You look beautiful, and the people will be happy to look upon you."

"Hai,—it will be the best parade ever in the province!" The king said happily, "But you must wait—until I explain to the ministers about something important. . . ."

"About who is to be my guru—?" Artha guessed. "Then you will see about the trip?"

The broad smile of the king suggested a sanction of that reason for delay—but he went to send out men to clear the way of the impotent, the ill and aged, to halt all mourning groups. And without too much delay the royal children and the raja and rajkumar of the province of Kapila were moving majestically down the broad streets and the people were calling out enthusiastic greetings. . . .

The impeccable rajkumar bowed and smiled dutifully from his howdah on the larger elephant which was resplendent also in gold mesh covering with jeweled rosettes. He spoke impatiently however to the attendants walking beside him bearing golden staves and colored palm leaves. "How much longer must this go on? We wish to be free on the mountains."

When they returned to the palace the rana Pati was out on the

grounds to watch them pass and she also praised them. How excellent it was that the young princes had allowed themselves to be seen by the people. She touched her lips to Siddhartha's turban, but she took Devad in her arms and said that he would be eight on his next birthday. Pure Rice looked upon his rana with a frown of disgust. She was still aggressive for herself and hers, but time was conquering the conniving spirit. . . . She was pregnant again and vanity was resigning for a time. . . . Jealousy was not too noticeable, for there was not too much occasion for it to flaunt itself these days. . . .

She revealed two gifts—two gem-set sandalwood framed slates, "One is for you, my Devad—so you will be advanced when the time comes for you to have a guru."

"I have a gift, also,—" The raja said, provoked. "But now, is it not enough for me to impart the name of the guru whom you shall begin studies with tomorrow?"

The eight-year-old bowed courteously before his father. And the father reared back proudly, "There are many learned men seeking knowledge of the higher realm now, I observed. . . . There is Solon in Greece; Ezekiel in Babylon; Confucius and Lao Tse in China and Viswamitri in Asia. . . . And I said to my ministers, 'Whom shall I get to teach my son?' And they in one voice said—'Viswamitri, the most learned, the farthest seen in scriptures.' And so, my son, Viswamitri is the guru you shall go to tomorrow." He smiled broadly, "And for this once you may go to the mountains!"

Things just couldn't be more perfect for a birthday. A servant was waiting on a slope of the Himalayas when the children arrived for the outing and delectable snow sherbet was served with rice cakes. Then they rode to the deodar line and cracked huge icicles that hung on the branches. They exclaimed over the snow flowers that blended so with the snow, they made a game of finding them. They peeked into dark crevices; Arno, the mahout told them animals made their homes there and it was dangerous to

venture too far. . . . They heard a growl of something—and ran to climb atop the elephants, and the party was over.

They urged faster riding down the slopes, and the swaying howdahs made great fun. . . . They laughed gleefully. As they passed a large opening of rocks once Devad, just for fun, jerked Artha's turban off and threw it into the rocks. Arno scolded, and said if an animal got the scent of that turban—it might remember for a long time and track Artha down—and harm him. . . . And Arno told the king when they got back.

Devad was punished, lashed by Pure Rice himself. At times like this the raja lost his reason and Pati feared him. She and Artha waited outside the dafter, cringing at every stroke. Artha agreed with his foster mother, ama Pati that his father was "but a beast to do this to Devad!"

"You are evil! As your ama is evil!" the big voice matched harshness in lashes. "It is like you to do anything to anyone for personal gain." Pure Rice, after spending himself with lashes flung the door open, "I knew you were listening! Come in, I wish to talk to you, also!"

"You are mad!" Pati accused, her eyes flashing hate, and her arms expressing love for her son as she pressed him close to her.

The sight of Artha softened the soul of Pure Rice, "Come, come —I have a gift for you." He procured a box from the mantel shelf, "Close your eyes and hold your hand."

Pati said, "Oh those hands! We will have to go through life looking at them! If you only had shown sense and had the operation!"

The silence was fraught with tenseness. Artha was abashed. Pure Rice's madness was returning, and Pati hastened to make amends, but her subtle insinuation made the situation only worse, "Oh, I made you open your eyes—but turn your head and it still will be a surprise, as he fastens it around your neck. . . . Oh, I forgot, you cannot turn your head."

Devad giggled and Pure Rice struck him with his hand, then

Pati pulled him away down the hall. Artha looked at his father in surprise, then up at the alabaster ceiling. The father had turned to look at a little red ochre vase on the mantel which was flanked by two vases of red roses, "Maya—my Maya—wore that necklace when she was eight, and I know she wished you to have it—this day—. My beloved!"

"Is she—that red vase—is it—?" Artha began, and Pure Rice, reaching to arrest his son's hand as it moved toward the vase of Maya's ashes, upset the roses, knocking the vase to the floor. "Go, child—that is all today!"

The next morning when he was about to leave for the guru, Siddhartha stopped by the dafter to tell his father goodbye. He was eagerly invited in, for Pure Rice sensed the impression he had made the evening before. . . . He walked in and stood looking down at the tiled floor—and the broken vase—. "What has happened to the roses? See. . . ." He stooped to pick up a withered rose. . . . "Surely this did not result from the ugly thing you did to Devad . . . .?"

The king turned aside, "Go—go to your guru—now."

Upon a low stool at the feet of Viwamitri young Artha sat, expecting great revelations of which he hungered to know. He remembered what Asita had taught him, "Look well and listen carefully, for the eye is uncertain and must be checked by the ear; the ear is uncertain and must be checked by the mind; the mind must depend upon the spirit—for without the spirit there is no mind." His mind dwelt on the word—spirit. . . . If this be true, then one should learn more of the spirit, he decided. But he was here to learn whatever the guru offered.

He traced with his writing stick on the slate—speech signs of people of all the nations, tokens of cave men, sea people, people who worshipped snakes beneath the earth, worshippers of the sun, the Magians and the Mound Dwellers. "All people are alike, are they not, most holy one?"

The guru pulled his beard and shrugged his shoulders, "They

are not alike, my most lovable one. . . . Some wear filthy rags and care little how they wind their turbans, wrapping them unevenly and tucking the ends at any convenient place. See, our turbans are in neat folds. . . ."

"I know. . . . But men themselves, are the same as birds are birds and—"

"That is the wrong way of learning. Among the Dravidians whom we Ayrans have conquered are those we accept only as servants—. Indeed there are those who have various trades that do not associate with each other. In every walk of life there are growing differences, so much so that soon there will be demarcations that advise, 'Come no further, you are not the caste I associate with.' "

The youth rose and salaamed before his master, "I pray forgiveness, but I was thinking on the teaching of Asita, in that the spirit impressed my mind that I am at one with Asita—and at one with Channa for they both love me very much."

"Hai, and love is the spirit which impresses the mind thus." A great admiration was growing; from that moment forward the guru knew he would seek to become beloved of his pupil also. . . . "It would be very wonderful if everyone could think that way, and after all—we are the same, and when we come to the final truth, very few attain commendably. You are one who no doubt will, if you continue to think profoundly. . . ."

"I would like for you to teach me concentration. I cannot sit long as Asita wishes me to," Artha asked coercively.

"That you will effect yourself. I can only create interests. Meditation comes naturally as does concentration or it comes not at all. You have such inborn ability. But I will answer any question you wish to ask."

A question was quickly forthcoming, "Why is it that flowers plucked from their stalks become ugly when not kept in water?"

A scientific answer was understood, and the next question was, "Then the same would also happen to us if water were extracted.

And would we not then believe water to be in all things that have life?"

Viswamitri rubbed his hands together and looked glowingly at his pupil, "That is what the wise Solon of Greece believes, that all things originally came from water, the hardest of rocks and the lightest of air and consequently all will return to water. . . . Your Brahmin has taught you I am sure, that 'Water is the whole world?' But, do not be influenced by any teaching, think things for yourself. . . ."

"I was thinking of how some things go back to earth." Artha's blue eyes sparked with knowledge, "I can see how, with so many objects to observe, opinions differ."

The guru, attempted to match with information, "This is a changing world. Now, the thinking is going through a change—turning toward the Abstract. You may clarify."

The student challenged, "I see no need of different forms; why cannot we move to that which we wish to become? I am told I was in other lives, a fish, tortoise, a man-lion, man with an ax, a beautiful rana—and in the last, a temple boy. Now, they say I am born to become the all-wise one who is looked for in the world, that the great Mind shall reveal this to me."

"Put away your slate," Viswamitri said quickly, "I would teach you the mystic colors. Repeat after me, 'Aum'—Aum is white for the gods."

The student comprehended readily, "I see how you get that—the mountains, home of the gods is white with snow."

"Hum"—the guru continued, "is black, the color for the purgatories."

"Pray tell me of the dark places. I have heard so much of them, but believe not a word Asita says for I don't want to believe such awful places could be."

The hands of the guru were intertwined again and again, as he looked down at his pupil in keen appraisal, "I think the same as you. . . . But, we must not allow Asita and the priests to know we

question their seven-flowing Styxian region. It comes however from the word, *hate*—and that is to be sure a dark abode for a soul to be enveloped in. I don't know who began reference to such a place, perhaps a blind poet with imagination in recounting a story of how our forefathers who lived evil lives were swallowed up by the earth. . . . But mind you, do not repeat. I am teaching you numerations." And again repetition was the order of teaching, "Digits, decades, centuries."

"So many things at war in my mind, I shall not sleep well," Artha said.

"But there are many pandumas to learn. There are many more necessary to know. The katha used to count the stars at night—Katha also means a story. . . . Then there is a koti-katha to count the ocean drops. If you should need a more comprehensive scale the arithmetic is by the Asanyka which is the tale of the drops that would fall on the world in—"

"But why count the ocean drops; is it not enough to say that water is water—or this is sand—?"

"Hai, it is true. . . . True. . . . Simple statement is best. . . . It is hardly time to send you to archery; shall we try a few tricks?"

The guru was well versed in controlling telepathic waves, and he began to explain the various currents of energy. "We must be tuned with them to detect them. See, when I understand your thoughts and you- mine, we will be able to send messages to each other on the wind. . . . And we are going to understand each other, are we not?" he said, placing his hands upon the small shoulders.

"Oh great guru, I shall be your friend, your close friend, for my spirit tells my mind I shall."

"And you, great prince of all the world shall have my adoration and affection. . . . Hai, my spirit tells me you will become the god I shall worship. . . ."

There was a long silence. The children's voices outside were noticed. It was time for the prince to—go to play—. "What of the trick?"

"Hai—think upon an object. . . . But first, let us forget that we exist—become lost in the essence of pure thought. . . . Then you may tell me the color of the object you have chosen. . . ."

"Is it the color of oxblood?"

The long palms were rubbed together nervously— "Blood—oxblood—? We—we must not exchange such ideas; it is against the wishes of the king—it- is—"

"The guru, I perceive is a little confused. Shall I ask you to think of an object?"

Then the pupil said, "Does it have jewels on the rim of it?"

The guru again grasped the shoulders of the prince and patted the coiled hair, "We are very close in thought. . . . You shall become a gochmen! The slate! The same object of which you were thinking!"

The prince remained calm, "Then, sandalwood is the color of oxblood?"

"It is time for play—hear the others out at archery?" The guru saw the king approaching and he said, "Go out, exercise your body and become a great hunter like your pitri, the great and noble monarch. . . ." The boy went out one entrance as the king came in another, and the teacher was nervous, fearing that the ruler had overheard.

Viswamitri salaamed, "It is with great pride I welcome the mighty ruler of Kapila. I—you have come to hear my impressions of the prince? Let your heart be at rest, most fortunate one. . . . I have never before had a pupil so keen of mind. I am aware of my most excellent opportunity and I shall try with all my wits to perform the duty well. Without a doubt he will become a mighty one in the earth."

The raja leaned on his staff and stroked his beard, "What I wished to hear. . . . I expected to hear also. . . . But let me remind you again against certain teachings. . . . I have made a vow, and I intend with all my power to execute it. Not that it is through fear I wish to spare him, for the Sakyas, from back in the days when

they lived in mud houses and existed on beef and beer have been very brave. . . . And down through the years they have acquired the art of gentleness and respect to their wives and guri."

"Such characteristics are deeply instilled in prince Siddhartha, but I marvel at his manifestations of the divinity of human conscience which holds to the course of right and wrong. . . . Such spirit serves as a force toward the attainment of serenity. When he is developed of mind, I shall begin the tenets of the soul. . . . No doubt, your son will one day find the oneship with the eternal verities, attained only through the exigencies of perfect meditation."

The raja pushed a wavy strand of beard toward an ear with one hand while the other toyed with his jeweled cane. "Asita predicts that he shall destroy ignorance and darkness from the world, and that through him enduring light shall come. . . . To have begotten so great a son gives me great pride, but I find myself fearing at times the time when he is old enough to go from me—that he perhaps will not be happy with the things I have accumulated for his happiness—that he might desire to go out and cohort with men of the forest—, I—."

The guru was busy with folding and opening his palms as his mind listened, then he interrupted, "Hai, I was a wandering ascetic, for years I went from one holy man to another to learn before I felt qualified to become a teacher. Ah, my most esteemed raja, one must get away from the world to take a look at the world. Once in the forest we get a new perspective of the—"

Pure Rice's eyes demanded quiet, and his voice was conquering in its power, "So, that is what you would teach my son? For him to get away from the world to take a look at the world? To give up the province and all I have wrought for him materially, to have him refuse the kingdom I have made for him to inherit?" The large jaws were puffing in and out as the purple-blue eyes flashed in reproach.

The guru backed away. "Today, I am to teach him whereof the

gow, four times that of a yojanna. . . . Let the raja's heart rest, this son shall be taught to appreciate his father's dowry. . . . Have no fear, noble monarch, your son shall follow after you in seeking after truth so that he may become an all wise monarch. . . . Come, let us go watch him in archery—. I believe also in developing my students physically; the body must be strong for the mind to function—for the soul to grow. . . ."

They walked down the long flight of steps, their brocade coats glistening in the morning sun—the crimson and gold of the raja's no more brilliant than the guru's, except the jewels embroidered upon it were the larger to reflect. They walked in silence for some steps, then Pure Rice looked sternly into Viswamitri's face, "You, the reputed wisest of all our land would teach my son—thus." The large shoulders shrugged disdainfully, and the raja mocked, "To get away from the world to take a look at the world."

"Let your heart rest, oh mighty monarch—" The guru began in coaxing voice.

"My heart shall never know rest if that which I fear is allowed to come to pass." Pure Rice said in short accent, "Set to your task with diligence!"

Chapter 4

The honking of swans in the sky overhead caused the raja of Kapila and the most renowned teacher of all Asia, Viswamitri to halt a deep discussion of life's perplexities, as they moved toward the archery field. It also interrupted the archery game. . . . It was Devad's turn to aim at the target in the mango tree, and just as he poised his bright-tipped arrow, the last swan of the formation was in place, so that he had but to lift his aim a little higher to bring it down. The two men and two princes with mixed reaction watched the large white bird with the barb beneath its white-plumed wing flash across the sky and fall into the lake.

Pure Rice, the enthusiastic hunter cried out boisterously, "A good shot, Devad!" And then, he remembered his other son, Artha—what would Artha think? Pure Rice, the protective father, going to the pool where the boys had run to, said, "Come, you two—into the court at once!"

When the young princes were reluctant to obey, Viswamitri said, "Go quickly, lest Siva the destroyer who caused the bird to fall, find you in his path!"

Artha, disgruntled and disturbed over his brother's act, looked up with blinking eyes, "Well, the destroyer himself should be destroyed. Mean old Siva! Someone just thought him up to scare people with!"

The teacher moved away up the slopes swiftly, to avoid the

raja's reproach. The alarmed raja took the princes in their wet kurtas on either side of him, almost dragging them to the palace court, vowing that they should not learn to be good marksmen if that was how they should use their skill "to fell birds!" And, remembering the remark Artha had made, he looked down at his son in white kurta, "We must go at once and make a sacrifice to Siva!"

A sacrifice to Siva? The thought troubled Artha until his eyes grew heavy with sleep that night, and he dreamed of large animals and birds in constant struggle. The next morning he complained of not feeling well enough to go to the guru, and he was allowed to stay away, but he slipped down to the lake to search for the wounded swan. There could not be a mean god to harm innocent birds. If there was, then people ought to just quit thinking bad things. He would discuss that matter with the guru.

Devad was by the lake also at the early hour, searching the banks and poking with a staff in the water. "You only wish it to place in the mango tree as a target!" he accused, and Devad but frowned at him and moved through the azalea shrubs to continue his search.

Channa came up from behind on the path Artha went, reaching out in excited gesture, motioning for Artha to follow him to the stables. The downcast face brightened and the illness fled as Artha spied the bird, stretched on the stable floor. "Oh, Channa, a long life be yours for this kindness! What are you doing to make it well?"

"A plantain leaf poultice," Channa said in low voice, "You run along and plan to go to the guru. I will watch over it—and keep it a secret from the others—so no further harm will come to it."

"Oh, you are right, Channa—, Devad might come and hurt it again. Please do not allow him to know it is here. . . ."

Siddhartha sat immobile listening to the guru that day. How could he keep his mind on pandumas and ocean grains when back

in the stable, something might happen to the swan? The guru noted the inattentiveness and paused in his teaching, "Hai, all the sands of the Gunga it would measure,—but why do you not say it is better to think of it—as a mound of sand? Why do you not vex me with questions today and say it is useless to learn how many sun-motes in a yojanna. . . .? But I must teach you this, so you will be able to figure out the atoms of which all things are bound by ceaseless energy. . . ."

The serious pupil said, "Forgive my ears, oh holy guru. . . . My mind only wishes attention on one thing—today." And he told of how they had cared for the wounded swan, hoping to make it well enough to fly away to the bardo with the others—. "For they seemed so happy and free in the sky, didn't they—, yesterday?

"Hai, the sky was athrob with their music." Viswamitri placed his hands on the smoothly coiled hair, "As one great chord of music sounded together, as we who are attuned to the music of the universe harmonize. . . . Our souls beat in unison with the great Mind of all things. . . ."

Tear-filled eyes looked up, "Tell me of the soul, and how it will go to the bardo."

"We will discuss the atma—in the final lessons, my prince."

"But can it be measured by yojannas; is it also of many atoms?"

"That is a question which only the great Intelligence knows."

The guru paced the length of the room, "You will begin to think that I know little to teach you, that it is you who will have to teach me. Hai, I am thinking that myself. But now, as is my duty, I shall read to you the Vedic hymns." He took the cloth from a scroll and began to read, "In the beginning there arose the Golden child. . . . As soon as he was born, he alone was lord of all that is. He established the earth and heaven. . . ."

"That must be the child, Brilliancy of the Sun. Read on, oh Viswamitri—"

"Who is the god to whom we shall offer sacrifices? He who gives breath, who gives strength, whose command all the bright

gods revere, whose shadow is immortality—whose—" the scroll was brought together, "I—cannot read more today for my eyes are very bad. . . ." The word "death" was in the next line—and the prince must never hear it. Besides, the boy was about to ask a question. . . . "Forgive me."

"If he was a child, how did he become a god? I am a child. . . . Now, think you upon the idea you taught me yesterday about the wicked one—would it not be the same thought? Foolish that people should choose to revere me to that extent, would it not be? Why should we offer sacrifices to any god—if people thought them into existence? Rather should we not seek to know of the great Mind, the Intelligence supreme?"

Viswamitri ignored the questions and went on with his lesson, "Mete is the word we use for breath. . . . That is to say, the space a man may stride with his lungs filled. Prana is breath—spirit—life." Then there were apologies for not interesting the prince more today. "Go to your archery and romp—and play, then you may concentrate better. . . ."

Artha turned when he got to the door, "But, I wished to learn more of our trick."

"I shall be thinking of something while you are away, and you shall tell me what it is when you come in again. . . ."

"Yojannas make no difference?"

"My rimpoche, if we are the same in mind and spirit, though we are across the world apart, we are the same as of one mind. No, the mind is not restricted to distance; it is a broad and universal essence which knows no confines, except as it is brought to control matter, matter of things that are existent. The body is specifically controlled by the mind. . . . But it goes beyond the material universe in its perception. Wisdom one day will impart that idea further to you no doubt, and I shall learn from you the workings of it. . . . Now go forth gladly, my prince—and seek joy in play."

Devad was intent upon a target, and Ananda the onlooker was watching—so neither of the cousins looked up when Siddhartha

approached. When the mark was centered perfectly, Ananda smiled his greeting to his favorite and said, "He is good at arrows, but—you are better with the sword!"

"Devad is too good. Yesterday he stopped a beautiful white swan in its flight to the sacred mountains." Artha's voice was but filled with pity.

Devad said with assertive sneers, "That is what I have been practicing these many moons for!"

"To stay a bird in its flight, to make it lose yojannas behind its kind in reaching the white home of the gods?"

"I practice daily to shoot straight that I may stay a bird, a gazelle, or a deer or—"

Ananda said, "A gazelle is the most fleet of animals, you would not, you could not be able to stop its speed. . . ."

Devad bragged, "With a few more as of today, six in the mark —I shall be classed with my pitri, a most gifted huntsman." He took an arrow from the bag, its plumes falling the length of the arrow in expert design. "The science of knowing which arrow to choose for a target is not to be learned from guri. . . . My arrow-smith sees that my arrows are perfect, and I see that my aim is right. . . . In this way, I may learn to slay animals as my pitri does."

Artha's eyes widened questioningly. Devad went on, "I suppose I shall be punished if I stop to explain that word to you, but it is very foolish that you are denied so many words. You mustn't know this—you mustn't know that—for it will make the beloved one sad. . . ." He mocked, "I presume you have wondered how the animal heads got in our pitri's dafter, did you not? I am sorry for you, my bhai. . . . If I do not know more than you when I'm eight—! Even Ananda, six knows as much. . . ." Arrogantly the dark prince walked away, "If I knew no more than that, I'd not wish to be a ruler!"

Artha sank to the ground, his feet beneath him. The sound of a sword striking against a tree came from across the way where Devad was practicing, and each thud but stirred a rebellion in the

troubled mind. "You—you, all of you are keeping secrets from me! Do you not wish me to be wise? That you tell me not these things makes me believe you do not love me well—too."

Ananda's chubby arms were quick to respond to the heaving shoulders. "I—I love you better than all the world, my cousin. . . . Please say that you do not despise me for keeping words from you. . . ."

"I am very fond of you, Ananda. . . ." The blue pools drained of tears, "And—I—I have a secret to tell you. . . . Come, it is in the stables!"

The boys ran quickly to the stables, and as they turned into the hallway, they looked back of them and saw Devad following, "I know what you're after. . . . You have the swan in here. . . . After I spent all the morning hunting it on the lake!"

Channa came out and Siddhartha clutched at his kurta, "Do not let Devad have our bird! We found it, it is ours now—. We are making it well again, Devad will only hurt it again!"

"Channa knows whose bird it is; a huntsman always claims the bird he shoots to the ground." Devad spoke confidently.

The groom leaned against the stirrup of a chariot and looked at first one prince and the other. And he went into a long katha about a bird being a lovely maiden in another life.

Such talk made the three boys go for a closer look at the bird, lying prone on the floor. "But, do not touch it, either of you. . . ." Channa suddenly said, "It is likely meditating on the gods, see how it is stretched in obeisance with bowed head to the south—as if to the sacred city. . . ."

"Pooh!" Devad wrinkled his large nose, "I see who it is you prefer. See, if I don't get even with you for this. If you do not let me have my bird—I'll—"

Ananda came between, "It belongs to neither of them, does it, Channa? It was free of all of us . . . . of earth."

Channa's calloused hand moved across his beard, "Hai, you are right. It was a wild bird belonging only to the laws of the uni-

verse. . . . In the sky it was free to go to and from the mountains at will, gliding in the vast blue road of sky. . . ." Artha was sure his friend would settle the argument in his favor. "How very beautiful it is that things can know such freedom and joy. . . . That is, it was free until a willful shaft pierced its broad wing. . . ."

"And then it belonged to me, Channa!" Devad prompted.

Channa turned to Artha, "Hai, we took the barb from its breast, and caused the wound to close; we have done what we could to help—but that is as far as we can claim the swan, my beloved—the hunter receives his game, and I—"

Devad snatched the fowl excitedly and ran toward the mango tree. Artha ran after him. Ananda stayed to reprove, "Channa, how could you—knowing what Devad will do?"

"I had to, my little admi," the quaking voice explained— "for the bird was about to die—and how else would I have explained it to him, we love so much. . . .? Now, he thinks we love Devadatta more. . . . But, it was the only way—the only way out of it."

On the way to the target place, the boys ran past Pure Rice walking in meditation. Startled, the king, seeing the predicament—called quickly across the way, "Come, my rajkumar, I have planned for you to ride over the kingdom, ah the pleasures of the fields you must see and how the gods bless the work of the ploughs in the province that is to be yours. . . ."

"Can—Ananda go too?" Artha sobbed, knowing he must go to please his father, but feeling that he must stay to aid the bird. . . . "I couldn't help the swan—anyway could I?" As they went through the streets with the crier before them, the one-day ruler of Kapila was reluctant to smile. He adjusted his tiara and fingered the emerald necklace about his neck. "I do hope though the people like me today—for I need their friendship so very much."

"You must not grieve over the bird," Ananda said in soothing voice, "Indeed one should not grieve over anything that has happened, for it does nothing but make ugly stains around your eyes and shoots arrows in your own heart. . . . And you should not hold

ill will against Channa. . . . Nor against Devad—, nor anyone for the holding of the ill in yourself is bad. . . . Channa decided as he thought right. . . ."

"That I did. . . . That I did. . . ." Channa said over his shoulder and touched the backs of the horses with the lines to urge them faster. . . . "Up! And Babu Ananda has well spoken. . . . If you will but remember his admonitions, you will be much happier, my prince of all the world."

Not until they were in the country lane was the conversation resumed. Siddhartha found voice above the sobs, "I did not question the decision of our most noble groom. That is perhaps the rule of deciding ownership among those less sensitive. . . . I am only disappointed that Channa's ability to understand the need of life is so limited. . . . I love Channa and it grieves me to know he believes the right to be subjected to rules. . . . I grieve also for Devad because he is so ill-developed of soul. . . . But you, Ananda—are so wise and good."

Ananda diverted as they drove by a lake, "Look you, the big fishermen! What large nets they have to catch fish in! Wouldn't we like a net to fish with!"

"I think not, my cousin." Artha looked profoundly upon the manner in which fish were lifted from the water and dumped into the boats. "I should presume the fish to be happy in the water as the birds are in the air and it is unkind to disturb them. . . . Would you not think their world has a blue road of peace, Channa? Answer truthfully."

Channa decided further discussion might prove him less understood, and he changed the subject. "Look you the other side at the ploughmen in the rice fields, see how the deep ploughing makes for watery jheels. And watch how the birds follow after the plow to see what they can find to eat. . . . Throughout the kingdom there are those who likewise have a difficult time to find food. . . . We shall observe, and give a few annas—to some worthy ones. A good deed is the best medicine for unhappiness. . . ."

"Oh look, there is a woman and a girl!" Ananda said, "the woman has a jar; fill it with annas, and make her happy!"

"But, you see by her dress she is not of the needy ones. She is come to draw water at that cool well there—with the palsa tree growing over it."

"I would like a drink from that well," Artha said, brightening. "Stop the ekka, Channa."

"I wish to have a drink from that well!" the prince said authoritatively when Channa made no move to stop, and the groom obeyed immediately.

They looked at the glossy leaves overhanging the rock curb, and Siddhartha said, turning to the woman, "It is such a peaceful place, the countryside—I prefer it to the courts. I feel that the water here would taste good. May I be granted a drink?"

The woman salaamed and quickly drew the water. When it was in the pitcher, the girl came up, asking for a drink also. . . . "But —look you who asks for water? We shall serve the prince—first. . . ." Her mother corrected and turned with another bow offering the cup. Artha reached for the cup and noticing that the woman looked at his hands, he put them behind him and said, "I should like her to hold the cup for me. . . ."

"Yasodhara!" the woman said, and the large brown eyes of the girl danced in joy at the privilege presented. She hung her head shyly as Artha looked at her from head to foot.

"You make me happy by your kind service, for you do it so gladly. I would say that the grace with which an act is done determines its worth. My blessings upon you and your land. May the gods benefit you greatly," the prince said liltingly.

They rode on, and slowed pace at many fields to see the fat soil rolled back to make a softer bed for seeds. Once when they stopped Channa went across a field to observe a special plant, and an elderly man came up to the cart and bowed low. "My avatar! I bow in humble gratitude before you!"

Siddhartha's curiosity took in every detail of the wrinkle-

wreathed face, and he watched the palsic hands that reached toward him, with something of a fear, for he had never seen such a being. The raspy, hesitant voice of the man was indeed different from any voice he had heard. "I'm a worthless one—but I have a heart filled with gladness—when I look upon you, noble prince. For at your birth the doors of the prisons opened wide and I walked out—free, free as any being of earth I am now all because of you. Allow me but to kiss the hem of the garment of the rajkumar, acknowledging my guilt of past deeds—and—now—!" The shaven head bent forward and pressed the folds of Artha's kurta against it as the bearded chin quivered of "gratitude for freedom."

"You look not as any I have ever seen, but your face is kind," Artha observed. "My gratitude for your homage, for you have made me feel—more free from sorrow myself. Go in peace and the way of goodness."

"I entreat the gods, the same shall be yours all the days of your life." The old man hobbled away.

"Oh, I wish Channa had been here with the annas he was to give to unfortunates—." Ananda raised from his seat and called to the groom across the way, "Hurry—please!" And the groom came running, "I thought you wished to bestow some annas and there was an old man here—"

"Old man?" Siddhartha and Channa said simultaneously.

But there was no sight of the man now. Where had he gone? Channa jumped around excitedly. And then his eyes rested on a python crawling into some bushes. "The gods willed it for the prince to know! I shall not be afraid. Come, let us back to the palace . . . at once. Hai, the raja will likely have me slain again—but what could I do when the gods decreed differently?"

As they rode along Artha was making comparison, "Old men have skins as shrivelled pomegranates? Is he the only one who will look like this or will we too become like him?" Then the prince answered his own question, "I notice that you Channa, my

pitri, Asita and Viswamitri are beginning to show signs of wrinkling. . . . But, this man, like you, was once fleet and straight and tall? As Ananda and I wish to grow to be—that is, straight and tall? Oh—" the terrible thought came alarmingly, "but Ananda we may look like that one day!"

Channa slowed the horses to a walk. . . . "My wee admi—, I will not withhold the knowledge from you. . . . Youth wears into age. It is a common lot of all mankind, and though the raja has wished to keep it from you, it will hurt you none to know it. . . . It is a common heritage which all who live in this world are bequeathed."

"And my father would have me to believe that only the lovely things are mine. . . . I should think he instead should be warning me I will come to look like that, so that I shall not be such a fault-finding little admi. . . . We should know when we look upon such that we are most favored by the gods to be young with a chance to be happy. . . . I shall try to be gay now, I promise. . . . And Channa, you, you—try to not be so fearful, will you? I think these things make us into old men. . . ." Hearty laughing alleviated the tenseness of the incident, and it also made Artha forgetful of the apprehension which his own soul held—wondering if back in the mango tree, Devad was not harming their bird.

They drove back through the town; the market was always an interesting diversion. Down the broad street they watched the bargainers perspiring in much talk over the worth of their wares. . . . A long line of opium buyers was waiting to get their daily anna's worth. "Such useless talk," Artha said, "it provokes my mind, and slays my spirit. . . ." Channa looked back over his shoulder—the word was a new one for the young prince; how he did use these unfamiliar words!

A snake charmer was entertaining with his music. . . . They watched to see the long slithering python stand still, as the tree limb above and then go into a rhythmic caper. . . . The boys laughed again. . . . They turned down the river road for a short way back to the palace. . . . It had been a very enjoyable trip.

"But, about that 'old' idea— I would like to know, does the mind also become aged?" the prince asked, greatly concerned. "My guru and I are studying of the mind over matter."

Channa answered with wisdom, "The mind grows with the years, my Siddhartha—and although the body bends and finally gives way, the mind most always stays the same, with all the more wisdom because of the years."

"And when the body gives way—the mind has to find a new body to go in—; the mind is not perishable," the thinking one deducted. . . . "I don't see how these things my pitri should wish to keep from me."

"Nor I, my prince, for he wants you to become wise." Channa was pleased with himself for having been truthful with his little friend. He had feared a lessening in friendship after he had decided the ownership of the game to go to Devad. . . . He so wanted the confidence of Siddhartha, and now he believed he had it again. . . . He began to whistle a gay little village dance as they rode along the river road.

The lower road was most lonely because of its lack of people. The ekka was stopped and sights of the river enjoyed for such a long time, and Channa relented to the boy's request to stop at an old inn at the foot of a mountain slope to eat. . . . What fun they were having today! The innkeeper made such a stir in serving them; he considered it a great honor for the prince to dine with him, he said. . . . Such was truly changing thoughts from unpleasantness, but all along questions about age were asked and they pointed out people in the inn who were aging.

Once more on the road they talked of how the river Rhoni fed the crops, and such things of contribution to new life. "I know, it is the water that the Kolis and the Kapilians fought over long ago. . . . But my pitri showed them a nice way to peace," Artha was saying and he stopped short, for out by the river bank he was seeing something else that he had not seen before. "What is wrong with that man?"

A man with swollen stomach and withered limbs was lying there. He started to try to move when he heard the questioning of the prince, but he lay back. "Stop, Channa, see what is wrong with him. Perhaps an arrow from some unkind person has wounded him!"

Channa clucked instead to the horses but Siddhartha sprang to take hold of the lines, "Don't you know it is unkind to leave a suffering thing! Stay the horses. . . . And be truthful to me, Channa. What is wrong with this man?" The chariot was brought to a stop, and Artha started to get out, but Channa arrested, using his hand with the whip in it, "You must not go near that man! His body is filthy with disease!" And he spoke unkindly to the man about being on the road. . . .

The man explained that he had tried to leave when the road was cleared by the king's crier, but could not. "I had no one to lift me," he excused.

The youthful heart was touched, "What brought you to this estate?"

The beggar said, "It is an affliction of the furnace of fate. The gods have willed that I be stricken. . . . Have pity on me. Cast me a gift that I may eat."

Channa brought forth a handful of annas and tossed them toward the withered hands waiting to receive them. Then the scant limbs were lifted to support the distended belly, and—soon the man was moving toward the market place. . . .

"But, I thought he could not lift himself," Ananda said. "It is a miracle, the coin made him walk!"

Channa was vexed and he pulled at the horses angrily. "It was incentive in the coin that caused him to move. . . ."

Prince Siddhartha was very quiet the remainder of the trip home. He asked but one question, "Is this the only man who will be afflicted thus?"

Channa replied truthfully, "Throughout the world are men subject to disease—the poor, the rich, the ignorant, the wise. . . ."

Artha, his head lowered and the emerald pendant tightly in his grasp, said, "Let us go back to the prison palace—there I will stay until disease or old age overtakes me."

The sad prince walked daily in the gardens, talking to the monkeys, "You care nothing for anything except your silly swinging back and forth, in and out, in and out the same bowers seeking food—more food. . . . And soon an attendant will call me again, 'Come, partake of your rice and milk that you may grow tall!' But, I do not care to grow tall, for if I grow tall, then I will become old and stooped and—oh, I do not wish to be old and stooped. And I do not wish to move in and out these same doors all my life. . . . They are building walls—walls about the grounds, closing me in, and it is as I am in a prison. . . . A prison like the old man was freed from. . . . Oh, I do not want to wait until I am old to be free. . . ."

He looked toward the palace with its clustered columns and many latticed galleries, studying the various arches, turfs and turrets. . . . Four courtiers in watchful prancing moved back and forth, back and forth in front of the alabaster barricaded threshold, coming to the inner gate of pink-veined marble and back again—back again. . . . This was indeed like a prison, he thought, although he had not seen one. He was being held here until he was old enough to be raja. . . .

He came upon a fallen pomegranate, picked it up and turned it in his palm. There was also a white feather on the ground. He held it in his hand and Devad said, when he went to ask him about what had happened to their pet, "It was mine to do with as I wished and I will not answer. It is in a place where if you found it you could not make it well again, so forget it. . . ."

Forget it, how could he? He begged, "Have you loosed it on the palace grounds that it may be free, at one with the peacocks and herons?"

Devad answered that he had tied rocks to its feet and thrown it in the lake, and the swan was no more . . . "No more!"

He parted the azaleas of the lake now, and looked at the waters. . . . All was so quiet . . . only the lotus blooms were stirring when the wind passed low and lapped the water.

Lotus blooms were beautiful symbols of meditation. Viswamitri had taught him how to concentrate by gazing upon a lotus flower. The idea was to find a jewel. . . . When one looked for beauty in a thing, he found it, if he looked long enough, his guri had said. . . .

His new pet, a falcon which he had freed from a tangled vine one day and talked in such appealing voice that it was not afraid of him—now came to rest on his shoulders. "I didn't think you so very pretty when I first found you—but now—I have found the jewel in your eye! Look—look over into the water at the fishes. They are free in the big lake, are they not, like you are free in the air? You were not happy the time we caged you so you would get used to Ananda and me, so you would want to stay here. I know how you used to sit on your little swing and look out at the jasmine coils and wish to swing there. . . . I was very bad to keep you when you wanted to leave. But aren't you glad I was, now that we are—friends?"

Channa came up the walk. . . . "Why is it you come away to yourself, my little admi? I see you every day when you come from the guri—you play only a game or two with the others, then you come to this place. . . ."

"I have a pet falcon now, you know!"

The falcon flew to Channa's shoulder. "Hai, I know. . . . He is almost as ugly as the mongoose. . . . One of these days I'm going to see that you really get a nice pet. . . . Your pitri wants to keep it a secret, but I know all about it. . . . But—no, no, don't ask me what it is—I might just not be able to keep my chin; I'm such a talkative old fool."

"Channa, tell me—did it really hurt so badly when my pitri had you—slayed for allowing me to know things which he did not wish me to?"

"I was flayed my rimpoche. . . . Slayed—is not the word. . . . Being flayed was bad enough."

"I wished he had done it to me, instead of to you—and Devad."

"No, no—my little friend! But, let us talk about beautiful things; there are such ills in the world, but thinking good thoughts will obliterate them. Do, my wee prince, try to find happiness in spite of that which exists otherwise."

Such talks with Channa helped Artha to elevate his thoughts as he grew into adolescence. The association with the other young princes Anuruddha, Ananda and Devad brought new interests in fencing, archery, and riding. They slipped away to the rivers and mountains, sneaking through openings in the walls which Pure Rice had ordered built to "keep out the ills of the world." They taught their horses to jump the walls and they ventured to distant inns, taking part in the revelries. Artha enjoyed this contact with the common people, but the sight of any aging, decrepit person caused him to lament and say, "Let us return to the courts within our walls." And back in the gardens of Kapila he would ride with Falkie, his pet falcon on his shoulder and pour out his grieving words.

The other princes promised to only go to "woodland places" to get the morose one to accompany them, and truly the mountain trips helped to overcome morbidity. Interest in growing things, and how each tree and shrub was made new each year provoked parallels—should not people also be made new when they get old?

Once they rode the trail by the animal dens—to see if there were "dangerous beasts" there as Arno had warned. Artha was venturesome as either of the other three, and he was first to go the trail. Of a sudden, a huge, white snow leopard sprang from behind a rock and attacked the horse upon which Artha rode, scratching deep gashes on its forelegs and biting off one of its ears. The falcon on his shoulder screamed a warning the instant the leopard approached and then flew with active claws into the

white fur of the beast. The bird's screams alerted the other riders and they spurred vigorously to catch up; soon, they closed in with their mounts protectingly. The leopard did not attack their horses, for it was intent only on getting a lunge at Artha, and when it could not, it retreated to the shelter of a mahu grove, tucking its tail, for the falcon was flying close behind it, taking mighty pecks in defense.

They loped their horses as four riders abreast in a race, until they reached a safe distance, then the four young princes looked from one to the other in wide-eyed wonderment. Ananda said, "Where, where is Falkie?" Looking back over their shoulders, they all understood that the bird had run the animal away. . . . "It saved your life, Art!"

Artha was grieving over the missing ear, and the wounds on his horse's neck. "Now, now will it grow diseased and die?" He said reaching his hand to lap the blood coursing through the thick mane. "Is this—blood? When it runs out of the body, will he die?"

The other youths were discussing the incident. "Remember that day you threw Art's turban in the rock den?" Anuruddha was saying. "Well, that is why he only wanted to get to him, instead of us—, he remembered the scent. It was your fault, Devad!"

Ananda said, "But, you didn't know that, when you were that young—did you?"

Devad jerked his rein to signal a quickening of pace again. "I have always known that!"

Artha was the last to ride into the stable, for his horse was limping slowly. The falcon had returned to its perch on the prince's shoulder and was leaning its feathered back against the face it loved. Artha spoke caressingly to it and the horse of how sorry he was he had taken them into the mountains to be treated thus. Seeing Channa coming to meet him, he jumped from the horse and entreated, "Hasten, my friend—, go at once and get plantain leaves for a poultice, or he may die of disease!"

Channa thought quickly, "That I will, for this is the horse the

Koli king has bought, and I am to deliver it in good shape. Come, my admi, remember—see good in all things."

"Oh yes, my friend, I am happy that the leopard changed its mind. It is good I live."

"That is what I wanted you to say." Channa was grateful for the smile Artha gave him. A little more encouragement and explanation of this kind and the prince would be himself. Hai, he went skipping happily to bathe before eating his rice and fruit.

Siddhartha was in a much happier state of mind when he went to the guri the next day. Viswamitri noticed the face was not so perplexed, and he said, "You have experienced something most awful."

"You—knew when it was?" Viswamitri had told him before that he knew he had felt very sad—and that he had gone with him into the depths of misery. Now he asked, "And you are happy because I—I—tried to be?"

"Hai, if only you could be, I would be very happy."

"I am trying. . . . Oh, I am going to have a big surprise. . . . Channa won't tell me what it is, but it is a pet of some kind. . . ."

They went into deeper study of the powers of the mind. The mind had great power over the body, through meditation one could move from the atomic to the infinite. Power over matter was expressed in many ways; by concentrating on the lungs, Viswamitri said a man could walk on water without going down . . . by conquering the nerve current, Udana which governs the upper part of the body, one could submit his body to any type of pain—and never be aware of it. . . . And he told of the holy men with thorns in their cheeks, and sides—of them lying on spike beds. . . .

This could not be believed, even from Viswamitri until at the market place one day a demonstration was seen. . . . How he would like to develop power of mind to such an extent. . . .

That day when he met with his father in the hall, and Pure Rice inquired of his school work, the boy seemed sad again. He had been weighing the dark thoughts of the recent incident,—suppose

it had been he instead of the horse receiving the wounds—for the horse had died. Channa would not say so, only did he evade with a diversion, but Artha knew and pondered the idea of death.

He was looking at frescoed walls and a table which was filled with bric-a-brac and above it, he gazed intently at an old sword that had hung there ever since he had remembered anything. Today he was wanting to know about all these things. He was handling the trinkets of gold, silver, brass, crystal one at a time, studying them. He had a crystal bowl in his hand when his father came by—and exclaimed, "No—No, do not break it!"

"I wasn't planning on breaking it, pitri—"

"I know—I know. . . . It is all right that you should—look at them. They belonged to your—ama. . . . These sold for a great price in the markets. . . . I treasure them because she loved them. . . ."

"And you love also the red ochre one in your dafter, do you not?"

Pure Rice tried to turn away but was held with another question, "The vase you broke that night—was not so pretty anyway, was it?"

"It—it was only pottery. . . ." The maharaja rested his hand on his son's shoulder.

"Pottery?"

"Clay. . . . It was made of the red dirt you see about. . . ." Now would be a very good time to tell him of the ochre vase and the ashes of Maya. . . . It had truly been wrong to keep from him the ways of nature which a boy was sure to know at some time—and be greatly puzzled about. . . . It must be startling to learn of such things all at once as he had. No wonder the child was depressed. "Why—you see, those broken pieces of pottery were thrown out on the ground—and after a long, long time, they will go back to clay again." But this wasn't comprehensive—he couldn't come out and say—Maya had likewise gone back to earth. . . . No, he would not tell him! His original purpose would still be carried

out. He would not allow Siddhartha to see another infirmed or aged person, and perhaps the remembrance of the ones he saw would leave him. . . . Oh, they must, so his ganthi-bud blue eyes would not look up at him so sadly as they were now. . . . The king's decision was made.

"But, pitri—"

"Hai, Siddhartha?"

"Ama Maya couldn't take all these pretty things with her to the other place?"

The perplexed king walked past the table again and again, looking at the trinkets—trying to find some base to start explanation. He must explain the difference between the material and the astral.

"But, I suppose she has lovely things there, too. . . . And has left these here for us—"

"Of course she has beauty—there. . . ."

"And she is happy?"

"You know—she must, she has to be!" Pure Rice's voice was quaking, betraying grief. And oh, if he could but find words to say how he wished the child of hers to be happy also. That he mustn't be despondent and remember with such periods of melancholy as he was wont to do. . . . Instead he said, "Is there—anything here that you would like to—to play with? Whatever you wish, tell me—I will get it for you. . . ."

The prince looked again at the ancient bow on the wall over the table. "I should like to test my skill with that. . . ."

The king was non-plussed. Why, the bow had hung there for centuries—so long in fact he didn't know the history of it—except it was referred to as Sinhauhdana's bow. . . . Old Asita might know. But—the holy man would consider it a sacrilege to allow it to be played with. . . . No, he must ask a servant, "Hai—you, you there—come, take down this relic from the wall!"

The passing servant acted as if he had been told to touch Siva's sword. . . . But like all others of the palace—he feared the conse-

quences if he did not perform the king's request. With much fumbling and apprehension the bow was brought outside to a mark in the punjab tree. "Now, now—let us see how it works!" Pure Rice was the enthusiastic one. His son tried and the shots went wild, flying like wounded birds from the waxy branches. "The weights are unbalanced, my rajkumar—perchance if you would aim a little lower than you do with the lacquered bows—"

The next try was a success, the crorey shell target made a clashing sound. "All hail victorious archer, most noble rajkumar who will one day strike thus at the heart of true law for the province."

The lachrymose countenance remained the same. It had been no out-of-the-ordinary thing, to know that by aiming higher the mark might be made. One had to comprehend the way special situations had to be handled, that was all the instance meant to him. To Pure Rice it was a revelation. "The ancient bow is for you a talisman, it is symbolic—in that you are master of it, that you will be ruler over many things. . . . Hai, I foresee for you a province that shall be enlarged to include boundaries to the north—to the white-topped mountains, to the east, hai—to China, and west even to Babylon. . . ."

"Pitri, according to you, I am destined to rule the world. . . . But, by the time I should encroach such domains I shall be so aged that I shall not be able to lift the scepter. . . ."

The king started to laugh boisterously—the boy was witty—but—he hadn't meant to be. He was very serious. . . . He looked on the laughter in wonderment. . . . And the laughing one became embarrassed for having considered the statement a joke. . . . He put his hands on the boy's shoulders and took the bow—, "Let us hang it back in the hall,—and speak not of having used it. . . . It might be that we will have much explaining to do as it is. . . . Come, how would you like a ride over the province?"

"What I see only makes me wish I had not gone. . . . People wasting their time in idleness—waiting to become old and diseased. . . ."

"Why—that—is—life, my son. . . . That is the way. . . ." The king stopped and turned away. He could not talk on these things. Then in sudden determination, he went to his ministers and attendants and demanded that the streets be decorated, that all the people don gay attire and be at work at something when the young rajkumar came through the town. "There must be an air of festivity, and at the same time, industry. . . . And this time there must not be one lame or afflicted in any way or any aged on the streets! Do you hear?" When the ministers looked dumfounded, he declared— "I shall lead the way myself!!"

At the stables where the excited king went to effect further plans, Channa said, "But the gods take on forms to defy the schemes of man. . . . It is no use to keep the prince from knowing of life—; he will find it out some way. . . ."

"Who are you to advise the raja?" Pure Rice frowned in furious brow-knitting, but he listened.

"Hai, sir—I was minding very closely that day the aged man came—out of nowhere, he did—I do not know where except he possibly was hiding in the hooded snake which I saw crawling away from the place soon after he vanished. . . . Oh, the gods take on some terrible forms to defy man."

"Then I shall defy the gods!" Pure Rice shouted, and Channa darted into the chariot shed in a fearful haste.

The excursion went forth as planned. The prince was pleased to see the people at their various tasks in clean and colorful dress. . . . The vat dyers, stretching with their silks—the silver and gold smiths in neat aprons at their work and the threshers at their tasks in happy mood. . . . "With such attitudes—the province may become a place of peace—one day. . . ." the prince observed.

The king would ride on before, and then in anxious curiosity return to the place where Siddhartha's chariot stopped—to see how his expression was changing—, how the impressions were going over. "Hai, the boy was indeed breaking from his solemn mien. . . ." And again ahead he demanded of the people, "Work—

be doing something—and be happy-faced—as he comes by, or I'll put you in prison!" Then back, the chariot bearing the king would turn to—see how the prince was enjoying himself—.

On over the streets of Kapila, they went observing the various occupations of the people and everywhere the people as anxious as the king to make the prince smile, complied with the request. . . . "My child is glad—he had made this trip? Hai?"

"I am well pleased with the people, my pitri. . . ."

They rode until sundown when they turned back toward the palace. It was Siddhartha's request to go the lower river road, the short cut—. With a remembrance that the aged man had been seen on the lower road, Pure Rice hesitated— "But—he wishes it, it shall be!"

As they moved into the open spaces, the king was riding close before the chariot bearing his son, relaxing his vigil, enjoying conversation. The day had been very warm and the dusk was refreshing, invigorating new interests. They counted the stars that came out, calling from one chariot to the other the names of the heavenly bodies they spied. Then, of a sudden both chariots halted to a stop, for their drivers had seen a light on the river bank where a group of people had gathered.

A crier was nearing the raja's chariot, asking what should be done about the "procession." Pure Rice realized it was a funeral procession, and he realized too that all he had accomplished in making the son glad that day—would be lost in a new slough of despondency. He turned to the charioteer, "Back, back the other route!" But, he looked over his shoulder as the turn was made, and he saw the face of Artha in the light of the pyre—, "It is no use, he has seen—he has seen!"

The young prince was as a beaten one; his face was drawn in a writhing, now a wincing—and—now a stolid stare. His father comprehended, and he uttered a hoarse cry at which Artha's body jerked back as if to dodge an assaulter's whip. His webbed hands clutched at his turban, and his jeweled body rocked uncontrollably.

"Back, I say—the other road!" Pure Rice called loudly to Channa who drove Artha's chariot. "Your life if you do not get him away from this sight instantly!"

Channa did not slow speed until they were approaching the palace stables. "Remember, my admi—now that you know these things, you are to enjoy life all the more, are you not? Come with me into the stables and see the gift your pitri has for you."

"What is it?" Artha spoke for the first time since the incident of the river.

"Why," Channa pulled his long chin with his palm, "it was once an evil thing and the gods gave it birth on earth as a big white bird to be shot down to suffer for sins, then it went back on the wheel—and the gods sent it back to earth as a—"

"A little white horse!" Artha exclaimed as the door was opened, and he ran to bury his face in the animal's white silken mane.

Channa knew he would overcome the tragedy, but the raja, leaning against the chariot wheel, depicted a defeated, aged and ill man.

Chapter 5

Time passed and the Sakya prince was still weighted with the sights of the world,—disease, age and death which he had witnessed. He had been able to philosophise about disease and age, saying it was good to know these existed, that one might avoid or prepare to accept—but death held a great fear. The fear of death made Siddhartha cringe from life. The memory of a burning pyre overshadowed.

The chariot which the prince now rode in was made gaudy with jewels set in the front of it, in the toran emblem of the royal family. Four equally groomed pacing horses which pulled the chariot were draped with flowery coverings. Daily he rode in the groves and fields and through the temple area. Ministers and attendants made his path joyous with minstrels singing and playing the vina, lute and sitar—but the face of the young raja-to-be remained sad.

The same precaution was cried out each trip, "Let no sick or stricken, no leper nor feeble folk be on the street. Let none bury their dead, nor bring them out until after nightfall."

The people who had heard of the mournful prince thronged the streets daily as he came by, and called out their cheerful greetings and paligans, but he only answered with a courteous nod of his shapely head. The wistful eyes were envisioning his people in the future years—when they would have shrivelled skin, fleshless bones and toothless jaws—when he would be king and would have

to look down upon them thus, and help them with their problems. This thought was disquieting.

The only pleasure Siddhartha found was with his horse, which he had named Kantaka. He poured out his fears and woes upon the white neck of the friendly animal that had come to understand his every mood. Ardjuna had taught him to ride as well as he who was conceded to be the best among the young lords. Ananda also had a horse now of his own, as did Devad—and they frequented the royal drives daily. But there was not much conversation to be had from Siddhartha these days of young manhood—which would bring age and—death. It was a time of seriousness and deep thinking which only he—it seemed, regarded. His best meditation time was in the saddle, moving with the white steed as in command of a white cloud of sky—and becoming lost in it.

"In all the world, I love Kantaka best," he told Ardjuna one day as they rode together.

"One day you will meet a maiden whom you will love more," Ardjuna chided.

"Have you met a maiden?"

"That I have and she is very worthy of love. There is none so comely as Yasodhara."

"Yasodhara. . . . A very lovely name. It seems I have heard it before. . . . Is her voice kind? Her eyes bright? Her body graceful as Kantaka is graceful?"

They slowed their horses to a walk as the maiden was described, "Hai, all of these—and her form like the grace of a gazelle. Her eyes are dark and deep as fresh jheels. The breasts of her like the plump breasts of the twin parakeets there on the mango limb."

They pulled reins and watched the parakeets as their small feathery balls of plump breast pressed together. Ardjuna explained, "When you love a maid, you wish to be so near her, as that. . . . I would I could hold Yasodhara so close to me. . . ."

"I lie upon the white neck of Kantaka. I have had beautiful pets before which I have loved—thus."

"But you know not love—until you have loved a maiden, my cousin."

They jerked their gem-studded reins and cantered a ways. At the next pathway, they were close together again, and Siddhartha asked, "Is she tall like you, Ardjuna? You should be of the same height for your heads and necks to meet as the love birds."

"Oh, I have never been so close to her! I was only saying it was like as if—. No, I fear Yasodhara is small. She is about your height, I should say. . . ."

"Does Devad also love a maiden?'

Ardjuna turned and gave an accusing look. "So Ananda has told you!"

"Ananda has told nothing in regard to you and your maiden. Although I should expect him to observe one's beauty very young. —He is very—old-seeming already. I was but wondering about Devad who is growing so very handsome and tall, I fear the maidens will all adore him."

"Hai." Ardjuna said looking down, "she's more gracious to him. We all go swimming in the river Rhoni, and there—we see her when she goes for water at the well. Come swimming with us and you shall meet her also. She is fond of us all—and will love you too. I think you would enjoy the swim, for—it is great fun."

"I care not for the ugly waters of Rhoni. I shall continue my baths in the tanks of the palace. Why should you be misled about life, Ardjuna—there is no fun. People are foolish to take life so lightly, for do they not realize life is fraught with pain and ends in death and the pyre? As for the maiden—people are not thinking when they marry and have children—oh, they are but bringing them evil."

"Your pitri expects you to choose a maiden soon. He is building new houses. Although they say he but builds to hold himself together, he has to be doing something to keep his mind from leaving him entirely. It is such a pity. . . . I hope you will become old enough to take over the province when that happens."

Without comment Artha shrugged his shoulders and galloped away. Ardjuna overtook him later, "I hope you think me not so unwise to wish to be wed to women."

"Women?" Artha gasped.

"Hai, the law decrees a man seven wives if he wants them; I want all that I may have. . . . But then, as you say, they might make you grow older—. It might be a good idea to just frequent the Pavilion of Lanterns. The older lords derive much pleasures there, and we shall be expected to—. Say, would not today be a very good time to begin going there? Will you go with me, Artha?"

"I will go with you to the Pavilion of Lanterns," Artha said indifferently. And they checked rein to turn around. As they wheeled their horses they were met by Ananda who had galloped to catch up with them. "We are going to the pavilion to lie with the women," he explained casually.

"Ardjuna, I am old enough to go too!" Ananda lifted his voice on the level with the clicking of horsehoofs on the tiled pathway.

"Come along," Ardjuna answered, "you may get by old Gotami—"

Soon three young admis were moving with dignity and commanding grace toward the triple doors of the pavilion. A little nervously they opened the bamboo gate screens, pulled aside the heavy drapes of rich purple silk—and jumped back as the opal-strung portiere made a clinking sound. Mystic music of lutes set the timbre of anticipation. Perfumed lamps added a sickly odor of repulsiveness—, but they went on. Standing in a dark corner of the main entrance hall was the director of women, Gotami upon whose face was a look of slight amusement. They braced their shoulders and looked demanding—. Gotami salaamed and led the way to the pavilion, and left them with a sweeping gesture—which they interpreted as, "Take your choice, young admis. . . ."

Women were lounging on mats, weaving garlands for their hair. There were disdainful fat women sprawled unbecomingly, spitting betel juice against the alabaster walls. . . . There were

others appearing but half dressed—. The boys drew back. . . . Perhaps they had come too early in the day, that they should wait until during the hours of relaxation—when the other lords came. . . . Perhaps—

They caught sight of three younger women, so contrasting to the hard faces of the ones on the mats and they moved toward them. A hush fell over the place; all gazes were upon them. . . . They stopped and looked as the younger girls braiding their hair—entwined red flowers. Gotami, seeing their timidity, called out from her toothless jaws the names of the girls, and the sound of her throaty voice suggested, "Be up and at your work. . . ." And as the names were called, the young men picked their women—"Nina" smiled coyly at Ananda; Ardjuna moved toward the dark one called "Vellah—"; and Siddhartha was left with a frail and delicate girl named "Lotus Flower."

Leading to a latticed place of privacy the young women salaamed gracefully—allowing "their men" to enter the brothels before them. . . . And sensing the awaiting emotion which the three young admis recognized as compelling instinct, they moved forward to boldly claim the sense pleasure as the inherited right of all Indian men.

That morning experience made an impression upon the young mind of Artha and inveigled thoughts from the negative state which he had lapsed into,—and he began to look at life with a new interest. The ecstasy was remembered in deep contemplation as he sat cross-legged on a mound of earth, meditating. The ravages of delight were studied with grave curiosity. Now he could distinguish between body perception and soul perception. . . . Old Viswamitri had touched on knowledge of intimacies, telling him of the zenanna women—, but he had not suggested the reaction he would know. He had not described a woman so appealing as Lotus Flower—.

Then paradoxical thoughts came to mar the bliss. The girl

too, would one day become ugly and unshapen as the women with sagging breasts . . . and haggard faces. . . . Artha sighed.

A teaching of Viswamitri came to him in his meditation: Every time one indulged in a thing, it impressed the mind, and the mind built up a desire for it. Stronger and stronger until it became a habit. He knew that his mind was building a desire to return to the pallet of Lotus Flower. However much he remonstrated with himself, he knew he would go back. He knew that all through the night his mind would continually heap tinder to that fire of desire. He quickly straightened his spine as he had been taught to facilitate control of self. He was aware that his body experienced muscular reflexes at will of his thinking, that he could at will ward off an influx of the sensory. He tried to concentrate on the beauty of the birds and flowers about, but the impulse of the sensory was the greater. He rose and hurried toward the pavilion . . . again. Across the way he glimpsed his father's form . . . moving toward the bamboo gates. . . . He wheeled about quickly to avoid being observed watching his father. He stopped to pretend to pluck fruit from a low mango branch which would serve as a screen. He watched his pitri going in at the triple doors!

He experienced again the psychomatic impulses, and then a jealousy flooded him. "Holy Devas!" His pitri mustn't choose Lotus Flower! "She belongs to me!" He moved down the walk, ashamed of the emotion. On down to the stables to talk with Kantaka, he felt very ashamed of his father, also.

A canter with Kantaka was diversion enough to coax his boyish mind back to the pleasures of boyhood. He patted the white neck of his horse and remembered how Kantaka had been the source of companionship through his young years; in the love of his white horse he had lost much moodiness and pessimism. Sometimes riding Kantaka he had almost been in a happy frame of mind. "Come, my beauty . . . let us go beyond the gates . . . to explore regions for other entertainment. . . ."

Ardjuna and Ananda were waiting for their horses to be rigged for riding. "Shall we go to the inn and look over the women there?" Ananda said. "We have a few annas, perhaps we will buy ourselves some wine."

"I will go," Artha said, "but if it is women you wish—why not the zenanna? And you well know we have all the wine we wish here."

"But, I like my women—one today, another tomorrow," Ardjuna said manfully. "I am going one evening into the court as the other admi-admirers of the court ladies. . . . I am sure my uncle, the raja expects it of each of us to choose a noble lady to wed. It is about time we observed them, at least."

Devad came up on his horse, checking rein, asking "Where to for looking at the ladies? May I go along?"

"If you promise to not lead astray to some animal's den," Ananda said accusingly. "Come, we are off to the inn. Then when it is evening we are returning in full dress to the court to pay compliments to the noblewomen."

"Tonight?" Ardjuna asked suddenly, "I said—only—one evening—I—."

"Now is the better time for all things," Artha said lifting to his saddle and popping reins in rhythm with the others—, "Tomorrow may bring the pyre and reduce us to ashes, in which there is no fire."

Ananda agreed, "Then I shall not forfeit any pleasure at the inn looking for tonight. I shall only expect tonight's experience to be more exciting than the morning's or I shall be bored."

The court that evening impressed abomination however to Artha. The elder lords who had protractedly subscribed to this entertainment of Nautch girls were gloom drunk; they but knew the gay overtures were designed to entrap and they submitted as to a habit. The young Artha shook his head and refused to listen to the sensuous sinecures but made to create desire. . . . And then he saw his father watching from Pati's apartment on the third

floor . . . watching—wishing him to be entrapped in all this voluptuousness. . . .

From a bower, his cousin Arhina was also watching him. . . . She had been allowed to come to the court parties for she was of age when she too should be made to see life, for she would soon be wedded to one of the lords. . . . Arhina was most beautiful, Artha thought, observing her coiled hair—. He had seen her only with it flowing; it had been very pretty then, he remembered now. . . . His eyes caught hers as she looked at him, and they smiled at each other kindly. . . . This was a different reaction to any emotion he had felt during the day. Arhina's smile was pure—and holy seeming. His body feeling, as suggested by the mind was—nobility and goodness when he gazed upon her. . . . How different, women could make one feel!

He began to remember that his father was building palaces for him. To have a private pavilion with perfumed lamps might be a very wonderful experience. . . . And with a woman of such an inspiration as Arhina. . . . He looked back at his blonde cousin. No, she had only made him feel ashamed for being there, and the nobler emotions rose in contrast to baseness because of the shame. . . . No, he wanted a woman who would appeal—as Lotus Flower. He excused himself, and idly walked over to the site of the new palace across the lake. A musky thicket with cool streams and a silver lake in the moonlight. . . . A spot of beauty. Building materials, blue tiles, veined marbles, lapis lazuli in piles —all these would be used to make a palace.

A private palace should make a woman very happy. . . . And he would find a measure of joy there also—if it were with the right woman. . . . But always he would be haunted by the thought that happiness would not last. . . . Old age and death would come. . . . And then what—what of the life beyond death? "Such contemplation is unfathomable to my mind . . ." he said aloud.

And then he noticed the voices coming from the building area. It was his father walking there with a court augur, "My son

according to the old Rishi was born to arrive at perfect intelligence. . . . According to the way he was born, was a sign of—great superiority in the world."

The augur answered with fervor, "Hai, a great raja he will be. . . . The great king Kiakha was born from the armpit; king Yu-liu from the thigh; king Pi-tau from the hand; king Manu from the head—and the son of the all-wise and ever constant king Suddhodana being born from the side will also arrive at true wisdom. . . . Young Siddhartha is little different from the gods in form. . . . He will be proclaimed a god-ruler of Kapila. . . ."

The king's voice became low and depressed. "But suppose he should refuse this royal estate and wish to escape the dominion of desires—suppose he should wish to go away to practice the austerities in order to obtain truth?"

"Keep such knowledge from him. That is my advice, noble ruler. . . . Keep him entertained at court, now that he is becoming of age it will be easy to interest in court life—; keep him too busy with life's pleasures and he will never wish to escape the pain of the five desires. . . ."

The king declared, lifting his voice, "He was born without pain. . . . I shall see to it that he knows not pain in this life and I shall invoke the gods that he shall not in the hereafter. . . ."

The king moved down to the pool where his son stood in the moonlight as a god-like statue. "I saw you leave the court and come here. . . . I trust what you overheard was pleasing, for the words we spoke were concerning you. . . ."

"I was too abashed at the wily women of your court, if you must know . . ." the son replied.

The king laughed boisterously. "I too have been disgusted with them. But—women are to be enjoyed by men. In time you will find one, one who will appeal to you and I will buy her for you. She will be brought to live in this place I am building for you. . . ."

Siddhartha sighed. "You are most generous. . . ." And then he

was thoughtful— "It would not be—proper to bring—one of the women from the zenanna to live with me here?"

Again the loud laugh of the king rang through the night, "Merciful gods, no!—You want to use a woman we have bought already—! Kapila wealth can buy you one—or as many women as you desire. You have grown so tall and noble-looking, my son, a woman would find it easy to admire you. . . . I will bestow upon you tomorrow the Gambunadi gems, ropes of pearls and diamonds. . . . Then their eyes will turn your way. . . . And, my son, your prowess with the bow, the discus, the lance is so improved. To say nothing of your horsemanship!"

The prince was silent.

"But most of all I admire you, my son, because you are able to deny praise due you. You have no covetous thoughts. . . . Indeed you are destined to be a Tathagata. . . ."

"I would like to acquire perfect intelligence," Artha said firmly. "Could I make a pilgrimage to Benares? There are many good teachers there, I hear. . . ."

"Men with contrite souls crawl to Benares, on their bellies to its sacred river. What have you done that you should go there?" questioned the king.

"Asita has told me of the Ganges, how it rises in the mountains of the gods to take its blessings to any who come seeking the true way—to those who come to ask for its benefits. . . . It is augmented by many tributaries—and to bathe where these tributaries join, one is blessed abundantly. . . . Its yellow water purifies from sin and death—. Hai Father, I was told long ago of the meaning of death—speak of it without hesitation. . . ." Artha sighed. "To die by its shores one is assured sacred blessedness; burned on a pyre on its shores, there is assurance of eternal peace. . . ."

The raja said, "The river Rhoni is also fed from the snow of the Himalayas. . . . Its waters are clear—. Your cousins bathe there and I will grant you now to go there with them. . . . Your cou-

sins are happy—; they find great enjoyment from court life, as does your bhai, Devad. You should enter into the spirit of the pleasures here and forget that the seriousness of life is weighting you. . . . What say you, my son—come back to the court and have as much fun as any of the other princes?"

His son said, "It is as well, my father—; we have to exist on substitutes—until we find the true way for eternal joy. . . . I shall enjoy your wines and your women!"

The king's reaction from the sudden impulsive declaration was such that he could not reply. He but nodded his head and smiled. And that evening and every evening thereafter, Artha was there to partake of all the indulgences offered at Kapila.

Apprehension and fear were forgotten in the escape from solitude. The young prince's solemn mien had changed to derisive mockery—and he drank and scoffed at the fools who spent their time in wasted debauchery—: did they not know that time was making them old—and they but lost the chance of divining the portals of eternal life . . . ? But—as the wine forced its path of forgetfulness—the brilliance of the gay life was visioned. . . . He forgot that life was a round of pain, that it offered old age and death. He was experiencing a life that held only youthful merriment.

When the thoughts came back momentarily to provoke, he but refilled his glass and beckoned for a lovely one to dance before him to obliterate the vision of an imagined world. . . . "Come, dance—and make me glad!"

It was a great honor among the dancers and singers to be singled out to dance before the prince. When his mind brought back the thought that when death came—the end of life was a little vase of dust . . . and no wine, nor song, nor warmth from a woman's touch could come to him there . . . he resolved to drown the insolent memory; it must not mock him now that he was beginning to enjoy and live as others. What matter if it ended in dust—life must not draw the veil of illusions to hide these new

and exciting sensations. . . . Let life's perplexities be for old men,—youth—youth needed to warm its blood with wine and women. "Come, press a cheek to mine—one day the cheeks will be like the rose petals—wrinkled and colorless—one day the body will be void of warmth. . . . One day the pulsing life within will be stilled—let it flow now, madly if it will—let us find life's joy together, maiden!"

And at dawnings when he looked out upon a new day crowded with memories of the preceding night—he said to himself: "Within me is the joy of the heavens—and the wrath of purgatory. . . ." The sun-illumined gardens brought the light of reasoning to his mind as he walked—and with a disturbed soul he sought the temple and the expiating gifts to the gods were many. . . . But still the condemnation within himself remained. "I have within my breast the fires of consummation—burning away, ever burning to ashes—to ashes that will one day rest on a shelf—in a little jar's confines. . . ."

The evenings with the cold glare of moon brought puzzling periods of seeking to divine the reasons for man's belief that the moon held the hand to spin the wheel of birth—to bring man again to know life in a different form. . . . But the music of the strings sounded impellingly glad and enticed him always away from deep thinking upon such themes. . . . He resolved to cast penitence aside and be led by the silver bright sounds, to partake of all that life offered to its fullest along with Devad, Ananda, Ardjuna and all the Sakya lords, to know "all there was to know of life."

When the excitement of the tinseled court life wore thin, Siddhartha took to every other measure of proffered festivity. The opiate cakes were eaten, and the opium pipe tried out. He would soothe the soul into acquiescence with life's fates. He took opiate of hemp leaves, bhang which incited the pitch of gaiety to a maddening desperation. . . . Perverse pleasures took hold of him and the passion for truth was overclouded. The lurid reflex of

life's restraint came to be as wane, sallow mogra blossoms plucked from the bough, weak and without power to sustain a semblance of the former self.

So dissipated did the prince become that the elders among the counsel staff members shook their heads and said, "The king will have to find an adopted son to bequeath his kingdom to—for the princes are to die early. . . . They follow after the old path of vices along which most of the princes go. . . ." The kinspeople prophesied that he would never be able to sire an offspring, his body was so dissipated.

His devoted cousin Arhina, who had grown into a delicate, pure young maiden—looked upon her brother and cousins with disdain. She said one evening when they were watching a performance of the Nautch girls, "When we were younger we were gay in a different way—and it was so satisfying. . . ."

"Then we were young fools, who thought life was a frosted sherbet. . . . Now, we know it as warm, enticing and gay. Go, bid the dancers come closer to our table. . . . It is wretched here to feel apart from the revelry . . ," Artha replied.

The request was granted; the Nautch girls' brown bodies moved in snake-like writhing before the prince, and he chuckled and said to Arhina—, "What is wrong with you, that you feel not the sway which surges and lifts us from boredom? You remain with a cold, quizzical gaze upon them. Think not upon the life they find when the dance is over, nor if they loathe their task of making us find animation. Think not that they will find pain afterwards. . . . Enjoy what there is to enjoy here—now. . . ."

As if seeking to vindicate, Arhina said—, "But yesterdays are ours still—and let us keep the memory of them sweet."

The wine went around the table again, and Ananda lifted his cup, "Let us drink to our yesterdays. May we mould their images in our tomorrows!"

Devad tossed the wine from his cup—, "Let wine and beauty be the moulds; they are all that sparkles with life!"

Devad went on in equivocal phrases, and the merry-making returned. . . . In the gala glory of sensual enjoyment not one of them, including Arhina and Siddhartha felt that tantalization of memory or projection of the future should be mentioned again. . . .

Sensual matter overwhelmed the attributes of the sublime spirit. The universe with its problems of age, disease, and death was a faraway katha—of childhood. . . .

Siddhartha absorbed in the dance which had commenced slow and smooth but was now toward the climax in quickening tempo, called out as he reclined on a bench beside the low table—, "Dance, for tonight is filled with brightness! Tomorrow may cast her shadow." And . . . of a sudden he raised up on his elbow—a tense moment of fear spread over the place, the dancing stopped, the music paused. One of the Nautch girls had fallen to the floor in the dance! And she did not move. A palanquin was brought to remove her from the court. . . . The dancing girl was a painted and wreath-bedecked statue of brown marble . . . from which the fire of sensuality had gone out. . . . The dancing girl, whose lovely body but an instant before was a movement of pleasure, alluring and lovable—representing life's gayest essence—was a void bulk of nothing now on the palanquin—; the dancing girl was dead! Siddhartha with realization of the transformation which death brought—rose from the table, purposely crashing his wine glass to the floor, and went out into the night, rebellious and cynical of life's pomp.

* * * * *

Before a meeting of his ministers, the king said, "Among you are sages with wisdom. Among you are prophets who foresaw my son becoming a sadhu. Speak your ideas to me now. I wish your advice as to whether I should choose a mate for him." A pall fell over the counsel room. They were all familiar with the way the young prince had suddenly revolted against the pleasures of the

court, the disdain he held for the zenanna and for all pastimes which only a fortnight ago he had indulged in to the debauchery state . . . how with disparaging resentment for it all, he had turned to morose meditation.

At night he had gone out and sat on the marble bench beside the lotus pool as his father was wont to do—, cupping his chin in his hand and looking out across the mountains, the same as Pure Rice—and calling for his hookah to be brought that he might find a release through the opiate, that he might slip away from the world of reality into fantastic dreams.

The old king tried often to discuss the affairs of court with Siddhartha, but the morbid prince would say, "Fret your life away with the worrying of it, if you must—but do not impose it on me." And he often rebelled against going into the court room as was his duty; many times his father bodily forced him to enter the massive room and be respectful to the ministers. He seemed nothing at all like the docile youth Artha. The sight of death had changed him thus? To have come upon it so realistically—after believing life to be so beautiful?

When the new palace was completed and new furniture placed in it, complete with rugs and gold-warped drapes, it was suggested that the prince should take a wife, and enjoy life rightly. He scoffed, "Enjoy life! Hai, dance it away and then one day fall over—and forget it all? . . . I will live my life as I like, concern not yourselves with me—; when I feel the need of a woman I know where to find one."

"But there are women, chaste and pure," Pure Rice insisted. "Ride over the province and cast your glance for a beauty. Whatever the price, I will buy her for you."

"Women are snakes with poison tongues, they wind their coils about you and kiss you—but all the time they are crushing and poisoning with—death. I care not what your overflowing coffers can buy for me—things wealth buys but pamper this body—

which will one day be dust. You cannot buy release from disease, old age and death, can you, my pitri?"

"No, I cannot!" the old king went into a rage, and his loud voice was heard all over the court in denunciations. Kinsmen, ministers, servants gossiped about how the father and son, so much alike—couldn't get along. And old Asita, the Brahmin despaired because—they were preordained to be dispassionate. They should take matters of concern with dignity and control.

Pati suggested an elaborate court party to which would be invited eligible maidens, and gifts to them all bestowed by the prince. It might be Devad would also "enjoy it."

The troubled king related Pati's plan to the ministers and asked their approval of it. "A woman's intuition as to what to do in times like these is sometimes a dependable agent," one wise seer said.

Another said, "Let him be subjected to charm of untouched women, they will awaken him from his trenchant moods."

"Achala!" a young lord exclaimed from the stair. "Let us have such a party, the old court entertainment is stale and needs divertissement."

"Where is the young rajkumar today?" one asked. "He is never at meetings any more."

"He and his favorite kinsman, Ananda, are on an excursion to the mountain," Devad said. "I consider it important to attend these meetings—it seems fitting that I, being second heir to the throne, should be wise to all the business of the province."

The ministers smiled approval of Devad's remark. The old king cast his blue eyes to pierce the depths of the dark, shining orbs upturned to search his; his voice quavered as he dismissed the session. He turned to Devad—and quoted from the tenth book of the Rigveda, "Two, even kinsmen, differ in their bounty."

The invitations went out, by gaily-clad messengers with the hopes that among the maidens of the kingdom there would be one lovely creature to entice the mind of Siddhartha from the spell of

disillusion. Praise abounded for the all-wise and good king, Pure Rice, because he was selecting a wife for his son from among the maids of the province.

The long-talked-of night was one of enchanting charm. The moon was suspended from a chain of stars as a round golden pendant between the white peaked breasts of the mountains, and its magic cast an unearthly glow, an appealing radiance as if there was an affinity of purpose in making an important choice which would also be of concern to the celestial world.

Bright and sparkling as dewy rosebuds standing prim in the garden, with their silken garments snug about their sweet-spiced bodies, they waited timidly, these choice maidens of Kapilavastu. When they were singled out and brought before the prince, they shyly . . . hid behind their dophattas and glanced up at him with lowered lids. The prince was handsomely dressed in bright new kurta and kurtha—enhanced with gems of emerald and ruby. He wore emerald-set earrings and the necklace of emeralds which had belonged to his mother. The new strands of Gambunadi pearls which his father offered were refused. He expressed the idea of wishing the nearness of her, "who would have loved to have lived to see this night" and when the old king sat with his chillum on the balcony, watching the party below, he too had thoughts of Maya's nearness. . . . "Which would you choose for your son, my Maya?" he said under breath and a kinswoman neared to inquire what he said.

"I was wondering which would be the choice. . . . I was thinking how handsome my son is."

"He is a little too feminine, if I may say such," the cousin of the king said. "You should engage in a good war or two and teach these young lords to appreciate their keep. They are all too weak and lax, and a woman is too easy to acquire. . . . I trust you will put him through the contests according to custom, and have him match his skill with others who would desire the maid whom he chooses. . . ."

"Hai—I shall abide by custom."

"But, my dear cousin—I trust you do not plan to follow custom and give over the rule to one so—inadequate, if I may say—so puny a monarch? Still you could expect nothing but a weakling, his living a sheltered life as you have made for him."

An outburst of depreciation for the interference came from the king as he bit down on his opium pipe, and he got up from his balcony seat and moved down to the court.

Pati came up to him as he neared the fountain and sat within view of the proceedings. "Did you see the beautiful maiden stand before him just now? She was as a Devas creature, and he never once lifted his eyes to look at her? What sort of son is this my sister has given you—? He cares not for life as the other lords. . . . Why, he looks upon them as if they were a flock of sheep. Watch you, the others—. Ah, see Devad—how he eyes their shapely bodies from ankle to head! From head to ankle!"

"Devad is too lustful," the king commented, and Pati moved away. The music of the orchestra drowned what she retorted over her shoulder as she went.

When time came for Siddhartha to give out the presents, Pure Rice observed that he indeed handed them out as if he were offering grain to a flock of birds, such listless gestures. The maidens made their curtsies and passed on, one by one. The same way each time, he placed the gifts in their hands and looked toward the next!—Did he not know this party was planned for him to make a choice? Surely the touch of one's hand as he placed the gift in it would arouse interest enough for him to glance at a face. . . .

Now the end of the presentation. . . . A helpless look was on Siddhartha's face. Pure Rice felt a share of his embarrassment—there was one more maiden to come forth and—the gifts were gone. . . . !

He went to Pati to explain the predicament. Pati was already

aware of the circumstance, and was trying to decide which of her own jewels she could part with to slip to him.

The king watched the kindling interest on his son's face. The girl approaching—and he stood empty-handed, looking upon her round, smiling face. . . .

"He is smitten with her." Pati said, "I must get a gift to him—," and she made a move to go through the crowd.

Pure Rice held her arm. . . . "Wait—, my son looks into the maiden's dark eyes as if some perception attended from the confines of preceding kalpas. . . . He has known the girl somewhere—before this. . . . He recognizes her. . . . Wait—, he will handle the affair. Listen, she speaks!"

Yasodhara said, "I seem to not only have known you since I was a child—but way—kalpas before. We perhaps were in the past life together. . . ."

"I was a forester in another life, and perhaps you—you were there in the forests with the birds and flowers—and we ran and played beneath the trees."

"And we were very happy."

"We were very happy."

Pure Rice settled back at his place by the pool, very satisfied, Pati sat beside him, "Aye—she is the lure—, the brown-eyed Yasodhara will pluck his heart from its depths. . . ."

"I shall send messengers at once to the great Suprabudda, her father to ask for the maid in marriage with my son."

The next overheard conversation was more revealing. Pati was nearing where they stood when she stopped to hear:

"Such a beautiful red sari you wear. . . . My emerald necklace will go with it as stars with the moon. It belonged to my ama and it was kept after her—death—not the usual year but for eight years and it was given me when I was old enough for a guru. I love it so much and—will you please accept it?"

"I once gave you a gift, remember the cup of water at the well?" Yasodhara bowed.

"You are the child—that day?"

"You were also a child that day. I am Yasodhara. I know your cousins well."

"Yasodhara. . . . My cousins have told me of you. . . . You—you are my same height. . . ."

As he circled the chain about her neck and measured height, Siddhartha's hand touched the softness of Yasodhara's short, plump neck—and he remembered how the love birds wished to be close to each other. His heart took fire as his hand fell on her shoulder. He seemed to have been accustomed to taking her shoulders and drawing her close to him—perhaps as lovers in—the other life. . . . And since she was the last of the line, and there were no more gifts to bestow—he led her across the court.

The next day when the prince was capering madly through the groves on his white horse, Ardjuna on a no less spirited black horse called across the ganthi border to talk about the night before.

"I suppose I love Yasodhara, Ardjuna. . . ." Artha confessed as they slowed horses to walk. . . . "I am sorry—you are so much taller than she. . . . I think she is right for me in every way. My pitri is making the dowery for her today."

"I am glad, my cousin that you are to have a chance at her hand. I trust she will make you very happy, if you win her."

"I have not been happy these last years, you know that. . . ."

"I have noticed. . . . Only yesterday you were slothful in your walk—and today you fairly sprint, walking or riding your horse. . . . I would say you are happy now."

"And love does that to me?" Siddhartha became introspective, "I do not understand. Love is most powerful. I not only feel a great love for the maiden, but I love all else that lives because of my love for her. The world has suddenly become very wonderful after all. I want to reach out and . . . caress even the ugly little monkeys in the chambeli branches."

"And they would probably misunderstand your intention and

set their teeth in you!" Ardjuna laughed. "You had better be starting on practice of martial arts, for you know you will have competition for the hand of Yasodhara. . . . I, for one will challenge you."

"You, Ardjuna . . . . so excellent in horsemanship?"

"Hai, and Alaric is fond of the maiden also, and he is excellent in archery, you recall."

"And Devad? Do you suppose . . . . Devad will contend for the hand of her?"

"It was he who first noticed her attractiveness that day she walked by the river."

Siddhartha turned his head, and without further conversation rode back to the stables. Life that had begun to be desirable was suddenly becoming portentous. Had not it always been thus . . . . filled with joy for a day, then sudden despondency? Was it his nature to be so changeable? His father was like that . . . . happy to the point of boisterousness, he seemed, then of a sudden, despairing over something. He was given to those same excesses, like father . . . . like son. . . . Was that the way of life? But his father had reacted to such little things; this was a great problem he had. A perplexing problem. Life must be filled with perplexities.

Ananda, his favorite cousin came up and stopped his horse very close, "I thought you would be gay today, Artha,—you were last night. It grieves me to see that you contemplate the taking of love so seriously. Or is it the contest bothering you? I've been worried about that myself for you, for so many are out to wrest her from you and the contest is seven days away. I heard your relatives talk of it last night."

"What did they say?"

"I dislike telling you, it is not so complimentary. . . . But, I don't wish you to think I am withholding, for your regard for me means more than anything else, Siddhartha. . . ."

"Thank you, Ananda. . . . What did my relatives say?"

"They said, if a war should descend upon the province and you were the ruler of it, the state would be garnered as—an easy prize!"

"My kinspeople said that?" Suddenly art became a challenge, and the drooped shoulders lifted, "I will show them! And I will set my Kantaka against any of your steeds, and I shall develop my skill in all things! Have no fears, Ananda, I shall be fit in seven days!"

"Hai, I will help you." Ananda called after as Siddhartha jumped from his horse and motioned for Channa to take it. "You had better begin with archery—that is your weakest. . . ."

"I recognize no weak thing. I shall become strong in all things!"

"I—hope so, Artha. . . ." Ananda also alighted and walked beside the determined prince toward the archery target—, "But see, who is already out at practice?" And he gestured his short arm excitedly, "Look—Devad!"

Chapter 6

After a week of intense preparation, the contests for the hand of the lovely Yasodhara were under way. The broad maidan, graced with large-leafed trees was filled with excited people discussing which of the Sakya lords would win the beautiful maiden. Yasodhara wearing a bright sari and a gold embroidered dophatta, was being borne forward in a gaily decorated palanquin. "A pearl of great worth!" they whispered, "It will be a lucky day for one of the princes." And they perused the line-up of young men in short tunics ready to match skill. There were Ardjuna, Alaric, Devad, and Ananda. . . . Ananda had entered the last day, when Artha was showing signs of admitted failure. Ananda, his dearest friend also against him! Poor prince. Where was he? Oh, there he was riding across the maidan on his white horse in elegant array. The crowd with one acclaim shouted, "Jai! Noble prince!"

Leaping down from the wide back of Kantaka, Artha looked at the contestants courageously, "Let my rivals prove the braggings of their skill! I am come to win this most worthy prize, most comely of all Kapila. . . ." And he bowed toward Yasodhara's palanquin.

Yasodhara brought the folds of her scarf over her face, but her large brown eyes were dancing anxiously. She reclined within full view of the first contest and waited apprehensively as her attendants fanned with peacock plumes. It was a very uncomfortable

season, the winds were beginning to blow a little suggesting that the monsoons were not far away—but still the air was humid and —yes a little fainty to Yasodhara. Oh, what if he could not go through the contests and one of the others should win? Such thinking must not be. . . . Artha must win! Artha so courageous and manly. . . . Her heart cried out for him—as the first contest was being called.

The challenge of the sword! Hai, Devad was first. It would be with all the contests that the chosen one be last—to outdo what the challengers did. . . . Devad first, Artha last. . . . Oh, what if Devad proved the better?

Artha was also wondering about his brother's skill. And Devad had not spoken to him these seven days—he must be intent upon winning. Devad was so strong, too. . . .

The brown arm lifting a glistening sword was flexed flauntingly, "You may have better swords, but I have the better arm, my cousins!"

"Let us see!" went up from the competitors. "Let us see!" was echoed by the crowd. Devad clove his sword into the trunk of a tree the width of six fingers, and the cheers went wild. "Who can better that? The gods are with the dark prince!" Ardjuna came next and cut an inch deeper than Devad, and the cry was in mockery to Siddhartha, "You'll never win if they keep getting better and better!" But the prince refused to be discouraged, for he had decided to perform his best and take the consequences which any one should do—bravely.

Alaric came forward confidently, and buried his sword eight inches! "Good!" they cried.

Ananda was next. Artha looked at his young cousin a little downcast, still Artha did not understand why "he" wanted to get in the competition. . . . He couldn't believe it was to show off his skill—although it was worthy of exhibition, but it just wasn't like him. . . . Besides, Artha had thought he—loved him too much to go out against him like this.

Oh, what a selfish world it was. People turned for a personal gain. No, he must not think it of Ananda. If Ananda truly loved Yasodhara, he would be willing to allow him to win, because of his great love for him . . . . he wanted to make him happy. But, did Ananda feel this way toward him? He was looking at him almost pathetically with his honest blue eyes.

"My arm may not be as large, but I understand the use of the body force behind the blow. See!" Ananda said as he stepped back and aimed powerfully. And when the judges went to measure, the mark on the tree was nine inches, by far the best stroke yet. The three contestants looked astonished. One so small with such a power!

Siddhartha could not understand. Ananda could have come into the contest for the sport of it, but this looked like he was out to win. "Well, young cousin!" he said defiantly, "You think I cannot bring it down after the manner of the old forester?"

Ananda said to the judges defiantly, "It isn't fair for him to cut on the same side as our strokes. Have him go on the other side of the tree!"

The other side of the tree. Why, it seemed Artha somehow knew that was the way to fell a tree. He must have known it in another life. He walked to the other side of the talis tree, and the cheers that had gone up after the long rebounding of sighs after Ananda's big stroke now grew into deafening loudness. He must recognize his friends, his subjects to be. Now, they were waiting, perhaps praying for him to win. He drew back with a great intake of breath and doubling his fists around the handle, forced the sword straight toward the weakened place on the other side. That was the way woodsmen cut trees. He had no doubt but it would fall. It did. . . . It began going in the direction where onlookers had crowded and the cries were "Get out of the way!" "The prince has cut it to the heart! The rajkumar has won!"

Ananda was smiling from the corner of his new moon mouth and Artha felt a surge of good will toward him. . . . Bless him,

he had said that—so he would win. . . . He had cut to the depth —so the tree would be sure to topple. He was his friend, how could he have ever thought otherwise? And the very act spurred him to greater determination. If Ananda was to pave the way thus—each time, he was sure to win.

"Wait until he goes against my horsemanship!" Ardjuna said sneeringly. "Call that contest next! Horsemanship! I will match my horse against the fabled Kantaka!"

Devad went to Ardjunna while the judges were convening, "A word in private," he whispered— "He knows how popular his white horse is, and in order to go along with the people's wishes— the judges will decide in favor of Kantaka. . . . Let us demand a fiery steed from another stable be brought into the contest. . . . I know of such a horse that will toss the pale, frail Artha to the kites!"

Any request from a contestant was honored, if the others competing agreed. And all nodded assent when asked if there was agreeable consent. Ananda said under his breath, "I think he is up to a trick—watch out." Pure Rice cried out, "They will all be killed!" And once the judges turned to the raja to see if he was not about to decree against it, but he had settled back—waiting.

Siddhartha did not know the meaning of a "fiery steed," and the others laughed at his ignorance. . . . When the black, fierce-eyed stallion was brought across the maidan with tossing mane and snorting nostrils, throwing its head from side to side in a wild manner—the other young lords trembled. . . . But Artha, not knowing, was unafraid. Devad himself, the perpetrator of the trick—drew back a pace and said, "I knew not it was so wild a beast. . . ."

Ardjuna turned to Devad fearfully, "You—you are to go first, and—it may toss you to your death!"

"The customs should be changed, the bridegroom-to-be should go first," Devad said. But he moved forward—determined to try.

The judges halted the proceedings with a change in the order

of the contestants. It was not fair that the dark prince should be first on all the tries. Ananda said, "Let me . . . . I want to get it over with!"

And Ananda hardly got on the back of the beast until he was on the ground—unhurt, but frightened badly. Precisely the same thing happened to Alaric, the noted rider.

Ardjuna came forward bravely, "I have tamed them before! You have to determine their moods—and move along with them. . . ."

The onlookers encouraged, "Come on, circle the plains. . . . You can do it!" But he too was dropped to the ground in an instant of black fury.

"Are there rules against the use of the lash?" Devad enquired as it came his turn.

The use of the lash was granted, and before he got on the back of the beast, Devad began to try to beat it into submission. Siddhartha cried out, "You are hurting the horse!" And the audience laughed uproariously.

"I mean to hurt the beast!" Devad said with clenched teeth and set jaws. "If I break it down, it will not be so frisky!" And the laughs went over the crowd again.

"But it is not right to hurt an animal!" Artha continued to protest and the laughs subsided as his voice filled with pathos, pleaded with each stroke of Devad's lash. . . .

Devad, when he thought he had subdued enough the wild spirited horse—jumped on its back with a quick sprint—and went into the air with the beast's rearing, staying on surprisingly well. Then the fierce teeth showed big and white—as the writhing neck reached back—and with a powerful force caught Devad's foot and thrust him to the ground.

The sympathizers thronged about the angered prince, who was more hurt of pride than body, crying "Let me at that beast!" But one sympathizer stood beside the horse—stroking the bleeding face, Siddhartha was speaking in a quiet voice as he so often

stroked Kantaka while talking kindly. And the stallion was standing still!

The raja, who had rushed to Artha's side to say—it was better to be wifeless than lose his life—now stepped back. . . . The black ears of the wild horse were perching up like shining ravens as Artha talked to him. The crowd was still. People leaned forward, expecting to see the mighty neck reach down and tear the face of the prince—for the rajkumar was placing his cheek against the horse's cheek—and his ill-shaped hand was wiping the blood and froth from its mouth. The prince felt only compassion and pity, and in some way the beast understood his friendship—standing still as a carved piece of black onyx while Artha mounted—and without further revolt moved as the reins tenderly guided, circling the track.

There was a long time in which the audience was hushed, it was expected every minute the former capriciousness would return—but the horse remained peaceful until it was led away and the contest was decided in favor of "Prince Siddhartha!" The acclaim mounted to a roar.

Pure Rice was sobbing in the coiled hair of his beloved son, "Oh, my Artha—they designed to have you killed by the beast!" And he turned to Devad, lying on the ground nursing his foot—"But, the gods were not with you! You thought to trick him to his death!" He shouted—"But you failed! You failed!"

Pati, who had been hovering over the hurt foot raised with defiance, and ministers came to help in returning the raja to his place at the center of the grounds. "Hold not concern over the next event, my pitri—" Artha said as he went away. He turned to the judges, who were making ready a target of a crorey shell and signalling the drummers to their places, "I have a request, if I may. . . ." And all ears waited to hear what it was.

"Since this is a day of diverse entertainment, I have an idea that might be of hilarious effect. Hanging in the hall of Kapila is an ancient bow which has belonged to Sinhaudana, whoever he

was." The crowd laughed lightly. "He must have been a great warrior or huntsman and I feel that I would like to have him honored today by bringing his bow from its place and using it to decide the final contest. Are all the conspirators willing to my request?"

From the center of the maidan came a loud guffah, and all eyes were turned to the raja. Then Devad commanded the attention. "He may use any kind of a bow. I can win over him in archery any day!"

The other two princes said, "Set up the target and begin the drums!"

The dusty steel bow was brought out and being so much larger than the lacquered cane bows accustomed to, it was awkwardly handled. Ananda and Ardjuna asked to have their targets set at the customary six gows. "Set mine at eight," Alaric said, "That seems to be my lucky number today!" And Devad, wishing to exceed, said "I will try mine at nine. . . ." Siddhartha, knowing he must win this contest also, said, "Hai, set mine ten gows away from the line!"

Yasodhara stifled a scream in her dophatta and her attendants began fanning her vigorously. Artha glanced toward her palanquin with a wry grin on his face, and anticipated what was to be enjoyed by her and the crowd of anxious onlookers. His heart was saying to hers, "Have no fear my beloved, the contest is over as far as you and I are concerned. I'm winning you, my Yasodhara!"

The archers going before were as clowns to the audience, with much fumbling and with no amount of accuracy they took aim and sent the arrows wildly through the air. Laughs at the wayward arrows, and witty remarks made great entertainment. "Hai, there, were you aiming at the punjab tree?" and "Be careful lest it do a back-kick!" But when Siddhartha took the bow, he remembered the day he had practiced with the relic, how his father had directed, "Aim low—low and hit the mark!" Across the way he felt the power of that suggestion, "Aim low—and hit the mark. . . ."

He leaned forward, listened for the drum, slipped the arrow into place and twanged the silver wire with precision. Like a shaft of sunrise sure of its mark at the bottom of a pool, the arrow curved downward and pierced the target ten gows away!

"The prince Siddhartha is the victor!" The judges proclaimed. And the people said, "The same way he shall one day strike at the heart of true government." They lifted voice and yelled "Jai! Jai! Our noble prince!"

Noble prince. . . . These words struck deep into the conscience of the victor. . . . Was it a noble thing he had done? Outwitting the ones—who had tried to outdo him, was it not well that he had turned the trick? But, in his heart condemnation stormed. . . . "No, I am not the best archer in this group. . . . By far, I am the poorest. . . ."

Yasodhara came forward with the crown of mogra flowers to place about his neck according to custom. . . . She was radiant in happiness as she lifted her arms above his head—but at—the glance of glory in her eyes his heart sank. . . . He had won her unfairly. Emotion of contempt for himself surged through his conscience. . . . He said, "I—I am not worthy of this prize of beauty and goodness. . . . It is Devad who is the greater archer—it is he who should have won the hand of her!"

Still on the day set to take Yasodhara as his bride, the feeling of guilt and shame clouded the conscience of the noble prince. It was as if he had thrown dice with the gamblers and won unfairly. . . . He had become the victor—through trickery, and this thought would be with him throughout their married life. In the early hours of his wedding day he had lain awake, and thought on the act—and then he dressed and went to the hall where Sinhaudana's bow was hanging and he stood looking at it—wondering how that great ancestor would have reacted to the trick had he but known.

The morning prayer resounded down the cedar-walled hallway, "May the shining excellence Savitar be manifest in us to his

stimulation of our thoughts." The reverberation of the purhoit's words struck deep. The devas had not stimulated thoughts for that act but the evil gods had guided it. And this marriage might become an evil alliance because of it.

The king's step was heard in the hall, Siddhartha moved away to avoid him but was accosted. "I was the same way on my wedding day, up with the dawn. For days before, sleep was evasive. Why, what is wrong my son?"

"It is Yasodhara, my pitri, I am not worthy of her."

"My son, the most gifted of all the Sakya lords, unworthy of a daughter of old Suprabudda?" The raja was about to laugh but the look on Artha's face made him sober. "Why do you look so upon Sinhaudana's bow?"

"Because I am ashamed for having used it in the manner which I did. I was but a weakling, reaching out for something to prop with. In times of stress, Viswamitri taught me, the dominating trait of character comes to the fore and that act but showed what I am. . . ."

"Oh, my son . . . . say not these things. You condemn yourself because we had a little session with the bow previously, and the other lords did not. How delicate a conscience. My child, in all the gifts of character traits, I would glory in that possession. Conscience is the sattva that harmonizes the soul in its relation with the Universal Soul. Such high principle of atma, my beloved son has, that through his example I have sought to live better. There has been absent in my traits, tolerance, controlled will, power of purpose; through you I hope to develop these."

"You but mock me, pitri. I have no power over purpose. I am of the same stock as you. We are weak, weak. . . . Forgive me, I know you would not have won a maiden by trickery."

"Come, Siddhartha, let us walk in the gardens and talk further."

"You have rightly spoken," the raja said going down the steps past Asita, "We have degenerated so we have some one else to

make our prayers. . . . A weak and punitive people, my Siddhartha, full of fears and ills. . . . How can we overcome?"

They walked a flower-bordered path down by the pool where milk white herons were wading. "On such a beautiful morning our souls should rise to be with Indra—ah, Indra stretches rays to us here—but when we reach for them—they are not there. . . . I have sought the light of wisdom, but it is fleet and passing—and my mind cannot dwell long on meditation these days. . . ."

Siddhartha took up the conversation, "Concentration brings extraordinary sense perceptions. But I cannot concentrate on the realm of the Infinite when earthly condemnations obstruct the vision. Our ancestors perhaps had better opportunities to commune and find peace—moving from one grassy plain to another with but their herds to distract. . . . Do you not sometimes wish for such freedom—away from all the luxuries that effeminate us? Do you not long for unrestricted living—to be out as one with the things of Nature—as one of the Eternal's plants growing according to divine grace? There must be peace in such a life. . . ."

Pure Rice nervously began parting his beard, "Hai, but—but I thought I would go down to Benares—first to talk with the learned ones there. . . ."

Siddhartha turned quickly, "You—you do not plan—to really go away, my pitri?"

"Hai, it is the custom, one I shall gladly abide by. . . . When a fine young ruler is of age to take over, it is time for the old raja to withdraw his will and hope for a better province. . . . I have not been well these past years, you know that, my son. . . . I have for your sake tried to be the father you expected me to be—but I have fallen short in many ways. . . . Perhaps when I have become the wanderer in some dark forest I shall find truth—and—"

"No, no—Pitri!" Siddhartha grasped the brocaded shoulder-pads of his father's coat. . . . "It is I who shall go away. . . . It is I who have sinned and need to go to Benares. . . . It is I who wish to go to a hermit's life in the forest. I care not for court life, and

I should never be able to rule a people. . . . I know not of the problems of the people, I know not their trades, so how could I know their problems?" Images of the workers passed in array before his mind's eye—dyers stretching their cloths from the vats, blacksmiths working with hammer and tongs. . . . How would he know how to advise according to the needs of the people? "My most beloved Pitri, I could not be a magistrate, the very gods would laugh at my pretense to rule. . . ."

"You will learn!" Pure Rice stormed out, "The kingdom is yours! I resign it to you this day—and when you are wed you shall return here to your new house, which I have built for you. . . ."

"I cannot—my Pitri,—I do not wish—"

"But, whether you wish it or not—you shall!" The raja moved back toward the court, "What is wrong with me; I cannot talk with my son and reason things out. . . ."

Siddhartha followed after him, pleading, "I shall not wed if it means that I take the rule from you—it is your very life, the people revere you. . . . They think of you as of the holy devas. —No, I cannot do this to you and the people. You would not be happy. . . . I would not be happy for I am not worthy of being their ruler—."

Pure Rice lowered his voice and spoke kindly, "Put aside all condemnation of self, and let pride and joy be the substitutes. . . . This is your wedding day. . . . Go, bathe and prepare to wear the mora headdress. The tilka upon your forehead denotes you are a marked bridegroom, Siddhartha. . . . The betrothal is sealed. Suprabudda has half the dowery. . . . The horoscopes have been read and they agree on the thirty-two points. Red Ram is the lord of Heaven. Mesha will guide you to greatness." And the raja was gone.

Siddhartha stood looking across the mountain line. . . . Somewhere up there—his father would go. He remembered an old proverb, "He who goes to the mountains, goes to his mother. . . ."

He fell in lotus posture beside the lake and looked into the lake's reflection of the plumed azaleas. He made his spine rigid and waited for the great Mind to permeate his being. . . . As he sat thus Udayah, an old seer came up and bowed, "May I speak friendly words on this portentous morning?"

"I am aware that it should be a glad morning," the prince replied without looking up. . . .

"It is. . . . It is. . . . There is a hum about the palace that gives it pure sattva. I watched the gifts being sent to the bride, and I felt—a new life was about to come to Kapila. . . . Ah, the garment which the bride will wear is the most costly and most beautiful my eyes ever beheld. . . . Not even Sati could have had one so lovely. . . . And look you, there are servants with jars and baskets, going forth still—. Now, in one of those jars is the vermilion for the marking of the part in the bride's hair. . . . I suppose you need to be acquainted with all these things that go on—on a wedding day?"

"It is good that I have a friend to tell me."

"Enlightened friendship is of three sorts; that which removes things unprofitable, promotes that which is real gain and stands a friend in adversity. . . . I claim the name of enlightened friend and renounce all that is magisterial. Listen, I will prove myself a sincere advisor.

"When youth is flushing into beauty and adulthood, there are many things he needs advice on, but mainly on the subject of women and the heart's undercurrents. A man who rejects these is like a tree which bears not leaves and fruit. . . . Many great ones have been overcome by women's charms. . . . Lord Sakra was; likewise the rishi Agastya, after a long period of practicing austerities. . . . And he found happiness. . . ."

"I am not ignorant of human joys," the prince lifted his head, but kept his hands on his knees. "But I see all things in the impress of change. Disease, age and death are to be our mantles, so this robs me of the satisfaction of such happiness. I take a wife

and she bears a child—to be overwhelmed with these three—disease, old age and death. . . . Is it not better to be like the tree which bears not leaf and fruit?"

"No, my young prince—it is not." Udayah said, departing, "The gods have willed it thus—and we must accept it."

Siddhartha remembered Udayah's words as he was being borne in splendor on the arms of four bearers, in a decorated palanquin to his wedding. Drummers before, and drummers, flute and cymbal players marching behind. . . . Three times in one's life there were drummers,—at birth, wedding—and death—drummers to scare away the evil. "Hai, it is evident throughout one's life—so one should take up the drums. . . ."

He glanced at the back where there marched the Sakya lords. . . . It was uncomfortable to turn his head—but he wanted to make sure that they all—were there. . . . Alaric, Devad, Ananda, Ardjuna. . . . Were they all hating him for going forth to take the prize they—might have had?

Now came the pelting of small stones as the crowd sang a welcome to the bridegroom. He must smile good-naturedly, this was of custom. . . . But, he observed—there were no mummies placed along the way the bridegroom went, as was common at weddings. . . . Perhaps they were cognizant of—this groom's realization of death. . . .

Such elegance indulged to achieve beauty at the scene of the nuptials. The golden gadi was set and the carpet spread. Wedding garlands made the whole place gay. The toran, emblem of the royal house was suspended amid floral decorations—where the bride and groom should kneel.

Yasodhara was waiting, more radiant than at any moment of her life. Her gown was of sheer silk, made with tight bodice and flaring skirt. Bands of gold decorated the skirt down to her gold-slippered feet. A diamond stud was in her left nostril and pearl drops from her ears came down to touch the heavy shoulder orna-

ments which held chains supporting the weight of her gold arm bracelets.

First the dwellers of the ancestral Paradise were invoked by the priests to be present at the marriage and to grant it a happy ending. The pitri-puja worship, honoring the ancestors always preceded other rituals. Cocoanut and rice were passed along with rolls of betel nut, and many were chewing betel when the prayers were said.

Then it was as a lovely katha, softly unfolding. Artha felt a perfect harmony with the devotionals, with Yasodhara kneeling on the silken pillows beneath the toran with him. The Krishna devotional was very sublime; he forgot the while the task of ruling the province and thought of his love for Yasodhara.

Gifts to the holy men and to the temple were made. Now a purhoit was asking, "Who gives this virgin?" Suprabudda came forward throwing rice, and met Pure Rice who was accepting for his son. Now came the rites, Hatha-leva, joining hands and tying garments together. Moving about the ceremonial jars the words of the priest were, "Become thou my partner as thou has paced the seven steps . . . ." said for the bride.

The speaking was all done by the priests, the bride and groom were but dummies to be pulled about at intoning of the rites. "Thy partnership I have won, apart from me do not live. We shall be as one in mind, action and senses."

For Siddhartha was being chanted in ringing syllables, "Thou wilt share my pleasures, and will twine thy loving arms about me and welcome all my love and embraces. Let thy mind be cheerful and thy beauty bright. Closely unite thy body with this man, thy husband so that you shall both be full of years."

All eyes were turning to Yasodhara. "Be thou devoted to the gods and become the mother of heroic sons." And the ceremony was at last over.

The parents of the bride began the customary wailing, "She

that was ours is no more. Now our daughter will return rarely to her home. . . ."

The bride and groom listened as they looked into each other's eyes—and moved to the jars where straws were placed—betokening their future, two straws were very close together—on top of the wine. . . . Lovers they would be—until death.

Pati came up with profuse well-wishing. Yasodhara fell at her feet saying after custom, of a bride to her mother-in-law, "I touch your feet." She lifted the rana's garment to her forehead three times signalling in graceful acknowledgment submissiveness to her will. Yasodhara, when she had borne children—would then be esteemed with the same reverence of motherhood. . . . Not until then would she be allowed to prepare dishes for her husband—she could only see to the comfort and happiness of—Siddhartha.

At last they were in view of the minaret-roofed palace built for them. Lapis lazuli entrances invited—here—there. . . . Which way should they go in? The quickest, to avoid the pelting of stones and rice. . . . "Here, my beloved—" Siddhartha said, and stopped —to look up into a rose oak where a bulbul was singing. . . . "That should be a note of some good portent—to have a birdsong welcome us. . . ."

With his arm around her they stood and listened, and the crowd—left; there they were before the pillared terrace of their own home, and a bird was singing full throated and happy. . . . "And they have but the sky for a roof—and a limb for a lintel. . . ."

Yasodhara turned to look at the alabaster threshold inviting her—the door of sandalwood being opened. . . . "And I—we have all this. . . . You are so good to give it to me—."

"It is nothing I could give, my beloved. . . . I did not achieve it—I but inherited it from the benevolence of my pitri. . . . The bird, listen—did you ever hear one sing like that before? That is not a song to its mate—but it lifts to the realms of the Infinite.

. . . All things intoning with the Infinite must be—so happy as that. . . ."

Inside the elegant new hall, Yasodhara was exclaiming over every new piece of furniture, each rug and curtain, and she stopped suddenly to look into her husband's face, "But you are not happy. You have not been since the contests, since you won me!"

"I was but beset with the overwhelming good fortune."

"Speak truthfully to me, my husband. Are you so unhappy?"

"I was thinking, my beloved, of how my pitri arranges all this for me and I am so ungrateful. He sends forth musicians to entertain. I suppose tonight the Nautch girls will descend upon the palace. Tomorrow will be added a pavilion. Will I follow after the old life? Will it go on the same forever? We bear sons to take over the indulgent practices and more and more we become worthless, useless fornicators of evil. Lewdness is monarch, Vice the ministers. . . . All this is for me. . . ."

"You are today bequeathed the ruling of Kapila?" Yasodhara questioned.

"I am the new raja, Yasodhara. Henceforth it is I who gives the advice and makes the decisions and I am incapable. . . . And I hate such pomp as goes with being a ruler. I would prefer to have knowledge before I am given this obligation."

"Hold no fear in your heart, my husband. I shall help you to find faith." And with the solace of these words they moved toward the bridal chamber, a place of cloistered serenity. "We shall love here and know such happiness that will make you forget any other part of life exists to bring anxiety."

Before going in, Siddhartha guided his bride to a view of the mountains. "There is where my pitri will go to search for truth but I know his heart is going to always be here in Kapila." He touched her chin and lifted it to view the sky, "There are jewels far brighter than the friezes of inland agates he has left for me here. The stars suggest to me that there must be some place, a world unfettered and free."

"I am sure that there is—, my Artha. . . ."

"You truly think so? We are all taught it, convention has bequeathed the bardo to us—but the plan of manifold evolutions to attain it, so many re-births—do you also believe that necessary? There ought to be a way of projecting ourselves there—without so much effort—; it should be a thing of grace if it is a gift. . . ."

"You—you will discover the path to peace, one day—." Yasodhara said softly, "but now—come, rest your fears in my arms. . . ."

For days they dwelt in the seclusion of the inner chamber of blue alabaster walls where the soft light of the perfumed braziers cast a starlight effect. The bed had a canopy of silk with a lucent film of stained stars as its design. . . . Thick draperies shut out all changes in Nature. . . . And time was lost in the bliss of nearness to each other. . . .

Night and day the lutes sighed from the musicians' quarters below. Delicious foods, sweetmeat dainties were brought to them at all hours. . . . Everything was in perfect and true order of—designed peace, but it was not wholly satisfying. . . . The conscientious one rebelled at the luxury—finally, and began to toss upon his pillow when he was supposed to be sleeping serenely.

Throughout the day he would remark in pity of the—man out there in the province who was writhing in misery—while all this was his to enjoy. Out there was a man of stooped shoulders—carrying a much too heavy load. . . . There was a blind one—never seeing the river of which he sang. . . . Down by the river road were the lepers with swollen, distented bodies—helpless with none to lift them. . . . While he was there served by cupbearers, cymballers, Nautch girls—.

"You are too serious, for one so young," Yasodhara told him. "Let no ugly frustrations come to cloud our joy, my most notable raja—."

"Call me not ruler."

"Then I shall call you, my lord—my most noble husband. . . ."

Compunction again came declaring that he did not deserve the

love of her, his wife. "I have no right to your love—it is Devad who should be lying with you—now." And he told her of the way he had inveigled her from the other contestants—by a selfish and unethical deed.

When he had finished the long, serious narration of it all—Yasodhara burst forth in laughing and teasing—, "So you think one of the other lords should have had me? Devad is the better archer—? Hai, and perhaps the better in form—. My lord, come to remember—he is built from the mould of a god. . . . I consider his face—hai, god-like also. And I am most fond of deep, dark eyes. . . ." She pulled his head into her lap and stroked his cheek, "But—I love—blue eyes and lord Siddhartha!"

The amorous songs to the accompaniment of the silver strings of the vinas floated to them there on the golden charpoy. . . . The problems of the province and the chastisement were gradually forgotten. The chime of ankle bells of the dancing girls below suggested a far away caravan. . . . The troublesome world was on a journey—and only the two of them were left—in the bridal chamber.

Chapter 7

The young raja sat as a magistrate in the long council room where his father before him had meted out justice to the people of Kapila. He was in the large, gold chair, and on the round of the dais below him was the small, gold chair in which he had sat as a child. He felt inadequate as the child still, and the expression on the faces of the ministers betrayed the same thinking. These were supposed-to-be-wise men, he thought, but their thoughts were confined in selfishness. Truly, there were many new ideas which he would like to impart to these counsellors, but he waited.

He felt the sting of the silence. They were expecting him to make some sort of a speech to them. . . . He must. . . . "You have, as a group done your duty in service to my erstwhile pitri in aiding in the accumulation of wealth for the province. . . . Now, that we have wealth, I will need no assistance in procuring materially."

The ministers squirmed in their seats, trying not to show concern, but seething at the remarks, "In fact, I shall rule in a different manner than you have been accustomed to witnessing. My pitri and I do not see alike in any matters, and you who have through years sanctioned his movements will likely disparage mine. I do not desire your advice, although I am grateful if you offer good attitudes. But I expect—to abide solely upon my inner convictions. Therefore I shall not often consider what the former raja would have done, or what you would do, but what my spirit

speaks to my mind." He went on in this vein for a lengthy talk and said finally, "Let us hear the first offence."

The case was stated, "This man was caught stealing fruit from the royal gardens, what shall his punishment be?"

It was his duty to interrogate the accused, he remembered. "Why did you steal?"

"I took the fruit from the royal gardens because I was hungry and had no food" the man said in fear.

Impulsively the young raja turned to an attendant, "The man is hungry; gather ripe fruits and give to him." He himself was surprised how easily the advice came.

One of the ministers broke the silence that followed with a quavering comment, "Why, that will cause our trees to be raided by other beggars. The man will send out the word and soon we shall be without fruit to eat!"

"But we are not hungry," Artha said, and he felt triumphant. "Next."

"This woman was found living in the pavilion without a permit." A shy, dark girl in somber dophatta hiding her face, trembled before him.

"What is your name?" he asked, "Do you have a husband? If so, where is he?"

"Sundari." The girl gasped. "I am wed to a Devadura tree."

"It is common practice," one of the counsellors explained voluntarily, "when a widow wishes not to be burned with her husband, she runs away and reports she is wed, hai, perhaps to a Himalaya pine."

"That is clever and wise," the raja said and evoked a laugh from the young lords standing in their places at the back of the room.

The girl was looking at Devad, directly at him and Devad quickly changed to sobriety.

"The lord Devad brought you into the pavilion?" Raja Artha asked.

She faltered, "The dark prince brought me here."

Some fulmination was brewing in the black eyes, Siddhartha thought. He expected his brother to speak up and say he had the right to a few prerogatives, being the next heir to the gold chair. . . . Perhaps to avoid a scene—or perhaps it was out of pure mercy, he said, "The girl may stay."

"But sir, she is of the devadasis! The temple women are looked after by the purhoits, and they will come here looking for her, and they will cause us trouble. . . ." This advice sounded very logical.

"So you are a temple dancer?"

"I was. . . . But I was treated badly—and I ran away."

"She could not be both," another comment was enlightening, "for the temple girls are taken to the temple as small children and dedicated to the gods, so therefore she could not have been wed to a man. . . ."

"So you—lied, Sundari?"

"I—I—lied. Thinking it evil for a virgin—to thus be in a pavilion." The girl said, speaking conscientiously.

"I will have to send you back to the temple!" Siddhartha said disappointedly. And as she turned to go—he wondered if he had done rightly. . . . His spirit was downcast—but his mind had reasoned thus. . . . "I trust that the priests will be better to you when you return."

He was thinking of the zenanna women—especially of Lotus Flower who was soon to have a child. . . . A child. . . . He had lain with her up to the time he was married, and the child—would likely be his. . . . His. . . . It could not occupy the gold chair, even if it was a son, for—a child born in the pavilion could not be claimed. . . .

A man from the province was waking his mind back to the courtroom. . . . He was speaking his own complaint. . . . "I have a lovely fountain. It falls majestically and constantly over a blue-tiled basin. The sun shines upon it and the heavens cast their

sparkling lights, but in the nights of darkness the Sudras all along the river draw water from it; they steal water from my well!"

The man had ceased speaking. . . . There was need of comment. . . . Siddhartha remembered only that the complaint had been about a fountain—. The man had spoken of it in glowing terms. . . . "You have a fountain?" the dreaming king asked.

"The Sudra steals water in the nighttime from it and—" the man began. . . .

The problem was restated. . . . "And you could not use all the water that flows from your well?" he said trying to stall in order to think of a solution.

"Hai, sir, one could not use all the water that flows from it, a constant flow of four fingers it has . . . night and day—and—"

"Then it should be a happy privilege to share the water with those who have not a well." The advice came shockingly to himself as well as to the listening counsellors. . . .

"But the Sudra's filth! They make his well unclean!" came protestingly from the ministers. . . .

"Water is a cleanser," Siddhartha said. "No doubt the lack of water is why the Sudra is regarded unclean. . . ."

And the order went out that wells should be dug along the cliffs where the Sudras dwelt, so that the lower caste could be cleansed.

Immediately the diviners went forth to find the spot where the wells should be dug. Their method was believed—as guidance of the gods; water was poured on the back of a goat and where it stopped to shake itself, there was to be the place for a well. He and Yasodhara rode out to the place where the digging was to begin. Their mahout stood on the elephant's snout and explained the proceeding to them in their elegant gold howdah. . . . And the enthusiasm with which Yasodhara watched made Siddhartha feel proud of his decision. . . . He said, smiling over at her—"I

think I rule as my father would, in accordance with the need of the people."

"You rule as the gods would have you rule, my beloved." Yasodhara said, "You do all things well. How deeply my beloved thinks on life. However, let no thoughts over which you have not control confuse you, my lord."

He was very quiet and thoughtful, the soft sounds of the plodding hoofs of the elephant in the sand evoked quiet thoughts, and their bodies rocked back and forth in easy grace. Yasodhara held her chadar close about her and spoke no further words for a time. The young king gazed out upon the rice fields and beyond at the river banks where the idle beggars and diseased ones came to watch the work. . . . When he looked upon these hapless victims of circumstance, he had a strange upheaval within his mind —as the question came to him as it had in his youth—why was he so favored and these so wretched? Why should the gods favor him—? Yet—was he not also cursed by the gods? He was deformed of body.

Some revolting ideas always found their ways into his thinking, at such times as these he felt like denouncing his wealth and all the luxuries which were his to enjoy—for he could but comprehend that all the wealth of the kingdom had been acquired unjustly—. Asita had told of how they used to wage wars on other kingdoms and take their gold and gems. . . . The Sakya lords had no right to their superior attitudes—yet they looked down on those who had to earn their livelihoods. . . . And the Brahmin looked down on them. . . .

In turn, the ones who worked the fields looked down on the Sudra as the very filth of the streets—and would not even allow them to drink from the same wells. . . . There was beginning in the province a division that was to mean disruption. . . . His father had noticed it and tried to curb it. He remembered instances in which his father had ridiculed the hauteur of his people. . . . But when he tried to balance the scales of justice, the counsellors were

in contradiction. . . . He glanced at Yasodhara who was smiling sweetly, almost appreciatively at the expressions of gladness on the faces of the people for whom the wells were being dug. . . . "You have made them happy for the first time in their lives, my lord. You are making a great ruler."

"I would like to run away from it all!"

"My lord!" Yasodhara turned to him in surprise. . . . "You do not mean that truly you wish such a thing?"

"If it were not for you, my beloved—I fear I would do so today." And then in an outburst of emotion, he itemized the menial tasks that went with kingship. . . . The ghee was mixed with inferior ingredients and sold for a high price, the farmers scattered their grain and another man's cattle packed the land with tromping. . . . The bakers complained that the barley bins were not filled to the mark and yet the Vaisyas demanded their prices. . . . All these insignificant frettings were his to hear.

The mahout turned down the market street—and the king gestured to the bartering babble, "See—what frustration! I have to settle such disputes. How can a magistrate be happy? I ask you, how can I be happy?" He stopped and laughed a little as he caught sight of a snake charmer performing his act. . . . "Hai, perhaps the fakir is an exception. He gets something more than frustration out of life. . . . The snake charmer commands and the snake—no, no—the snake is coaxed; that is the way. . . . See the song of the gourd flute enchants—and the slithering body goes with it. . . . Would that there were a magic we could summon, to lift our heads and soar from the babble of life's market place."

As they rode back to the palace, Siddhartha was still complaining of the shortcomings of the people of the province. "The Vaisyas consider themselves better than the Sudras because the Sudras do the jobs of filth. . . . The merchants feel themselves better than the Vaisyas for farmers work in the dirt. . . ." And then he reasoned—there was much beauty that sprang from the

dirt. . . . They were going down the palace driveway which was lined with flowers—and he named flower after flower which they came to. . . . Then he pointed to the pool where in his youth he had been content to toy with a hook and never catch fish. Then to the azalea bushes—where he had experienced for the first time —disillusionment, having learned of a wrong doing. He would never be free of the portentousness accompanying that ill deed. And here he was ruler and Devad still causing trouble. Devad was watching with jealousy as they rode silently by.

Yasodhara was speaking, "I know my lord, your reasons for fretting are many. . . . Born to rule brings grave responsibility but in every man's household there is trouble. Even in our household will be discontent. 'A mortal life is but a sob, a sigh, a strife, a storm . . . ever seeking to know rest, but never finding it. . . .' Let not situations over which you have no control—disturb you, my lord. It is life."

What beautiful choice of words Yasodhara used. . . . How smooth was her voice—until she became disgruntled over something, and then she pouted for hours. How he wished he could tell her now of Lotus Flower—that she would understand. . . . He broached the subject. "Hai, you perceive truly, my love. The laws of Manu decree a man four wives, but even so, man is grieved because his women hate each other. . . . Convention has decreed it, why cannot women conform to it?"

Yasodhara was silent. . . . He felt an impulse however to tell of the new life which was to come in the zenanna. . . . It was but right to tell her. It was of his own. . . . "I have a confession to make to you, my love . . ." he said when they were standing by the pool of the court, later, lingering—yet wishing in some way to become closer to each other through understanding. . . . "According to convention a thing has come about which I descry as condemnation—. Will you love me the same, if I speak of it."

"I will love you the same, if you treat me as dust beneath your pointed slippered feet!"

"The girl, Lotus Flower of the zenanna," he began, and he noted a changed look on Yasodhara's face, but he went on—"She has known no other man—but me from the day I went to the zenanna. She is to have a child. . . . It is due—now. . . ."

There was a long pause—. Both of them looked into the pool where fishes moved around stems of lotus leaves. . . . Siddhartha lifted his head. "It will be my own flesh and blood. . . . But convention will not allow me to claim it. I wish—there were some way—"

"There will be, my lord," she said with double meaning. "Do not worry—so much. The child—will likely not live. . . ."

Yasodhara left him with a sweep of her dhoti and a tilt of her head. . . . He watched her go and the meaning of her words came slowly to him. . . . It was common practice in the zenanna, the dhai was a paid attendant there—who saw to it that the girl babies did not live. . . . "Oh, no, my child must not die!" he said aloud and as Yasodhara went up the palace walkway he made hasty steps toward the pavilion of women.

At the door of the pavilion, Gotami stood with a bag of quince seed in her hand. "Is it time for Lotus Flower's—child?" he demanded.

"Why are you concerned about Lotus Flower? You have a pretty wife to look after." The tousled head turned and nodded toward Yasodhara standing on the terrace, talking to Devad. . . . "It is about time that the king should make some sort of a law forbidding another man to look upon his wife. . . ."

"I said—how is Lotus Flower? I said that nothing must happen to her who is to bear my child! Do you hear? If the child is strangled at birth—you shall die!"

Gotami dropped the bag from her hand and stood looking at the young raja aghast. . . . "Just like your pitri! You had better get control of that temper. Indian men, especially rajas are supposed to be dispassionate. . . . Have no fear. If you wish the child to live, it shall. I looked after the wishes of your father;

I shall look after things—your way. . . . But, if I may say—you are very alike in some ways, but—opposite in—others."

He turned away, confident that all would be well with Lotus Flower and her child. He went to the court and looked for Yasodhara. He saw Devad talking to Pati and when Pati saw him approaching she turned and came to meet him. . . . "My most beloved Siddhartha, you make a handsome raja. But my Pure Rice, I know you are lonely for him."

As she lifted her head, he noticed that her eyes did not agree with the voice which she so skillfully camouflaged. . . He stood erect and without smiling, "I have heard pleas from the province all day—and it seems that such approach prefaces a plea. My ami, what is it you wish—something within my power to perform?"

"You have all power," Devad said. And raja Artha caught the sneer in his voice also. "I know you are most pleased to see the wells being dug for the Sudras. . . . Now the filthy dogs may bathe. . . . But, will they? And I understand that the granaries are to be opened to them. . . . In the —springtime, the gardens are offered that they may have fruits. . . . And in the—"

"Your father never did such foolish acts!" Pati said.

"I know. . . . My father was not so aware of the needs of the province . . . perhaps . . . But, I have come to my limitations. I don't know what else I can offer my people—. Their faces are strained and indicative of sorrow. . . . I don't think life was meant to be all sorrow. . . . It is enough to know that it ends in old age and death—we should not be sorrowful as we go. . . . There should be a little pleasantness in life. . . ."

"Hai, I was speaking of such when you came up. . . . I wish to make a trip to Benares," Devad said.

"Benares, the sacred city? I have not been to Benares as yet myself."

Pati said, "Your duties are so depriving, are they not? It would be very kind of you, since you cannot go yourself—to send Devad

in your stead. . . . Travel so broadens one. . . . It is my ambition to even allow little Hasti there the privilege of traveling. . . ."

Siddhartha looked at his half-sister, aged seven, beneath the punjab tree being pushed back and forth, in a swing of silken cords. He smiled at her, "And how is the little parrot today?"

Hasti made a face and kicked at him when he moved closer. He said, "Why, this is no parrot—but a monkey." And then he turned to Devad, "I should deem it wise that you go to Benares—in the interest of our pitri."

Unaware that news was being taken to his father complaining of the unconventional way affairs of state were being conducted, the young monarch granted Devad the trip when he said that someone should see after the old raja since he had become so addicted to dope that he sometimes knew not where he was. . . . Artha was sad at this news. He condemned fate that had kept him there to rule and had sent his father unhappily away. . . .

He went to his private study, and feeling in need of comfort he took one of the pogi which his father had given him. He had many books. He read the Creation Hymn. Old Viswamitri had read this to him after the little example of the fig had been taught. He had put the fig on the table beside him and said, "Divide it." And when it was divided, he said, "Now, what do you see there?" He had replied, "Some very small seeds. . . ." And he then had asked him to divide one of the seeds— "Now what do you see?" "Nothing—at all. Yet, that which you do not see, produces the essence from which the great tree arises. . . . So, with the world, the finest essence which cannot be seen is the soul—of the world—that is reality."

He read from the scroll: "Nor aught existed. Yon bright sky was not, nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above. What covered all? What sheltered all? What concealed? Was it the water's fathomless abyss? There was not death—yet was there naught immortal. There were no confines between day and night. The

Only One breathed breathless by itself. . . . And other than It there was nothing. . . ."

He relaxed his hands for a moment and the scroll came together. . . . He stared into the distances—beyond the terrace. . . . Beyond the palace grounds—in that direction was the south gate and beyond there—was a road that led to Benares, the sacred city. . . . How he wished it was he going to Benares. . . . There were great and learned men there who could teach him ways of knowledge—whereby he could, knowing more, be able to rule more capably. . . . Old Asita had impressed him with the idea that he was destined to be a great and learned one. . . . How could he? A kingdom had been thrust upon him. . . . He was forced to rule—. From what Pati had hinted she thought he ruled unwisely. How could he be wise when so immaturely he had shouldered such a task? He could read again and again the books here—the sacred books, the hymns to the gods. And more and more they seemed inadequate. Each time he read or heard them chanted, they seemed more to fall short of the thing he sought. . . .

Back to the scroll, he meditated on the last of the creation hymn. . . . "Darkness there was and all at first was veiled in gloom profound, an ocean without light. . . . The germ that lay covered in the husk burst forth one nature from the fervent heat. Who knows the secret? Who proclaimed it here when this manifold creation sprang? The gods themselves came later into being. Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?" He let the scroll come together, and sat, staring into distance.

"The gods came later," he repeated aloud. "So all the gods, the evil and good were products of the mind! In the beginning was the source of life, the great unknown. Only this great spirit should we aspire to know."

He sent a messenger to bring Asita to him there and soon Asita was expounding his store of knowledge on the one essence which permeates every aspect of the universe. "It is Brahma the real of the real, the impersonal, immaterial, unborn and undying

spirit of the universe of which the individual souls are an unbreakable and eternal part. Therefore, the individual soul is meant to be at one with the essence of things; the unity of life is the one reality."

"But how can we become as one with this great universal spirit?"

"Most of the seekers go to the forest, first to prepare themselves for the way of truth, and on to the sacred city. When we place out interests on things of the earth we can only expect to find frustration."

"Frustration is a seething kurtcha strangling my people. They are becoming enslaved to social and political customs. I abhor the hauteur and self-esteem prevalent here in my own court."

"I knew the gods would bring you to the light." Old Asita clasped his hands. "Now you are feeling the call of enlightenment. Hai, the gods decreed it. You will become the enlightened! You will teach us the way of truth, how to abandon illusions, how we may perceive truth—. The day you were born I was given that knowledge that you would become a Tathagata! I shall live to see it! Keep seeking, oh my Siddhartha—my petitions will be in your behalf. . . . I go now to seek the wisdom of the gods and ask them to direct you to wisdom. . . ."

The young ruler sat with a fixed stare out across the south, in the direction of the sacred city. He then got up and went to Yasodhara's chamber. He always came to her when day was over. . . . What a day it had been! He would go now and rest his head in her arms for awhile before the— "Where is she?" he asked of the attendant near her door. It was uncommon to come here to this place and find her not on the couch by the window. . . . The draperies flaunted mockingly in the night wind.

The attendant bowed, "May thee obtain through Agni—brilliant offspring."

"Answer my question—, where is the rana?" he demanded.

Startled, the servant stammered out quickly, "She has gone to the temple to make sacrifice—she has gone to pray for a son."

* * *

The weight of royal responsibilities grew heavier on the heart of King Siddhartha. Trade had slowed down on account of the heavy frontier taxes and in order to carry on at the peak of exchange necessary to meet the projects of the province, river boats had been brought at a big expense. The Dravidians proved to be skilled oarsmen, their shiny black bodies were employed to give manpower to the vessels as they launched out in the river. The young raja's business reasoning was criticized, yet the ministers agreed that India's precious perfumes, spices and fabulous stones as well as silks and muslins were coveted by the Arabians, Egyptians and Mesopotamians. With such a rate of improvement within the province, the generous gifts of grain and the extensive program of road building and well digging—the older men prophesied that soon they would be having to issue letters of credit as other city-states were doing, getting loans at high interest rates and heading their provinces toward financial ruin.

Problems, all unadjustable such as the growing caste system which was bound up in occupation problems, were heavy upon the young monarch's mind. A great middle class was arising. Workers in metal, wood, leather, ivory, stone. Also potters, dyers, florists, cooks, physicians, incense sellers, goldsmiths, actors. . . . All these were distinguished from the serfs. The warrior caste had been the most elevated, but since the lull of wars and the prestige of religion, the priest class was gradually coming to be looked upon as intermediary between the gods and men. Night after night king Siddhartha walked in the gardens, many evenings his pillow was never touched—he desired so greatly to adjust his province needs to the fulmination of desires overcast by the strata of life.

And in the daytime when he rode through the streets of the town he was unhappy, observing bargaining of the traders as they sat cross-legged in the midst of their wares, beginning at a high price and then coming down lower—and lower. What were things to talk so much about? Silks and linens—all these things would go to dust. . . . The silken canopies and drapes of the palanquin of the young being brought home amid clashes of drums and horns—would also one day be ashes. . . . Not too long before, he had thought a wedding a most gala affair—his own. Now, he should be considering a birth a most noble and proud honor, for a child was to be born to Yasodhara. But—as Lotus Flower's little girl child—which she called Dayna, it too would bring compunction. Injustice was but the issue—he was sinning against a child to bring it into a world as this. . . .

Camel drivers rocking back and forth on the humps. . . . Caravans of stuff which would one day be dust. . . . The smell of the sweetshops, the sight of the swarming flies. . . . What sights—for his child to see. If a son, what problems for him to shoulder. It probably was to never be a better, cleaner place. What could he do—wait—and watch? The prowling of dogs for orts, as were most men content to get their daily ration. There arose a great stench. How could the people around breathe it? He looked and saw—dyers stretching wet clothes from the vats and hanging them to dry in the sun. . . . On into the country, and sights there repulsed. . . . Broad-necked hamals sweating in the sun under the strain of heavy loads. Large stone wheels grinding on the roads. This was the progress which he had effected in the province. "Hai, Channa—let us go back. . . ." And under breath he said to himself, "Back to the prison palace—where I shall die an infirm, aged man—and my body will be ashes in the confines of a little jar. . . ." Surely, surely there was something greater as reason for living, but it was not apparent in Kapila.

At his request they drove by the temple area on the return trip. The raja forgot for a time the negative and pessimistic

thoughts. He watched the anxious faces of the people going up the steps of the temple with gifts to Siva—the destroyer, fearful of what he might bring upon their heads if they failed in the gifts. They left up to the gods the life beyond the grave, their gifts to the temple were sufficient, they thought. . . . No, no! he almost said aloud. "Gods are but figments of imagination, you must do something about the touching of the eternal life yourselves!"

Anxious faces—all. But of their souls, if one could but glimpse —what would there be? Good will and good deeds as he had tried to do? He looked up at the giant figure of the large bull, form of Siva—black and unappealing . . . with melted ghee shining on its rusty coat, making a stench in the air. Gifts to the destroyer —for fear of what might be visited upon them—in reprisal. Religion of sacrifice. . . . Depreciating this world and making real the world beyond—perverting minds. . . . Ah, souls must writhe in rebellion as his own. It was a sure truth—unless these people brought solace in their souls as they brought their gifts—they would receive none. One must know the virtue of inward peace. There must be an ineffable contentment that kept from fear— No, the answer to their problems would not be brought about by worship of Siva nor any other of their pedestaled gods. . . .

Now that the priests had positioned the image on the top of the row of steps, Channa turned his head, expecting orders to move forward. . . . But he saw the face of the raja intent upon watching a beggar whose idiotic face was upturned toward the chariot—grinning vacantly. A dog was licking the sores of the beggar. . . . Siddhartha observed chuckling, "Only those two have no cares and problems. . . ." And then his attention was attracted to a young girl whom the priest was directing back toward the temple door. Between two guards she was tossing back her head. Now he could see her face. . . . Where had he seen her before? Why—was it not the woman Devad had brought to the zenanna recently? He asked of a priest as to how the child came to be

there. . . . The priest answered haughtily that his own ministers had returned her to where she belonged. In his voice was yet anger which he had been expending upon the girl in curses. But now he was bowing humbly before the king, knowing it was his duty.

"A true Brahmin would not allow the hurt of the smallest creature, feeble or strong." The priest fumbled nervously with his plaited beard. The king went on: "Him I call a Brahmin is thoughtful, blameless, dutiful, without passions—"

"Most high one," the priest began, "Speak thou the wisdom of the ages. . . . But what human has the power to cleave his tongue when the whole devadasis vexes him so?" Then, "The harlot was running away," he explained.

"Bid her to come here," the king said.

Through his mind was running the repeated words of the priest, "Your own ministers brought her back here to where she belongs!" A saintly child like that did not deserve to be manhandled by merciless priests. He felt impelled to take her away again, regardless of what the ministers advised, he must. He said, "Let me have a word with her!"

After much bowing and apologizing, the honeyed voice of the priest arose above the noise of the chanting crowd. "The noble ruler wishes to speak with the sacred woman."

Sacred woman. The words burned as added fuel to the raja's indignation. But when she came and clutched the wheels of the chariot pleading in frightened voice, he saw her eyes more closely . . . she did seem to possess a sacred soul. "Speak your grievances, child."

The devadasis girl relaxed her hold as the guard's grip left her arms and she sank to her knees. Her eyes became filled with fear as she shrank from the stare of the priest. "He will have me beaten if I speak. He will have me put in a dungeon, where he told me the gods would come to me."

She covered her face with her sari and began to sob. The priest

spoke, "She was brought to the temple and dedicated to the gods, to become a responsive soul— so that the gods would desire her. It is my duty that she lives up to her vow. I am bound to the laws of the temple and it is my duty that she be respectful to the gods."

Siddhartha wondered about her, the woman, Sundari who was recently found living in the pavilion. "What is your duty here, my child?" the raja asked, ignoring the priest. "You expected sanctity in your life when you were brought here? What is your fare?"

"I have been given in duty to the priests; I cook their food, I mend their robes and I. . . ." She turned tremblingly to see threatening eyes behind her. "I am not a virgin!"

The priest's face was tense with anger and fear. The king said, "Prostrate thyself, oh Brahmin, and make a prayer. Kneel down!"

The priest's voice mingled with the crowd noises, "May thy shining excellence of Savita—" And as he turned his face toward the rising sun, the youthful raja snatched the temple girl to the seat beside him and the chariot was speeding away before the prayer was finished. A conquering feeling dispelled the gloom he had known. It was the right thing to do—it was the only way to get the girl away from the temple—where she was confined to come to misery of old age and death—at the hands of these men who would take her body in the name of religion! He would probably get in trouble with the temple and the ministers—but it was more important to save a young girl from the inflicted vices. He was performing this act in the name of the goodness of the great soul inspiring it. One caught the will of transcendent truth —and one had to obey.

There was mixed reaction to the episode. The people who saw the child harlot beside him in the chariot as they sped the streets—said, "Our ruler lives for pleasures alone."

"What means our fool king?" the ministers said, looking out at him. "The temple women are adorned with the finest of gar-

ments—splendid jewels they have on their bodies. . . . They have joy of the consort of the gods. They dance in rhythm to the holy strains of the temple music."

He took her straight to the zenanna and said to Gotami, at the door—, "See that she is touched not! She has had enough ill treatment."

The child impulsively kissed the hem of Siddhartha's robe, as he turned to go. . . . "My lord, leave me not. . . ."

Gotami grinned, showing her toothless gums, "Hai, leave off running the kingdom and make entertainment for the charming little captive—. She knows well that law to a woman, man is her god all the days of her life. . . ."

"See to your duties," Siddhartha stormed. "And keep your mouth." He slammed the bamboo gate.

"Him shall I worship all the days of my life." The child harlot's voice trailed like sweet-scented flowers groping for the light.

Beyond the gate was a nurse with the infant Dayna. He stopped to look at the face of his child. "I did it for you. The gods forbid that you should grow up to be treated thus."

He walked on, not thinking where his steps led. His thoughts were recapitulating all that had taken place the last months. Had he administered wrongly? Reason told him he had, that he was to be censored by ministers, purhoits—and his father who would be told by Devad of what he had done. But his conscience had agreed that his acts were good.

He met Ananda on his way to the zenanna. "Jai! I am proud of the way you have been so fearless of the long whiskers!" The familiar pat on the shoulder was Ananda's way of greeting. "All they do is wag jaws, and I'm glad you give them something to talk about—bless them. I understand you have brought the temple beauty back. . . ."

"I have!" Siddhartha spoke curtly. "And I also ordered for her to be let alone."

"Have no fear, noble raja! I am on my way to see my little Nina. . . ." And Ananda was gone.

No one understood him. Not even Ananda. But, if he—did not have Ananda with him, he could not—go on. Artha bent his head.

When next he met with the ministers, he knew that the accumulated disapprovals would be besetting, but—when he went in he was surprised to see his father in the counsel room. He wanted to rush over to him and fall at his feet, ask of his welfare and beg him to sit in the gold chair and decide these vexing matters. But, one look from the piercing beads of steel eyes—and he went directly to his place.

First on the agenda was the matter of the loan to the Koli kingdom. The old king was there to have it—renewed. His own grandfather. . . . He had not known him very well because there was always friction between him and his father. . . . He smiled at him very kindly—for he appeared to be such a friendly old man. He had the urge to rush down and help him, for he seemed very feeble. He was stating his case; it was a plea for the reduction of the interest on his loan. The aged voice was filled with pathos. "Did we charge him interest?" The anxious raja questioned the chief minister. And at nod of his head—before the bearded jaws of the ministers could say more, Siddhartha said, "Well, give it back to him and cancel the whole loan!"

He dared not look at his father, Pure Rice—but knowing that he had done this to his grandfather—his ire became a rising tempest. From the corner of his eye he could see his father making as if to rise, then grasping the arms of his chair. He could see the challenging looks on the twenty ministers' faces. It was the same challenge which had caused him to ask for Sinhaudana's sword that day—they were out to defeat him, and he must—while he had the chance—get ahead of them. He cleared his throat as his grandfather bowed, and decided on a speech to the ministers:

"Before the haranguing over the raising of the taxes begins,

I have a matter to discuss." Eyes narrowed and beards twitched, but the riled raja did not notice any hand raised in attempt to stop him. He went on: "I understand that my wielding of authority is contrary to many of your opinions. I expected it to be. We will find agreement on things concerning the improvement of the province—eventually, I trust. But the matter which I am concerned with at the present, is the delving into my private affairs. I would like to remind that many rulers dismiss—or have killed those who disagree openly with their authority. . . ."

There was not a stir in the courtroom. "When I took over this task, I was ignorant of the intrigue and the Brahmin despotism. I soon learned that you have feared the priests so long that they have about taken over your very minds. My father, whom I have the greatest regard for in judgment and otherwise—went along with you. Perhaps, that is why he said to me when I took over—'Be just and fair to all, and never be a tool of the ministers' thumb.' I challenge the false sense of duty that has hung over this place these years—and I shall thrust forward advances toward a new duty—. Now that I am aware of the degradation of things that are done in the name of holiness, I intend to blot out the spiritual autocracy which permeates the province!"

He ranted on of the priestly order . . . the learned, the devoted to the gods, who guided people to believe that their sacred duty was to famish their bodies and feed the idols. "Gifts to the temple! Gifts to the temple! Every time we fear, we run to the temple with gifts. . . . We are but feeding the fat priest-hogs! What for? To expiate our sins? So they may promote their machinations of evil? But it is all for themselves! This day I am bidding every idol which has been erected in my house and gardens . . . to be thrown into the river!"

Pure Rice's eyes were snapping like blue turtle throats. . . . Siddhartha looked at him to see the effect his words had made. But when he rose to his feet his voice was quiet and controlled. "My son, you are a descendant of a fair race, a race of warriors

but that means not that you must war with words. I question not your authority, my son, rather your judgment in the fight with purhoits and their power. I descry your judgment in the spending of Kapila's funds. Wait until you have a horde of invaders to cope with, and you will wish for what you have thrown to the winds.

"I have come back to urge a mobilization of power, for war is talked of in the south. A demon of Persia named Darius is heading through our passes they say, and we shall need to build forts and weapons. I hurried back when news came to me of the extravagances that have been going on. . . ."

The Koli king was rising, asking to be heard. Pure Rice remained standing for he was not yet through speaking. He listened to the old man's words, however. "I fear not the invaders. We are not planning to arm against Darius. If he is brave enough to mount the Himalaya humps, know you not he will sink in the sandy basins of the Sind?* So much for Darius. But now . . . the purhoits, I think they could do with some investigation. As our forefathers did in the forest life, we should seek the Omnipotent, unafraid. They had no purhoits to pray their prayers, and from all I have heard, they were guided very well."

As the old king spoke, Artha nodded his head in appreciation of his outspokenness. But Pure Rice sat puffed as a toad, and at a convenient time he rose to command, "Enough of your old tongue! Get back to your side of the river!" At which, the Koli king smiled wanly at Artha and moved out of the counsel room.

Artha watched him go, yet outside, groping for support of the columns; his grandfather with scorn was being driven away—and he was ill. The young raja rose from his throne chair, as the old man almost fell on the way to his chariot. Not one of the ministers showed concern, nor did his father. . . . The row of men waited for further proceedings of the court.

An hour afterwards, when the council hall was afire with

* Ancient name for the Indus river.

controversy, a messenger interrupted to say that the Koli king was dead. The stony faces before him remained unchanged, and raja Siddhartha said, "Since it is ordained for us to meet disease, old age and—death, it is good that we are a race of brave people to meet these—without fear, as my maternal grandfather has precepted."

Chapter 8

The new ruler of Kapila walked solemnly in the wide gardens of his palace and thought upon the state of affairs of the kingdom. The talk of war clouded all hopes of the projects he had started. They could not spend for both weapons and development. All efforts to promote welfare would be disrupted by this fear, that was as his grandfather had said, probably unfounded. But his father had come back, and ill as he was, was directing mobilization and overtures to nearby kingdoms in order to get a united attack against an invading foe.

"He is the same as taking over the rule," Siddhartha said to himself between clenched teeth. "He is welcome to it." And he looked at his pretentious palace, "I never wanted all this, anyway. I dislike the ostentatiousness of wealthy living. Outwardly we wear brightly jeweled garments and move in gaudy chariots but within we are as dull embers of a funeral pyre. It might be good for these smug provinces to be awakened from their complacency, if in no other way . . . by a war. But, I've had enough of fighting among ourselves. I cannot abide more of it. I will go away." He turned toward the palace.

From his dafter window he looked at the mountains and valleys dancing in the heat haze as blue shadow bhuts of the gods he had denounced. He chuckled, moving his hands to his hips jauntily, "Nothing has happened since I threw the images into

the Rhoni which proves what they are, these gods that rule men's minds. I hold no fear for figments of imagination, but hold to the one concept of an Eternal One of creative ability which we may summon to aid in affairs over which we have no control."

Ananda's knock was welcomed. "Come in, my dear cousin and let us speak of wars and portentous things until they are cast aside. All things lose portent when we discuss them to death. . . . But, what—you look as if you had been pursued by a bhut—!"

Ananda clutched at raja Artha's shoulder, "The girl Sundari is again missing from the zenanna, and the priests will surely this time, not be so easy to throw off. . . ."

"Why,—I told old Gotami—" Artha began.

"I know. The zenanna women said she was there in the early hours; they remember seeing her oil her hair and twine flowers—but some prince came to visit her, they cannot remember which one—and she slipped away with him."

"Devad is not here, only he would do this thing. I think they lie." And Artha made his way to the Pavilion of the Lanterns and questioned the women lying on their mats.

"I would know of the temple woman, not your imaginations of what might have happened, but what have you seen and heard. You, there with the red cheeks—did she speak to you of leaving?"

"Many times," the answer aroused conjecture, "she said, this was not the kind of place she had been born to live in and should go away."

Another offered, "She said she was to run away to the mountains—to die, if she found not peace."

So, the mountains were searched and the girl Sundari was found and brought back to Kapila. In explanation of her act, she said, kneeling at raja Artha's feet, clutching his robe, "But my ama taught me, I was to grow up to be so good and holy."

"I understand, my child. I too seek something beyond this miserable life of bondage. I know of a monastery in the mountains; it is reputed to be a pure and goodly place. I shall send you

there tomorrow. We have taken the chance with the purhoits too long any way. Your going will be secret, so that they cannot know your whereabouts."

The girl went away rejoicing. And the raja was a little glad he had thought of a place of safe-keeping for her. He turned to Ananda, who had brought her to him, "See that Devad knows not of this journey. I bid you make the plans with Channa to leave before dawn tomorrow."

Ananda came back that evening to relate the detailed plans of Sundari's escape. He lingered to talk and they walked in the court. "I would come often to your courts, my cousin, but there is always such dolefulness."

"I know you like the gay life, Ananda, but the noisome laughs of Nautch girls are not for the green paths of peace."

"I agree, they are boring at times. I now prefer to be rid of them on excursions. Remember how we used to take them on trips to the passes; you, Lotus Flower, little Nina and. . . ."

"Speak not of those days!" Siddhartha spoke harshly. "I am soon to be father of another child. If it were not for Yasodhara and the child to be I would leave on the morrow myself, go away to the mountains and divest myself of this tinseled life. I would go away and learn of something worth leaving with my son."

"The prophecy was that you should be a wise one." Ananda looked profoundly, "That may be your call from the bardo . . . to prepare yourself."

Siddhartha lifted his webbed hands, "These? Superstition and nonsense. Signs? The only sign that spurs me on to wish to learn and become wise—is the enlarged belly of Yasodhara. I know I am going to have a child of mine brought into this frustrated life—I want to find out how to tell him to meet it!"

"Hai, if you do go away to learn from the wise men—find out how they do magic for me. They make pulse beat in one arm one way—in the other different. They fly through the air and make

themselves invisible. They suspend the body at will—giving up all signs of animation. They—"

A messenger's approach interrupted. The maharaja wished conference with prince Ananda. It was very important to see him tonight. "I will return and tell you, if you wish—what your pitri is concerned over," Ananda said, moving to the door.

"I'll be waiting here—to hear." But when Ananda had gone, Siddhartha decided to go for the while to Yasodhara's chamber.

He and his wife had been in perfect agreement in all things up until the "coming child" came between. Then "the child" had become her only interest, and she expected it to be his. But concern over becoming a father should not cause him to give up a kingdom to hover over her. How he wished she had the zeal for truth as he did,—she once had the same ideas on the great Mind of the universe. "Unless you and I are harmonious, the child I bear will not attract a soul that is perfect," she had said.

When he came to the terraced inner court he met his cousin Arhina who salaamed courteously, "May happiness rest with the noble rajah tonight."

He reached to his forehead, "Am I becoming wrinkled, Arhina? This ruling is making an old man of me and happiness seems a childhood katha we knew together. How is it you remain so carefree and beautiful? How can you take this prison life so calmly? Tell me your secret of happiness."

Arhina tilted her golden head, "I am free because I allow no prison walls to hold my spirit!"

"A most remarkable enlightenment!" Siddhartha said, taking a ring from his finger. "Allow me to present this in token of appreciation of your enlightenment. 'Allow no prison walls to hold my spirit!' You tell me what I need to know—in one speech."

He went on into the star-decorated chamber which had once been so bright—but of late had seemed tomb-like. There was no light in Yasodhara's room—but he moved toward it—for he heard her sobbing—on her couch. He decided she had witnessed

the giving of the ring to Arhina, and this was—jealousy. He should go away and let her sob until she came to herself. Consoling her would but keep her childlike. Yet he continued to stand there, listening to her, his own soul sobbing with her.

Women and their tears. . . . Women were wailers at funerals, hired mourners. It was a part of a woman—crying. But, this was a world one had to be grown-up in. Yasodhara was to be a mother soon. . . . "My love, bid the sobbing cease and tell me what is wrong . . ."

"Go away—!" she said, sobbing the louder, "go away!"

He moved to look out the latticed window. He remembered how they had stood there that first night and spoken of being heart to heart and soul to soul. . . . Here they were lifted to celestial love. Why couldn't it have remained thus? With all the burdens of court, he could not stay here in—this depressing room and make love to her. Was that what she wanted? Selfishness, that was what it was.

"Priyaji, this must be a soul illness you have. I do not understand. You act as little Hasti who pouts her lips when I try to talk to her. I am sure you saw me give the ring to Arhina and this is childish jealousy you are giving in to. Arhina is a favorite cousin whom I love very much. I have given you many rings, have I not?

"I feel very close to Arhina for our souls are illumined by a like spirit. I wish you would see her more. Make friends with her, priyaji, and allow her to lead you into a full life. I want you should be worthy of being a mother." The young rana but increased her sobbing, "Hush, my rimpoche—this heaving will but bring on the time of delivery. Try to control yourself. If you do not, you—oh, my beloved priyaji—, cease your tears."

He moved to take her in his arms but she pushed him back, "Leave me! If you think her company so well, go yourself and speak with her, give her rings! Go, if you wish to the zenanna woman! I wish you not here! Get out of my sight, I say!"

Artha stood looking at her aghast. He knew he could not hurl back rebukes to her whom he loved so much. He knew it must be her condition that made her act in this manner, but he looked at her pityingly, shaking his head. "I wish you were not like this, beloved. . . ." Her wailing grew louder. "But, I will not humor you into such exhibitions." And he closed the door behind him.

He went down the steps to meet Ananda who was coming to report on the audience with the ex-maharaja who was edging his rule. "I am to go to Magadha as an instrument of conciliation. He wishes to make our state stronger against invaders by combining power of other provinces. He will buy me Magadha wives and settle me down for raising an army. They say Magadha women are lovely—and loving. Not so bad. . . . Come away with me."

"I will go with you to the house of my pitri!" Artha said angrily, and in hasty steps they moved to the dafter of Pure Rice where Devad, his younger bhai was entering for an interview. "I am glad to talk to you both!" he said, going in after Devad, and being followed by Ananda.

Devad turned, his black eyes burning in reproach, "And I have something to ask you, my bhai."

"Ask it."

"Where is the temple maiden, Sundari? You have hid her, I know—but where?"

Artha evaded, "I am informed that you were last seen with her before her disappearance. Now, suppose you tell us where the girl, Sundari is?"

Ananda continued with the banter, "Hai, he quiets down when you ask leading questions. He even looks guilty. My cousin, let us not be brought to believe that you—you might have murdered the girl. . . ." Devad moved into the hallway.

Pure Rice's loud voice lifted above the prattle, "Enough! This is a time for all seriousness. Speak no more of the temple woman, we have had enough of her. It is good that she ran away, for we are done with priestly intervention."

"You will never be done with priestly intervention," Siddhartha said sarcastically. "For you will not withdraw yourselves from their influence. But I came not here to resurrect the holy men. I understand you are about to begin some travel—"

"I expect to go to the cultured island—hai, as soon as Pati has recovered from her grief. By that time you will have knowledge enough of administration that I may leave affairs with you."

"You think so?" Still the young raja's voice was filled with irony. "I am so very pleased to know you have hopes for my advancement."

Ananda intervened, "My cousin had reference to our trip tomorrow—." Ananda stopped to listen to the two men, father and son at sword points with words:

"I have had hopes for you, but disappointment has replaced. I have taught you all I know of economy and you disregard my every admonition. I remind you that all the riches you spend so wildly were not too easy to acquire!"

"I have heard how much of the wealth came to be in the coffers. No doubt, it was not easy to wrest from the invaded provinces," Artha returned with round voice.

"In my day—it was justified," Pure Rice said firmly.

"No theft is justified!" the younger raja's voice now rang defiantly.

The old king did not reply. After a lapse of time, in which the two men exchanged cutting glances, Siddhartha said, "A province needs not two rulers, even in times of stress. I shall go away and leave the kingdom to you."

At this Pure Rice became enraged, waving his arms wildly, protesting the thought of his son giving up the province. Sakya lords did not desert kingdoms nor armies and he would not allow it to happen in his family. "I shall place guards at every gate, day and night to hold you here to your task! You shall not quit this rule! My son, I had rather see you dead than a traitor. . . ."

Siddhartha turned to Ananda and the two of them walked

silently down the corridor to where the tinkle of lute and sitar made lively entertainment. "Did you say you wished to celebrate tonight, my cousin?"

"Hai, like old times? Wine and women?" Ananda tried to be jovial, but the look on Siddhartha's face checked him. "Then, perhaps wine."

The next morning, when he came to the apartment of Yasodhara, Siddhartha was feeling a little guilty. Suppose the pains had been evoked by her grief and . . . no, there she was in the milky marble tank taking her bath in seemingly gay spirits. She was talking to her attendant as she lay in the clear azure water with her dark hair piled high on her head revealing her plump neck which he so adored. Her body in the water, with her back to him where he could not see her unshapely front, was the same as when he first looked upon it in the bath, beautiful and alive with movement.

"Karlanda, bring the perfumed Arabian oils. I must keep my skin soft and radiant, for soon my body will be its old shape again. Then my lord will look upon me and desire me as he did when I was a bride. And I shall wear the sari from my bride's collection which he liked so much. Come, help me from the water."

Her words, Siddhartha thought, were for his ears. She had heard his steps on the stairs. He turned away, and going from the place, he said to a servant, "If the rana needs me, send a messenger to the river Rhoni where I shall be bathing."

As he went out, a retinue of servants bowed before him and he felt an impulse to scream out at them. Could he not breathe in his own household without a procession ready to count the intakes?

As he passed by his father's place a little later, on his white horse, there was the old king standing on a tufted spot smoking his hookah—looking out across the lowlands. There were the extra guards he had threatened to add to keep him in prison. For

the old pitri's benefit, Siddhartha spoke to the guards, "I am on my way to have a bath in the Rhoni. The water runs not inviting in my own tank. I beg you, go to your duty!"

The guards looked first at one monarch and then the other—which should they heed? And Pure Rice had not time to take the pipe from between his clenched teeth—to speak, before the white horse was down the river road like a streak of cloud before a mighty wind. In his mazed mind he remembered having decreed something about keeping Siddhartha there—but—he was but going to his bath. . . . Lack of water was why the Sudras were unclean. And he went into distorted imaginings, a mosaic of people and artillery—whirred as a discus—the image of his son in the center of it. And when the old king's body began to move with his imaginings, the guards left their new posts and went to their gambling rooms, back of the stables.

Siddhartha kicked his feet out and relaxed in floating position as the river Rhoni buoyed him. In the midst of beautiful surroundings, in sight of the mountains with white sari of sparkling diamond-set ermine and emerald fringe—across their shoulders—the white sacred mountains as a patient nurse watching near, one should find content. If he could but relieve his mind of all its troubles—he could see the peace here amid flowers and singing birds. But the falling nelumbo blossoms on the water—reminded of death and decay.

The nelumbo blooms floated resignedly down the stream—their grace became as one with the river. And he was free and at oneness with the river—relieved to be free of buckler, sword and heavy vest.

He studied the design of a pipal leaf. The pipal leaf was heart-shaped. But no two of them were the same, all had sought to fashion design as set by the Universal Mind. One leaf had an extra web growing close down the stem of it. Another leaf was blighted with disease. There was a whole limb caught in a web—and worms were eating there. Yet one portion of that same limb

free of the web's snare—was green and glossy. Here was a revelation. He lifted his hands and looked at them. The great Mind of Creation decreed all things to try to be perfect—and for that which was not, to lift proudly which was free of disease. His guru had said his mind was perfect; he would develop it. He was gazing admiringly upon the sprig of green leaves when three men in yellow robes stopped on the river bank. They were so quiet, moving among the branches, he did not notice them until one said, "My lord, we note that there is food in the saddlebag on the shoulders of this splendid horse—does it belong to you?"

"I have a nursemaid who supplies rice cakes bountifully; help yourselves. What kingdom are you from?" he called from the water.

"Of the same as you, oh mighty and gracious friend—we abide in the bountiful realm of Goodness." The answer came back through muffled munching.

"I meant, are you from Kapila? Or a nearby province?"

"What matters where we hail from? All needs of life are the same. You have given us food for the body and food for the spirit—both necessities. The way you said 'Help yourselves' makes us feel welcome to the gift. Most men when they see us, say—'Ah, here are those beggars again. They will rob me of all I have. But, it is written in the scriptures I must turn them not away.' But a difference in your welcome makes us perceive your goodness and the act does both the giver and recipient—good."

Another mendicant spoke. "The answer to the age-old request for water gives insight into a man's character. If he refuses, he is beyond redemption. If he makes a wry face, he is on the road to a low birth. But if he smiles he has the fount of eternal life within himself which says to all men, 'Come, partake of it freely and live!' "

And the yellow robes were gone through the trees as a flash of sunshine blotted by a cloud. "Like spirits of the forest they come—and go. . . . I need conversation with the like of them. I wish

I might follow to hear their wisdom-filled words—until my searching mind knows rest."

Their words were eschewed for some time. What did it matter where a man came from? His station in life? And there was only one province that one should seek to go to, the bountiful bardo of Goodness—to be at peace with the great Soul of the World. A man, in order to be able to find this great tableland must be free of all ties, all bonds—and set out on the journey unafraid.

These men, he remembered carried not even a begging bowl. They used their hands to cup water to their lips. How free they must be, free of body and spirit. And he would be free like them. He almost crawled from the bank to put on his clothes and go in the direction they went. Then he remembered all the things that held him—at Kapila.

He would have to be near when his child was born—but after that—he would go away and search for the way to enlightenment. He spent the day however there by the river searching his thoughts, making sure what he wished to do. He had begun many things over the province which might come to a standstill if he went away. Yet, would they not have to be halted anyway with the scare of war demanding all effort toward preparedness? So, for that—he need not stay. And there were not definite needs otherwise to hold him. Yasodhara would develop better with him apart from her—and how she did need to grow up. . . . His father would come to his senses and keep sane enough to command the defense projects. He would feel the responsibility in full, and perhaps find strength to be free of opium and bhang. Yes, when his child was born—he meant to leave. Where? As deep in the forest as Kantaka would be able to take him.

He looked toward the mountains, anticipating the new life he would soon know. Then he looked down the trail he had come and must soon be traveling back, for the sun was low in the sky. A horseman was riding up the trail hurriedly. The green and gold of the horseblanket revealed this was a messenger from his house-

hold. He quickly got into his clothes, buckled on his sword and wound his turban. By the time he was dressed, the messenger was near enough to shout his message, "Come quickly, my lord! To you a son is born!"

He was not able to believe this news. Was not Yasodhara feeling well and gay when he left that morning? But then—he had been by the river all day, much could happen in a day. "Is my wife all right?" he asked when the rider came close enough to talk.

"She is well, my lord," was the reply, and the trip back was solemn and unhurried. The explanation was that a dhai had delivered the child, but a doctor was sent for.

"Did the dhai say the child was—perfect?"

"My lord, the word is—the child is more fair than you were when you were born!" There was a dearth of river breeze, as they rode by the rice fields where steam rose like white fire; the young raja mopped perspiration that trickled down from under his turban. But his mind was forming images of how the child would look and thoughts of how it would be brought to know sorrow and trouble—perhaps disease. For sure, old age and death. He quoted to himself a Homer poem newly received from the Hellenic country:

> "Like leaves on trees the race of man is found.
> Now green in youth, now withering on the ground.
> Another race—the following spring supplies.
> They fall successive and successive rise.
> So, generations in their course decay;
> So flourish these when those are past away. . . ."

And on through the crowded streets he went yet meditating. He acknowledged the cries of "Jai, Fai-Rajkumar T-Fuddal!" with a nodding smile—but in his mind he was saying, Birth . . . . Only another time of travail on earth for another soul. His son also would inherit ills of life, and he too would be doomed to

age and death, as all these rejoicing at "a birth." Fools—they should rather celebrate when death came. Yet, as he neared his court, he anticipated how his child should appear, and he could not keep from feeling that it would be a great experience to look upon flesh of his flesh. Would his eyes be blue as his own, or dark like black jewels as his wife's? Would he have her round face and short neck, or long, lean features as his own?

He looked at the crowded court. How people enjoyed a celebration. His son would one day guide the destiny of this people, that was why they were here to welcome, clapping along with the deafening pounding of drums performed by priests on the balcony outside of the child's room! How could his child and wife rest? A paternal instinct challenged and he all but cried out for the celebration noises to cease, but Channa came up with paligans and blessings and he decided instantly that which he had pondered all day—he would go away from the noise of strife himself.

"Give my horse a goodly amount of food and bring it here to the side terrace at dusk. I am going away."

"But, my lord—" Channa began.

"Did you hear?"

"Hai, my lord and I will do whatever ye ask, if it is even to the risking of my old neck."

He moved through the crowd of people, acknowledging their blessings, thinking he had decided rightly—; if he waited until he was overly fond of the child, he would not wish to go, it was now or perhaps never. . . . He would explain it to Yasodhara; apart for a time would be good for her, also—. He softly opened the door of her room.

The old nurse who had brought him to be acquainted with life met him, asking—"Step lightly" for his wife was asleep. He tip-toped to the charpoy where she lay. Asleep? Her eyelids were quivering. She was pretending again. She was yet sulking. After he had determined to overlook her pettiness. . . . Now—he was

unhappy again. He went back to Gotami, "Then I would see my child."

The old nurse grinned and sneered at the same time. "Your father waited until you were arrayed in your linens and brought to him sweet-smelling. He waited until attendants and musicians made a presentation."

Siddhartha's face flushed in anger. He hated all the formality of royalty! He should push the old dhai aside and go kneel beside the couch of his wife—and the cradle of his child. But his beloved was tired, he had seen that she had gone through pain. He backed away—and went to his own quarters.

Devad was there to congratulate him. He had wondered when he heard his father and his brother threatening to give up the province—if the task might fall to him, but— "It looks like I am going to have help a little later. . . . A very fine child. How is Yasodhara?"

"Very well, I suppose. Sit down, my bhai."

"Oh, you do not feel like booting me out?" Devad stretched in a comfortable chair. "Ever hear the katha about those pointed slippers you wear? A ruler of long ago had them thus designed, that horn has a hard padding, you know—so he could kick his subjects around better."

"I know—I know. . . . But that is not my idea of the treatment of subjects. Did you ever hear of the old abu that entertained in his house the man who had killed his son? He feasted him and fared him until the morning and gave him coin and his best steed to make for his life—. But, of course, he immediately notified pursuers the direction he went."

"How noble," was Devad's comment.

The irony vitiated the good spirit Siddhartha wished to provoke. "Now, if you are in contemplation of something to debase me, my bhai—let us hear it. I could not rest, knowing you had a surprise for me. I know how you dislike me, Devad. But I do not hate you. I only dislike your principles."

The noise of the crowd came through the open door, and through it came the sounding of the prayer bells. Devad got up to go, "Are you coming, my bhai? Of course, you will join the family at the altars this night—if you have not the others."

They looked down at the fires, the blue smoke spiraling to meet the purpling sky.

"No, I am not coming, my bhai. I shall never again take part in any such pretense; but I shall not forbid its practice among the people."

"Shall I tell that to the old raja?"

"Tell him anything your scheming soul contrives!" Siddhartha said, picking up a scroll, one of the Vedic hymns.

"Read the scripture which says— 'Who bridles the temper is like the well-trained charioteer,' " Devad said, leaving. "I shall explain your absence."

He sat for some time in the attitude of prayer, listening to the chant of worshippers below, and Siddhartha wishing in some way to be a part of the rituals this night—opened the scroll and read: "This reverent praise fashioned in the heart has been offered by the minds, oh gods—." And then he became aware of another presence in the room. He turned and saw his cousin Arhina. "Why—why are you not down there with them?"

"I wished to be with you—this night. I have noticed that you do not come to the gardens of your father ever. I was a little upset when you forbade worship in your own. But, I have come to think along similar ways—I too think it is futile. Come, look down upon them—like children dancing in a game. We are more mature in our minds, are we not, my cousin? And the sacrificial fires are childish to us, are they not? The prayer like the smoke is forced down by the fog in the rose oaks and back to them there and they become as immersed toads croaking in the night."

"Arhina!"

"I know you are surprised at me. I was surprised when I came to the realization myself."

"What realization, my cousin?"

"Through sacrifice and mortification is not the way—but virtue is the true way to happiness."

"Virtue . . . Thank you for telling me this. I shall contemplate it along with other ideas when I am free in the mountains yonder. Are not the sacred mountains beautiful in the moonlight—what a night of nights to go—."

"Go? Are you—going away?"

"Tonight. . . . Into the mountains. . . . To find the way to emancipation for—all of you—for myself and for my son. Keep my secret. Take this gift of friendship—" He unfastened a collar of pearls from his neck and placed it about hers, "as token for the courage you give me to go there." With arms entwined they looked at the mountains. Tonight there was an unearthly glow, not a blue nor a purple mountain line—no description in earth terms was forthcoming—it could only be felt. "And you—, will you help Yasodhara to—know release—and peace of soul? I hope to find it there—." He nodded toward the distant vista. "—There in the mountains."

"Then—my cousin, take peace to the mountains," Arhina said and silently left him.

The court musicians were playing a song, "Happy the mother, happy the wife—" Siddhartha recognized it, and with it in his ears and touching his heart, he made his way to Yasodhara's room. He must make peace with her before he left—or he could not "take peace to the mountains." He tip-toed to her bedside, for although there was no guard except the drummers outside—he felt the need of secrecy. Yes, she was truly asleep this time. He looked at the even-moving covers, her beautiful hands—so relaxed. . . . Her face so peaceful—this was a natural relaxation which had come from exhaustion. In the light of the kohl lamp—she was pale—very pale. He would not wake her.

The incense was stifling. The canopies of costly brocades appeared to close in about him. He stooped down and touched his lips to her forehead—tenderly, lightly, lest she awaken.

"Now, my Shreemati—you are a mother at last. Now you will be looked on by all with reverence and deference. I have always looked upon you so . . . I yet do . . . Our misunderstanding was but a passing wind that will not uproot our love.

"Oh, my love, be not bitter. Overcome morbidity, hate, jealousy. Be above scheming." As he knelt, he lifted his eyes to look again toward the mountains. "Oh, great Mind of all the world, help me to know and find a healing for the illness of mortal minds. . . ." And then back to the face of his wife—, "My rimpoche, do not cringe from reality. But seek to understand life, and strive for a true unfolding with it. Do not hold it and depress it as a smothering fire to burn inwardly so that guilt becomes the tinder to ignite into a consummation of self. . . . Oh, my beloved—, strive for a divine conscience."

He got up from his knees, but he stood looking at her, her long dark lashes on full cheeks, braided hair framing her cherub face; her full breasts rising and falling in equal rhythm, breasts that would succor his child. . . .

The child? He remembered that he had not yet seen it, and he moved anxiously to the crib in the adjoining alcove. At first he looked down upon the sleeping infant in a detached sort of way. So this was—new life? This was his son? This would grow into the child that would sit in the little gold throne chair—and the man to sit in the big gold chair. He would listen to the same advice from the earthen stool—as in ages past—not one thought forward. He would find his recreation with opal chessmen and silver swords and perfected arrows. He would lie on costly fur rugs and fish with golden hooks. He would be weighted from an early age with jeweled vest and metal tunic. He would waste hour after hour—doing nothing—nothing. All his thinking

patterned for him. . . . Unless he could find a way—to change the order of things at Kapila. . . .

"Oh, my son, I would stay here as you grow and help you to harness the evil instincts that pervade life—but I—I know not how. I can but pray you will seek goodness and be free of prejudices, that you will in spite of the luxuries heaped upon you—find a will to know your own freedom. . . . Oh, my son, let them not make a worthless warped soul of you!" And he began to sob.

He moved onto the balcony and looked at both—child and wife. Unconscious of the drummers crouching near, he stood and looked—as moonlight streaming in made leaf-designs on charpoy and crib. . . . How long would he have—only this picture in his mind—to cherish? His wife—and child—to be only a mind picture—for he was leaving them—this night. . . .

There was Channa on a horse, waiting at the terrace. Where was Kantaka? He looked beyond—there his horse was, a mass of white beyond the oleanders, his head lifting at sight of him—and an anxious little neigh startling the harmony of the song below! He began to descend the pillar of the balcony and Channa rode to fetch the gray-white horse from its hiding—. Kantaka was beneath him when he found footing on the column, and he quickly jumped into the saddle.

At the gates he looked for the extra guards whom he planned to outwit. . . . But, they—? "Where are the guards, my Channa?" He called over his shoulder, for Channa was following.

"I started a dice game when the prayer bells sounded. . . ." Channa explained. "I knew they would not miss it. . . ."

Beyond the palace wall, Siddhartha rode—free without having alarmed the crowded palace. Channa followed behind a few paces. The relieved raja said in full voice, "Where are you going? I did not ask you to accompany me."

"Where, my lord?" Channa urged his mount closer and spoke in a half-whisper, "Anywhere you lead—my Siddhartha—, even if it means the breaking of my old neck!"

Chapter 9

Up the forest path, the runaway raja on his white horse, the moonlight sparkling from jeweled waistcoat and harness, proceeded toward the white mountains that beckoned—"Come closer —closer and you will find the secret of life." Moonlight on dew-dripping fauna convinced—"This is the way—through beauty to peace—peace."

He tried to close his mind to things of the province, but realizing that he was probably leaving the line that separated Kapila and Koli territories, he remembered all the loveliness that had been—home. . . . Flowers, trees, market places, dusty roads, long caravans,—sun-baked wastes, poppy fields—quick coming springs —after meditative times of the monsoons . . . . dry, hot winds—heat haze. . . . He forced his mind on—swamps, forests, snow-caps. . . . These he would learn to love as much.

Channa was close behind him on a black Numidian horse, breaking through his thoughts with attempted conversation and suggestions of fear in order to get him to turn back. "It is a fearful path we go, my lord. Soon we shall have to walk and lead our mounts."

"Is it still Kapila paths we go?"

"No, we are in the Koli territory, my beloved."

Thoughts dwelt with the old Koli ruler, the injustice done him. Now something should be done for his kingdom—in apologizing some way. . . .

"No, we turned at the swampland—and took this road. . . . It is of your own choosing you go from territory of your province, I am only following, my lord. . . . But I can direct you back to the line. I trust you are not going very far; the court diviner predicts rain soon. We would be bogged down if rain came—"

They rode along for some moments, the tall wet ferns touching their feet.

"Consider not that calamity will come, Channa. . . . Or it might. . . . That is not the way to escape death—always to be expecting it will come."

On farther, Channa said, "I think I scent a leopard, my lord!"

Accustomed to Channa's excitable manner the young seeker of truth continued unperturbed, "The moon is full. Look at it down in the river—. I could not have picked a more inspiring time to come to the forest—. One should surely find truth through beauty.

"One should depart from life when the moon is full and be able to take the sense of beauty to keep forever in his conscience."

Channa listened attentively as the king, who had suddenly become very verbose, talked as if to him, but yet—to himself. They were lowering their heads to escape tree limbs enmeshed in vine-traps when Channa could withhold his curiosity no longer—"Where are we going? I would follow you even into battle, my lord. . . . But I would like to know where. . . ."

"I am going to make war on the desires of the flesh. . . . And of the mind, I think, Channa. I am going to live in this forest until I have overcome desire for the worldly existence. I will not return until I know true communion with the Universal Mind—and its relationship to man. . . ."

Channa groaned. What he had feared to hear—he had heard. . . . "But, my lord, the forest life is rough . . . especially to one so accustomed to luxuries."

"I know. . . . I wish to be disciplined," was the answer.

"But—my lord, do you know anything of battling with wild life?"

"I do not mean to truly make war in the forest—Channa, I was only saying—"

"Hai, master—I know—but—if a brown bear came your way, or if a lion's path you walked in—what would you do?"

"One does not know until a time arrives, what action he will take. . . . I probably would act on some instinct which I knew not I had. . . . You see, I was a forester in a former life,—that is, I think I might have been; I have a great love for trees. . . . Especially with the moon upon them, my Channa—as they are now. Unearthly, are they not? Is that sandalwood which I smell? Ah, the fragrance in the outdoors—why does one think he can capture it in incense pots? Where are the cedars? Have we passed the line of the deodars yet? I hardly know where we are going—I only know I wish to lose myself in the mountains. . . ."

Channa was riding beside him now in an open stretch of plains. "Oh my beloved one, I will stay in the forest with you—and protect you from the harmful spirits—I—"

"Do you think there are harmful spirits that will be seeking me out?"

"Hai, my lord, especially if they think you are to become a Bodhivista. . . . Hai, there are demons . . . . terrible demons wandering about the countryside. . . ."

"I'll take care of the demons, Channa—never fear about that."

"Hai, it is spoken that holy men can by incantations compel them to enter a wicker cage and then they take them to be burned. . . ."

"So, demons can be burned? Hear that, Kantaka—demons are easily done away with?" Artha patted his horse.

"No, my lord—but they return. . . . Demons are immortal. . . ."

"Immortal?" The pensive thoughts were returning— "Indeed we should all strive to be immortal. . . . I would seek a way how we may approach the immortal pavilion here in this world—Somehow I sense the nearness of it, even tonight—in the midst of all this beauty. . . . Look down into the water there again,

Channa—the stars—they must be the roof of the place of peace—and yet we glimpse them here. . . ." Siddhartha alighted and moved closer down the river path. . . .

"My lord—take care. Demons ride the river ways. . . ." Channa warned, but also tying his mount and following his master. . . .

"Have you ever seen a demon, Channa?"

"No, unless it was in the form of a hooded snake once—when—"

"And what makes you think a hooded snake might be a demon?"

"I do not know, my lord . . . . I—"

"My faithful Channa, you can establish truth only upon that which you know." He reached down and picked up one of his slippers which had fallen off, "These pointed things are wet as toads—by morning they will be withered no doubt. A little out of place in a forest, aren't they? You may take it back with you, my good friend, as a talisman—"

Channa hesitated about taking the shoe—, "But, I am to stay with you, my master. . . ."

"No, my friend, I came out here to learn deprivation—and how could I with you at my command? This is still Kolian territory?"

"It is, my lord—would you like to turn to your own—? I can direct you. . . . I—"

"My father was quite shrewd in obtaining that affiliation—by marrying my mother and ami Pati—. Strange how one act aids—and another tears down, that which is thought of by the same mind—. My father's ill words caused the death of the Koli ruler. . . . I so would like to heal the hearts of those he has wronged as well as his own Pati. . . . I do not think he could have intentionally done anything to my mother—for he loved her dearly. . . . My father's mind—how it needs to be healed. . . ."

Channa knew the seeking mind was but expressing itself—not

to him, but he so wished to deter thoughts—, "Your mother was known for bravery and I think you must have inherited it, my lord—. But, she would never have done such a foolish act such as risking her life in a mountain forest where there are numerous wild beasts. . . ." He paused, then went on trying to get the raja to turn back, "In this section the mountain lions are numerous. . . . They say that though you pierce your sword through the heart of a lion, it would still have strength to kill a man before it died. . . ."

Dreaming was diverted, but no words of fear had caused it—Siddhartha had suddenly seen a stream which was tributary to the river, "My Channa, see how the small stream empties into the broad river! Beautiful, isn't it? The thought comes to me—this is the way that all our lives converge—if we course them right—into a oneness with the all powerful force of Life. . . . Come, let us go up this stream a ways. . . ."

Without comment, Channa obeyed by bringing the horses past a large thicket of sansir and into a cleared path along the stream. . . . They lifted to their mounts silently.

"This has the appearance of a much-traveled path, Channa," Siddhartha said as they rode along. "Would you say there were people living close here?"

"Probably animals, my lord."

"But—the branches are parted very high. . . ."

"Wild elephants—no doubt. . . . Ah, my lord, there is no fury like elephants on the run."

Siddhartha pulled the reins of Kantaka, "This large leafed tree, what is it?"

"The mahua, my lord."

"Such large, large leaves has the mahua. . . . Only yesterday I was contemplating the beauty of the pipal leaf. . . . It is shaped like a heart. . . . But none of the leaves I examined were perfect. . . . I thought—life must be like that also—. Do you think

as some leaves are designed to be larger—some men are born to attain broader knowledge than others?"

Kantaka was slowed to a walk—, "But—wisdom could not be refused to any creature, great or small, who wished to strive for it. Like the pipal leaf striving to become a perfect heart—they may fall short and become a little warped—but—. Do you consider the seat of the soul in the mind or the heart, Channa? Poets speak of it as the heart—but the Brahmin theory is that the mind impresses the soul—"

The kind-hearted groom chuckled, "Things like that are for great minds to puzzle out. Now, I—if you will not allow me to stay and serve you, I would like to instruct you in the art of preparing some barley flour which I have brought here in the saddle bags. . . . You stir it with water into a paste, dig a hole in a chalky spot of earth, gather sticks to build a fire to heat the earth—when it is hot, very hot, you remove the fire and flatten out the paste in a cake on the warm earth—and—"

"One should dwell upon thoughts of the spirit and pay less heed to the needs of the flesh. Too much food makes one logy and unable to think clearly. We have too many honey cakes, sweet breads—, meats. . . . It will be good to rest my stomach a while." Siddhartha patted the white forelegs of his horse and observed the lather around the jeweled martingale. . . . "We have ridden too long, let us stop here. . . . And go very slowly returning —Kantaka is tired . . . . and—"

"You—stop here on the Anoma stream? Should you not go nearer a village, my lord?"

"Anoma—is that its name? I like this little stream. Anoma—. But what difference a name—so long as a place is identified with peace?" He began to stroke the mane of his horse, "The greatest task is bidding friends farewell—. You and Channa have been my friends, Kantaka when others misunderstood. . . . You have borne me valiantly and Channa has served me faithfully—."

"Oh, master—if you will not allow me to stay—, keep your

horse, one friend—. You can learn to groom and make ready for mount. . . . First you place the numbah square, fit the saddle cloth across—set the saddle, draw the jeweled girths and buckle the breech band and martingale—then—"

"Instruct me not in the arts of meticulous detail. Such tends to take the mind away from the great seeking. I would judge that Kantaka cares nothing more than to seek his daily orts—. Perhaps only I, of all my people care enough to try to find an answer to life's mysteries. . . . But, here I shall stay until I find—peace."

"But, master—that may take kalpas. Think of your wife and son—your father—and—"

"What are kalpas when eternity is to be entered?"

"Poor province—it will go to ruin before the son becomes of age, for soon the old raja will be so wrought with fretting over you he cannot rule. And all will be up to Prince Devad. . . . Consider the law, my master that he might also inherit the rana if he is successor to the throne. . . ."

"Contend not with me Channa, I am not to be persuaded to return to the province. You cannot tempt me through fear. I have come here to freely seek, to tune my mind to the great Mind of the universe—and you seek to implant doubt and hate and earthly contriving. . . . Go—, leave me—"

The old servant knelt at his master's feet. "I beg you forgive this blundering old fool. . . . I would recall half my years to punish myself—."

"Rise up, no longer am I your superior." Siddhartha's voice became authoritative, "Rise—and take my robe and neck chain—ah, this turban must have been caught in the vines—." In taking his turban off, his hair became uncoiled. . . . "Ah, such cumbersome things men do live with; here take my sword and buckler! No, give it to me—"

"Master, you have yet the other slipper on your foot! Hai—give it to me. . . ."

The slipper was snatched off and thrown into the water, almost

in anger— "You wish not two to remember me by—. Hai, hold my buckler while I draw my sword. . . ."

"What are you going to do Babu Siddhartha?" Channa said rising, frightened.

Before the old groom could comprehend, the sword was being used to cut the long coil of hair from Siddhartha's head—; "I have here no bronze mirror to set jewels and coils—and such things are out of keeping with a hermit's life. I have other things to contemplate besides my looks. . . ."

Channa fell to his knees, and reached for the fallen coil and pressing it to him, said, "Your beautiful golden hair. . . . Oh, my lord, what will your father say? Your wife? How can I tell them —what you have done?"

"Take it to my father, and here—this precious jewel that held the tiara around it. . . . Give it to him to signify my heart's relation to him. . . . Request him not to mourn because of my act—; say I have entered freely into the forest to learn discipline that I may be taught truth." After pausing for a moment, he continued, "How often has my father said, the Ayrans are meditative people—. Tell him I have come to this place of quiet to meditate upon the truths and laws of life. I want to find a way that man may approach superior to life's vicissitudes. . . . Entreat him not to grieve for me. Tell him, I do honor him and respect and cherish the love which prompted the gifts he gave me—. But tell him, I forsake prestige, power, and prosperity—for a greater gift,—freedom from bondage of flesh. . . ."

"Oh, beloved Siddhartha—my heart is bound to thee as heat is to boiling water—" Channa sobbed, "I shall ever revere you. . . . Oh, my lord, the whole place will be afflicted with grief. . . . if you do not return—"

"I shall return when I have conquered. . . . When I have found the way to redemption I shall come back and expound it to the province and to the world! But now, I must cast aside the world

to save the world. Go, my Channa—and lead Kantaka gently. Take good care of—him. . . ."

Channa was leaving. Siddhartha was almost sobbing also as his friend slowly mounted his black horse and taking the reins of Kantaka was soon lost in the forest's darkness—. Only occasionally in a clearing the white horse was seen weaving in and out the vines. . . . Occasionally whinnying penetrated the night—the horse was also crying for its master. . . .

But Siddhartha turned and looked into the water, moving over to the water's edge and sitting down in meditative posture. . . . He would not watch. . . . He would close his mind to all earthly things which hampered and harassed and kept him from peace. He would be stronger than the drives that were within him, making war upon his emotions.

He must concentrate on a way of life that led to happiness and peace. Riches, power, fame, love—these gifts brought but appeasement. . . . They were shaped in confusion. . . . If he could incite rebellious thoughts against these things. . . .

No, first, he must seek a higher level and concentrate on it and these things would be unimportant. . . .

Through the remaining night he sat and looked at the sky's reflection in the water, and watched the stars fade as the morning light cast its powerful rays through the trees. Yet, looking into the water, he was aware of the change of light—it brought a realism—and he could not keep his mind from thoughts back at the palace. "Here, there is no holy man to bid the sun to shine—and to go out and bow to the four corners of earth to entreat the evil spirits to hold off their fates—."

He seemed to hear the words, "Awake the sluggard to stir—to his task—." He watched the pointed slipper caught in a forked stick, move up and down in the water. Now they were waking at the court. . . . Now—Channa was likely going in and spreading the news of his departure. . . . And Yasodhara would waken in alarm. . . . His father, how would he accept the news?

Indeed the news of the runaway king went over the palace like wildfire. Before Channa could make his way to the king whom he planned to inform first, all in the servants' quarters knew and grieved. . . . It was quickly told to the women in the after-palace and there they dishevelled their hair and tore their clothes, wailing and weeping as for one just dead. Gotami came and implored every detail of the master's renunciation. Arhina, Ardjuna and Alaric were at the heels of Channa, "Did he arrive safely, and how did he look—when you left him? Happy? When he cut his tresses did he seem to find freedom? When he gave you the jewels and robe?"

Devad came up to inquire, "Hai, did he take the girl, Sundari with him?"

Channa nodded and shook his head—standing like a stricken one gasping uneasily, clasping the robe and hair coil closely to him. . . . He started to the garden where he saw the old king walking and smoking with his hands gripped behind him, but Arhina implored him to tell the news to Yasodhara—first. . . .

Yasodhara was still in bed. Channa dropped to his knees in the middle of her room, "I come humbly begging thy understanding heart to receive news from the raja—."

Yasodhara, wide-eyed and anxious sat up in bed, "Stay not the tongue, speak out! Where is he that he couldn't come himself; is he away with that temple woman? She is not in the pavilion—he is not in the palace—where are they? Where is my lord?"

"In truth, I have committed no fault—have me not punished oh, royal rana—." Channa began, "The gods effected it—they drove him to solitude, and what was my strength compared to theirs? I tried every art my tongue could devise to bid him return —but he—oh, beloved rana—he stayed in the forest to live the life of a hermit—. I took along some barley flour and told him to prepare it—."

Scorn was in Yasodhara's voice, "Oh, dull and unjust servant. . . . You knew this thing when you left the grounds and you did

not arouse the palace and prevent him from going! You helped him escape—as one would aid a criminal to escape. A vicious reptile, you are! You deserve punishment and I shall have the raja—I shall ask my husband's father to chastise you. . . ."

A lusty cry came from the adjoining nursery and the accusation stopped suddenly—, "Now, you have waked him with the news. . . ." And she began to cry, "Oh, my poor fatherless child—and I have been telling him of his most worthy father—. Now he is a pitiful, fatherless child. . . ."

Gotami picked the child up in her arms and Channa rose to look at it, forgetting his own problems for the moment, "Hai—it is a fine child. . . . He is no frail and pitiful one, a very robust child I should say. . . . The same golden skin and eyes of violet as his pitri—."

"Speak not of his resemblance to his father." Yasodhara commanded. "Never again—to me of him. I care not to hear of him who has deserted us—to wander in the mountains because he cares not for us here." She again began to cry and Arhina moved to go in to speak with her, but her advances were also repulsed.

Channa heard her yet screaming her denunciations as he moved down the corridor and out onto the court—on his way to the king. . . .

Pure Rice's eyes turned toward the groom as a trapped beast looks at its conquerors. "I know why you have come. . . ." He raised both hands from their clenched position behind him and waved them in the air, digging his fingers into his fists. . . . "You have come to tell me my son is gone! I see it in your face! No worse woe could be written there! Tell me fool—, is it true?"

Channa pressed his arm against the bundle beneath his coat and began to stammer,

"Oh, great and worthy lord, the prince—our beloved one—sends his warmest and truest greetings. . . . He says his heart is filled with most kindly regards for you. . . ."

"Where did you take him? Tell me, where is my son?" The old king's hands were shaking and his head doddering. . . .

Pati ran to him and remonstrated, "Whatever is wrong, it is well, my lord. Allow yourself not to become excited; you know how it affects you of late to become angered. . . . Come—Come. . . ."

They led him to a marble bench, slowly, Ardjuna and Devad taking his arms which were flying wildly in the air. . . . The two young lords were speaking tenderly to him, encouraging calmness—but the steel beads of eyes were focused upon the ashen face of the fearful Channa in tense apprehension. . . . "Answer me, you fool. . . . Keep nothing from me. . . ."

Pati continued to console, "If he has gone away for a visit—you have other fine lords to depend upon. . . . They will assist you in the government and everything—." She smiled at Devad, "You will meet with the ministers today, will you not?"

"Ministers—affairs!" The rebelliousness that his son had felt, the old raja now experienced. "I hate the whole miserable lot of affairs! If I have not him to leave—it to—, let Kapila rot in its degradation!"

"My pitri," Devad touched him on the shoulder, "You as well should defame the gods as the province—."

Devad's hand was shrugged away and the writhing body lifted itself to look toward the mountains, "Let the gods rot in their bardo!"

Then the lords forced him down to the bench again. And the old king sat there looking at Channa—, "Has he gone from Kapila?" His voice broke into sobbing, "My son?"

Channa was on his knees before him, "My honored one—it is true. . . . He has gone, renounced the wealth of the kingdom and —is living in the forest—where wild beasts wander! I tried to persuade him to return—I tried—to—"

A monsoon of moaning came from the old king's lips as he beat his breasts with his fists, "The heir to Kapila is gone! No

more shall I look upon my son's face. . . . My son . . . . the beasts will devour him—the elements will be his enemy—. He will die as my Maya—. Oh, my son—for whom I prayed the Lord of the Universe to never be allowed to know of death. . . . My son!"

Spent of breath he paused to look at articles of clothing and the coil of hair in the arms of Channa. . . . Channa held them out to him. . . . With quick grasp, the palsic hands clasped the coil of hair and the garments to him hungrily. Then his eyes shone in the morning sun as burning ghats—leaping excitedly. . . . And then they were quiet pools . . . . jheels—still and lifeless.

Ardjuna cried out, "Fetch a doctor, the king is mad!"

* * *

When the sun was on the crest of the mountains, and he could determine an East-West position, King Siddhartha assumed the position of meditation, of the first dharana as Asita had taught him in his youth. With his chin on a line with the ground he raised his shoulder blades so that his spine would be straight, and then he crossed his feet, drawing them up to his body with their soles upward. He began to concentrate.

"I am waiting here oh divine One. . . . Come. . . . Come. . . . I cannot go forward until I am fortified with peace in my innermost self—oh, giver of life. . . ."

He kept thinking of the misunderstandings back home that brought confusion, strife. But, he must not think on these things, he must concentrate on—virtues? Arhina said that was the way.—

Wonderful Arhina, her comfort that last evening would long be remembered. . . . If he only had been able to have had a few words with Yasodhara. . . . How beautiful she was as she slept. . . . Memory of her soft face and body awoke desire— . . . . But passion must be mastered. . . . If he had only been told by her that she cared for him still. . . . Her attitude had made him wonder if love was still in her heart for him. . . . No—he must not let

doubt creep in . . . . doubt and passion were two sins of the flesh to be mastered. . . . How? How?

He thought of all the ways he had learned from Asita and Viswamitri. . . . Concentrating and speaking sounds—which were mystic keys to unlock the door to the divine. . . . No, such practice was founded on ignorance—he must find the truth. . . . Truth. . . .

"I know, oh, eternal One that the way of peace is to be found. . . . We must acquire it in this world that we may take it at death into the eternal realm. . . . Where is it, oh eternal spirit abiding in space and in all things—? Reveal thy truth to me. I come seeking, as a lost child seeks the way. . . ."

He let his eyes lift to look at the mountains. . . . The Himalayas held the homes of the gods. This had been taught to him—but it too was ignorant teaching. . . . His father had referred to the mountain peaks as pure—. Surely it was not wrong to believe that the Absolute was associated in some way with the bright peaks. . . . "Oh, come, divine Nature—and teach me what is of thee."

Now, he looked into the stream, Anoma. . . . He would have to begin all over again. . . . It was so hard to keep one's mind and eye on a single object. . . .

A mere stream was a mystifying thing of itself—how did it keep moving—moving, churning, whirling—? When it got in the larger river it was more quiet. . . . On and on it went until it found a still larger body of water—would it there know rest? "Oh, maker of mysteries reveal thy hidden ways to me! I would cut away the stone of ignorance as the water cuts away the banks of rock. . . . I would go deep into the heart of universal thought. . . . Impress my mind with thy truths, oh, universal Mind of all things."

The champ blossoms falling into the water detracted from the object of meditation. "Oh, eternal knowledge, teach me the reason for decay and death in the world! I can tear deep-rooted pas-

sion from my heart—, I can overcome doubt—, I will not meditate on findings based on ignorance—but how can I know the things my seeking soul covets? Sorrow is the shadow of life, birth—, growth; decay—, pleasure, pain—hate—love—delusion, all these breed perverseness. . . . How can we be perfect and versed in the right way?"

He became tired in the lotus position. . . . The flower vine leaned against the rocks and trees. It seemed in perfect accordance with the divine will. . . . He leaned against the saddle bags which Channa had left for him.

These bags were filled with provisions meant to sustain him. . . . He remembered that he had not eaten since the evening before—and that he was very hungry. . . . He reached in one side of the bag—and procured a handful of parched rice. . . . Eagerly he ate the handful and reached for more—. No, this was to last him for the time he was away. Besides, he must control the lust for food. . . . He remembered the sumptuous banquets at his father's house. . . . He remembered the obeseness of his father, who sinned against his body every day. Perhaps—he should fast rigidly—perhaps that was the way to attain enlightenment—. But, how good was the rice—and what else was it that Channa has brought? Fruit and cakes. . . . How was it he had told him to make the barley cakes in the fire—? He had not been listening then—. Well, perhaps when all this was gone, he would likely go on a—forced fast. It was impossible for him now to stop eating—. Hai, a forced fast. . . . About the only way to make him stop eating—for it to give out. How like his father, he thought. Suddenly, he remembered that he had eaten without bathing his hands! And staring directly in the stream too? He laughed a little. . . . If old Asita—well if any of them back at the palace could have witnessed that—, what would they have said? A Brahmin never ate—not even a piece of fruit without the ritual of water beforehand! A touch of humor prevailed. . . . He had

eaten without bathing and the sun had risen without the Sadhu's compelling it to. . . .

How long had it been since he had been able to laugh a little? Every man needed to be able to look on things with a twinkle of humor at times. . . . It was good for the soul. His laugh caused a hunter across the gorge to call out, "Aree! A happy day for hunting it is—why do you sit idle?"

The laughter ceased and the interest concentrated upon was—a man walking a log over a gorge of great depths without so much as looking down at the possible death he might step to! What wonderful confidence. . . . When the hunter stepped to the ground and appeared from behind the branches of the champs, he remarked, "Are all hunters so well trained in forest life? My admi, you win my admiration, walking that dangerous elevation so well poised. . . . How do you do it?"

"I consider not the ravine and its danger—I do that which my feet were meant to do, walk to where my mind tells me I wish to go." The forester stopped short, and recognizing the kurta of the Kshatriya—he bowed—

"Stay obeisances, admi—I am but mortal." The laugh began again. . . . "But—you might have thought me some freak form of Siva? I cut my hair—I am mortal though—. And my slippers—one of them is floating yonder in the stream." He drew his feet from under him and wiggled his toes. "It feels good to be barefoot. . . . Won't you sit and speak to me of the forest?"

The hunter leaned against a fallen tree and placed his arrow on the stump.

"What think you of the tree's decrepitness, would you say it died from age or the woodsman's ax?" Artha asked.

"I am not familiar with trees and flowers—I am only a hunter. I can tell you the age of anything I fell. I also farm, I can tell you of planting seeds and tilling."

"You walk through beauty and never see it?" Siddhartha sighed, "The way of so many. . . . May I try your bow? I have a

little knowledge of archery. It is strongly made, is it not? I will aim at the dhup tree yonder. . . ."

No sooner aimed than the hunter exclaimed, "Aree, a good marksman!" The barb went to the bark of the dhup tree, and the hunter retrieved his arrow. . . . "You could bring down an elephant with your skill!"

"I wish not to bring down any animal, my friend. I wish to see all things enjoying life."

"All things, however beautiful must die—at some time, and why not at a convenient time to aid a hunter and his family? I see you know not of life; from your tunic I perceive you are a lord pampered in luxury. . . . Hai, the silver threads in the weaving of your kurta is most extraordinary. . . ."

"I was observing your—what is it you call, dhoti—; whatever it is, I would like to exchange my tunic for it. . . ."

"You are most kind," the hunter said, "but I could not trail deer in such a livery. The dhoti I wear makes me as one with trees and leaves—and—the forest."

"I wish to be at one with the forest."

The man of the forest looked squarely into the face of the raja, "I know—you have run away and you fear they will come looking for you. . . . Wrongly accused of something no doubt—." The deduction was made, looking into the honest purple-blue eyes and the hunter began to take off his dhoti. Siddhartha began to undress and the exchange was quickly made. The hunter offered his bow to better balance the bargain—, "Besides you will need it in the forest, and I can make another. . . ."

The gift was waved aside, "I sent my sword back to the palace. . . . I want to be free, do you comprehend what I mean when I say I want to be truly unfettered of things of the world?"

The hunter was not listening, he was watching a chital in the clearing down by the water's edge. As he took aim and was releasing the arrow he realized that the lord had truly meant what he said about taking a life—for he was reaching over and ar-

resting his hand. He jerked away from the grasp—and the arrow escaped and struck a small fawn which was following—. "Hai it was a doe—was that why you stopped me? I am most grateful to you, for I never take aim at—"

He stopped short his speech and looked at the river bank. The small black and white spotted fawn was writhing in pain, bouncing in and out the shrubs. Siddhartha ran to it and took it in his arms, "See—see what you have done!"

The hunter quickly set about the removal of the arrow from the small neck, talking all the while about how he had not meant to—how he never killed does, but the sympathetic soul was not listening. "It would have grown in grace and been very happy here in the trees, if you had not stopped it with your barb. . . . Now, it will die!"

A thought came suddenly of the plantain-leaf poultice once used by Channa on wounds. Soon with poultice, and barley flour for food, the animal was quiet in Siddhartha's arms.

The barley flour mixed with water made a milk that was satisfying to the fawn, and from the way the fawn was hugged and the way it laid its head on the benefactor's arm, the hunter knew —the run-away-lord was to be left with a friend. "If the barley meal runs out, wild goat milk may be had by—pulling the udder —like this—. You may catch a goat by chasing it into the vines. . . . If you need further help, there on the rise—that little knoll—"

Siddhartha was not looking at the gestures of the hunter, he sat hugging the fawn and looking straight ahead—. "I would I knew where the holy men dwell. . . ."

"I was trying to tell you, my lord. . . . On that little knoll, you will see large rocks, that is the opening to their caves. . . . Move here with me, and you may view the pandal of bamboo and jute —that is the entrance to their dwelling place. . . ."

The fawn was placed on the ground—where it stayed contented, "Hai, I see two of them out front—"

"There are five of them. I often see them on the river banks gathering roots and twigs. One has a notion that what he seeks is under water, I presume for he swims for hours under water. . . . They eat grasses and pound on birds and fishes like serpents after prey—and at times they go in for rigid fasts. . . . If you want to know of deprivation, they will tell you. I trust you enjoy the deer-skin dhoti. . . . I feel a different admi, myself. . . ." And the hunter was gone.

Siddhartha stood for some time watching the two Brahmacharins, trying to determine what they were doing. . . . Then he glanced back at the fawn. "Blessed creature, you in holy reverence for our kindness—remain. . . . All fear is gone from you!" He looked for the hunter, and aware that he was alone—he said, "Now is the time, we go to learn that which is ordained for all who seek—wisdom."

He lifted the animal in his arms to proceed along the path to the knoll and the cave. He went staggering, balancing the fawn in one arm and the saddle bag in the other, a little fearful—for the two men outside were horrible looking creatures. One was rooting the ground like a mongoose finding a snake in a hole. He was lifting up—and Artha could see his swollen cheeks were pierced with thorns as arrows on a target. . . . Now he was down again at the roots of the trees—deliberately dashing his jaw against the tree roots to bring pain! What pain that must cause! Yet, the face was indicative of control. . . . But what a fierceness on that face? Such as on an animal's face when it was vexed to spring. . . . Now the repulsive face was looking directly at him, and coming down the path to greet him—was this terrorized being. . . . A cracked laugh escaped from the swollen throat. "I was coming to look for Ebod, have you seen him? But then you would not see him, perhaps—for Ebod swims under the water. . . . He goes noiselessly and disturbs not the water. . . . But one day he will jump from the river when he has found Indra's image. . . ."

"And what image do you seek, great rishi?" Siddhartha asked timidly. . . . "In the earth?"

"Yama. . . . Where else could he be but in the earth? Ashes of the dead go back to the earth, so one must reason—Yama is there. . . . But, I will find him—I will find him. . . ."

The gaunt figure fell again into the dirt and began rooting. Siddhartha turned from the sight with a sickening feeling, and moved over to where the other rishi lay—prostrate, his head on a rock. . . . A drop of water—from a one-time waterfall fell on his upturned face and trickled down into his matted hair. The slight movement of the yellow robe over his hollow chest told that the man was yet alive. . . . He would speak to him and see if he was in a coma—or if he would sit up. "What is it you seek, oh holy one?"

The slight form did not move, but a weak voice explained—"Truth through rhythm. All things have rhythm and the secret is in the dropping of the water. The drops are far apart now, and it is hard to detect. . . . But when I first began, their beats made a bhajan to the gods. . . . It will be revealed soon—when the drops cease—I shall find the answer. . . . I will find what I am seeking. . . ."

Another attenuated form came from the pandal of the cave and lifted his face to gaze at the sun. He was aware of the presence of the stranger Siddhartha, for he said, "If you are a seeker—go in, join our little group. Place your burden in our midst and become rid of all the evil which you have brought from the world." A bony hand was beckoning to the cave, but the nose remained high and the eyes lifted to the sun.

Sounds from the cave came clearly. The other rishi was inside, in mystic syllables attempting to bring response from the cave walls it seemed with— "Aum! Aum!" symbol of the deity—in shrill, nasal shrieks. . . . The cave sounds were anything but inviting, yet the penitent one practicing austerity of "high nose" continued to invite—, "Here you will destroy all mundane influ-

ences and when you have done penance here you will be given peace and rest. All the holy ones who have died from the top of that mountain have gone straight to Paradise. . . . Come, come—be not afraid. . . . When the final destruction of the body is effected you will be at one with the Infinite being of all Creation."

"That is the entity—I seek." Siddhartha said solemnly, "May I bring—my woodland friend with me?" He looked down at the fawn in his arms.

"All things have the same importance here, all things that have breath are the same. All of earth, returns to earth—but that which is eternal goes to—its place. . ." Siddhartha observed that the fawn was blind in one eye, the shaft of the arrow had brushed across its face—and caused this. A greater sympathy for it now, caused him to hold it dearer. . . . And as he moved beneath the pandal of bamboo to set the bag of barley down—the warm little body of the fawn gave comfort; it had love for him. . . . If all things of earth held mutual regard, as High-Nose had said—that should be a start toward Truth. He sat on the stone floor with the tall mountain in view—and tried to discern a reason for austerity, and if he found in conviction—it was right—what would be the penance he should choose? He hugged the fawn closer.

Chapter 10

For three years penance ravaged the handsome body of the king of Kapila. His form had become as frail as the ascetics who gave him shelter and instructions in the arts of peace. And the way of enlightenment was more dark than when he came there, for the pain he tolerated but diffused his thoughts and he could only repeat, "bodily suffering brings religious merit."

He wore spiked sandals and thorns pierced his forehead, breast and sides. With time, they said the pain should be unnoticed—when time brought the mind's power over matter. But when—how? One claimed water purification cleansed the mind; another said fire brought zeal for obtaining release. He had submitted to immersions and he had drilled sparks from rocks and fed them with ghee in prayerful libation from sun to sun. His mind but belonged to the five men who had befriended him—; he came to this realization one day, in a vague feeling of resentment.

He looked at the men of twisted hair, and realized they were also twisted of mind and soul. Somehow he understood that if he stayed on, he would become more fettered, and he had come to learn of them how to be—a free soul. He had but wasted time here—how long, he had no idea. He only knew he could not stand sight of them longer, that he was going, leaving the cave. They had been kind and he hated to slip away, but they would not understand if he tried to explain. As the fawn had gone from them

one day—he would disappear into the woods. Yes, up the path by the river, until he reached the mountain trail. He would go up to the top of Vulture peak, where—if his soul expired he would be taken directly to the home of the gods. . . .

This thought troubled him, it was not in line with the reasoning he had once pursued—but he had heard of many holy men going there to—die. But, he did not wish to die! He had much to live for back home—where was home? He had a family—somewhere in his mind, there must be some sweet associations, but as he tried to think of home he became conscious of a disturbance of spirit, and he dismissed the effort because it brought pain.

He should pluck the thorns from his body now, he thought, now that he was out of sight of his five friends. . . . He reached to his cheek with trembling hand, but the pain was more severe as he tried to remove the jagged thorns. . . . He would wait until he had rested—some place.

He rested many times before he reached the top of the mountain, Vulture peak, but always when he tried to remove the instruments of affliction, he shrank from the pain. . . . Nearing the top of the peak, he became aware of the need for food, and he began to look about. . . . The vultures were flying above him, he could feel their black wings fanning him—they were expecting him to be "food for them?" Oh, Giver of benefits, he must find food!

He found a wild fig tree growing from a rock, and beneath it was a long ledge, a perfect place for a meditation spot. . . . He reached for a fig and lay down on the ledge. . . . Looking about again, he saw a breadfruit tree—there would be food on it the year around. . . . Here was where he would make his home, for there was an opening in the rocks where he could go when it rained. "Thank you, Great Giver of Good," he said and in exhaustion found sleep.

In his dreams he found soft arms enfolding him, and brown eyes laughing. . . . He heard a child's prattle and it was

sweet. From somewhere a beautiful white horse came, asking him to ride to the mountain top. . . . And a golden chariot paused to ask him to go away to the land of the sky. . . . "No," he had said, "I must stay here until I find what I am seeking, a way of release from suffering. . . ."

The warm sun was on his face beckoning him to awaken, but he wished to remain with the dream's peacefulness. . . . This, he thought is the calm state in which one should enter the immortal pavilion—in such a bliss, eternities could be spent in joy. But another thought vexed, old High Nose looked up at the mountain every morning—he was likely seeing him and calling to the others to "Come see, he was unable to withstand suffering—and has gone from us."

He awoke slowly, and looked down in the direction of the cave from where he had come. There was no one in sight, but—he would make a screen to hide. . . . He found bamboo and plantain leaves and felt very secure, for he had found more promise of food—; he would stay here in this perfect place until he divined wisdom. Figs, jujubas and mangoes—and there was a herd of sheep on the other side of the mountain. He would make friends with the herd boy, perhaps the herd boy was lonely too.

"Where am I, boy?" he called.

"You are in the province of raja Bambisauri. There is a village down there." And the boy pointed as he looked in awe upon him. "You are a holy man? I know a woman who has a sick baby—will you heal it for her? My name is Kotiya. I will give you milk if you will heal the woman."

The woman was brought to him, and he advised a "search for a mustard seed from a house where death had not been." The woman rushed away, believing in him, believing that to find the mustard seed the child would be well. . . . Let her seek, it would be good for her faith—and the revelation would also be good for her thinking. . . .

Suddenly he chided himself. What had happened to the impres-

sionable Siddhartha who had been so eager to help the suffering and needy that he had emptied Kapila's coffers? What had happened to him these moons, he who had been contumely and loyal and respectful of others should have gone with the woman and sought out the best doctors? Living amid the stench of filth and observing the persecutions had hardened his soul? Instead of gaining religious affluence, his soul degenerated?

He must constrain to overcome such influence. From now on, he avowed he would be acutely aware of needs about him. . . . Yet, when the boy told him of the denunciations of the woman who had gone from house to house until the breath had gone from the child—he said, "It died, did it? But, they are no better than I —I too will have to suffer pain and death."

No sooner had he uttered these words than he was sorry for them. And what was the boy thinking of him? He apologized, "I am not a wise man as you thought. You should have advised her to go to another. . . . There must be a wise teacher in these mountains."

"There is Alolam on mount Pinda," the herd boy informed.

"And he is wise?"

"He has many disciples," Kotiya answered.

"Then I shall go and listen to him. . . ."

"And when you return, may I come and learn from you?" the boy asked eagerly.

"You—you may become my first disciple, Kotiya. I would teach in my first lesson, not to inure yourself against suffering. I had people in my province who were like that—they could sit down beside a hungry man and eat their food. . . . But, I—I once was sorry for all I saw in need. . . . Being ruler, I thought it was my privilege to help them. . . . I think I was right, I think that must have been the right way. . . . I will go to Alolam—and see what he thinks is right. . . ."

Alolam of Mt. Pinda expostulated on "self" that day Siddhartha came to listen in the grove where he and his disciples met.

"Self must be mastered before one may reach a birth with the great Soul of all things, that is the way—master self." The searching king agreed, but how they went about doing away with selfish personal aim was after the same fashion as the five old friends—through penance and fasting. He went back to his ledge with knowledge that inspired him to achieve the eternal destruction of bodily form. . . . From henceforward he would try to think broadly, and to teach the herd boy a magnanimous approach to life.

One day he heard the boy calling to him in fearful pleading to come—come and help him. . . . He quickly made his way to the side of the mountain where the boy was. . . . There were two men standing there from king Bambisauri's court. . . . "They—they are ministers of the king—who have come for five of my pet lambs to make a sacrifice for the Dasara season. . . . Tell them, what you tell me, it is not meek to offer sacrifices. . . . Go, teach king Bambisauri it is not right to slaughter lambs to eat for sacrifice. . . . They may have the old sheep—but not my pet lambs!" And Kotiya burst into tears.

A poignance came with the persuasive voice. Siddhartha waited for perfect control over himself before he said—, "This is one of the things over which we have no control, but still must meet bravely. The king has decreed it, you must part with your lambs."

The boy threw down his crook and sank to the ground. . . . Siddhartha sat beside him. "As long as we live in his kingdom, we must abide by his requests. . . . You must not grieve over the lambs—over anything. . . . Say to yourself, I have loved and enjoyed them—but now they are not near me, I will remember only how I joyed at their presence. Consider, too— that after one blow, no more will they be subject to the teeth of the cougars. . . ." The boy continued to sob. Siddhartha continued on in similar appeal—and he turned to the men, "We should practice serenity—regardless of things that come to vex us. . . . That is the noble way. . . ."

He looked with compassion on the boy who had given him skins for his body warmth, and milk for sustenance. . . . He said, "But, I will go with these men and talk to the king as you wish concerning the uselessness of sacrifice. . . ."

The face of the herd boy, and the faith in the mission which he set out to effect made Siddhartha take new impetus in his walk. He took one of the lambs in his arms; the men had two apiece. . . . The lamb's nearness and peacefulness with its confidence and the boy's confidence brought determination to try to change the world against sacrifice. With the lamb's heartbeat against his own, he felt a kinship with all things that had life—this was the way he had felt about pets he had known as a boy, about the fawn—now this tender, trusting thing in his arms—how could he give it over for sacrifice?

Sights of towers, steeples, slupas, pagodas distracted. . . . The sounds of the bazaar, the money changers, the counting of the crorie shells—all the sounds of the town upset his soul. How he coveted the quietness of the mountains, only there was serenity.

He moved with the ministers to the slaughter pen. He heard the king, Bambisauri, whose voice reminded him much of his father's—calling to the priests. . . . And the purhoit, not unlike Asita did—laid his hands upon the goat, saying, "Let the king's sins be laid upon this animal and let the fires consume them. . . ." Yes, somewhere he had witnessed such a sacrifice as this; it was all so familiar. But he knew not it was Kapila, Pure Rice and Asita being imaged in his memory. Vaguely he associated these sights, but where—who? Siddhartha moved forward, unafraid and said, "Oh, great king, take not that which you cannot give."

The king turned his burly body around quickly, as if anger would be forthcoming, but then upon eyeing the features of the speaker, he said—, "Your comment is most welcomed, my lord—as is your presence. I requested ministers to go and search for you, and for once they made hasty return—young ruler of Kapila—?"

"I once was ruler of Kapila. . . ." Memory began to return to him. "Hai, I remember—." Siddhartha said.

"Ministers from your kingdom requested that you be found and invited to the feasts of our province during Dasara. . . . I understand you have been away for years."

Dasara—Kapila! He was remembering the lasciviousness of holiday festivities in the past. Back now, all was in a merry mood making ready for the season. Perhaps Yasodhara was braiding her hair and painting her eyelids—looking forward to a celebration. . . . Hai, even now, his son might be old enough to know what Dasara meant. . . . He forced his attention once more on the king Bambisauri's words. . . .

"A Kapilavastuan begging for food! Your hands were made for a scepter, not a begging bowl. I was most concerned over the story of how you of such royal descent had rejected your former state and given yourself over to religious piety. I am moved that one so young as you, fails to see that while youth possesses the body, one ought to enjoy himself—that you have come voluntarily to low estate. Consider you not that it is noble to desire power, pride of family, name and wealth?" Siddhartha ignored the question, and the welcome went on in profuse words describing the entertainment, the food, the zenanna women—"all for your joys at Dasara. . . ."

Lust and desire were listening. . . . "Sleep once more on a soft couch, drink my wine." Yes, he had given up these to search for something. Then he recalled his mission clearly; it came to him as the ringing of a bell when he listened to the king's words, "Rest here, and your body and soul will be enriched, my brave one—for is that not your intent?"

"I am constrained to bow to the hospitable Ayran that you are, oh king Bambisauri. And such friendship as you offer is coveted. . . . My intent is to enrich the soul—and hai, thereby the body will find also comfort and peace. . . . But, call me not brave. . . . I am very fearful. I stand in awe of all things of earth, for I fear

the ravages of disease, old age and death. . . . I know I must, and I am seeking to find emancipation. . . . But, I shall have to decline your benevolent offers. Only shall I accept seven grains for each day of Dasara—for I have found that too much food makes the mind logy and dull. The same effect as too little. . . . I shall be grateful for the sufficient portion." The shorn head bowed with grace and repeating his first words . . . "I cannot take that which I cannot give," he bowed away.

"I know that you could not personally return my favors, but—allow me to say, this offer of entertainment is but in remembrance of the most elaborate I have known at Kapila recently. . . . That young Devadatta, acting monarch in your absence is a most extravagant host, . . ." the king said following him to the door.

Siddhartha turned, "But—my father? Is he not ruler of Kapila?"

"My dear admi—, your father has been very ill since your groom returned to the palace with your robe and jewels. . . ."

"Ill—?" The awful thought of something happening to his father—shocked numb.

"Ill of mind, raja Siddhartha. The doctors have said they know no cure. . . . I am sorry to tell you this if it breaks your serenity, but it is true. They spoke of searching for you and asking you to return at the time, but—the old king said he did not wish to ever see you again."

His pitri did not wish to see him—ever again? "Devad rules in my stead, So . . ." Siddhartha said, "that leaves me free—to go—my way . . . ? And why—why did they bother to search for me at the Siva celebration time?"

"It was the rana who was concerned over your happiness at this season. She asked that you be made comfortable and happy—if possible, and Devadatta honored her wishes. Your wife must be very devoted to you, young raja—she, although a very beautiful woman, takes no thought of enhancing her charm—but wears plainest of saris, and dophattas, combs her hair close to her

head—. And I understand, that when she was told you slept on the ground, she refused to lie on her bed, but asked for a mat—that she too might suffer as you. . . ."

Siddhartha hung his head—but he did not turn away, so the king continued. "I am aware of the interest your bhai takes in your wife, and you may be sure that she goes through no painful penance if he can prevent it—for Devadatta is very fond of her as well as the three year old child—, Rahula."

"Thank you, king Bambisauri—for your kindness and interest. Now, if I may have my grains—I shall go to my abode. . . ." He must leave before he burst out in crying.

As he moved away, the king said: "If you find the power you are seeking, I pray you remember that I stand in need of knowledge of the good that I may help my people."

"I will come when I have found the way," Siddhartha replied simply, and departed.

Back on the ledge the many things crowded through his mind so that Siddhartha could not find any measure of repose. . . . He would stay there in that cave and never go away to hear things of the world! He should never have been found if the woman and the mustard seed story had not circulated. . . . He would stay a recluse—without contact with man—just lie on the ledge and meditate upon the holy presence. . . . But, ah—now—Dasara season. . . . And Rahula—three years. . . . "My son.". . . If he had only asked how he looked. . . . Surely now at this hour, which was rest time at the palace—Yasodhara was telling the boy a katha . . . a katha of Dasara perhaps.

But back in the palace, Yasodhara lay on her mat and refused to be comforted. One after another came to try to reconcile; Arhina, fair cousin of Siddhartha's was able to do the most with her. . . . "Come, the new sari is ready for you to wear to the festival—, you must not grieve like this—he would not wish you to. He is trying to find truths that will stem the tide of all

woes—. Help him in your thoughts, will you not? Come, let us be gay—during this gay season. . . ."

"I will not wear the elaborate sari—when he is wrapped in a yellow clout!" And her voice reverberated harshly against the jasper walls of her room.

"If you do not control your emotions, my beloved—you might become as the raving raja. See him in the garden, wallowing in his best kurta . . . .?"

Yasodhara pulled herself up by the leg of a teakwood table and she went to look down upon the garden at antics of Pure Rice. Every morning during the preparation for the holy reception of the season, he had entreated the priests to continue to call on lord Siva. . . . "But, I shall not honor Lord Siva's gala season. Go, tempt me not to dress—and banquet when my beloved is desolate in fasting!" she said.

The child Rahula ran into the room, Yasodhara caught him in her arms and wailed louder, "My son, your pitri is not coming back this Dasara season. We are forsaken. Forsaken!"

"My pitri is coming and he is to bring me a gift!" Rahula affirmed, nodding his blonde head, he said to Arhina. Turning to his mother with pouting lips, "Isn't he?" he demanded.

"Arhina is the teller of the bright kathas—ask her," she said curtly.

"I am sure he shall, Rahula. . . ." Arhina said. "A wonderful gift he shall bring you, too."

"See, Ama—!" Then to Arhina he asked, "What would you guess the gift to be?"

"Oh—something very wonderful that you shall keep always."

"A jewel perhaps to wear in my tiara when I become ruler?"

"No doubt it will be a costly gem that your pitri will bring to you," Arhina said assuringly.

Yasodhara added, "He knows that some day you will wear headdress and robes of the raja. . . . Hai, one day Rahula you will rule over Kapila!" She began to weep.

"And this is the sari which your ami is to wear for the gala season," Arhina said, holding close to Yoshadora the new sari made for Dasara, ignoring the tears.

Rahula exclaimed, "Oh—put it on, Ama—see how pretty you will look in it!"

That evening as the music for the banquet began Yasodhara walked down the stairs wearing the new dress and she was more beautiful than—even the decorated tree, as Anuruddha said.... And Devadatta came up to meet her at the foot of the stairs bowing and offering adoration.

"If only—he were here—with us. How did the ministers say that he fared?" she asked as they went to the banquet room, leaning on Devad's arm.

"He is living on a high peak known as the Vulture in king Bambisauri's province.... His ministers found him and took him to the palace for the festivities. He is no doubt enjoying life.... Come, my beautiful one, let us forget all but that life is here now, tonight ... and that there may not be a tomorrow! War is very close, my beloved."

That evening when Yasodhara again thanked Devad for his kindness and interest in finding Siddhartha, he was most complying, as only wine could make him, "For you I will go to the Vulture Peak myself to see after his needs if it will make you happy."

"You will, Devad?" And Yasodhara clasped her hand in his, "Promise me?"

"On the tomorrow, as early as I awaken, I shall make plans for the journey! All for you!"

The next day Devad was on his way to the city of the five peaks in the province of the raja Bambisauri with a box of jewels as a gift in appreciation of the king's kindness. He had brought with him his most capable groom and servant, Channa, released from prison to make the trip. When Channa returned, saying that he had accompanied the young Siddhartha in his flight from

the kingdom, the old king had made him a prisoner. Now, Devad was releasing him only because Channa was a good driver over mountain roads and knew the way to the mission where Sundari was. But the groom, who had become irate from confinement and deprivations, was indignant at the sharp commands shouted at him on the way.

"Drive less fiercely, you fool. These mountain passes are too treacherous to take chances on! Know you not that Kapila will be without a ruler, should anything happen to me?"

"Lord Siddhartha will return to us when he has gained wisdom," Channa retorted.

"Be careful of your speech," Devad threatened. "I had intended to speak in your behalf after this trip, and cause the old raja to repent his wrath against you, but mind you, it will be depending upon your obedience this trip."

"I do not mind the imprisonment when I think I did it for his sake."

"For his sake," Devad mocked, "that is all I hear at the court. Every wreath that is hung is for our dear lord's blessed memory! I shall show them who is 'dear lord' one of these days—you fool, slow down!" he called as the chariot careened.

"Your patience I beg," Channa said politely. "Kantaka seems to know he is going to his master. . . . I scarce can rein him in. He can pull with that Numidian any day!"

"You should not have brought the old jerky bundle of bones. . . ."

"If I could but be at the stables he would be better fed. . . . I brought him thinking it would gladden lord Siddhartha to see him once more. . . ."

Devad laughed. "I shall not allow you and Kantaka to go any farther than the court of Bambi. From there the king will arrange for a mahout to guide me to the Vulture peak."

Channa seemed displeased for an instant and then he had a new thought, "Hai, then I am free to go as I please, your honor?"

"No, you are yet a prisoner, remember. . . . You tell me the exact place you will go,—now where is it you wish to go while in this vicinity?"

Channa hesitated.

"Tell me at once, or I shall conclude that you have a secret mission in these parts. . . . Oh—I remember, Channa, you came away to these mountains when you took the temple harlot away from Kapila. What monastery was it you took her to, and how far is it? I would welcome sight of her dark and tantalizing form so warm and life-giving. I shall also go to see her. Yasodhara will never know, nor would she mind if the mission to find Artha were delayed a few days."

"Oh, my lord, Devadatta, remember your duty. Remember the trouble we had with the priests about the girl. Let us not bring any more on Kapila than it already has. . . ."

Devad laughed scornfully. "Duty? My first duty is to the present ruler and his happiness, myself. I have a Dasara gift to take to Sundari; which road leads to the monastery, my Channa? Make no false turns. Remember rightly the way. Impudent and unruly servants are dealt with more harshly for betrayal than a mere prison term."

Silence reigned for some yohannas. Channa turned at a very rough and lonely road. But soon Devad settled in his seat, for he had seen in the distance the large rock monastery of Vesali. "You have led me right, and it is well you did."

Devad found the priests of the monastery incompatible. They refused to let Sundari be seen; the gaze and touch of man defiled one who had been dedicated to the gods. Devad's full lips mocked, "Tell me oh worshipful Devas, who has reserved her beautiful body in the name of the gods . . . is the joy of her comparable to the pleasure Siva found in his milkmaids?"

They rode away leaving the priest dumfounded. "Drive slowly, along this wall," Devad commanded. "Somewhere along here I recall an opening. As we came up I wondered if I would have to

make use of it. Stop! There it is! And, stay the chariot, I shall do the looking in myself. . . . Hai, I see one of the dedicated walking in the court. I shall see how much it costs me to see my beloved temple woman. . . ."

At the opening of the rock parapet, he motioned for a robed figure to come closer. When the nun hesitated, he took out a gem from the box of jewels and held it out so she could see. "Here, I would like some information. Have you one here, dark and beautiful known as Sundari? If so, ask her to come to me."

The thin hands of the nun snatched the gift and gazed upon it a moment, then nodding, ran quickly to fetch the girl.

Devad settled back in the chariot. . . . "My beloved bhai is too busy learning from the great rishis . . . a few days' delay will make no difference."

* * *

Approaching the grove of the great rishi Arada Rama, Siddhartha faltered. There was much fog in the grove of livid green moss-covered trees, and the day was cold and damp. To the mighty guru and his dark-clad followers who had attained tumo, summer reigned on the mountains of snow by believing it so and practicing it faithfully. They were comfortably seated on the jutting rocks that offered space for a large group. The haggard faces of the group looked up at the newcomer as if he were an intruder. Siddhartha bowed humbly, "I am persuaded that the fount of knowledge in this grove emits measurelessly from holy lips. I am constrained to seek true deliverance through your teaching."

The interruption was acknowledged by the guru and the lecture proceeded, "Nature is of itself pure without fault, the involution with the five elements causes an awakening of power of perception, seeing the cause for form, sound, order,—these are the roots of action. . . . The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body; these are the roots of understanding. . . ."

Arada's words were well chosen, but one had need of greater powers of conception to comprehend of what he spoke. His voice with tremulous inflections found complement with the cold breeze of the grove. "Now, the root of the mind is two-fold, it is both material and intelligent. The cause is nature's involutions. The one who is aware of the cause is the self, 'I.' "

Next followed a repudiation of self, as Siddhartha had listened to from the other rishis. They all descried self because they had become dissatisfied with themselves and therefore sought to destroy that which they hated, Artha concluded. . . . "I" was ridiculed and classed as a word used by the ignorant. Ignorance and passion were constant transmigrations of the self or soul. "There are those who say the outward things are one with the soul, that the objective is the same as the mind. They confuse intelligence, saying number is the soul. Doubting the truth of the soul is excessive doubt, and must be distinguished aright. Deep speculations as to the limits of perception but involve the soul and unbelief leads to confusion and ends in difference of thought and conduct. . . ."

The other listeners must also have felt the discourse dull, they were asking questions to enliven the meeting. And after each answer the revelation of knowledge seemed to flow in even splendor, shining on the face of the speaker. . . . Siddhartha was moved to ask a question. He rose slowly and stood king-like in his ragged clout, "I come from a province where there is much feasting and sacrifice going forward night and day. What speaks the noble Arada on sacrifice?"

The answer was pleasing to the interrogator, for it was in keeping with his own ideas, "Slaughtering living things and to render pure by water and fire are without the right expedient. They result from ignorance. Such practices manifest that the material world is ground for the soul, that is, depending on the senses which bring this classification—indolence, lustful desires,

fears, passions. I plainly foresee that the root of all desire after form is binding us to go through birth after birth. . . ."

"In which way, then, may we escape the self-ego?" Siddhartha asked.

"Let us kindle wisdom to become a torch throughout eons to oppose dark ignorance. Yourself using wisdom is the expedient. It is advisable to remove oneself from the crowd to lead a hermit's life—hai, to depend on alms for food. We must learn to abstain and to desire little, find enjoyment in practicing a quiet life, diligently study the Sutras and the Sastras, to govern well the organs of life, hating vices, and putting away all sorrows that are barriers to happiness. Thus we obtain the first dhyanas, the condition of ecstasy as enjoyed by the Brahmakola heavens. Then, having obtained this illumination, by inward meditation away from the entanglements of follies, we, diligently seeking, persevering, searching for higher advances are led into the Brahma heavens where we taste the greater joy."

Arada proceeded to reveal the way to escape to yet a third heaven where no desire for further excellence is possible. And, on he expounded to the state of abstraction beyond all bodily conditions, where all forms and desires were done away with—an empty release of the idea of "I," away from material limitations finding the perfect release.

Siddhartha took issue. "I agree with all but your idea of release from self in sense of empty release. You have said you can remove the properties of a thing by arguing it to death—but may I contribute a contemplation of thought—when you remove heat from the fire, is there not then still such a thing as fire? You say by clear thinking we may get rid of the body, but thereby you yet leave the body in bonds. What you say does not satisfy."

The guru's voice had dismissal in its tone, "We wish no argument in this place of peace, no mockery of the holy methods. All contrary minded should seek elsewhere."

Siddhartha bowed himself away, and not until he moved in

meditation along the little stream that led to his cave, did he realize he had offended. Indeed, he was not going to sit there and have soul argued into nothingness. . . . He was not searching for nihilism, but for a way of "peace with self." And since strength had come into his body again with the partaking of food, the broad approach to knowledge beckoned as it had when he first set out to search. He was as ardent a believer as then, that to escape the outer death one had to make contact with the verities with the eternal on this earth.

He looked down at the narrow gorge where water moved—all small tributaries of life, like the streams led to the big sea. The mouth of the holy Ganges but drank in the same manner. In like pattern, streams of comprehensions would move him one day to a great expanse of truth. He would go back and meditate on his ledge until he heard of another great teacher in the forest. He would abide the pain in his flesh—grimly, and try to think clearly—of future findings, and forget his ties with the world. The fears which king Bambisauri sought to instill in him must be forgotten. He would not think of wife and father. He would not dwell upon what he believed Devad was capable of doing against him. He must be filled with good thoughts, if the Great Mind would dwell within his.

While Artha thought "good," Devad dwelt on ways of chicanery. It was nearing the new year, Divali holidays, when he came from the arms of the temple woman to the city of the five peaks, Ragagriha, to be the guest of Bambisauri. The king greeted him, ushering him in at the sumptuous palace hall which sparkled with entertainment. "My province and Kapila must be friends against the foe."

But Devad, looking about at the guests making merry with wine, said, "Where is he?"

"Very close to the passes, but I refuse to believe he can break through our barriers—Darius—, or you meant your rishi bhai? Why—he is meditating on the mountain out from here, on ways

of making men better equipped to meet life. I say each new year, this is like the last—we are still the same sordid sensuate beings as before. . . ."

Devad was inattentive, he was scheming for the tomorrow—"May I have the use of an elephant while I am here?"

"Indeed and a mahout also." The king took him through the crowd, introducing him to court ladies, "An eligible prince. . . . Next he will be stepping the seven jars. His cousin has recently married a Malla princess. . . ."

Over the wine, conversation lagged and Devad was again at his plans—if he could get Artha out of the way, he would wed Yasodhara. Hai, then he would be "ruler and lover—."

When he retired to the resplendent guest room and sought sleep on the gold-inlay charpoy, schemes still held forth in his mind. Like a childhood promise, he had to keep thinking of it—thinking of it. Now it possessed his every approach. He could think of nothing else—Yasodhara and ruler of Kapila. Beautiful and warm maiden. . . . Golden throne chair. . . . And sleep was impossible.

He traced the relief design of a screen beside his bed. It was in some bold decoration of spears, cakras—weapons of war. How foolish of him to wish to be ruler when war was at the gates. . . . There was always worry and anxiety in defense of a province—why could he not come to his senses—and see this plan in his mind—was wrong? No, he would have to go through with it. He must have Yasodhara! He must be ruler of Kapila!

The next morning the obsession to become raja was driving toward a deed which Devad knew to be—unforgivable. Artha out of the way, he would be king, and the first law he would effect—a brother could marry his brother's widow—as he would inherit the zenanna women—a man should inherit also his brother's wives. . . . Nurturing this ambition he moved toward the Vulture peak in elegant howdah with a burly black man as mahout.

Channa stood and watched him go, and knew—his friend and

loving master was not safe when Devad was near. But Prince Devad had said—he was yet a prisoner and must stay there until he returned. Had he not defied the old raja himself and for the sake of Prince Siddhartha—what was he waiting on? He had Kantaka saddled presently and was soon following a few yohannas behind on the mountain trail.

"I knew your master would get to see you, Kantaka—. Some way . . . I knew I must bring you along. . . . Not too old for these passes, are you, pretty horse? Now, up this trail—just so we keep sight of them occasionally—to know the way. We are going to our beloved Siddhartha, Kantaka—up—come along." The old groom talked to the horse, and . . . to the skies, all the way up the mountain, "O holy Devas look down and help!"

But Siva must have taken over this day! Devad and his mahout were not turning to go to the shoulder of the mountain where Siddhartha sat on the ledge. They saw him, as plain as could be—for were they not gesturing and looking toward him? What were they planning to do? Going on up to the top—of the peak—and getting down—and looking at the ledge again. . . . Now they were climbing higher—on foot to a spot in line with the ledge. Channa knew they planned to harm Artha in some way and he coaxed Kantaka down the path of the mountain shoulder to Artha, to be there to protect him, warn him, or. . . .

There he was—poor Siddhartha! His head bowed over—looking upon his navel. He stopped to tie Kantaka so the horse would not be observed by Devad. Then the old groom began to run toward the ledge, slipping and sliding—and up and running again. He looked again at the mountain top—the two conspirators were loosening a large rock!

Oh, merciful gods, what were they planning to do? No! They were sending the boulder bounding, crashing, breaking a path down the mountain and starting avalanches of small stones. Horrified, he stood and watched it come with increasing force—down—down. . . . There was not time to go to Siddhartha! It was

striking the edge of the ledge where he sat—and only the small stones were pelting him. . . . Channa watched it go on beyond the ledge and drop with a loud splash in the water below. Then he ran to Siddhartha.

"Oh, my beloved—what has he done to you?" Channa bent over the prostrate one and examined the emaciated body. "My poor—poor prince! Your beautiful face hurt—but not much bleeding—you are all right, all right—" And he lifted the slight shoulders in his arm. He looked to the top of the mountain—"They are gone. . . . They probably ran when they loosed the stone. . . ." He looked down the trail— "They must have gone down the other side of the mountain. Come, my beloved prince Siddhartha. . . ."

Waking from a comatose state, Artha lifted to his feet with the help of Channa, and asked, "Did—someone call my name?"

"It is Channa, my lord—I came to see about you, brought Kantaka. Come, let us go to a place of safety—where—where? Devad is trying to kill you!" All the while he spoke, he was dragging, almost carrying the attenuated form. "Have you no friends in the forest whom you could go to? I must hurry and be at the stable of Ragagriha when Devad returns . . ."

"Go, then," Siddhartha said, stopping and refusing to go farther. "I will see to my wounds. I have friends to see after me. Go at once."

"But, did you not wish to—see your old horse, Kantaka? I brought it as a mate to our team so you could see it—I—"

"I want no sight of things of Kapila. I do not wish to see a decrepit old horse that is ready to die!" The words were so final. "Go, I do not need you here, my Channa."

"You will—leave this place then? Here he knows to find you. He may return. Promise you will leave the ledge—forever—, forever my lord, take no more chances."

"I will leave here. Now, you go. Go, I say—I want no further

sight of your old beard twitching, and your eyes shedding tears. . . . Leave me, Channa!"

Channa went reluctantly. Artha knew if Devad learned of his coming that the old charioteer would be killed—he had to speak harshly to make him go. And as Artha stood in the entrance of his cave, looking down on the old friends, Channa and Kantaka, he gave way to grief. "Oh, why did I ever leave them?"

He pondered the near death that he had just experienced, and shook with fear. Of course he was afraid to die, no amount of mind suggestion would fit him for death. And he was going to have to go to—friends somewhere, for he was so very fearful. He did not wish to be killed! He was afraid to die!

When the Kapila chariot finally drove back to the palace, his death was reported. Channa was again placed in prison and Devad explained the unfortunate incident: as the renowned buddha sat in meditation with his face toward the east, a snow glacier had loosened a big rock which fell down upon the "good" one. His body had been reported taken "to the bardo by the holy devas"; because of his religious merit, he was transported to the abode of the gods.

Chapter 11

Tired of body and tormented of soul Siddhartha returned to the cave-home of his five forest friends. Having slipped away without thanking them for kindnesses received, he felt reluctant to return—but he must have a hiding place! The shepherd boy had taken him, that day of his tragic accident, to his hut at the foot of the mountain, and there he had stayed until his wounds were healed. But he couldn't meditate anywhere except on a mountain—and he had told the family of Kotiya— "Kindness and shelter and good food so graciously given, are yet not enough—I must have contemplation." This was true, but secretly he wished to be in some deep retreat—where Devad could not find him.

His intention was to go deep into the darkness of the cave and stay until he arrived at truth. It would be good for him who had been so caustic with words of late. . . . How he needed to be humbled. He had wounded the spirit of Channa, who had loved him since the day he was born. This act would never be blotted from his conscience until he could explain—to him, that was the only way to get him to leave him and "save his old neck." And he had brought Kantaka all the way for him to see. . . . Ah, if only he could have placed his arms about the white neck of his horse and sobbed out his very soul's agony. . . . But he had said, "I want no sight of an old horse about to die of age." He needed to go into darkness and stay until the revile and canker had been

snuffed out of him. But—as he approached the rock entrance of the cave and heard the nasal "Aum" and "Hum," sounds to influence the gods and the purgatories—he halted. "Ignorance and fear are the worst enemies."

The rhythm-mad rishi was lying out front on a bed of spikes; this was his imposition of penance lest he lose the knowledge learned through patience at the waterfall, no doubt. He had attained something beyond what he held as karma the last time he had seen him, Siddhartha observed. His voice was free as he called out, "Hai, here is our friend come back! He has probably returned with great knowledge to teach us, let us make a crown for him!"

Siddhartha's soul sneered, "Fool, I know more than to waste my days on a mat of spikes!" But he only smiled and bowed humbly.

The Yama-seeker appeared at the cave door, corruption streaming from his swollen thorn-cut face. Repulsiveness caused Siddhartha to step back a pace. Arada had said and it was surely true that suppurating of the flesh was not the right expedient. But the face of the hermit—was brighter, holier—than it had been before. Siddhartha could but bow before him, and listen to him.

"I have found that Yama—is ever present within us! Here! Here!" And he beat against his narrow chest with bony hands. "Yama—is ever present with us. . . ."

"And what—of the others? Have they found what they sought?"

"Ebod has found the image of Indra in the Nairangara river!" The raspy voice sank to a whisper. "The river is, as you know, pure melted snow from the home of the gods, and that is where the enlightenment came from. He is down there in the river now, swimming beneath the water, performing ecstasies to Indra."

The returned rishi was about to ask of High Nose when he saw a figure groping its way along the wall—coming out, holding to the rocks. It was he—blind! Blind from so long gazing at the

sun! But when he greeted him, Siddhartha found that High Nose also had progressed peaceward.

"I live now in a new world, a beautiful, serene world. All of you, gouge out your earth eyes, so atma may see!" And suddenly the hoary head was tilted sidewise in a stance of listening, "Is that not lord Vayu down by the river singing?" And in ecstasy he made his way to the river by touching trees in rapid succession.

The "Aum" and "Hum" had ceased and—the last of the ascetics came out to meet the returned—grinning and going over to the thorn bushes—plucking thorns.

"Hai, make him a crown of thorns to wear—" came from the spike-bed, "and when we make him our homage avatar—he will tell us of what he has learned on his journeys."

The wreath of thorns was being plaited for him, and the two child-minded ones would expect him to accept it. Siddhartha studied their faces. Happy? Yes, they were. . . . Why were they happy? Because they had no part of the frustration-of-mind, world-fettered existence. They were free of soul. But it were better to be despondent that to also be—free of mind. A common sense thought, mind—mind was the way!

They were coming toward him with the crown. He reflected the mental anguish that he had suffered when he first experienced the piercing of thorns. But these too—would find equanimity of pain when the flesh accepted—after a time the pain would be almost unnoticed. He hesitated, resolving finally at a conclusion—through mortifications two men had gone mad, but three had seemingly reached a higher level of conscience. What other way was there than this? He said, "Bring on your thorns."

He remained for three weeks with the forest friends, all the time trying only to remember that the pain in his head—developed karma. Determination that his mind should not waver, made him forget that he was sought to be killed. With swelling in one's head, one could but think of the pain. The dizziness made the mental images that came into his thinking diffuse as one whir of

a kite's wing—when he sat outside the cave, then as a circling of bats when he sat inside. Mind? Reason? Where? How?

His father's image that he had so lately concentrated upon, for he was very concerned over the welfare of him whom he loved so dearly—his father's image was not even to be imagined. How did he look? And Pati—also was forgotten. Also Hasti—and all the young cousins. Nor could he remember detail of Ananda's face. There was something about the shape of his eyes—so unusual—what was it? And the eyes of Yasodhara—what were they like? Her hands were so caressing—he could almost feel her touch, but—oh the pain in his head! And was Rahula like himself as they said? He could not imagine how he must have looked as a child. . . . He could not concentrate on anything but the pain—pain, pain! But he could remember clearly the set features of Devad—as he last saw him in his father's study. He could but remember, Devad was his enemy, his own bhai his enemy—why—why?

He felt that he could endure no more this side of madness, and he ran out of the cave in a sudden, decisive resolution one morning—but halted as he came to the calm rishi on the mat. "I—I shall have to leave you again," he explained. He must get away from this place and go where he could cry out against the pain or his very soul would expire. "I am going away. . . ."

"You may think you will find solitude apart from us—but if you find it, you will be able to enjoy it though the whole of the people of Kapila were around you."

These words were—surely wise, he thought—but Siddhartha did not grasp them. The other four forest friends came up as he was taking his leave, and they too—must have uttered words to remember—but his mind was so befuddled. They said something about the first to attain wisdom should enlighten the others. They said—what was it, meet in the sacred city a year from then. . . . "I will meet you in Benares," he called.

"At Deer Park!" they chorused.

"At Deer Park," he called back weakly, and made his way to the breadfruit tree, for he had enough of fasting—with fools.

As he rested and renewed strength, thinking in the fresh air became clearer and the pain in his head less severe. He had, in his thinking come upon a conclusion that enlightenment had to be of reason, found by concentration. Want of mind led to an empty life, however it was looked at. But it was equally as bad to—yes, as he had done, to reason wrongly. He had seen improvement in three of the five seekers, and he had decided upon that observation—he should try it again. Well, he had not, as yet, removed the crown of thorns they had placed on his head. And, as they had said—the others in his cheek, side and thighs—had ceased to hurt since corruption oiled. Would he somehow coerce wisdom this way as Ebod and—

No! He sat upright. No, that was no way to enlightenment! And he munched on a mango slowly, trying to think. He remembered eating mangoes as a youth—back when old Asita and his father told him his webbed hands and stiff neck were signs that he would become a Buddha. Indeed, all of Kapila had gone along with the superstitious idea, and expected him to become all-wise. They were to blame for implanting this desire to obtain knowledge. . . .

Become a Buddha! Bah! What was it costing him? His province, his wife, his son, his father, his friends? Was it worth it? Was he sorry he had set out upon this mad quest? No. Truly, he wished to know of life and death, if it was possible. He proceeded the path by the river, after re-winding his hair on a bone found in the clearing. There must be something more after death than "a bone for a reaper hook."

"Oh, eternal—Omnipotent One, show me the way—soon. . . . Soon! Come eternal Giver of Rest and bring truth. . . . Help me to cross over this precipice of pain and be at one with the universal release from suffering. . . ."

He prayed fervently, earnestly, and when his head bent for-

ward in pain he saw the corruption trickling from his side—and he began to meditate upon it. The stench of it was as the foulness of life—; if he but lifted his head the odor would not be sickening—but he did not have the strength. Corruption, the decay—of the body. . . . This body was not—the "I—". Let it go to its dust. . . . Let death come if it would, the "I" that he was henceforth to be identified with was not of the flesh. . . . That was what Arada meant. "Do away with the "ego-self." It was not the important part, as man thought.

But why did he fear that Devad should wish to kill him? Hai, it did not make sense. Fear—what was fear? It was something that kept him from concentrating on the part of life that held all he was seeking. One could not venture onto the immortal pavilion afraid. . . . He remembered the thought of sweet remembrances crowding the pillow of the last sleep—and thereby taking with them for the eons to come—peace—blessed peace. Fear cast out these things. Rather, these things should cast out fear. . . .

One should think—on beautiful associations in the life they had lived. As he—hai, and Yasodhara—must have lived and loved in the forest life together. They sat on a fallen tree as this. Perhaps he was but tired, not from a long journey with pain—but a day of labor among the trees. . . . Ah, the breeze from the swampland was sweet—and cool. . . . He would think on the calmness of the forest—.

But the sound of footsteps in the slush below him caused him to snap into the present. He did not lift in fear—the quiet moment had conditioned against alarm, but he was alert. In the alertness, his mind was able to deduct—here were three men coming toward him—and their manner and dress revealed they were from his home province. He did not consider if they were sent by Devad to harm him: he felt their sympathy extended in their greeting and he was not afraid of them.

They were Kapilian ministers sent by Yasodhara. She had sent cakes, rice cakes to coax him. He accepted them with a

smile and said, "In this world, families are brought together, then divided according to destiny. Buds on the bush find a kinship: everywhere is kindred, then severing of relations and finally to a doom of dust. We, too—unless we find something of the infinite to tie in kinship."

The men either did not understand, or else they ignored his comment. One said, "Your family needs you in Kapila and the province does. Come with us and forget this mad search for truth."

"Mad? Perhaps. I saw two with 'want of mind,' and one thing I have learned, I wish not to be free as they are free. Yet, I recall —those who rule have souls ever vacant and athirst."

"Your half brother is usurping your place and driving Kapila to degradation."

"One has to come to a low estate to get a vision of his place in the world."

"But, you oh gracious lord, worked for our interest, improving our lands and wells." The pleading continued.

"You have to see that there is more to life than possessions."

"But, my lord—come back and preach only this to the province. If all men knew to look beyond the seeking of earthly things, they would be better."

"Hai, they would be better," Artha repeated, lapsing in thought. "Go away. I am about to divine a truth. Go, I will not go with you. I will not fret over what my bhai, nor my rana, nor my pitri does. I shall be aware of all the disturbances back there, and yet—I shall find peace. . . . I shall find peace. . . . Go, lest you keep me from it. Go, I say!"

The men moved away at his insistence, and he opened the bag of rice cakes. Oh, blessed one—she yet cared for him. But, had she not, he intended that his state of near-peace should not be interrupted. He threw a crumb to a bird which came to perch on the low tree limb over him. He reached out his hand and the bird took crumbs from it. He deducted,—well, he must be beginning

to know some degree of losing self. . . . And old Arada could have been right as that being a first step—for he had a good feeling as the birds came close and ate the remainder of the rice cakes. Looking at them, he felt surely he was on the threshhold of the immortal. Oneness with things of nature brought a very good feeling.

He looked down at a pool of water a few steps away and remembered he had eaten without bathing. How many days had he gone without bathing? He moved down into the water and parted the lotus bloom so he could walk out into an open space and lie down in it as he lapped the water on his aching forehead. The relaxation he felt there contributed to the suggestions of a near-reaching of that which he sought. It was so peaceful there in the forest, in the midst of green things growing, flowers blooming and birds singing. All things moved with certainty toward a revelation of Immutable Mind. And a smug feeling within himself made him know he too was a part of growth.

The presence of pain was a part of growth toward the infinite, for one should be aware that suffering is a part of the world. He would try to tolerate it for this reason. He would, hai, he would leave the thorns in their places, although the water had softened the festered places, and he could easily remove them. One was more humble, knowing of pain. He just would pretend that he and Yasodhara were living there in the forest, that he had felled a thorn tree, and a branch of it had struck his head. Imagination was a potent thing. He found himself suggesting to himself he should go to her; he should get up from the water and go to a hut in the forest where they were completely happy together.

Indeed, imagination was powerful; he was pulling himself up to the bank again, expecting a revelation of the peace-to-come. But as he climbed from the water, he expended his energy pulling at the roots of the pipal tree by the water's edge, and on the bank he fell across a tree root, losing consciousness.

As he came to, he felt cool water on his face and he heard lovely music as in the distance? No, it was very near; it was the tinkle of bracelets on a woman's arm as it moved from a ewer of water to his face. He raised to see a gray dophatta and a devas face. Now, the graceful hand was feeding him with a wooden spoon, pouring rice milk into his mouth. A musical voice said, "Oh, holy one—forgive, if my touch defiles, but you would not eat it yourself."

She had called him holy. She fed him, thinking he was a wood god, and this milk and rice was an offering to obtain a son, next birth. "Where is your husband?" he asked. "Does he too wish a son?"

"He is raking hay in the field yonder. Our cottage is over the way. We both wish for children, yes—especially do we wish a son?"

"May the bountiful life force hear your desires," Artha began, and as he spoke he felt his words took wings as from another Mind. He reached up to his forehead, and found that the thorns were gone. He touched his side, his cheek—.

"I took them out, oh holy one," the woman said. "There is so much pain in the world, we should not inflict it."

"Such a wise utterance," he said between swallows. "We should on the other hand perform good deeds."

"I shall ask my husband to bring some hay for you to lie upon, for the night is near. I would ask you to go to our cottage, but you would decline, saying you are closer to wisdom in the forest. I do not attempt to divine wisdom, for it but brings frustration—I but give myself over to the divine will and am directed without knowing how or why. . . . I only feel that I 'must' do a good deed, and I do it without question. Now, I have performed as was willed and I shall go my way."

"Divine healing go with you," Artha said, raising up. "And goodness be always your light of joy for the deed you have performed today."

"One should never offer thanks for a deed without being aware that the doer was the receiver of good. I think that is why you holy men beg with your bowls, so you may give opportunity to selfish hearts?"

He smiled and nodded his head, although he had not thought of it in that light before. And when she was gone, he realized that the forest woman had taught him many truths. Concern not too much over why or how, but give one's self over to Divine Guidance. The same as Arada: "be directed by Divine Will." Was that not being at one with the Universal Soul? Was it not the same as the birds and all things of the woods were using—trusting?

Man alone relied upon self. All things of life gave over to the guidance through Nature's laws. Man thought he only was clever, but animals and fowls of the air had found the way. . . . The woman had found the way through service, unquestioned service to those about. How did one find this power? Through release from seeking it. Release from fretting, worrying, conniving, planning and scheming.

He sighed–the release from pain was sweet. Never again would he inflict pain upon himself or others, but he would be aware of its presence and he would know how to receive it when it came to him. Yes, one could be spent with suffering and know true abandon in the Eternal Will. He felt at one with Life. "With ill thought forgotten, holiness is attracted—and all is well directed and clear. One has but to project himself into this oneness with Divine Will, think himself there and all his acts thereafter will be in the paths of goodness for they will be directed by pure Thought."

The descending sun was making a bright hue throughout the forest—on the lake . . . with the lotus bloom made brighter still because of it. This beautiful feeling within was at one with the glow, making him feel peace—and love for all things. He had felt this nearness to life when the birds alighted on his shoulders as he fed the crumbs from the rice cakes. . . . Why this feeling

brought his beloved near, though they were yohannas apart. . . . She was beside him listening to the bird song. Thoughts of home no longer distracted—but emerged with the great good feeling that all would be well—with all he loved.

The bird song in the tree above—it must be a bulbul praising this extraordinary beauty. A bulbul. . . . And the tree was a bodhi. . . . He smiled, remembering the superstition that one should become wise when he sat beneath its boughs. One could learn the simple wisdom he had found—anywhere. In fact, he had known it all along. . . . Animal self must be eclipsed by raptures of the higher bliss to find this blessedness.

And with perfect release of self in the arms of Divine Goodness, he went to sleep. He was not aware that the bed was soft because of a friend's load of hay—he did not even remember when the man brought the straw for his bed. He was lost in contemplating ways of assimilating his truths so he could tell others. He dwelt on coercive thoughts until sleep—peaceful and dreamless shut his mind, as by the hand of Divine Will, promising peace to all the world.

He awoke with the sunrise matching the same rapturous glow of the sunset. He felt so free, and wholesome—the strength of food in his body, and peace in his mind had caused his wounds to heal overnight, it seemed. Oh, Healer of Nature! He could not believe what he saw—the places where the thorns had pierced were closed, showing little signs of yesterday's infliction. He leaned over to look at his reflection in the water—was his forehead well also? It did not pain any more. The healing of Life had touched him, and his soul was yet vibrating to the music the sunset willed.

The crickets and frogs that had contributed their music of the evening had left the trees and pools to the birds this auspicious morning. . . . Now the Painted Thrush's chant of "Morning! Morning!" filled his being! It was to be a new day for him. He would seek no more to understand the Power, but upon ways of

using it,—projecting his will through attitude to the very throne of the All Powerful Mind of the Universe.

He realized his head was hung over the lotus blooms, that if he but looked he would perceive the golden heart of the flower. Another superstition of his people. Ah, he had found the jewel in the lotus through meditation as the holy prophets of old had done—although he had not looked in a lotus bloom knowingly. Nor had he known that he sat beneath a pipal tree, which had come to be regarded as the Bodhi tree where one could sit and divine wisdom of approach to the bardo of the gods. Any place of peace would hoist one there, if one lifted the right attitude, and any object that brought the right meditation was instrumental. . . . Old Ebod was right, the thing sought is within us, to discover and use and—yes, hold onto as we go out from the world so we can live on. This was real living, this oneness with all things, it attuned to the great Mind of Creation in an esoteric sense and made one truly alive.

The cosmogony of the world was brought into the realm of thinking. As the lotus lifted its bloom from black mud, so one could reach up and offer harmony of purity about. . . . thereby knowing tranquility. One who was at one with all things of life was at one with the great "I Am." And, as he felt a kinship with the universal power a great light filled his soul—the great Mind of the World impressed—and brought true peace. . . . Peace on the mountains, in the marketplace—anywhere, ecstatic peace. At one with the great Mind, at one with the world—and all things in it, in peace and love. Indeed he had found a jewel in the lotus.

"Achala, you live!" Ananda's voice rang out through the stillness of the forest. "I have found you, my Artha—and you are not dead! Your face shines with intelligence of the gods! Oh, my poor, dear Artha!" And then he looked at him pityingly.

Suddenly the two cousins were in each other's arms. . . . "I have found it! I have found the way—Ananda. It is in the right

mental approach. No distortions of mind which cause stumbling and bereavement and depression. . . . By looking at things in the right way we extricate ourselves and rise to glorified dhyana. We don't need to go through kalpas of transmigrations. . . . Once there is absorption into the love of the Divine, you have a regard for all things—then you are in harmony with all things—and then—"

"I know, my dear cousin—but come now back to the province and there you may tell us all about it. . . ."

"No, I must go teaching as I go—I cannot omit a single village. How did you know where to find me? Ministers from the kingdom were just here a few days ago."

"The news was circulated for a long time that you had died of an accident, but I could not believe it, I could feel the mental waves from you—every now and then. . . . So, I came down from Magdha and I asked everyone—hai, everyone was still mourning for you. . . . Then I talked to old Channa—and he told me you yet lived. . . ."

"I am more alive than I've ever been in my life. You must have the right view, the right way of looking at things of life—right aspect. And, if you have right aspect, what you do thereafter will conform. . . . Right effort, right speech—behavior. . . . See if one is right-minded in his action, he will concentrate on principles of—"

"Wait, my Artha—you may tell me this later. . . . If you were in your right thinking you would not stay here in this place after what happened. . . ."

"I must meditate in solitude—until I have this conception of thought perfected, and then I must go teach it. . . ."

"But Devad is out to wrest the kingdom from you at any price. He will hear that you yet live. If ministers were here a few days ago, they have had time to report back in Kapila—and perhaps—even now, Devad is in these woods—waiting to take your life. . . ."

"My dear Ananda, you cannot frighten me now. I once was fearful of what my bhai might do. All my life I have been wary of him, I think. But now, with this new way of looking at life . . . now that I am at one with all things, and the great One of All—I know that nothing can harm me. Why, Ananda, the great Mind will send out tsams to protect me, I know. It will guide me to places of peace, away from danger. . . ."

"No, Artha—you are only ardent over this new . . . new way, over ardent. You have to be practical, my cousin."

"It is most practical, and at the same time most beautiful. The great Universal Mind is here in the forest—it is back at court, it is everywhere you can go. One takes hold of it, and he takes the ecstasy in his heart wherever he goes, and it overcomes barriers and lifts opportunities—and gives us peace and hope and—"

"Hai, Artha, Artha—I grant you have surely found something very wonderful. I am sure you have, I see it in your face. But let me explain the situation to you. . . . You know that your pitri—is incapable of ruling any more. . . ?"

"I know that he lost his reason—and he said he did not wish to see me again. . . . But, I will see him, and I will bring him to himself again. There can be no more discord. Once he is made to see—"

"I know, Artha, I know—but I was explaining the situation at court. . . . After he could not rule, Pati herself has practically been ruling through Devad. He is incompetent as you know, and now rana Pati herself is ill. There is of a necessity that someone capable must take over the rule of Kapila!"

"I do not wish to rule, my Ananda. So many besetting things take away from peace. One has to keep himself in a low state to be at one with life. . . ."

"But, do you wish Devad to take over and ruin what you have left for him there? Do you wish him to not only take over the kingdom, but your wife, Yasodhara? She trusts him now. She has

been mourning for you up until—just recently, she decided to—accept Devad. She is to marry him, Artha—"

Artha smiled, "You cannot excite qualms in my trusting soul, Ananda—all will be well."

"Listen, cousin—I am married to three women at Kusinara, and if while I am away I thought that one of them was being tempted away from me . . ."

"I thought you married a Malla princess—"

"I did, but—"

"Ah, Ananda—the great lover! When you have listened to my teachings—you will learn to live above passions, and after that you will truly be happy in the higher realm, so far above the physical plane—"

"I am most happy, now, and relations with Magadha and Kapila are happy and peaceful. And we are to join forces with Bambisauri to meet the enemy—and—, but that is not what we wish to speak of—"

"No, I was telling you of my—"

"Artha, we must get out of this place—at once!"

Not until now had the herdsman's presence been made known. "This man led me to you here. I am most grateful to him for his aid," Ananda said.

Siddhartha looked up, "The same is he who brought my bed to me? Hai, the same as the hunter of kalpas past!"

The herdsman nodded, his leathery cheeks forming a smile, and the blue of his tunic matched the morning skies. Artha said, "Hai, I can see that you and your beloved wife are also of the great awareness of soul. How grateful I was for the grass to lie upon last evening. I was so lost in thought, I did not know when you came—or you moved with the grace of goodness, so subtly—but sure." He turned to Ananda, "You see, when you possess right insight into life, all action conforms—these good people were impressed to care for me because they know a oneness with the Divine. . . ."

The herdsman was examining the pile of grass. "I thought I brought a much larger load than that, my lord. . . . It could not be that your weight pressed it down so. . . . Some animal must have come in the night and eaten part of your bed."

There was laughter from all three men, and then there was seriousness. "But," he continued, "there are very dangerous animals in these parts. I killed a lion right here at this water's edge. . . . That is, I shot it—I do not know if I killed it—but it has not been back any more; I have been watching. Look, you can see its pud here in the mud—." He parted the weeds from the path and footprints of the lion were there to corroborate his story.

Ananda's eyes widened, "Now, you will surely come, Artha."

"I suppose right reasoning would be—not to make one's bed in the path of a lion. But—" Artha was looking up with questioning concern, "if the beast has not been back these days for water, you probably have wounded it, and it is off in one of these caves, starving and dying of pain. . . . We must go find it and put it out of its misery." He lifted himself and made ready to go on the search.

Turning to his cousin, he said, "Ananda, come—it will not take long, this is an errand of mercy we must not pass by."

Ananda sighed, "I was glad that you reasoned enough to get out of the path of the beast. But, now—to go right into its den does not make sense, my cousin . . ."

"It makes a great sense, the meaning is stamped on my soul's impression. A thing is in need of aid—in that cave perhaps, and it is a living, breathing being—of the same flesh as you and me, wont to suffer and die in the sad manner if something is not done to abate it. But," he turned to the hunter—"you have your weapon, you say, get it—to protect ourselves from other beasts while in this merciful pilgrimage."

The man ran quickly.

Ananda stood there and looked at his cousin with mixed reaction of disgust and bewilderment. . . . "I have known that you

have been a fool when it came to regard for things. You've been helping helpless things—all your life, Artha, but remember the time when Devad threw your turban in the snow leopard's den? And later it attacked the horse on which you rode? You know how these things are dangerous? If the beloved lion, in that cave is not dead, or if—it has a mate in there,—it will remember the smell of our being here and if any other time it meets us—it will bring its claws to devour us because of this—act of mercy. . . ."

"Oh, my dear Ananda when you know and appreciate life in full—you do not consider danger, if there is a way of service to a creature. You have lived, you must admit it—selfishly, my cousin . . . ." he began, but hesitated, for the herdsman was returning with his bow and arrow. . . .

"Not saying it braggingly, but—I am a good shot—" the man said plucking on the string of his bow—"I brought down an elephant with this once—I suppose it will suffice for a wounded lion."

Ananda drew back, "There are elephants—wild elephants around here?"

"A herd of them. They used to sometimes come over to my cottage and decide they would move it for me. . . . There was one old bull elephant that led the pack. I would wake up in the night and hear him giving orders to his herd—and of all the trumpeting you could not sleep. So, I watched when they came down the pass, that same old bull was leading—and I let him have it in the spot nearest his heart!"

Artha, who was leading the way to the cave, turned, "You felled him?"

"I killed him." The hunter asserted, "and after that the pack scattered. I seldom see them any more, just one now and then. . . ."

Artha and Ananda looked at the man in wonder—so he had killed an elephant? "What other kinds of animals frequent these haunts?" Ananda asked, greatly concerned.

"Mountain lions, tigers, cougars—" the man began and Artha interrupted.

"I had a most glorious experience this morning. . . . Sitting there quietly, at one with all glories of the new day—a chital and her fawn came past me to drink in the water. . . . I had made myself so unnoticed by my selflessness. . . . Be careful, my cousin of these slippery rocks, you do not know as we how to cling with—our toes, perhaps. Be ever cautious but never afraid. So many avalanches from loose rocks occurred while I—ah, here is the cave—come, let us see inside."

Ananda held back, "I will let you do the risking of your lives —. I am not so zealous to serve creatures of so low a—"

"My Ananda, fear is the first thing you must and will throw off, an ill-fitting garment. . . . Courage makes you free. Too, being unafraid—you, well—stay here if you like, it will take time to convert you. . . ." He turned and explained to the herdsman, "It takes egolessness to perform good deeds. . . . You will come with me?"

"Hai, I will come—and I will follow to hear your teachings, my lord. . . ."

"You and Ananda shall be my first to enlighten—," Artha turned from the cave, "No sign of life here—only water falling in the most sublime music. . . . Listen, is that not a tinkle of a lute string? I would I could stay and listen to it—"

"So, are you satisfied, my cousin?" Ananda sneered, as the two came from the dark, "you have looked for the lion or tiger or whatever it was. . . ."

"But we have not looked enough; we have not found it. . . . Come, there is still another cave. . . ." Artha moved forward a few yohannas—then stopped. "This is a perfect site for an abode for me. . . . I think I shall stay here awhile and meditate upon the truths I have learned. . . ."

They approached a cave with high ceiling that they could walk into in comfort. . . . "I could get my camels in there." Ananda said, "I wonder what my driver thinks has happened to me. . . .

I am going back and bring my man and the camels we rode up on to this protective place. If there are wild elephants in these woods, I must not leave them out in the open. . . ."

When Ananda went away, Artha began to disseminate ideas. "The primary joy is in accepting and approving those who walk beside us. . . ." He turned and looked down the slope and beyond the valleys. . . . "When we drive away vanity by earnestness we climb the terraced heights of wisdom, and we look down on the sorrowing crowd as one stands on a mountain and looks down on those of the plains. . . ."

The herdsman replied, "I earnestly wish to attain knowledge."

"Aiding fellow-travellers and helpless creatures builds a bridge to walk over the ravine of frustration and hopelessness. . . . When the deep meaning of life is absorbed, then is rendered capability of earnest effort toward truth's attainment. But, you are likely to find serenity in other ways from how I have found it. . . . I shall not say that my way is the only way—but I hold it to be noble. It, I think, is more practical than the ways I have listened to which consider the expedients—as suffering."

"My lord, here are the puds again!" the herdsman called out. . . . "Come, look, leading into that cave where we are headed. . . . And look you, here are also some smaller puds— There are cubs here! So, be very alert, my lord. . . . One with young can be ferocious—. Here, allow me to go before. . . ."

The burly herdsman pushed the anxious Artha behind him, and proceeded into the cave. . . . Soon his big voice was calling out in excited beckoning, "Come, look—it is indeed good we came. . . . See!"

There was a dead lioness with two tiny cubs pulling at her milkless flanks. "She will not attack, see her ribs—she starved to death. . . After my arrow wound, she could not get out for food—and so—she left these two cubs. . . ."

Artha rushed forward to fold the wee cubs in his arms, "Poor starved creatures. . . . Go fetch milk from your herd. . . ."

As the hunter started to go, he said over his shoulder, "You needn't be afraid of the mate being around, for I remember killing a male lion months ago. . . . And I thought it was a lioness that I had wounded." The hunter left in haste. . . . "I'll be back with the milk soon."

Ananda came back and Artha pushed him out again—, "Go with the herdsman—to milk a goat. . . . These poor things have fasted until their stomachs touch their spines—I did such a thing once, and I know just how they feel. . . ."

"But," Ananda protested, "I have never milked a goat—"

"Wait, water will do for the present—water from the stream there," Artha said. And to Ananda he turned, "I want you to have a joy of participation in this. Self must be suppressed to grow in goodness. We must see others about us of the same clay, and administer to them as if they were ourselves—for all are as one. . . . Pity and need makes all flesh kin. When coming from meditation with the Divine, I felt there was a need for aid around here. . . . And I was led right to it. . . . Oh, my beloved Ananda, you look at me as if you doubt—I know, Ananda, the lamp is in myself, it burns in the darkness and guides me to those that have need of me. . . . Doubt is a sin of self. . . . Delusion breeds perversion. . . . Follow good, Ananda and reach with me the state of Nirvana—complete in love and love's charities. . . ."

He waited for Ananda to return with his double-hands filled with water from the stream and showed him how to pour it on heads of the cubs—and into their parched throats. . . . The herdsman returned with a ewer of milk. And another of his friends from the pasture also came, holding a pitcher of overflowing white foam. . . . Soon the two cubs were pacified, stretching and yawning—and falling asleep.

A garland maker seeking sephalia blooms in the forest saw the men rushing in at the cave and he followed to see. . . . A bullock driver, on the road by the farmhouse left his team and followed the herdsman with the milk—when he invited, "Come, see. . . ."

And now in the cave were seven people watching the act of mercy. . . .

"They may grow up and attack us—but all the same there is something in a man that makes him help critters," was observation by the bullock driver. "We can't pass 'em by."

"I suppose it's the god-like ideal in us," the garland maker said.

Siddhartha turned his body around to see the speakers. "Man is identical with the Divine when he has humane ideals and innately follows where they lead. Let us seek a pure mind and supreme enlightenment."

"My lord," the herdsman bowed, "I would know of the great enlightenment, teach the way—oh enlightened one. . . ."

"It would take many lectures to learn all that I have to say, for my very soul is bursting with words it would utter. . . ."

"We are willing to sit at thy feet—" three of them said at the same time. . . . "Speak of your revelations, mighty guru—"

Artha seated himself in the midst of the men and began, "Each man's life is the result of his former living, past wrongs make for woes, past deeds of goodness, for bliss. You suffer for yourselves. None else compels, or holds you. It is you yourself that makes you live or die and whirl upon the wheel in agony. . . . You are not bound. Within yourself deliverance must come. Each man makes his prison or his lordship. Higher than Indra's state you may attain, or sink to the filth of a worm. There is a perfect path that all may walk when sin is quit, and at the end of it we find perfect, sinless rest. . . ."

"And that perfect state, Nirvana?" Ananda asked.

"Nirvana is a steady process of dropping errors from the finite mind's ingrained notions of the ego, and going on until every movement of ego is extinct—until we reach a perfect calm. . . . Everything, my noble cousin is a flux of aggregates uniting and disuniting—a great avalanche—from which we can only escape through Nirvana, the perfect peace through release."

'It is not then, simply annihilation and vacuity?" Ananda was becoming interested.

"On the path to Nirvana we have passion hindrances cleared away, knowledge purified and egolessness clearly perceived and accepted—. Finally the mortal mind ceases to lust for things of the world, and it reaches the realization of noble wisdom and thereby finds tranquility. When we have found it we can meet conditions as we find them and give encouragement to the timid and the selfish—and help them to turn away from trite things which stand in their way of true enlightenment and deep compassion. The deep seat of consciousness, along with the noble wisdom expresses a perfect love for all things. And in perfect love for all things we find a oneness with life, and the Infinite Mind which is the creator and perpetrator of life."

A stillness was over the cave. The two small cubs were asleep beside the dead animal. Siddhartha paused and gestured toward the sleeping ones, "When we realize these great truths—one of which is, that death is a part of the world—we can accept it as part of a plan. . . ."

As he was about to expound on the subject of death—a great commotion was heard outside the cave. The seven men rushed out to see—. It was a mayhem-mad elephant breaking down small trees and coming up the slope toward the cave, trumpeting loudly, ominously . . . . thrusting its snout from side to side and then into the air—bounding over rocks, and briars—toward them there. . . . "Quick, quick with your bow—" they cried to the hunter. . . .

"Stand aside!" the man with the bow shouted and moved forward, taking steady aim with his large bow and well-tooled arrow.

"Come back!" the garland maker cried hysterically.

Siddhartha said, "Let the man hold his brave calm. . . ."

With perfect precision the arrow went into the thick hide of the beast—near its heart, and then, with a ferocious bellowing—going—over and over—against the rocks, down, down—crashing

tree-tops, the huge beast went—splashing into the lake below.

The seven men stood and watched the gruesome sight, and when the last crash was heard they turned to look at the scampering animals and excited birds of the forest, then they looked at one another. . . .

"We might have been killed," they said, "if we had not been—in there—."

"An errand of mercy is always good portent," Siddhartha said calmly.

The others were still shaky of voice as they spoke of it. . . . "It was headed toward the cave," Ananda said trembling, "it had a scent of—one of us. . . ."

"Hai, and it was mayhem mad!" the bullock driver looked down, shaking his head.

The hunter suddenly turned to Siddhartha, "That straw taken from your bed!— Does someone seek your life?"

Again the men looked at one another astounded and fearful. . . . Siddhartha nodded.

Chapter 12

In a glittering howdah on a white elephant with gold pennons of the Kshatriyas flapping in the breeze, prince Devadatta, elegant in costly robes rode through the gates of Kapila to the south—down the road that led to Benares. His father, Pure Rice had commanded him in excited anger, "Go to the sacred city and get remission for your sin!"

He told himself as he rode along, that he was fortunate to get off "that easy." Had it not been for rana Pati and Yasodhara pleading his case, he might have been sentenced to death for the crime. . . . But it had only been an unimportant augur he had strangled—unintentionally, of course. He had been drinking a little too much and—perhaps too worried over affairs, when he had called him to divine wisdom for him. . . . "Come, fool—tell me, will I be ruler of Kapila?" he had said, and the old sadhu had spoken— "If the rule falls into the hands of the dark prince, Kapila is doomed!" Was that not enough to incite a man to action?

As the elephant's cushioned feet moved smoothly down the newly paved way, retrospect brought tormenting accusation. They said he had hurled a lotas at the man and then got on top of him when he fell over—and—. He looked at his hands; they must have excessive strength in them. . . . He had not meant to kill a man. . . . Remorse rode along for some yohannas. . . . By all the gods of the bardo, he had not meant to kill the man! But—this

trip—on his belly the last part of it—would save him from the purgatories.

He looked back at his two black men with their coarse turbans and heavy-sack robes. If it had been one of them he had killed there would not have been a trial, but a sadhu in trouble meant trouble with the purhoits and he had to go through a trial. Vexing days—these past weeks. . . . But, he intended to stay in Benares and—look around for awhile. He had plenty of supplies for a time, rich foods too—none of these hermit fares for him. . . . He thought of his brother, "I might look around and find him there—and sit in on some of his sermons. . . ." He laughed to himself, "I might get a little too much wine one sitting—too." He looked again at his servants, strong men with small brains. . . . It would be smarter to let them be involved. Any way—, so he could be ruler of Kapila and—husband of Yasodhara.

The farther south they went the warmer it was. The pearl-studded vest of the prince was moist with perspiration, and he mopped his face continuously. He nervously anticipated every caravan and group of travellers approaching. He knew Ananda had sent back the word that "Kapila's prince was well and wise" and he had gone to fetch Siddhartha. Surely they would return by way of the sacred city, for—every great dissemination of truth had to be echoed from there. Truth! What could his brother have learned that his mind did not already know?

He was overtaken by a caravan from another province's royalty on a trip to the city of the gods—and they invited him to ride along with them. . . . "My gratitude for your offer, but I have a short excursion up a mountain by-way before reaching there." Indeed, he was not going to allow these princes to witness the last crawl for him. A mountain by-pass? An excellent idea. . . . Did not these mountain holies assemble their acolytes before they proceeded to Benares? If they had not a great following when they went into the sacred city, they were paid no heed. . . . Probably Artha and his listeners were not yet out of old Bambisauri's

province. . . . There—there was a road that led to the Kanic country, perhaps he was there! He raised his hand to signal a turn, "This way, my faithful ones!" he said lifting voice, and in a more sedate speech he bade farewell to the princes with whom he had been riding.

He was about to think his choice of roads had been wrong, but after many short trips up mountain maggas and over plains to secluded groves, he found a group by a small stream in a grove of sal trees. . . . The sickly smell of neem blossoms came to mingle with his own body odor and Devad felt faint as he recognized Artha's voice. . . . Artha, whom he had come to—do away with. . . . His voice was falling like music on the still air.

"It is a joyous, realistic way of looking at life. Although it is a protest of the Vedantic views which suggest that all is illusion. . . . I say to you life is real, as sorrow and disease are real. But sorrow and disease and all your troubles, whatever they may be, may be dismissed as illusions if the mind is made to direct the right thinking."

Devad moved closer, but stayed behind a clump of vines. To be sure this was Artha, but his ideas had surely changed. All his days he was wont to lament over disease and sorrow—and—

"Not through the wheel of re-birth is it necessary to come to live above woes, but by projecting ourselves there today—wherever you are, and whatever station in life you be, you may lift through right attitude. It is unnecessary to go through deprivations and mutilations to know the humble state which gives understanding, as many holy men teach you. I say to you, that is the wrong path to freedom! Follow me and I will lead you to know the higher raptures, holy and divine attitudes—and help you to grow from the animal to the god-like pattern of soul fabrication. We achieve this liberation easily and simply. As all great truths are simple and potent.

"Ask yourselves why is it you act the way you do, think the thoughts you think—and where will such thinking and action

lead you? From what karma set you on that road to where you are headed? Reason it all out. Prod your inner soul's secrets, and be honest with yourselves at the findings. You may change face about, my brethren." Devad shifted his position behind the vines, uneasily. . . . Was he directing his words to him?

"I am not saying that all of you are headed toward a deep ravine because of some distorted thinking, but I rather would suggest that the little things in your life, short-comings, faults which you impose on others but cannot see in yourselves will come to light, as you reason. Be honest in your seeking and in your efforts to eradicate them, and soon you will build up a new approach to life.

"In this new approach you will develop a tolerant view of others and their faults. We are all human; we have plenty of shortcomings. . . . But, once you feel that inner glow of understanding, it will lift you from the depths of your sorrow and enrich your life all the days you live. . . . Hai, it will go with you to the ravine of death—and you will not fear."

In the large group of listeners, not one turned aside to see the new addition to their midst. They all sat in rapt gaze, looking upon sadhu Artha's shining face. That holy light of his countenance did not dim when he began to discourse on death.

"The energy produced by mental and physical activity in the body builds apparition of a new physical and mental phenomena that continues to exist when this corporeal being is dissolved. The good or bad finds affinity with the new existence. And to have a happy existence in that life to come, you had better feed your soul with the idea here. . . . But, he who knows how can live comfortably in Hell, my brethren." Devad squirmed. When did Artha get his sense of humor? He was always so serious. The laughter went over the crowd, but the stirring speaker had attention again immediately.

"But who of us wants to live in Hell, that place of mental anguish discovered eons ago? I will lead you up eight level and

smooth roads toward an eternal dwelling place from which you will never wish to return. I say to you, once you have quaffed of the waters from the graceful fountains there, you will in no wise wish to depart. My holy brethren, that great fountain of truth falls to us here—here in this grove of talis and sal trees. . . . Look up and quench your thirst after Righteousness.

"Which are the Righteous Paths? See them, follow them. Right Views leads to Right Aspirations. When you have traveled Right Aspiration road, you begin to have Right Speech which only Right Reasoning can give you. Right Speech co-habits with Right Behaviour, both roads run along together, toward this great palace of Release—follow them if you would be happy. These two roads bring you into a broad way of Right Effort—. The vision you behold from this exalted road will hold you to the course which leads to Right-Mindfulness, the province of Peace."

Devad covered his face with a silken square, pretending to be wiping perspiration, but he was sure that his brother had recognized him. . . . But, did he not appear as one with the other of the princes and kings in the group? How did Artha ever amass such a group of followers? Here were people from all walks of life, mingling together—unaware that Sudra and Prince touched shoulders; rulers, merchants, barbers, fishermen, cow-herders, shepherds, wanderers—, all listening intently.

"We know there are heavens, for we can project ourselves into them—now, from here. We know there are hells, also—for we have burned in them here by the fuel we heaped on our own pyres. . . . Our hells are what we make, brethren, here and hereafter! Know and avoid them. But, we are in this world—which is very real with its suffering and sorrows—let us not fall by the wayside and say, 'I will endure them for they make me a place in the after life.' This may be true, brethren, that sorrow helps us to develop that great oneness which we are seeking, but—it is not necessary to go the straits of sorrow. Is it not better to lift from

our sorrows victoriously to view the Right Way? The way of Release from sorrows is through Right Ambitions.

"We reflect our inner lives by our every act and speech. We indicate the direction our souls are going by manifestation of our sense reactions. Cleanse your souls of foul thoughts and reflect a calm of Right Purpose. If you have griefs or grievances, express them, bring them out into the maidan and lift your arrows at them. You will surprise yourself at the sight before you. It is easy to see faults in others, but ourselves we cloud with the ego. Do away with the 'I' and you will humble your demeanor and live in a lowly attitude, loving all things of earth as yourself.

"Remember your mistakes only so that you will not repeat them; never remember them to the extent of allowing them to depress you. We should let nothing keep us from serenity. Project yourselves from the very abyss of morbidity by projecting your thoughts to the exaltation of that inexpressible reality, and look down upon the world and its vices as from a high peak. . . . But I mean not that you be proud, but grateful for this outlook.

"Abstain from great acquisition of material wealth. This brings confusion, the great enemy of peace. Spend as much time as you can in reading of the philosophy and religion of others. Analyze them, as I have done and see that they all seek the good life, so therefore are good—but let no worship of avatars consume your thoughts so as to have you believe all your sins may be laid at their feet. . . . You yourself must extricate yourself from evil, my brethren. . . . No gifts at the temple can do it, however-much your riches. Get into the open road of Reason!

"I traveled the narrow paths of Fear and Ignorance. I pitched headforward into mortification madness, partaking of painful austerities and listened to every declaimer on every mountain I could drag my bones to—but I became all the more confused. I almost lost reason. Then I engaged in magic-learning to try to hold to sanity. Every sadhu has his bag of tricks to attract followers—I may bring out a few, if you show weariness. Hai, I tried

every form of redemption, but became sick of mind because I was ill of body. Then one day—

"One day, my beloved sent rice cakes to me in the forest. It was as much the gesture as the gift that set me on the ecstatic road which lifts from the sordid. I ate and gave crumbs to friends of the forest—which came near me without fear. Then, I knew I was on the way to become as one with Life. I went to meditate by a pool where bright lotus bloomed, I gave myself over to the water as I gave my atma to the will of the Divine, and clear thinking began to come to me. Pulling myself out of the water, I fainted—and when I came to, a hunter's wife was caring for me, believing me a wood god. . . . She had taken the thorns from my flesh—a thing I had been afraid to do myself—and I tell you, I felt free from the fetters of life's pain. Then, and then only was I ready for religious teachings. I listened. It was she who taught me.

"She said there was enough of pain in the world already without inflicting it upon ourselves. And she said—she never questioned the 'where from or why' of the Power which guided her, she but accepted and used it. A simple mountain woman taught me to reason.

"I was born a puny prince. I grew up pampered in ignorance. I learned of disease, age and death in tormenting blows. The kingdom was thrust upon me to rule when I knew not how to rule myself. I was born with a beautiful karma, with a divine sense of right and wrong, but I moved into life—confused, misunderstood by my cousins, my father, my wife. I came to the forest life as much to get away as to seek. But not until I waded through dung of cave's foulness was I conditioned to accept the simple way—to accept life's fullness by participation. Know this—although you like the lotus blossoms I observed, are bound with earth's slime bogging you down, you are free to lift your heads in glory!

"I see those lotus blooms now, their reds and blues blending with sunset and sunrise. Ah yes, beauty is a way of conditioning the mind. . . . You feel the glory and goodness abounds in you.

Once in harmony with life, all things about you blend in beauty; you are in tune, ready to meditate and touch the heavens.

"I suppose you all have been taught the gochmen method, and the analogy of the stiff tree trunk with free branches in the rigid spine meditations. You know the lotus posture; I observe that most of you sit before me with crossed feet. I do not ask that you must sit thus, you may stand—or you may hide yourselves behind the tree branches—just so you listen. So you reason, and meditate. Only this I would urge, as you think, feel your roots firmly fixed in the oneness of the Great Mind of the universe and you will be projected there."

Sadhu Artha relaxed smiling, "That is all there is to it, you but project to participate with Power and you are a part of it to accomplish whatever you wish."

The vine-screen at the back of the group moved and attention was attracted to it. Artha said, "You need diversion. Follow me with your eyes to yonder peak of snow and I will show you how magicians perform. Under their yidham I will disclose my double, my ethereal self, the 'trong jug' body as it withdraws itself inanimate." He turned to Ananda, "Will you assist me, please?"

Ananda got up with a curious expression on his face and followed nervously. They touched the vines as they passed, moving out into the mountain trail and Devad jerked himself back, afraid. . . . He truly believed that if he tried to harm Artha, waves of energy would hinder him. On up the path, Artha explained to Ananda how the performance he was about to do was by "shugs and tsal waves."

"But, what are you going to do—with me?" Ananda questioned as they ascended the slope.

"Help you to overcome your fear, my cousin, Ananda—. I shall strive to do the same for Devad who is also our guest in the grove."

"I saw him. What do you suppose he is up to?"

"A bout with reasoning within himself, and coming to see the light, my Ananda, as will you. . . ."

"You are taking a great chance with fate, Artha—, I think you had better—"

"Now, let us do that trick. You wonder why I teach this along with realism? I wish to show there are no demons nor gods except those that the mind creates. . . ."

"You would teach that?"

"Only to the acolytes who follow me to the last, after I am sure they have something of a foundation to hold them. . . ." Siddhartha looked up at the sun and over at the glaring snow background, but continued to expound on the false conceptions that men must convert into realistic views. "They create images of gods, never finding the Real."

"But what of that tulpa, when are you to—perform?"

"I already have, Ananda; hear the cries from the crowd below?" And they went down the mountain in silence, the noisy praise for the great Tathagata in their ears. The people began to throw in the stream amulets, linghams, the phallic emblems of the power of Siva. . . . They were ready to be led into a new way, free of superstitions and fears.

"I don't yet see," Ananda said as Artha took his place again, and he sat at his feet.

"My dear cousin, it was plain. I learned it from old Viswamitri when a boy." And Artha went forth with his teachings.

"Sometimes magicians tell you the tulpas which they eject are endowed with vitality and that they become real beings. . . . But none has been seen. . . . Always, the magician explains that the tulpa has been sent on a mission. . . .

"Another superstition that is too prevalent, is of the great magicians who have attained the highest mysticism—not having to meet death in the natural way, but by their own power may dissolve their bodies and lift their tulpas into the eternities. . . .

This, I believe was reported of me recently. . . . I am not a tulpa—would you like to touch my body—and see?"

Artha moved through the crowd, and was coming directly to where Devad was. . . . Devad moved to his elephant quickly and was soon enclosed in the curtained howdah. His black men behind him, as quick to their places, were wide-eyed in fear.

Soon the sadhu and his followers were on the road again, and as they stopped and refreshed themselves with food and thought, others were added to the group—until a throng was trudging wherever Artha led. He turned to a river site across the sun-baked wastes and the people were unmindful of the burning earth underfoot. They continued with Artha, braving the elements until the winds prologuing the incantation of the rains to follow—blew the sand in their eyes.

Artha and Ananda were riding up front on the elephant which raja Bambisauri had given them when they departed from his court. They were talking of things that had interspersed the times they had been apart, and did not hear the grumbling. Artha diverted with the request, "Look back and see if Devad is yet a follower. You are aware of my old fear— 'See if a leopard follows us, Ananda'—? Hai, this is one infirmity of the flesh I cannot extricate myself from, so I shall philosophise—it restricts me not. . . . I shall tell my acolytes to learn to accept that which they cannot have power over, and—live with it, above it. . . ."

"I see not to the end of the procession. My most holy cousin, you are most convincing. I would not miss a word you say, myself. . . . Devad will be along—have no fears, for you cannot keep him from following you. . . ."

"I am directing my words to him, Ananda—; that is why I am convincing, for I am very sincere in wishing to reach to the depth of his blackness. . . ."

Ananda clutched the webbed hand, "They . . . they are complaining. They are revolting! Protesting loudly against the wind,

asking you to calm it. . . ." The wind was coming across the wastes in fury. "Let us hasten to the river."

The grumbling ceased when Artha stepped from the howdah and said, "Follow me to the water; let us wash the sand from our eyes!"

As the followers were going down into the stream, an old custom was remembered, or they had misinterpreted Artha's analogy of the lotus and the slime . . . . they were bathing themselves in the water in the purification rites as convention had impressed, and now they were covering themselves with mud. Siddhartha, watching shook his head and said, "Ignorance is the greater taint."

Going down to the edge of the stream he sat on a log and began to speak. "Oh, most endeared ones, the inner purification is the only way. . . . Cleanse the spirit. . . . What you are seeking is within yourself. . . . Make peace with it." It was hard to get the group quiet and in listening attitude again. "You are but manifesting self-contempt in your acts," he said, and for a time a revolt seemed to increase. But he kept on talking, "Change that self-contempt to appreciation. Get control over yourselves. Self is lord over self. Self over self is self subdued. Right mindfulness demands complete self-control. With self subdued one may conquer his passions, habits, aspirations, and proceed to right rapture. And he who conquers thus is a greater conqueror than he who wins a battle. Trust your omniscience to guide you there. We all have within us the knowledge of right and wrong. Set standards of what you wish to become and all the inadequacies of life will become staffs to boost you to triumph.

"Sloth and torpor must be replaced by resolution of spirit. Hypocrisy and insincerity must be blotted out with true intent. Repressed and nurtured ills become as vile when we envision them rightly. When we see them as what they are, they reveal themselves to be but hideous stumblings. If you proceed with right effort you will find resolved suppression of all evil states of the

mind. We are a result of all we have thought, and all our thoughts and actions follow us on to what we wish to become. If we act prompted of the evil, pain follows as wheels follow the foot of the ox that draws the cart. If we speak or act purely and with holy intent, happiness follows as a glad git's echo—bounding again and again."

Everyone was quiet. . . . Artha's words fell in smooth-flowing cadence, against the river song. "Hostility cannot be stopped by saying 'Peace—peace' for peace comes from within." He went on to discuss the ill-taught ways of deprecating self, which was but cloaking with inferiority. "Smash the contemptuous and raise up a wise self, strong and invulnerable. Then the strong may lift the weak and fallen. . . .

"Be tender and kind one to another—" he went on in solemn appeal. "I cannot bid you to love one another—but I bid you find approval of him who walks beside you, and find joy in his fellowship. . . . The old instincts become a barrier, and build walls of prejudices as the curtain of the howdah hides the vision of the path which lies before us." And they followed, looking to him as a light to guide them from the old life to a new resplendent peace.

From village to village they went, adding more followers as they went. At Koli, where his wisdom had preceded, came a great throng to hear him, many of whom followed. At Nadi, where there had been an epidemic recently and many lives had been lost —he spoke great solace to the sorrowing. He talked of death and Nirvana. . . . Death was a natural change which all were privileged to know, it was an effective agent to a restful phase of life. He admonished the mourners to develop inward spiritual stability to help them meet all changes with serenity. "We must find a truce of understanding and submit to the higher laws which govern us. Emotional restraint is not recommended, neither is emotional release—but in clear outlook of reason, will be found modifications. Awareness of the relatedness of all life brings us to the right aspect and self loses significance. Too many feel superior,

and for this very reason are extricated from life. A karma of right attitudes gives sight of all things as in contemplation of eternal power. This blind 'will to be' becomes a part of the mysterious psychic force and goes about, through projected hope, to assemble another five aggregates to constitute a new being—or to find contentment alone in perfect release from becoming—to remain embodied in the Power. The latter is the final heaven of complete rest."

They moved on from grove to grove. At Vesali, a park of flowers, trees and fruit suggested a period of rest and a likely vahara, for Lady Amra, owner of the place expressed a willingness to build a permanent place for the mendicants. She came forward, a retinue of servants with her holding trays of jewels, "In recognition of the great One making me an heir to Truth, I offer these gifts," she said. And explained how reason had impressed the need for women to be admitted to the order of the Yellow Robe. "I would like to build a vahara here in this grove large enough to accommodate you and your followers, and friends of mine, the nuns of Vesali who earnestly seek the good life."

Vesali? Artha associated the name. Yes, it was the convent where he sent the temple maiden. . . . Women in the order? The temple woman in the same group with—Devad? For the first time in many months the wise Artha was perturbed. He was sure his group had not progressed enough to withstand temptation which such association would bring. Yet—

"Laws of the great Mind have made man and woman as one. Woman has the same privilege of learning truth; she also has inherited the right to seek through emancipation the paths to peace. . . . How many nuns in the convent would wish to come?"

"Four hundred, my lord. They already have cast off desires of flesh; consider this."

Lady Amra—spoke enthusiastically, "Oh, I would bid you stay here, and let me build for you a great vahara—with quarters apart for the women adherents. . . ."

There was a puzzled expression on the face of the guru. . . . He was not sure that this was the voice of good beckoning or—evil pushing itself. . . . He excused himself, "I make great decisions only after meditation, my dear lady—allow me until tomorrow."

The gracious one made the guests comfortable with food and drink, and Siddhartha was greatly impressed with her benevolence—he must consider her offer thoughtfully. And after a sumptuous repast he settled in the twilight, apart from the others—to meditate.

In another part of the grove another was in deep contemplation. Devad, also having accepted the hospitality of the Amra grove—settled for silent scheming. . . . Vesali convent. Sundari was at Vesali—. And the thought that she might be brought into this group suggested intrigue which only his clever imagination might resolve.

The enlightened Artha with his horde of followers moved down through the narrow passes of the carved buttresses of mountains toward the sacred city after it was decided that "women should be admitted to the order" and that the pilgrimage to Benares could be made while the vahara huts were finished in lady Amra's grove.

Benares was a vast amphitheater of hills; a pageant of people moved steadily against the backdrop of mountains down to become a part of mosques, minarets, domes, pagodas, temples—hovels . . . . the river. . . . . People were going down into the river by the throngs. . . .

They came upon a calm and inviting grove, fruits and flowers abundant, but—where was the holy feeling that went with it? In such a place one could find eloquency of thought, for here was much to incite one to let loose the tongue. Here he must indeed preach a sermon—against superstition. . . . If one died on this side of that polluted stream—he went straight to the heavens! If on the other side—he was changed into a donkey. . . . Such ig-

norance as man had grown with, and all there was need of was an observation of things as they were, with intelligence reasoning how they would be hereafter. Men were crawling on their bellies as penance for a misdeed. Misdeeds should only be forgotten and replaced with good. In the middle of the sacred river were the burning ghats—to be reduced to ashes there, they believed would bring them to be "regenerated in Paradise." "Ah, the beliefs of man!"

Ananda said, smiling reassuringly, "They should accept your simple way which is so completely satisfying."

"The masses are to be moved only by some profound, unbelievable way. Magical, and mystical hold sway and reason is tossed to the winds."

"I notice that Devad is yet—a follower."

"He is following, at least? I know, Nanda. . . . I know what you are thinking. I will guide him into right thinking. He has ever been out of keeping with our sense of honor and justice—; hai, there is but need of a 'first time' for the sensible approach to life."

Artha looked over at the grove, Deer Park and among the crowd there, he saw his five ascetic friends from the province of Bambisauri. They saw and recognized him and rose to meet him, "Ah, the doubtful one has all Benares at his heels—he must have found some god's power to command such a following!"

They salaamed before the elephant that bore Artha and Ananda, pouring melted ghee upon the animal's back as if the god Ganesh, which was represented by the elephant was the power he knew. The blind one, old High Nose touched the trunk and limbs of the elephant lightly with outstretched palms, then with mysterious movements waved his hands around the space of the howdah where Artha sat, "He has found truth, do you not see the light around him?"

After a moment's hesitation, in which the enlightened one wondered, the two men lifted from the kneeling elephant. . . . Sidd-

hartha raised his hands, "Rise, offer no prostration to an earthly being. . . . Reserve your energy for some kind deed. . . ." He had truly found humor in these last days of freedom, something he had not known all his life.

The two foolish ones brought a robe for him to sit on and they bathed his feet. Then they offered rice to eat. . . . "You have found the way, Tathagata, I see it in your face . . . your smile. . . . Tell it to us. . . ."

And they moved over into the park across the way, where there would be room for all to assemble. The chorus came from the crowd, "Tell it—oh wise guru—" and they began to seat themselves comfortably on the grassy plot in the midst of the grove. . . . "Speak to us on life. . . ."

"I know only one way of life—to live in truth, above all passions. I have come to make war on the flesh and all the desires of the flesh," he said, settling himself for a long sermon. . . . He had studied exactly what he would say—. Heretofore all his words had burst forth spontaneously—but here in the sacred city where so many able speakers were proclaiming, he felt that he needed to take each part of his doctrine and see how his Middle Way compared to the age-old superstitions.

"First, we must grant that human existence is one of suffering; birth, life, and death are all attended by pain. Decay and disease wrack us. . . . Cravings unsatisfied torture us. In brief,—clinging to the five aggregates is painful. Of a truth, there are many pleasures, many joys to be had in this world, but they are all overshadowed by grief—unless we have the light of Reason we cannot abide here long."

"Say on, oh Sadhu," voices cried over-riding sounds from the river where noisome worshippers bathed.

"Suffering has its roots in the passionate desire for material things which do not truly satisfy. The very things we associate as pleasure make fetters for our souls." He waved his arm toward the ghats of the river, "Everything is burning, and how it is burn-

ing! With the fires of ignorance, anger, lust, despair, greed, dejections, lamentations, jealousies, hates,—but brethren, there is hope. My doctrine is as the salt of the ocean is of one flavor. . . . emancipation through attitude."

Voices rose praising his doctrine, "The only truth . . . . the sensible way!"

"My way passes above the cliffs of despair and leads to the conquering of all cravings. It is an eight-fold path; right views, right judgment, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mindfulness, right meditation and right rapture. In order to get a right view, start with an open mind. . . . Open the windows of your mind and glimpse the eternal shore, my beloveds! Right speech is abstaining from all falsehoods, harsh words, slander and foolish chatter. Right aspiration is the nurturing of ideals which bear no malice, or harm to any creature. Right conduct covers the whole range of moral living, but with special stress laid on the taking of life and the taking that which is not one's own. If you behave with right conduct, you will be right-minded toward all things; and with right attitudes—only may we possess right rapture of a holy feeling.

"I say to you, the sensualist cannot comprehend the Sutras and the Sastras, how much less may he know the way to overcome desires of flesh. He cannot get rid of lust while he pampers lust. Scatter the fire in a desert grass and who can extinguish it? Such is the strength and the power of lust and covetousness. Wisdom, the vehicle of insight of reasoning brings right words as I go through the groves of right conduct, along the right road of proper means, my refuge is right recollection and my couch—meditation of right-mindfulness. Those who come forth from the slough by these means shall fall neither to this side nor that in the sorrowing crowds.

"Destroy the seed of covetousness and all the rest of the lustful desires. Ride through the groves of right conduct in joy for this is as the spokes of the wheel of the vehicle of wisdom

. . . equal contemplation the uniformity of them; firm wisdom, the tire; thoughtfulness, the sockets; right reflection the nave; and the wheel itself the law of perfect truth. The right truth now, from this sacred city must go forth to the world."

Ananda came forth and expressed his wish to be counted as a first follower of the noble truth, and likewise others thronged about him, praising and making vows. He noticed Devad standing aside, and he went over to him, joyfully greeting him and saying, "I trust you will find release from your condemnations, my bhai—."

Devad drew back, "You—you know?"

Siddhartha went on in sermonistic phrases, lifting his voice for others to hear, "Rid your conscience of all that is evil. Throw off the cloak of deceit and bare the bosom of truth and you will find freedom from your problems. . . . You wish to have a private word with me, my bhai?" He lowered his voice, "Remain here, if you will." And then he lifted his words again to the crowd—, "Hear you the chant of the pilgrims, 'Mother Ganges according to our faith thou givest present happiness and release to all.' If you will, I bid you all go down into the river and try its cleansing power. Then report to me next meeting what you find. . . ."

Smiling, the followers of Siddhartha who had secretly wished to have this privilege went down the steps into the water—sceptically.

"Now, my bhai—why did you do it? And why did you not go the last of the journey on your belly as our pitri demanded?" Artha began when only he and Ananda and Devad were together under the sal trees.

Ananda looked questioningly at Artha. . . . What had been done—? He had not heard? Devad began to explain, "You know we have been taught to revere the Kshatriya name, and defend the province in all ways. . . . I was so incensed at the augur's words—I—I did not mean to kill him. . . ."

The half-moon eyes of Ananda widened, but Artha betrayed no

surprise. Artha pointed to a man crawling past, the staff he dragged containing the five products of the cow. . . . "That is the penance for killing a cow, and you . . . . have killed a man?"

"But, I thought . . . . since I heard your discourse you would not sanction such a superstitious thing. . . . I . . . . I . . . ." Devad stammered nervously.

"You but let your temper rule your conduct. Temper is a fierce and destroying fire which ignites and cannot be put out by any waters other than pure karma." Artha looked directly into the dark eyes of his brother, "Is there not another matter you wish also to confess?"

Devad fell to his knees before him, "Is not the sin of being a murderer enough to taunt my soul forever? I have enough against my soul to effect eons of purgatory; I schemed against your life. Have mercy!"

Ananda and Artha exchanged glances. Devad was kneeling before his brother whom he had sought to kill, asking for mercy. Artha said, "Rise, my bhai, I have not the power to forgive sins. Mercy follows truth's virtues. Burn low the rubble of vicissitude and new growth of pure thought and good deeds will have a chance to grow. That is the only advice I can think to give you, Devad. Stay in the group awhile, however, and I may be inspired to help you further."

When Devad had moved away to the river, Ananda said, "Your righteousness is beyond my comprehension. How can you solicit his presence when you know he reverts back to his old scheming self when your sermons are over?"

Artha folded his hands behind him and bowed his head, "Let us give Cosmic Righteousness a chance, Ananda."

Chapter 13

The new vahara at Vesali against the background of shrubs and flowers of Lady Amra's grove was an inviting place to the weary seekers of wisdom. Rishi Artha and his followers reached there just as the rains began, which was very fortunate for the Varsha season lasted so long and it would have been very hard to travel. There was a long row of reed huts for the men, at one extreme of the wide grove; at the other end a row of huts for the women. In the middle of the grove was an arbor with thatched roof, a place for assembly. . . . Siddhartha bowed his thanks profusely, "May the benevolent lady Amra find abundant blessings for this kindness."

Lady Amra smiled, "The joy of anticipating in so learned a program is enough reward. The women from the convent have already settled. I trust you will soon be, for the winds and rains have no reason, my lord."

The women had food ready, and after a delicious repast in the arbor, the mendicants urged "a talk" before they went to their quarters. Siddhartha began with praise for the hands of the women—and subtle humor about how they were foolish to have to take the second thought on admitting them into the group. Then he began to speak in seriousness:

"There is a place for every being of earth, and we have found ours. Let the minds of the true believers be at rest. Here we

should in our every manifestation find love, wisdom and power. What is the essence of these three but the universal Omnipotent of which we are an integral part. We are relative beings, not absolute.

"In these days we hear much of the Absolute, that which cannot be dissolved. The body is done away with—and that which is sensation is no more; but the karma remains. The empirical ego is only half self. Self is an ever-changing reality. The process goes on indefinitely until it is ultimately stopped when there is a realization of the truth of self and half-self. When we come upon that awareness, we begin to find freedom, joy, and a state of bliss. Then we come into our natural heritage—satisfaction of soul, attuned to the Omnipotent."

Although the winds rose and threatened the thatched roof of the arbor, Rishi Artha held his audience, pleading with them, "Have done with self-asserting and selfish actions that but frustrate our lives. Surrender and trust the pervading spirit, leave all to the integration of the Omnipotent which is in our being. Let us here in this new life, dedicate ourselves to be submissive to that power—bury our wills in it. Let us feel this great power flow through us and fulfill our needs and guide to good deeds, and a faith that can say to the mountains, 'Be leveled that we may walk forth in peace.' This power is our heritage, we were born into it of earth. Use it!"

The listeners were satisfied. They went to their respective places of rest, the power of their guru and the power of the prevailing Presence conducive to peace in the new place. Sadhu Siddhartha watched the women go to their quarters, how the men looked longingly toward them—and he went into his own place to consider the matter. He looked down the hut row—Devad's was three doors below his. And wondering if his brother might disrupt the new arrangement—he went into his hut.

Closing the bamboo door, he sat down on the mat on the floor, his lantern beside him. A mat and a lantern and—one change of

a yellow robe. . . . Two dhotis. A bowl he had for water and milk—and if necessary ever he would resort to using it for alms? But, the great Guiding Spirit would care for such needs, he would not consider the bowl as necessary to his comfort. He who had been accustomed all his days to expensive and useless articles, he who had been brought up in magnificent halls—to be satisfied with these things and four loosely constructed walls—? He uttered his gratitude for these. And then the outpouring of self and the problems that suggested frustration brought him to the realm of superconsciousness. There he spoke to the great I Am of the disturbing matter, and reasoned that his adherents were not established in the grace of his teachings enough to live above lust. He talked on until he felt the Cosmic superimpose itself, and with the feeling that the Great Mind would direct affairs there—he went to sleep.

The next morning, as he expected, the "first" greeting him in the arbor was criticism by the older men—of the "women being allowed to become followers. . . ." It was also his own judgment, but he replied, "I know that many a man here has at some time digressed from his convicted truths by a woman's foil—but the law of the Great Mind has no distinctions as to sex."

He tried to subtly handle the dissensions, and attempted joking with his audience. "Excite yourselves not to lustful thoughts when a woman, walking, standing or sitting attempts to exhibit her form and shape. She seeks to rob you of your steadfast heart. Know the truth and be made free. Regard her tears and her smiles as equal enemies, they are but meant to entrap you. My advice is, study her amorous beauty—is she rich in adornment, and chattering foolishly? Look beneath her tainted unguents to the sorrow of impermanence, impurity and unreality. When you consider these, all lust dies. Lust beclouds a man's heart to true beauty, and the heart that is not restrained falls in the evil snare. But, we are a restrained and dedicated group. We know that beauty and wealth are falsely appraised. We are aware of their impermanence—and

therefore together, let us go forward in our thinking to that common heritage, bliss of peace which is ours for the acquiring.

"Surrender the all-pervading Guide our wills, and we will be led honorably. Leave all to that integration of the Omnipotent in ourselves and we shall become as channels for the great power to flow through to others. We do not originate this power, we but use it—and we have but to say, 'I believe all things are accomplished through the losing of myself in the Universal Will and therefore I go down the path of right thinking and right action to right accomplishments."

"But," one convert argued openly, also attempting wit—"Women have tempers like volcanoes, a warm bed until the rocks begin to fly in terrific force. . . ."

The sadhu became subtle again. He told a katha about a man who hermited himself with grief because he had been refused a wife he wished to buy in his youth. Recently an old man with the amorous vision still in his heart was taken to see his lost love, a shrew-like woman, speaking in hate to her small, ill-behaved children as she bent her large hips in the river to wash clothes, her stringy hair falling across her wrinkled, fat cheeks. "Needless to say, the man forsook his grief—and today he is a very happy individual."

Then the admonition was, "Cast aside doubts, fears, worries, burdens! Seek the inexhaustible, superabundant Conscienceness—which is big enough for all to receive a full share of blessings."

And they began to sing and chant—songs were of the old gods and their omnipotence, but—Siddhartha smiled as he walked to his hut with Ananda by his side, "We will have to blend the old with the new—it would be too disruptive to make a complete transformation at once; and each one will reach his own peace his own way."

"And you have taught them the way—; let one of the older mendicants take over and you return to Kapila. They need you

there," Ananda begged. "How very much they need you, my cousin!"

"I will go to my home province. But after I am sure that the nuns are happily initiated in the new life."

"Did you notice that the former temple woman, the devadasis named Sundari was in the group? You remember how Devad was attracted to her?"

"I noticed her. I saw Devad also looking at her. That is another reason I must not go to Kapila until I take my followers. . . ."

"Do you not know he will stay on here until he destroys you, my Artha? That is the most evident thing as far as my reasoning goes. He will deal you misery and distraction and then—"

"Incite not my fears, Ananda. I shall leave it all to Pure Thought. I shall try to help the child harlot, attempt to lead her to know a full life—as I will my bhai Devad."

"When we were younger, I would have said, 'You're a fool'—but now I shall have to withhold a remark, not knowing of one to take its place." Ananda turned to go, "I will have to hurry to Magadha before the monsoons get under way. I shall go by the old home province and—say they may expect you when the rains are over?"

"Tell them I shall return when new life has come to earth. Say that I come to make all things new. . . . Tell Yoshadora that I come with my heart filled with hopes for her and Rahula. Make her to understand that it is not of neglect, but of regard for a greater duty that I came away from her. And tell my pitri how much I regard him as noble and good and wise. Tell him to look forward to my coming, for I shall bring a great revelation which will have the balm of peace he has sought these kalpas. Tell him—"

Artha stopped short, for Devad was coming up to where they stood before the hut. "I perceive you are taking your leave, my cousin?" Devad said to Ananda.

Ananda replied solicitously, "Hai, come—, ride along back to Kapila with me!"

"My atma is honored at the welcome, but I wish to be under the influence of my most enlightened bhai. I think I need to overcome a guilt barrier before I leave him."

Ananda took up the matter in spirited defiance, "You should revere the very ground he walks on. He knows of the two attempts at his life, the rock and the mad elephant, and yet he bids you stay in this place—hoping you will transform into a noble and good mendicant. He considers himself enlightened, but I say he is still—a fool."

Devad's words were in perfect control, "I say that he is a magnanimous soul. I shall double my efforts to hold sway over self and practice pure behavior." Then he tried to turn the frowns of Ananda to a smile, "I think we shall both have a little strain at enacting the pure life, for you see our huts are the nearer to the nuns."

They turned to see the nuns filing in at their huts. Devad said, "Not very bad looking, any of them—if they were out of those clouts. . . ."

Ananda summoned his mahout and turned to Siddhartha, "I do consider you great and holy. Your teachings I will attempt to follow. Forgive, if my disciplined mind deviates control of my pure speech. My great love for you fostered my tongue, and may I bite it off if I allow it to speak thusly of you again."

Two yellow clouts were in embrace. Then hands on shoulders, and cheek to cheek the two, sadhu and acolyte looked lovingly into each other's souls. "When shall we meet again?" Ananda said.

"We shall never be apart. Yohannas make no difference," Artha smiled as Ananda rode away.

He and Devad stood and watched the white elephant disappear in an overhanging cloud on a distant hill. Devad was talking intimately—more freely than he had in all his life to him, of how he intended to try to lift his soul above ignorance, delusions, passions, hate. "With your help I shall attain the good life—."

"Come to me in any matter which chides, my beloved bhai," Artha said lovingly. As they moved toward their respective doors, the temple harlot Sundari was seen running toward them. They paused as she rushed over to kneel at Artha's feet, her delicate arms reaching out in entreaty from her yellow robe, "Go not before I speak to you of my troubled atma, my lord."

Devad moved to look down upon her, however much he tried to restrain, sensuousness crept into his voice as he said, "It is good to see you, Sundari—in the following of so great a sadhu. Your presence gives me courage and hope—that there is hope for the like of us."

He glanced at Sadhu Artha, trying to perceive his reaction, but Artha betrayed not an emotion. He was only looking down at the girl, waiting for her to continue. She gestured repulsion with her hands in Devad's direction, "It is he I would speak to you of, my lord," she began. "It is he I fear will keep me from following the new path. By your standards, we have sinned together. . . . I fear he shall lead me into the old relation with him. His presence here threatens the calm I seek. . . ."

Devad said, "On the contrary, I shall help you to exercise control. I too wish to abide in the truth. With the aid of one so filled with power, we shall not waver."

Siddhartha lifted his hands, Devad was not sure if it was to signal his talk should cease, or if it was in a blessing to her bowing before him. "I shall go before the Great Presence in your behalf. All I am able to advise now," he said, letting his hands fall and clasp together under his long sleeves. "Take righteousness as your phallic. Indulgences of senses lead to physical, mental and spiritual want. The spiritual seeking lifts from mundane lusts. Go, meditate—and find peace in yourselves." And as they turned to their huts, looking back at him, and then at each other—he moved to his own mat to try to recapture the positive calm which had been disturbed.

Ill portent still overshadowed as he sought to harmonize with

the Universal Mind in the seeking for a way of peace for the two adherents. Finally he found the calm of resting the matter in the care of the All Powerful. "Great and holy One, in my soul and in all the world, and worlds to come—I have faith in thy guiding hand," he said, and lay down on his mat. Soon all disturbing thoughts were stilled in the cradle of sleep.

The next day the rainy season descended as a roar of drums before a procession. The order of the Yellow Robe initiation was in session at the open arbor when suddenly the sadhu's voice was drowned by the storm and the thatched roof was blown away. Drops of rain became as daggers driving against the robed figures as they sought the shelter of their private huts. At times like this it would be impossible to keep dry—anywhere, for the small reed huts were also temporarily constructed. Much time would be taken from meditation in running outside for banyan leaves for repairs—but the calm they had learned already was to aid in keeping even tenor of temper.

There was much time for thinking, and now that it was impossible to hold a meeting in comfort—, Siddhartha set to work outlining his findings and assembling the knowledge so that it could be made into a poga. . . . A System of Thought to Follow, he titled it. The four noble truths were the first doctrines to disseminate. . . . Existence. . . . To exist is to suffer. . . . Cause of pain? Desire . . . which increases with gratification. Cessation of pain. . . . Suppression of desire. . . . And practice and discipline of morality proceeded to through knowledge and observance of the laws of the universe—toward cessation from desire.

Then he set out to theorize on the conditions of existence. The Nidanas, or consequences, predisposition of mind which determines action—karma; consciousness; individuality; sensibility—sensation. . . . Desire. . . .

The vision of Yasodhara clouded his thoughts. The look that he remembered having been exchanged between Devad and the temple woman—how many times had he felt that same magnetic

power drawing him, as Devad must feel drawn to the girl. Even over the mountains to the home province he felt her drawing him closer reaching out herself to him. She was thinking of him. Bless her. . . . And once he had tried to lose contact with all who loved him. How foolish he had been practicing austerities and abstaining from contact with people. And she, they said, had slept on a mat to also try to find the way. "I shall teach it to you, beloved, soon—very soon," he said, half-aloud, and then he went back to work tabulating: existence—birth; activity—age; disease —death.

Then he listed the material attributes: sensations, notions, abstract ideas, reason, faculties and disposition of mind; judgment. He began breaking into sub-divisions, exhausting the elements material and intellectual, the moral properties and the attributes of an individual which unite to form a being. Then he considered those that dissolved at death, and those which undergo modifications during a lifetime.

There was deep contemplation at this point, and he concluded that karma attracted a new set of attributes, for becoming a new individual. This change went on until it was resolved through projection and denial of participation—a celestial existence made real by attributes conducive to Nirvana, supernal and eternal.

Lost in the seeking of a permanent form to leave his disciples, he forgot that the rains were upon them, that there were problems close at hand needing attention. As the rain fell softly on his thatched room, thoughts poured into his mind from the great Mind as if emptying to make jheels of knowledge where his followers might come and drink—and be made refreshed. When the downpours slackened during the daytime he made his way to the arbor, and the word went around—soon he had an audience to hear what his seeking had divined. At night they returned to their huts to meditate.

Resting from concentration, often Artha stood and gazed out at the rain. He saw silhouettes of men going and coming from

the women's quarters. Indian men were accustomed to four wives; he could not expect to make celibates of them suddenly, he reasoned. How could he lead his followers to know that the way of Pure Thought was above the body's passion? How could he teach that it was Nature's trap to hold to the confines of the senses? Hai, he would have to begin making laws. What should they be? He began to make a list of taboos.

A man should be allowed only one wife. . . . Too many wives brought distraction from peace of any pursuit especially in seeking the eternal verities. Hai—he was to go back to Yasodhara . . . and for her who was denying self and seeking after the good life, he would remain pure—if not for the seeking of the eternal truths. . . .

When he finally resumed meetings in the arbor, much of the culminative power which had been evident in the previous gatherings was missing. . . . And he overheard some of his adherents discussing the trinity—Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver and Siva, the destroyer—and several times together they called forth varied utterances of the sacro-sanct symbol of the Absolute.

Back in the times of meditation Siddhartha tried to bring the teachings into focus. Brahmanism was hostile and held no parley with strangers. He must impress upon the acolytes there was a great need of his doctrine of ahimsa, love for all things—regard for every being of earth. He must teach that every living being was a brother, in spirit, if not by blood. . . . Brahmanistic militants were always warring—he must teach peace. Peace. . . . And he worked tirelessly on a code of morals and laws evolving a system of religious behavior. When he had them finished, he asked some of the first followers if they, when the rainy season was over, would not like to go out and teach the way "to establish a kingdom of right living," and he was most pleased with the number responding.

"You are taking upon yourselves a great task—which will be

a joy and a blessing—never have it said that the yoke is heavy. You are setting forth a doctrine of good, of peace and contentment—and you therefore must emanate that which you teach. You are well versed in the meditative states, and now I would acquaint you with a doctrine of good: forbid followers to lie, kill, steal, cheat, commit adultery, drink excessively, or falsely slander." And then there were positive things to teach, purity, patience, courage, charity, contemplation, knowledge—"Be aggressive against infanticide, and suttee—the burning of children and women for the glory of the creator." This was to be especially stressed, and to uphold womanhood to man's equal—where it had been, but seemed to be degenerating to a degree of mere ownership. . . . And finally the successors were ready to go from him.

Before they left for their respective domains as assigned, they were drilled over and over in the enlightenment, and Siddhartha felt that he had been true to every phase of truth that had been entrusted to him. He felt that his tree of knowledge was indeed beginning to bear fruit. And he slept deeply and profoundly that night to the drone of the winds.

He awoke in the middle of the night by the touch of a soft body near his own. He reached over and felt the outline of the figure. It was a woman!

Aware of the censure which he would receive if his followers learned of this—he decided against reaching for his lantern. He tried to compose himself and to lie still for some moments determining what was best to do.

A woman on the mat beside him. . . . Offering herself to him? He had not known a woman in six years—he had most forgotten the emotion as reacted to one's nearness. He must exercise restraint, lest all he had accomplished vanish this night. . . . This thought held parley until a new approach came into contemplation's path—was this some sort of temptation, a trap to test his strength?

"Speak, woman, who are you and why are you here?" he called softly but firmly.

The small silhouette rose and bowed at his feet, "Most holy guru—I am Sundari—"

"Sundari!" he exclaimed suddenly.

"Have mercy on me, oh mighty and powerful divinity. . ." she began. "Give my soul release from its sin. Cleanse it from blemish . . ."

Sundari, the nun, who had shown such an aptness for the good life. . . . Sundari the temple child, who had known but to submit to the wishes of the priests—now was sin-conscious, because she felt the need of a pure life to gain pure thought. . . . "Know you not this is no place for discussions, child? Meet me in the arbor in the morning. Coming here, you may arouse evil ones to wonder and not to understand. . . ."

But she disregarded his words, supining herself on the mat, she begged, "My lord, give my body strength to overcome through your blessed self in me. . . . With thy righteous burning destroy my unwanted desires—"

"Who told you to do this, Sundari?" Artha's voice was stern.

"The dark prince, my lord. It is with him that I have sinned and he says lying with you will be the only way my sins may be remembered no more against me. . . ."

So, Siddhartha deducted—after all his faith, Devad was using some cunning to cause him trouble. He knew it by reason and he felt it. "Has the prince come to you since your arrival here?"

"Nightly, my lord. . . . I have sought to turn him away—but he overpowers and causes me to weaken my will. He wishes also to live by your immutable laws—and we tonight decided to sincerely try to abide by your judgment. . . . He will come to you tomorrow; he promised that he would. Have mercy on us, my lord—for we are weak and you are strong—; we are ignorant and you are wise. . . ."

"I know well the background which you have had, my child,

The priests have told you that what you ask is a way of purification, but—as I have said in my talks, satisfaction of desire is but a step for a deeper entrenched desire. . . . Abstinence is the true way. I offer you no satisfaction of flesh; on the tomorrow I shall discuss the ways of the spirit. Go to your mat and meditate the remainder of the night." He held the door of his hut for her. "Rise, child—go. . . ."

Rising, she kissed his hands and feet, and she stood close in front of him—begging, "When he comes to you tomorrow—say that I have had communion—with you to the dhyana of the blessed One. . . . Say that my sins are not binding against me in my new life. I have been a child all the days of my life, I knew not what was wrong—now I learn from you and I cannot escape the old life. . . . Say, my sins are forgiven. . . ."

"I have no power to say sins are forgiven. I say to you, my child, go and fine peace in meditating upon thoughts of goodness in a new life. . . ."

He watched her go straight to her hut. The moon came out a little behind the clouds illuminating her figure—and he thought she held herself very resolved and determined as she went inside. She was going in to meditate. . . ? Truly she should find the way.

He went back to his own meditation, with a feeling of having conquered the flesh. And he lost himself in meditation, establishing serenity. He was about ready for the repose of sleep when he noticed that the rains had returned. He remembered the acolytes who had gone out—and he wondered how they fared. He went to the door and looked out. The sky was athrob with arrows striking against the ground in forcefulness. His own hut was dry, and he wondered how the others were—. He glanced down the nun row. All was dark except the third—Sundari's cabin. . . . He stood and thought on the temple woman for some time. She—would find peace, for she sought it earnestly. . . . She was probably yet seeking. . . . "Blessings on you, Sundari!" he said and went back in to commune in her behalf.

Sundari halted at the latticed door of her bamboo hut. Standing inside was Devad, divested of his robe—staring at her, his eyes like clutching fingers upon her. "You—you have come back!?" she said, frightened.

She moved toward him, "You said I should find atonement and we would not repeat our sin."

"Did I say that, my rimpoche?" Devad's voice wavered.

"You said that." And then her voice grew tense, "Speak not endearing words to me. I will not be moved. I have been purified and my thoughts will keep me so. . . ."

"How very brave and confident my little Sundari. . . ." He moved to lay a hand on her shoulder.

She noted that he was more drunk than he was before, when she had lain with him prior to going to the guru. . . . She shrank from him, "Touch me not! Your touch defiles."

"But your robe is damp, beloved. Let me take it from your body; wet clothing makes for illness, and what would I do if anything happened to my little rimpoche. . . ? My most beautiful one!" He snatched the robe from her body.

She stood before him in her nakedness, his eyes darting fiery fingers over her from foot to head. She spoke calmly, "The body is not of merit. I have attained the blessedness of peace which considers not the desires of the flesh."

"I have not found such a state as yet, my rimpoche. Come, impart the truths you have learned from lying with the great guru. . . . Was it so satisfying an experience? You must speak of it at the meeting tomorrow. . . . Hai, you must make a confession, my Sundari?!"

The pause that followed was filled with terror, the returning rain complemented with thrusting shafts the anger which held vindictiveness, "So, that was why—you tricked me, as you wish to trick him and turn his followers away? I have noticed that you dislike him. How could you—oh how could you when he is so holy? But, I have nothing to confess before the group except your

imposing visits. . . . The holy guru dismissed me with his blessings saying that he could not forgive sins nor could his body's strength be imparted, that if it should,—it would not give my soul strength. This is something I must do myself—that you must do. . . ."

He flung her on the mat. She continued reasoning. "But—you are seeking to become master over yourself. Hold sway over thyself is the guru's plea to us all—try—try—" and she repulsed his advances, but he overpowered her.

Devad mocked, "Another notable teaching the guru has said, my deseraj—stop struggling!" But she struggled against him with all her strength and when she started to scream for help he clutched at her throat. Aware only of the sensation of pleasure, he did not realize the strength of his grasp. . . . "I hate to do it, woman—but you must not be so foolish as to arouse the sleeping nuns—or the most watchful guru—who likely is awake yet on his mat from meditation and chastising his mind for denying him—this—ah my rimpoche. That is the way. . . . Remember, submissiveness—is also a teaching of the holy one. . . . Submissiveness, waiting for—release . . . from. . . ." As he put his arms around her, he noticed how limp her body was—he observed in the semi-darkness that her eyes were closed—but Sundari always closed her eyes in the act of love. But, now—all was strangely different—. Her body that was always so warm and emollient—was cold. . . . "Sundari!" he called in fear. "Sundari!—My rimpoche, what have I done? Speak, my rimpoche!" . . . Sundari was dead in his arms. He had strangled her to death.

He had strangled her as he had strangled the augur. He had not meant to. . . . "By all the gods—and all the truths that reckon men's lives—I did not mean to do it!"

He lifted to his knees and looked at her on the mat—unable to believe what had happened. . . . He had meant only to quiet her, to keep her from calling to Siddhartha, to keep her screams from waking the others. But—who would believe that he was not of a murderous heart? Previous experiences would point with scorn,

incriminating him. He looked at his hands, they must be very strong. He got up and looked at the nude form. . . . A beautiful woman—a good woman Sundari had been until she knew him. . . .

He closed the reed door,—which had blown open by the wind. He paused to look out at the long rows where the men slept. Not even Siddhartha's light shone, so no one had seen. He was safe! The wind and rain still held counter—but something must be done with the girl's body for had she not previously that night confessed to Artha of their relationship? It would all center around him and he would confess. . . . Something of late made him weak—wanting to unload every sort of ugliness. And if he did, what would be the penalty? He must not let this deed be laid to him. He must think—think of a way out. He looked about the hut for some evidence to plant, blaming another, and then he turned to look again outside.

On a mound of debris at the end of the row of men's huts, beyond Siddhartha's retreat would be the place for the body of Sundari! He turned quickly to look in all directions; there was no one watching—he stooped to lift the body, but he drew back, he could not do it. He ran with uncontrollable fear out into the rain to the tent of his servants. And the two black men, fearful of the deed but more fearful of their master, moved with the stealth of stalking animals and placed the body near Siddhartha's door.

Sunshine streaked through the bamboo walls and touched the eyes of the calmly sleeping Siddhartha waking him gently. He remembered how the rain had fallen in the night, but now the sun's bright light proclaimed the rains were over. How grateful all the acolytes would be, especially those who were going out today to disseminate his truths. In his own heart a portent possessed, keeping him from happiness. Perhaps it was his conscience saying that he had not spoken long enough to the temple girl last evening, who had seemed so distressed. . . .

And then he became aware of loud voices outside his hut. He

threw his robe about him and went to the door. A crowd was standing about the rubbish pile—and others were coming up with fear and curiosity on their faces. He moved into the midst of them, "What is wrong here?"

His adherents moved away from him, and looked at him with fierce, accusing eyes. "It is closer to your abode than ours—, you should know. . . ."

Siddhartha moved toward the spot where the naked body of Sundari lay, as if it had been thrown hurriedly on the rubbish heap, "It is Sundari—the temple girl." He folded his arms across his chest and looked down upon the body for a long time.

The gesture to command quiet went over the group. "The guru is meditating!"

"The guru is experiencing sorrow—"

"And he teaches us to hold no sorrows!"

The whispering reached his ears and Siddhartha said without looking up, "I do feel a great remorse for this deed."

"He admits remorse. He might as well say he killed her!"

"Perhaps it was he who did it! . . ."

"Right here at his door the body was found!"

"The child came to me in the middle of the night—" Siddhartha began to explain in quaking voice, but the influx of whispers drowned, and heads nodded toward him and back to each other. "She came, asking for purification rites—which I could not give according to the old view of purification which she had been prodded into believing was necessary to obtain atonement for her sins."

Devad, standing on the fringe of the crowd stepped forward at this instant and bowed before Siddhartha. "Oh, most holy—I know this woman, and the priests at the temple where she was presented to the gods. Allow me to return her body to the temple at Kapila for the last rites. . . ."

Siddhartha tried to meet the eye of Devad, but he could not. Somehow he felt that Devad knew—what caused Sundari's death,

but—he could not accuse. He would not think derogatory thoughts. . . . Of no one. No . . . not of Devad, nor of those who whispered and stared at him.

One of the acolytes came forward, "If this prince does know the place she should be taken and if he is willing to take the body there, I should think that the easier way to settle—what to do with the body, my lord."

Siddhartha was still silent. His mind would not allow a quick decision. He felt that Devad was in some way responsible for this act—but that he intended to involve his reputation—even back in Kapila? What harm could taking her back there for the last rites do? "That is the place she should be taken." He turned to Devad, "Your wish shall be granted." And to the group he said, "And may the sins of the night find moral rectitude, as he travels with her to the final demise."

Devad called forth his two black men, who then placed the body in a blanket and lifted it brusquely from the rubbish heap. Siddhartha and the followers yet stood and gazed at the place where the girl had lain. He said, "Deeds from upadana are like wild fire catching hold of grass—soon a whole mountain is afire!"

But none seemed to hear.

He spoke of the brightness of the sun after days of rain; the right always prevailed even though wrong held long and tedious battle. . . .

One acolyte came closer and asked a question concerning the perishing of the "I" at death. He replied sadly, "The 'I' perishing at demise? It is a most grievous error to think this. Instead, let us presume that it becomes a self-perfect, lasting, imperishable, unchangeable self when it is void of all its relative skandhas—conceit, doubt, ill will, sorrow. . . . Such a thought of self is ground for all sorrows that bind the cords of the world. Having sorrow we betray the truth and all it stands for. Let us know a faith in the great Power of Life, and believe that all misunderstandings will

come to an end concerning this deed. I trust my example of kindness and goodness to all things has had its impression. . . . I have taught you to search for a final passive peace by delivering the ego within you to a more trusting place in the will of divine and pure thought, and thereby avoiding the turmoil of doubt. . . ."

Siddhartha felt that his words were hitting stones. He closed his eyes in a silent searching of power. He needed far more strength than he had to cope with the circumstances now. When he opened his eyes—Devad was down the road with the body of the child harlot in the howdah with him. He was glancing back over his shoulder anxiously, excitedly—; what evil intent possessed him? Siddhartha stood watching and wondering. And when he turned to speak again to his mendicants—they were gone.

Perhaps they had gone to the arbor to await him there. He went up the little rise to the meeting place, and finding no one there—he sat down to wait. He needed to meditate before speaking further, for his words were filled with the weight of sorrow which he could not throw off. . . .

The roof had many slits letting sunshine through; the rain and wind during the night had done much damage. He watched the water trickling down a shredded banana leaf. A drop moved silently in the sun—and slipping to the tip of the leaf, clung patiently until the law which held it released and let it fall to the ground. . . . Then he remembered an adage of where drops had gathered—and he thought of old Viswamitri. . . . Words of encouragement which the old man had spoken to him on leaving his teaching came clearly, "You are the enlightened one. . . . I shall learn from you now." But, how incapable of teaching truth was he—now, and he was going to return to Kapila when the season broke. . . . Now, they were expecting him, for the sun must be shining there also. . . . "Hai, oh divine Guide—I must trust that the sun—will shine—there."

He was attracted to the tinkle of trappings of two elegantly bedecked elephants which were halting in the grove. One of the

men, dressed in costly raiment, was coming toward the arbor—was he seeking him? He rushed and fell at the feet of Siddhartha requesting forgiveness for interrupting his private meditation and asking to be taught by him, "Your fame is widespread as a great giver of peace. . . . I am a man of riches, I share my wealth with orphans and the destitute—I have given great sums to—"

"I know, I know—" Siddhartha lifted his hands, "Yet, your deeds bring no appeasement; you still have a longing within which cannot find a potent. . . ."

The man looked astounded, "Hai—you read my life as you look at me. Tell me what I must do to—"

"Rise, my good admi—I am not to be bowed to. I only see by your face that you are a friend to the friendless; that your charities are many, I do not doubt. But you do your deeds with the one purpose of—receiving this gift. The way is clear, we must give from an abundant heart—and because we give, the law of refilling—begins to make a new heart, and a pure soul. . . ."

The Kosala nobleman got to his feet and stood looking down upon the speaker in bewilderment, as he spoke, "And although you give and give and still have great wealth left, you are yet lustful after seeking more riches. More. . . . The desire for increase for 'self' brings only restlessness, and is detrimental to true peace. Cease such efforts and dwell not on thoughts of the material, and all that you need will come your way. . . . Stop greedy lust which is but a voracious animal seeking to devour. . . . All good will come if you will follow this path of intelligent living which I shall outline for you."

He talked on of the path of wisdom toward righteousness and as he talked he forgot the trouble that the morning had brought, he was imbued with ideals anew as he expounded them. . . . He started with the truths of Existence, fixed causations and the eight fold path and the discussion of the ego, existence of self-nature as the cause—and how cause and effect went hand in hand. "There is both mind and want of mind in the world." And he preached

devoutly on application of wisdom. He became so interested in what he said, he did not notice that a wealthy lady with her retinue of servants had arrived and she had sat at the back of the arbor and had heard all that he said. She was rana ama Pati from the province of Kapila. . . .

The nobleman was thoroughly convinced and when he made ready to go, he entreated the guru to come to his province. "I will build you a vahara at Stravasti, the land of riches. I will build you a place of meditation from every precious wood and stone known. On behalf of all that lives, refuse not my request—" And Artha accepted:

"I expect to send out acolytes to all provinces, to which I cannot go myself—the teaching will go forward, and we gratefully accept your offer. A charitable man is loved by all, his friendship is prized and his gifts are most appreciated. Go, great and good one, and may joy precede thy steps and cast out the tormenting demon of fear. . . ."

The nobleman was taking his leave, promising to begin work on the retreat for the "great teacher of all of the world"—when Siddhartha, moving across the arbor aisle with him, saw Pati, sitting in the back row of log seats. He ran to her with outstretched arms, "Pati, my ama Pati!"

"My Siddhartha!" Pati was sobbing in the arm of the yellow robe, "Where . . . where is Devad? Oh, I want to hear all about your wonderful new teachings, I am convinced of your great knowledge and power, but Devad, I must find him."

"Devad . . ." of course, it had always been Devad, her own she loved, naturally more than he. "He had already begun the journey home." Home . . . how sweet the word. . . . "You should have met him on the way." Pati was up, making ready to go. "Wait, I want you to meet Lady Amra . . . I suppose Lady Amra has gone, but wait—I wish you to hear of my Middle Path to Nirvana. . . ."

"I know you have attained wisdom, Artha—I see it in your face. I knew that you would, even before your birth, when my

sister Maya had a dream that a six-rayed star like a six-tusked elephant shot through the void, heralding your birth. . . . But, because of my own son, Devad, I would not speak of it. . . .

"Forgive me, Artha, if I have loved my own son the more. . . . Time and events make me less greedy for him, and more understanding. . . . And, I with all Kapila await your coming hopefully."

"Oh, thank you, my ama Pati, and thank you for taking my ama Maya's place these many years. . . . I trust that your love for Devad will lift him from entrenched vices. I sadly regret that I have not been able as yet to touch him with my teachings—but —."

He went on to speak of his sure way; of right ideas, resolution, speech, behavior, effort, vocation which would lead to right-mindfulness and right repose through concentration. He explained that all the sorrow she had experienced had been caused by a selfish clinging to desires, that she had but to lift to new attitudes to extricate herself. "You would not have such an ominous flashing in your eyes, my noble ama, but a calmness, an abiding assurance that all is well with those who believe they belong to the great Power which controls destinies. . . . Come, speak to me of that which troubles you, my beloved ama Pati. . . . Is it the health of my pitri? We will bring him around, never fear for he has searched for this truth many years, and I know he will see it as a sensible way. . . . No, it is not our beloved Pure Rice who makes your thoughts so troubled?"

"My Siddhartha, I would withhold this news from you, but you will know soon. And do not let it interfere with your religious activity. I wish to become a follower—but—"

"What . . . my pitri . . . Pure Rice, is he?"

"Your pitri is well in health. Only his mind. He grieves yet for your ama, my sister. He joins with every mourning group at every pyre he comes to. But, that is not what I wanted to speak of. War . . . Siddhartha, is at our very doors! Darius's men have broken

through the passes and there is not enough of the combined forces of the provinces to hold them back. They are coming . . . coming to take us! And we cannot avoid them. They are now as far as the Sind river!"

War . . . Siddhartha sank to his feet in a position of meditation. War . . . War was coming to his people. The Imperial West would take over the provinces of the East. What then? Would his teachings give courage for the times ahead? He looked for Pati whom he thought was still beside him. She had gone as silently as she had appeared. He looked for adherents . . . it was long past time of assembly. And they were still in their huts. "Eternal One! Draw near!"

Chapter 14

Lady Amra was making her way from her large house to the grove of the order of the Yellow Robes, straight to the arbor where Sadhu Siddhartha sat in meditation. He had sat deeply contemplating the thoughts of Sundari's death . . . and the words Pati had brought concerning war. For ghatikas men had tried to reason on these two great challenges, war among and within men, but demoralization was destined for the people of his province from the two, and he had no control over either. He watched Lady Amra's approach, and he could read in her resolute face what she was going to say.

"My lord," she began, struggling for control over her voice, "it is with regret that I come, asking you to remove yourself from the vahara. You and your sensuous followers! You should not expect me to harbor those who perform evil while expounding the good way. I have meditated on this outrage before coming to you, and I am convinced that one of my standing will be scorned when this awful thing is exposed. Plainly, Rishi Siddhartha, I want no such goings on in my grove as have been reported to me recently. And after the happenings last evening, shudderingly I say—depart from this place, the lot of you!"

Siddhartha arose and said in smooth voice, "Your place here has been a divine and blessed retreat from the ills of the world, for your charitable nature has made it so. My gratitude to you for

your act of benevolence. I shall go to Kapila. Keep the truths which I have taught and through them may you find the good life. May the right perception of the truth in this case bring light in some way and may you learn of it.

"I shall ask the Divine guidance to shield your soul with tsams during the coming days of invasion. Let me prevail upon you to cast out fear and scorn and remain as close to the Source of Good as is possible."

"Who is closer to the Source of Good?" Lady Amra lifted her voice, "Mind you, all the food and shelter—where has it come from during the Varsha season? I gave it to you! I am your benefactor!"

"Most noble lady, I have expressed my gratitude. Now, I shall express my views as to the light of my teachings. I would like to re-state some of the things I spoke on the 'I,' for you have not received this truth, Lady Amra . . ." Artha began.

The noblewoman shrieked, "Get out of my grove without delay!" And she moved down the rows of huts with similar ejaculations. The surprised mendicants came forward with their lanterns and begging bowls and spoke in groups concerning what they should do, where they should go.

Siddhartha, who had gone to his hut and procured lantern, and scrolls containing his assembled truths, stood and looked at them sadly, "I am returning to Kapila—I will see that you are cared for there."

They gestured repulsion. Artha was surprised for he thought some would understand.

But no one made a move to go with him. They shrank away from him. He stood as a petrified tree in a forest of waving arms. There were so many things he needed to say to them, if they were not to follow and listen further to his teachings. A little revelation was as bad as none. But they were listening to the whispers among themselves—he turned away and moved into the road northward. Their words in heated argument and fearful imaginings came to

him across the way as a great humming of bees that swarmed without a queen bee to guide:

"So he too is going to Kapila! Where the girl is being taken!"

"He is not afraid or he wouldn't go. He is innocent!"

"Who did it, then? The dark prince from Kapila?"

"He wouldn't be taking the body back if he did—or would he?"

"Who killed the nun, then—I would like to know?"

"Let us follow and see. There will be great feasting in his honor, no doubt—and he said he would see we got shelter. . . ."

"Perhaps he is only saying he is going there, he is likely only saying that—and he will go some place and hide."

"Let us follow a few yohannas behind, to see. . . ."

"No, let us go to Kapila another way."

So it was, Siddhartha, with his small pogi of books moved up the muddy road homeward, feeling that he had not a soul to believe in him, unaware that curiosity and greed banded his followers in groups, this way and that—to dodge his sight, yet knowing his every turn—and followed him to Kapila. With mixed emotions, saddened at the climax of his work, and joyful in anticipation of seeing his people—he moved in a steady gait. He kept a bright forestalling, saying to himself, "It will all work out in time." He must trust—and abide. The great Giver of good would adjust it all. . . . But how? He would leave it in the keeping of pure thought, he would not think but that everything would come out well. He probably should have kept Sundari's body, awaiting a questioning among the members of the order, but they had suspected him. It was hard to be accused when innocent. Probably worse if guilty. Things would come to light. If Devad did it, he would confess surely after the journey with the corpse; how could he do otherwise and remain sane?

The acolytes had turned from following him, but there were always others; he could get a following any day. He remembered the offer of the vahara by the noblemen; it was good to know there was a place to go, if one place did not welcome. Even Raja

Bambisauri might build a place for him; he was greatly interested in his doctrine. If he had a message worth giving to the world, the great Universal Spirit would impress and reveal a way. All that would adjust itself.

But, war. . . . War was something he had no knowledge of. War was man's making, men going out against men with spears and cakras to kill; invaders coming into a land and possessing it, making of its subjects, slaves. No one knew what was ahead. He hoped his teachings would offer light in the darkness to come.

His mind dwelt on the beauties of the roadside as he went. He refused to let all the accumulated ills bedraggle his spirit. Every low place after the rains became a jheel, and every jheel was fringed with a new growth of green. He had witnessed just such a resurrection two years before and had his soul lifted into the new path. He would not deviate from that eight-fold way, no influence could take his mind from right purpose. His way was a beautiful and peaceful one; he would go it with the banners of hope flying. Things would just have to be right in the home province.

Bird song made the tree branches sway in rhythm. Acacia trees were budding. The beginning of life was so inspiring; maturity should be fruitful. He should in his latter years be imbued with more and more wisdom, to teach people the Right Way to live.

He stopped to bathe in a jheel. He wanted to be clean for the return to Kapila. His appearance would be so contrasting to when the people had last looked at him, they would not know him perhaps. . . . But Ananda would have every door banner-draped in his honor—if people's minds could be coaxed from the fear of the invading army drawing nearer and nearer. He must prepare a great sermon to preach to them upon arrival.

He took a look into his scrolls, to see what should be stressed in trying days. In all—looking at any descending doom, even toward death—one should be prepared to accept it as an eventuality, and not become too perturbed about it. If he could but prepare

their minds to receive whatever came, bravely. . . . He sat for some time reviewing his eight-fold path which brought one to right rapture—through looking upon life sensibly and serenely. This would be his sermon to Rahula, to grow up by—to look at life "sensibly and serenely." This too would serve all the young lords asking advice. He would prevail upon Yasodhara to know serenity through control. He would give little Dayna advice on living above the sordid life of the zenanna where she had to grow into womanhood.

The memory of the innocent Sundari—and Lotus Flower in that place made a revolting determination to go back and do away with pavilions. Dayna was to soon be of age to be attractive to men. And the Persian soldiers would acquire the zenannas along with all the other privileges. . . . Merciful Creator—, it was better to be as Sundari—out of it. . . . An inexplicable matter which he knew not how to advise on.

He sat for some moments resting, and chewing upon roots and herbs. The more he thought on the pavilion problem, the more Sundari's face came into his mind. What was done could not be altered. And one was foolish to grieve. . . . Unless it would avail some solution as to what could be done in effecting a confession from the guilty one, the matter should be dismissed. The harlot had reached a modicum of peace with the Great Soul—, and her future in the light of reason was brighter than most maidens her age.

Maidens wearing garlands and machite on their eyelids, exposing their bodies to lust; such, little more than a phallic suggesting Siva's power over fertility. Something must be done to elevate womanhood, all women to revered places. Carousing and whoring could and must be controlled, with the minds of young men and women being trained to detect the indecencies and to practice control.

He became drowsy and slept awhile on a couch of grass. He awoke refreshed and ready to resume his travel. He lifted the

wicker lantern and his scrolls, and as he stood up, a voice called to him from the roadway. It was a young admi, driving a herd. He was giving his whip into the hand of another—and bounding toward him. When he drew nearer he saw it was Kotiya, his once close friend of the Vulture Peak. "My little one, grown into manhood—I hardly knew you, Kotiya!"

"I looked at you the second time before I knew you," Kotiya said admiringly. "I may have grown older, but you look younger, much younger—"

"I do?" Siddhartha said, pleased at the compliment. "Where are you going?"

"We were driving the herds to greener pastures in the south when the rains caught us and—well, we decided to go on south after the sun came back. We are resting a little now—and I came over to hear more about your great teachings all the people are talking about."

"The people are talking of me, Kotiya?"

"They say you are out to break the priest rule. I am glad, for I remember still how they killed my lambs that day—"

"My boy, retaliation is not a good thing to be glad about. The priests were but performing that day at raja Bambisauri's request. . . . So, I am to break the priestly dominion, am I? I never thought of it like that—but perhaps I am. . . ."

"I heard how you snatched a temple woman away from them one time, by making one kneel down in a prayer. . . . I told this person who was speaking of it, you were a kind rishi and you must have done it to help her in some way."

"I did, Kotiya. And I am glad, for that temple woman died last night. . . . We should do kindnesses to as many people as it is possible for us to, for who knows what night will take them away from us? Or what hour we ourselves shall depart? So, let us be tender and kind one to another, doing good at every opportunity. I would like to have you go along with me, back to Kapila and let me present some of my new teachings. . . ."

The brown eyes of Kotiya danced in anticipation. "I could ask my brother to drive my herds for me. He is older now and—needs a chance to show he is. Wait, I shall ask my pitri—."

Soon Kotiya was back with the permission to go with the holy man and become an acolyte if he wished. "What is an acolyte?" he asked as they moved along together, walking slowly.

"A follower after the truth a guru gives."

"Do you have many of them?"

"Not today, Kotiya. . . ." Siddhartha's voice was almost sad.

"Then—if it will make you happy, I should like to be—your acolyte . . ." Kotiya took the lantern from the tired hand, "May I help by lessening your burden?"

Siddhartha rested his hand on the boy's shoulder, affectionately. "You are to become the guru, I am thinking, my boy—for you awaken new ideas. You read in my voice—that I was sad because I had no followers today. That tells me, tone of voice betrays attitude. We may speak kind words, but if our voice is not in agreement, then our attitude is not kind. The mental attitude influences the voice, and the voice then could influence the attitude, so let us try to speak happy words. . . . Reason tells me if we spoke of happy things long enough—no matter how sad we were, we should be made glad. Shall we try?"

The two, up the mountains and over the thorny wastes and sandhills, went like playful monkeys. . . . Soon the herdboy was teaching the art of yodeling happily and making the mountains rebound in joy. "And, when I send out sad notes—how very doleful they are—. That is a wonderful thing to know, we make all about us glad or sorrowful—just by the way we act," Kotiya deducted. "Now, I can tell when a maiden means it when she tells me she loves me, hai, guru?"

Siddhartha laughed. "Maybe the maiden knows the art, also! But—if she speaks in a persuasive voice enough times—she will. Hai, my boy—you have persuaded my soul from the depths of its purgatories. I who was doleful am responding in gladness. I think

now I am in tune with the Law as I have not been before. I was never awakened to such a morning as I knew today—but where are the clouds of despair now? We have chided them away."

Artha's voice dropped the hilarity, "But it is not necessary to go to extremes, my Kotiya—we can project happiness without so much excess laughing which makes me so weak, I shall have to rest again."

Resting, the talk turned to Attitudes in a more serious aspect. Extremes were detrimental. Too much wine or opium, too much wealth, too little. . . . Penances to extreme. . . . "All these things take us to the cliffs' edges. . . . But let us look at it rightly—" Artha began, and stopped to watch a man in the rice field beating an ox—jumping up and down in the miry slush so comically that he and Kotiya had to laugh again. "The excess temper, my lad—did you ever employ it to that extent? Confess. . . . I think I have also— But if we looked like that—we shall not again try it, hai Kotiya? If in all extremes we could see ourselves—we would consider how we act—, and change, eh?"

The man was wallowing in the slime where he had fallen; now he was getting up, bumping his chin on the plow handle and going into another rage—. "Hai, he needs a little of our sunshine—let us go to him."

They mired in the rice fields each step of the way, but they went gaily.

"Good evening, my good admi! We would trouble you for information on the road, if your good heart would give us the time," came in cheerful inflections across the field. It was Artha who spoke.

The farmer came forward, brushing mud from his blue tunic, wondering if he had been observed in the temper act, and if he had been ridiculous. "We hate to take you away from this beautiful task of planting—but no doubt your ox needs a bit of a rest. My, what a fine animal you have there—if I had such a friend to help me in my tasks I would be most grateful. And such

a field! When this field is in bloom, it looks like a slice of the mountain hump with its snow has come down to you, doesn't it? We would inquire the whereabouts of a dharmlas to spend the night—"

The blue sleeve lifted to point down the road, the direction they were headed, "Only a short ways—" he began. "Hai, I have a good ox—and field—but—"

"And a flock of beautiful birds following at your heels," Kotiya offered.

"The birds eat up my grain. I sit in the trees during the day trying to scare them away—but—they do seem to be hungry—and it is good that I can feed them. . . . I—"

"But there is always enough grain in the earth to produce a bountiful crop of rice, and what a blessing," Artha continued. "Think of all the mouths you feed with your wonderful work—which is but a joy to you to watch the furrow of soil roll back. I just know you are the happiest man in all the province. You should be!"

"Hai—I am very—well off. You two—, do you need some rice from my bag? I have more than I will plant and—" The farmer was sacking a bag of rice for them.

Artha smiled gratefully, "We are very, very hungry. You must have a great soul in you, my admi—for you are most generous. Blessings on you—and may your spirit remain always in the state of happiness."

When they had gone a ways up the road, they looked back and the sight of a farmer in a blue tunic behind an even-moving ox—making a straight furrow was a sight very pleasing.

"I now see the significance of the begging bowl," Artha said, going along happily. "It is not the benefit to the beggar—but the giver. I may start to using it one day. . . . Ah, this old Reason, we have as 'a gift' is the greatest yet. If we practice using it until it is a habit—it will serve well. First observation, next investigation, then finding the truth." Artha talked as Kotiya went along

whistling—softly, listening. "My boy, perhaps centuries from now, will be echoed the rhythm of our thinking today."

"But suppose—suppose people just do that to—get gifts? Not always are people interested in what they can do for others—but more in what they can get for themselves," Kotiya offered.

"Right you are, my boy. Anything carried to extremes—as I say, and they will do it as a means to a selfish end. We'll just have to stress Right Attitudes." Artha began to expound on his principles. The eight-fold Path to Right Living would be good-habit forming, and bad-habit breaking, and through acquiring good and abandoning bad, one could arrive at an activity of mind which brings Right Rapture. "And I see it now as a wheel—with Right Rapture we go into Right Aspirations. The wheel of the True Law. The mind impresses the spirit and the spirit impresses the mind. My old teacher, Viswamatri taught me that long ago. . . ."

"When he died, people came from other lands," Kotiya said, and Artha turned sharply to look at him. "You didn't know your old teacher was dead?"

"No, and I still don't know it. That fine old man will never know death. He has likely reached Nirvana, the blessed peace of sinless rest, the change that never changes. Nirvana, the perfect calm, we may know here—when egoism and passions are extinct. Everything, my Kotiya, is a flux of aggregates interminably uniting and disuniting,—by concentration, we can become master of our lives and make our own peace."

That night at the quarters of ascetics, the dharmlas where they stopped, they shared their rice with other seekers of truth, and exchanged ideas. Siddhartha, so imbued with his lately inspired Way was the center of interest. They sat late beneath the stars and moon, for it was the Moon period, Chaitra-Shud, and the night was most restful—and listened to A Way of Enlightenment that led to the Good Life here and hereafter.

"I met a hundred men on the road to Delhi, and they were all my brothers," he quoted an old Indian proverb as he said good

night. "We are all of the same mind, we differ only in karma. And through the eight-fold way, build for yourselves pure and undefiled lives, above the taints of discrimination, blame, anger, jealousy, hate—and all the undermining vices. Breed benevolence for every being of earth. Abandon the ill garment of condemnation, put on the cloak of charity—and come, my brothers, let us walk into a new life together."

The next morning the group of mendicants saw them leave—and followed behind to hear more of this rishi of Reason, but Artha and Kotiya did not lose their rapport of rapture—they went along with their heads lifted in joy, beholding the new signs of life along the road. "A cocoon is also coming forth!" Kotiya stopped to see a butterfly emerging from its webbed case. And the others thronged about to also look.

Artha expounded on karma. "Who makes the cocoon?"

"The worm!" came from the followers.

"All right. What type of wings are you worms developing?" And there was hearty laughing.

Finally they rested on Nikin mountain just outside the city of Kapila. He recalled incidents in the days of his youth, how he and Kantaka used to ride these trails. Days when he and his cousins came together to the mountain. Surely then—they were very close brothers—he and Devad. Before introspection took hold and brought ill thoughts, he must begin to speak of the importance of breaking with the past. "Lest we indulge in grief—and garnish the present with funeral garlands, let us grant that things are as they are because of what has gone before, and have done with our yesterdays. The past is intractable, therefore discuss it not. Now the eight-fold path is the Way of the Future. I shall discourse on it at length when I reach the gardens of the Kapila palaces. Meet me there, brethren. Tonight. . . . I would go down into the city, unrecognized. For a very definite purpose, I ask this. Only Kotiya may go with me. But I shall grant you all shelter and food for

the night. Go in contemplation of new vistas, until I see you again."

At the city gates, there were beggars beneath the rose oaks as there had always been. They were crying out, asking for gifts—as always, and when coin fell in their bowls giving out blessings—in the name of Indra, Siva—and all the many gods. They made a place for Artha and Kotiya to stand beside them.

Artha observed, "Many travelers passing through, and they are most generous, I see."

"Have you not heard?" one said behind his palsic hand. "They come to see a young raja who is to return a Buddha. He is expected soon."

"A young ruler of Kapila has been enlightened, you say?" Artha asked.

"He went away into the forest many years ago and through penitence and meditation has found the way to eternal bliss. . . . His teachings precede him; all the land is talking of him." Again the trembling hand went to the bearded face; the beggar's harsh, raspy voice sank to a whisper, "He defies the gods, they say—and the priests have it in for him. They want his brother Devad to rule in his stead—so they can still have power. . . ."

"They do? And—do you think he may be able to become the raja of Kapila?"

"To tell you frankly, all this scheming will be for naught—for these provinces will become satraps of the Persians. . . . And like most everything else men strive for in this world—they'll come to the finding that all striving is for—naught anyway. . . ."

"No doubt. . . . No doubt," Siddhartha said, trying to comprehend the matter. When he turned to ask another question, the beggar was haranguing with the others in his group, whether they would go spend the coins received or stay and await more generosity. Still another group wished to go look at the garlands of the streets and doorways, for the town was decorated in honor of the returned Buddha. Artha said, "I, too, would like to see the gar-

lands and the pennons, would not you, my young friend?" He turned to Kotiya, "Let us listen at all that is said."

As they moved away they overheard the travellers passing through the gates, speaking in disappointment for having come such a long ways—"to honor one of such an ignoble deed." And they were leaving—, passing by the beggar bowls without making contributions. What was wrong?

In the marketplace men were using emphatic gestures and saying such strange things to each other. "If that is true—then may the Westerners take us!"

They walked through the residential section. Gay sephalia wreaths, mogra blossoms, neem—every door was decked and pennons of gold and green were waving. Siddhartha felt he would like to speak out to them, "I for whom you deck your houses—would instead ask you to make sweet the indwelling there—." But he only looked wonderingly at the herdboy.

Ah, these streets, he loved every turn of them. . . . How many times he had ridden here and the people had called out their blessings. . . . If they could but cry out to him now, what would they say—"Jai! Bodhivista! He comes to make new the old and bid good over evil!"

Then they came to a street where they were taking down the pennons and garlands. Kotiya said, "Tell them—you are here, oh great bodhi!"

"Shh— Listen. . . ." They over-heard the talk between the housewives—but still they did not comprehend.

"All the good he may have learned—will not be listened to now."

"Hai, they will not let him rule—after this."

"What is our province coming to?"

People down the street were pushing and jostling as if to see a spectacle—. Was someone else riding through in parade, proclaiming to be the returned wise one? Artha and Kotiya also pushed into the crowd to see. . . . There were the two primitive

black men in sackcloth robes and turbans—he had seen with Devad, hai—Devad's servants going down the street with the corpse of Sundari in a palanquin! Artha drew back, "What was it—painted on the side of the—what did the sign say—?"

Kotiya said, "It was something about—this, the—deed of the renowned raja!"

Artha pushed forward to get a better look, but the people closed in around him, and he became—a part of the maelstrom of movement—following the corpse. He was in the midst of rebellious people—who if they identified him might turn on him—but they were following the two black men, calling out ugly remarks. . . . Where were they going? He looked ahead at the familiar landmarks of temples—on past—up the driveway to the river road—where the ghats were! "Oh holy Presence! Be with me."

When the crowd halted the returned raja was all but exhausted. His wealth of brown hair which Kotiya had neatly coiled on top of his head the previous night, anticipating this night and the admiring crowds—was falling into his face—and probably keeping him from being recognized. . . . He reached up to twist it into a reaper's hook—but his arms were weak. . . . What? Was he afraid? He had done no wrong. . . . He must in some way get before the people and—say this was not his deed. . . . He had the courage to do it. . . . He must. . . . He would. And he pushed to the front of the crowd, close to the priests who were making ready to begin the rites— . . . . "Stop! Stop, the rites!"

But the cries of "Hari-bol!" had already started, and his voice was lost as in a storm's mighty roar. . . . He looked for Kotiya—but he was nowhere to be seen. . . . He had not a friend in all this seething countryside. . . . If they but knew he stood in the midst of them, they would place his body on the pyre—instead of Sundari's as—they were doing now. . . . It was the great power of Goodness keeping him from being heard. . . . But, how—how was he to let the people know of his innocence?

He closed his eyes, searching for a union with the Superconscience for a revelation. "Holy One, hear me!" And he prayed as he had never prayed before.

The consecrated outpouring of soul was lifting itself, from the amassed emotion—of resentment against him, which was expressed in harshly inflected cries of mourning. "Great Giver of Good. . . . Draw near! Impart peace. . . . Peace! Let me not be afraid! Bring reason to their minds!" And then across his closed eyes . . . . the torch glare passed. They were about to ignite the wood. The ancha-gavya rites were unnoticed in the cries, and the intoning of the priests had been subdued to silence. But, the torch . . . . the priest was holding it aloft, asking who . . . . was next of kin to the deceased. . . .

The light of the torch against his eyes . . . . brought back that tragic experience of his youth when he had learned of death. He felt now an inexpressible helplessness. Something of that same experience. Yet there was the great Presence—sustaining still.

The crowd was becoming quiet . . . . lifting heads to look down the road. . . . "The old raja comes!" they said in effusive whisper, "he will light the pyre . . . . he always . . . . does. . . . . when he comes. . . . . He takes it out of anyone's hand!"

The crowd parted for the chariot of the raja to halt in their midst at the bidding of the mad king. And they . . . waited to see what he would do. Siddhartha had come to this moment, as he had been caught in the preceding moments, without a plan of extricating himself from the place of accusation. He had only one idea, and that was to get up and reveal his identity. His father's eyes indicated in the glare of the torch, an empty mind. "I will take the torch. . . ." he was saying, "I will set fire to the pyre!" Artha could not believe this empty-seeming face to be his pitri's. Pure Rice took the torch as a scepter in his hand and his glassy eyes shone wild-like. But as he moved near the garland-decked pyre, he saw the placard and read it. . . . As he read, the torch in his hand began to tremble. . . . "Who—who is responsible for

this?" He demanded in booming voice, turning toward the crowd. . . .

The mob answered, "The rajkumar you gave us—prince Siddhartha! Raja Siddhartha is the murderer!" And the announcement was doom-portentous—Siddhartha knew he must get up and declare his innocence, but he also reasoned the "action of a mob had not reason."

He did not have time to sum wits together to speak—anything—before the old raja was getting up on a stump and crying out against the crowd, "You are all fools! My son Siddhartha is no murderer!" And he was calling for those who knew anything about this outrageous act to come forward and speak. . . .

Then Devad's men were pushed forward, "These—were the bearers of the palanquin!" And the two black figures fell in a writhing at the raja's feet. . . .

"Come to your senses, you black images of Siva!" Pure Rice said forcefully. "Tell me who is behind this shameful act?"

A voice from the crowd said, "They have been down every street—with the body!" And Pure Rice's form became as a carved statue of defiance—as he held his shoulders stiffly erect and folded his hands across his broad chest, waiting for the black men to speak—.

"It was Prince—Prince Devad—oh mighty maharajah, have mercy! He made us do it! He killed her—and—we put her on the—"

The sentence was not finished. The raja interrupted, calling for the guards—"Take them out and spear them! Spear them! Send for Prince Devad—Devadatta! Where is he . . . ? Devadatta!" The mad raja cried out with all the voice his massive chest could force—and it rang out above the river noise—for the crowd was very quiet now—and the river sound was all that was audible—save for the jostling of people.

Siddhartha in anxious waving of his deformed hands was coming to the front, demanding that the guards be stopped—"Wait,

stay the punishment of Devad's men. . . ." Great boldness possessed him.

Artha felt the stares of the people upon him, they were recognizing him in the light of the torch—but regardless of what they might turn on him and do—he had to say this in his heart; "Rescind the order! Take not their lives, for we should not take that which we cannot give!" And then—the old raja recognized him.

The flaming torch was dropped to the ground, the father and son were clasped in arms, and the funeral cries stopped as a swelling tide breaking against the shore falls and withdraws for another forceful striking. . . . But Artha was not concerned now about what the people would do,—he was observing sanity return to the face of his father as he sobbed out piteously of "this thing they would do to you, my noble son, my wise and noble son!" Then love for him dismissed the fears—and his eyes shone brightly with joy as he said, "My beloved Siddhartha has returned to me. At last he has come home!" And by the excessive verbiage of praise, Artha knew his father was—his old self.

The crowd's attention turned to the movement of oleanders by the bend of the river. The guards were rousting Devad from his hiding place, where he had secreted himself to hear the outcome of the intrigue. . . . He had mounted a horse for a quick getaway, but he could not suppress the desire to first hear—what his scheming would bring. He held his head defiantly as he looked over toward his father, "I was on my way to amass a division of cavalry for defense. . . . I was going out to search out mountain ponies! Someone in this province must be alerted to action in behalf of the people!"

The people remained very quiet, looking at first the raja and then prince Devad. The old raja had his arms folded across his stomach, looking at his truant son disgustedly; "You with your rotten intervention into affairs of the kingdom. . . . You with your

subtle scheming!" More vindictive words assured Artha of the old king's sanity.

The smell of burning flowers and the sound of crackling twigs caused all eyes to turn toward the pyre. The flaming faggot which had dropped from the raja's hand was catching grassy paths—to the funeral bier of Sundari. . . . Pure Rice turned to look at the blazing white sari of the corpse. He turned with sudden command to the black men, "Take that body from the fire!"

Convention had decreed none but the priest should touch a body after the rites had been begun, and the people began to fear that the old raja would bring wrath of the gods down this night. "At once, I say—or off with your heads!"

The burly man went forward in abject fear, looking wide-eyed at the priests coming to intervene. . . . The raja turned to the purhoits and spoke to them as a group, "You thieving pretenders! You rob the people of my province of their very bread; because of their fear of you and your gods they close their minds and shrink their bellies. Get out, all of you!" And he pushed a priest against a lotas which was filled with ashes from a previous cremation. This was an act to call demons down from the skies—but the people, fearing and moving back relaxed after a servant lifted the jar from the ground—and nothing happened. . . .

Nothing happened, except as the old raja in command, ordered. . . . Was he mad—or was this not his old self returning in power? He thrust another priest aside and stood looking at the dead woman, "Place her again on that elephant! No—wait—" And he with eyebrows knitting furiously directed an attendant to change the placard—to mark out the name of his beloved Siddhartha and above it write the one identification, "I"—and then he turned to Devad:

"You—you shall do penance for your deeds. . . . You now, go with that in the howdah with you to every corner of the province, down every street of the town!" And to the guards at the gate, he bade, "Go you along behind to see that he does!" And

the macabre procession moved up the temple drive, the priests following behind. . . .

Then very calmly, Pure Rice turned to his son in the yellow robe, "Now, come my Siddhartha, into the court—and let us hear the truths you have learned."

Channa, the old charioteer who had been groveling at the feet of his beloved Artha rose to make ready the chariot a few paces away. Soon brocaded tunic and coarse cloth robe were touching and father and son were in amity as they had never before been. The crowds followed behind the chariot as it moved down the drive toward the Kapila palaces bearing two happy rajas.

At the bend of the road Artha was surprised to find that many of his followers from Vesali were in the crowd. . . . Even Lady Amra's chariot! There was the herdboy, Kotiya—lifting his hand and calling out, "T' Fuddal! Raja Siddhartha!" And the crowd took up the cry, "Fai! Jai! T'Fuddal!"

There they were at the side gate of the old palace. Artha looked at the place where he had felt a prisoner—as a youth. . . . It was a beautiful, restful place among the large trees. . . . A welcoming place, for were not all these people coming from its many entrances—his friends and relatives coming out to greet him with joyful faces? Ardjuna and Ananda with two beautiful women—their wives . . . . Arhina, on the arm of a handsome lord—from another province, possibly her husband now . . . . Old Asita coming forth with bared, bowed head—. Pati and Hasti—Pati with her shoulders and head held high—in pride, or perhaps to ignore the fact that her own son was not honored in this homecoming.

The afterpalace, his own home across the way. . . . He looked with anxious thoughts of Yasodhara and Rahula. . . . It was a large palace, very beautiful, how good his father was to build it for—them. . . . But where were they all? Why—down the oleander walkway his wife and son were running—hai, running to meet him! He repulsed the press of the crowd and went to meet them with outstretched arms.

In the midst of their embracing the young prince Rahula broke away with his small hand pulling at the sleeve of the yellow robe, "My pitri, have you brought a gift for me?"

"A gift?" Artha looked down at the upturned cherub face, and into the anxious blue eyes. He recognized the eager curiosity as identical with himself when he was eight—wanting to know of all things, seeking, searching, hoping—. How like he must have been, Rahula was. . . . "A gift? I have a most precious gift for my Rahula!" He lifted his head to look out over the crowd, "And for all the people of Kapila," he said, pleased at the large number in the courtyard.

"Is it a jewel to wear in my turban when I become ruler?" The thin voice of the young prince continued although his ama, Yasodhara pulled at his hand attempting to quiet him. "My ama and Arhina said you would bring me a gift when you came."

Siddhartha moved between his wife and son, parting their handclasp and pressing each hand ardently. Then he guided Rahula to the bench at the top of the court steps and they sat, facing the crowd. From this place he could see the red lights of the lanterns of the Pavilion of Women, and—leaning against the bamboo gates his daughter by Lotus Flower was watching—listening. For a stabbing moment he thought it was Lotus Flower —so like her she was in vivacious youth. . . . Lotus Flower perhaps was no more; zenanna women died early. . . . As Sundari was no more. . . . But he must not grieve and think of the past, the challenge of the future was before him. . . . He looked down at his side, at flesh of his flesh—a most perfectly formed youth, eager to learn of life.

"A gift for you? I have a most bright and shining jewel for you to wear when you are ruler over this great people. . . . May it find reflection in them and shine to immeasurable lengths into the world. . . . Listen, my son:"

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN WORDS

Achala, greeting
admi, man
Agni, god of fire
ahimsa, non-violence
ama, mother
Aree, salutation
asok, tree
atma, or atman, soul
ayah, servant

Babu, Mister
bardo, home of gods
bhai, brother
bhut, ghost
bodhi, wisdom
Bodhivista, a buddha
Brahma, Hindu god
Brahmacharin, holy one

cakra, weapon of war
chadar, shawl
Chaitra-Shud, moon period
chambeli, flower
charpoy, bed
chillum, pipe

dafter, den
devas, spirits
dhai, mid-wife
dharana, concentration
darbha, sacred grass
Dasara, Hindu festival
devadasis, temple women
dharmlas, quarters for ascetics
dhopatta, scarf
dhoti, loin cloth
dhyana, step, meditation
Divaldi, Hindu New Year
Dravidian, original Indian

ekka, two-wheeled cart

esraj, musical instrument

gadi, a cushion
ganthi, blue flower
gatha, verse
gatika, hour
ghee, clarified butter
git, song
gochmen, meditation wood
gow, measure of distance
guna, mystic element
guru, teacher
gutli, lucky coil for newborn

hai, yes
Hari-bol (Say God!)
funeral cry
hatha-leva, wedding rites of tying garments
hookah, smoking pipe
howdah, seat on elephant

Indra, god of sky

Jai, greeting of wishing success
jetsuma, endearing name
jheel, pool after rains
jujuba, fruit tree

kankar, hard rock substance
katha, a story. Also a measure
karma, acumen of deeds
kurta, a shirt
kurtha, a tunic
kurtcha, a snake

lapis lazuli, gem
lotas, brass pot

magga, path
maharaja, king

mahau, large-leafed tree
mahout, elephant driver
maidan, park
marhuts, divinities of air
mendicant, an ascetic
mogra, blossom
monsoon, rains
mora, head-dress
mussak, bloom

Nautch, dance
neem, blossoming tree
nelumbo, flower
Nidanas, causes
Nirvana, state of bliss

paligan, quotation
pandumas, measure
pipal, tree
pitri, father
plantain, banana
pogi, books
prayama, breath control
priyaji, endearing name
purhoits, priests
puri, fried bread
putra, son
putri-praji, forefather worship

raja, ruler, (king)
rana, queen
rajkumar, heir
rimpoche, word of endearment
rishi, seer

sadhu, holy man
sal, tree
sari, dress of Indian women
sattva, reality
sephalia, blooming tree
Shreemati, Mrs.
sitar, musical instrument
Siva, god of destruction
soma, intoxicating drink
Soma, god of sacrificial drink
Sraddha, worship seeking offspring
Sutra and Sastra, symbolic scriptures
suttee, practice of burning widows

talis, tree
tulpa, ethereal body
Tathagata, enlightened one
tumo, inured state

Yoga, mental control over self
yojanna, eight miles

vahara, a mission
Vaisyas, farmers
Varsha, rainy season
Vavitra, dawn god
Vayu, god of wind
Vedas, sacred book of Hindu
Vishnu, Hindu god of support

Zenanna, pavilion of women

Verses from

THE DHAMMAPADA
(The Buddhist Bible)

All that we are is a result of what we have thought.

If a man speaks or acts with pure thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him, but if he speaks and acts with evil thought, pain follows as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the cart.

"He abused me, he beat me, he defeated, he robbed me"—in those who harbor such thoughts hatred will never cease.

Those who bridle their minds are free from the bonds of the tempter.

If a man's thoughts are not perplexed and dissipated, he has no fear while he is watchful.

Knowing that his body is fragile like a jar, one should, making his thoughts firm like a fortress, attack the tempter with the weapon of knowledge.

The tempter never finds his way to people who are emancipated through true knowledge.

If one who is intelligent shows you what is to be avoided, follow him as one who leads to a hidden treasure.

Those whose minds are well grounded in the elements of knowledge, who without clinging to anything rejoice in freedom from attachment, whose appetites are conquered, are full of light and free—even in this world.

The gods envy him whose senses, like horses broken in by a driver, have been subdued, who does his duty and is tolerant like a threshold. When he has obtained freedom by true knowledge he has thus become a quiet man.

If a man makes sacrifice and oblation for a whole year to gain merit, the whole of it is not worth the moment of homage to a man whose soul is grounded in true knowledge.

A man who has learned little grows old like the ox—only his flesh grows.

The foolish by his thirst for riches destroys himself.

As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought.

Fools follow after vanity but the wise man keeps earnestness as his best jewel.

If a man's faith is unsteady, if he does not know the true law, if his peace of mind is troubled—his knowledge will never be perfect.

The fool who knows his foolishness—is wise so far, but the fool who thinks himself wise is a fool indeed.

One word of speech is better than a speech of a thousand senseless words.

A fool does not know when he commits evil deeds, but the wicked man burns by his own deeds as if by fire.

There is no fire like passion, no losing throw like hatred.

Self is lord over self.

Come, look at the world glittering like a royal chariot; the foolish are immersed in it.

We live happily indeed free from greed among the greedy, not hating those who hate us. Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, but by love.

Let a man overcome greed by liberality, lies by truth, evil by good, anger by love.

When the learned man drives away vanity by earnestness, he is wise and climbing the terraced heights of wisdom, looks down on the sorrowing crowd as one on a mountain looks down upon the plain.

The fool wishes for precedence, lordship, worship among other people; his pride and desires increase.

A wise man will not yearn for honor.

Wise people falter not amid blame and praise, as a solid rock they are unshaken by the wind.

Whether touched by happiness or sorrow wise people never appear elated or depressed.

He is good, wise and virtuous who does not wish for his own success by unfair means.

As long as the evil deed does not bear fruit, the fool thinks it like honey, but when it ripens he suffers grief.

Not in the sky, midst of the sea, nor in the cleft of the mountains is there a known spot where a man may be free of evil deed.

All men tremble at punishment, and all men fear death—remember that you are like that and do not kill or slaughter.

Let a man avoid evil deeds as a merchant carrying much wealth avoids a dangerous road, as a man who loves life avoids poison.

The evil-doer suffers when going the evil path, he mourns when he sees the results of his evil works; he suffers in this world and also in the next.

The virtuous man delights in this world and in the next when he sees the purity of his work and the good he has done; he is most happy when going the good path.

He who lives looking for pleasures only, his senses uncontrolled, immoderate in his food, idle and weak, the tempter will overthrow as the wind breaks down a weak tree.

As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, passion will break through an unreflecting mind.

It is good to tame the mind which is difficult to hold in and flighty—rushing wherever it listeth; a tamed mind brings happiness.

The follower of the law, even if he can recite only a small portion of it, but having forsaken passion and hatred and foolishness possesses true knowledge and serenity of mind.

Earnestness is the "path to immortality" (Nirvana) and thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die, but those who are thoughtless are as if dead already.

By rousing himself in earnestness, by restraint and control, the wise man makes for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.

If a man is tossed about by doubts, full of strong passions and yearning only for what is delightful, his thirst will grow more and more.

Rouse thyself, by thyself, examine thyself by thyself—thus self protected and attentive will thou live happily.

He who envies others does not obtain peace of mind.

Let him live in charity, be perfect in his duties, then in fullness of delight he will make an end of suffering.

Do not have evil-doers for friends, nor low people. . . . Have virtuous people for friends, the best of men.

Those who know truth as truth, and see untruth as untruth arrive at truth and follow true desires.

The man who is free from credulity, who has cut all ties, removed all temptations and renounced all desires knows the uncreated and is the greatest of men.

Wherever venerable persons dwell—hamlet, forest, sea, land—that place is delightful.

He who always greets and constantly reveres the aged will know increase.

Let a man, after he has discerned his duty, be ever attentive to it.

If a thing is to be done, let a man attack it . . . a careless pilgrim only scatters the dust of passion more wildly.

Rouse thyself; do not be idle. Follow the law of virtue. The virtuous rest in bliss in this world and in the next.

Those who are slaves to passions run down the stream of desires as the spider runs down the web he has made for himself.

The life of one day, virtuous and reflecting is better than a hundred years vicious and unrestrained.

A sage should not take notice of the perversities of others, their sins of commission and omission, but of his own misdeeds and negligences.

Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart—it will not come nigh me. By the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled.

The accumulation of evil is painful and the accumulation of good—delightful.

There is no satisfying of lusts, even by a shower of gold pieces; he is wise who knows that lusts have a short taste and cause pain.

Not to blame, not to strike, but to live unrestrained under the law, to be moderate in eating, to dwell on the highest thoughts is the teaching of the Awakened.

The Awakened call patience the highest penance, long-suffering the highest Nirvana.

Do not speak harshly to anyone; those who are spoken to will answer in the same way.

He is not called an elder because his head is gray, but he in whom there is virtue, restraint, pity, moderation, wisdom.

He who takes refuge in clear understanding sees the four holy truths, pain, the origin of pain, the destruction of pain, and the eight-fold way that leads to the quieting of pain—that is the safe refuge.

He who has tasted the sweetness of solitude and tranquility is free from fear and from sin.

He who gives himself to vanity and not to meditation forgets the real aim of life.

He who holds back anger as a rolling chariot I call a real driver. He who controls his body, mind, tongue is well controlled.

Fletchers bend the arrow, carpenters bend the wood—wise people fashion themselves.

He who knows that this body is like froth, and unsubstantial as a mirage will break the flower-pointed tempter's arrow and never know death.

As a tree, even though it be cut down, is firm as long as its root is safe; we grow again unless the feeders of thirst are destroyed.

He who calls nothing his own, is serene, undisturbed, manly, noble, free from anger, tolerant, mild, thoughtful, dutiful, virtuous, subdued —awakened, is perfect in knowledge and has reached the end of births; he has risen from all bondage.

The ten great perfections: generosity, goodness, renunciation, wisdom, firmness, patience, truth, resolution, kindness, equanimity.

The four noble truths: suffering is universal; its cause is desire; when desire ceases, suffering ends; the way to end desire and suffering is by following the eight-fold path.

The Eight-fold Path:
Right thoughts,
Right mindfulness,
Right concentration,
Right resolution,
Right speech,
Right behaviour,
Right effort,
Right vocation.