

# **THE LIFE OF THE VICTORIOUS BUDDHA**

*A SIMPLIFIED TRANSLATION OF*

**VEN. MEDHAṄKARA'S JINACARITAM**

*BY*

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# TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

## THE STORY

This work tells in a concise form the inspiring story of the Bodhisatta's aspiration for Awakening, its fulfilment at the foot of the Bodhi Tree, and the Early Ministry of the Buddha in the newly founded Sāsana as it has come down to us in the Theravāda tradition.

Ven. Medhaṅkara follows for the most part the story as it is found in the Jātakanidānaṃ, but he leaves out a number of matters which are present in his model,<sup>1</sup> and concentrates on the main story which gives his narrative greater concision and thrust.

The story opens with the youth Sumedha gaining insight into the nature of reality following the passing away of his parents, which is followed by his renunciation of the home life and very successful spiritual practice in the Himālayas.

He then comes into contact with a true spiritual teacher, the Buddha Dīpaṅkara, and being inspired by the meeting, he gives up the chance of liberation then and there, and makes his aspiration to attain Buddhahood himself, in order to help all living beings cross the great flood of Saṃsāra.

Such a high calling is not so easily fulfilled, of course, and he spends many aeons in self-sacrificial actions in order to fulfil all the moral perfections that make one fit to establish a Sāsana.

After being reborn in Heaven, he is urged by the Gods to take birth once more on Earth, and finally fulfil his mission. Having ensured all the right conditions prevail, he descends and is born on Earth into a virtuous and prosperous family, who nurture and protect him until he reaches maturity.

Although in his new existence he is surrounded by all the material pleasures that his position can provide he is dissatisfied, and parallel to the youth Sumedha, he retires to the forest for spiritual practice.

After a number of dead-ends and intense, but ultimately futile, practice he overcomes all temptations and defilements, personified by the wicked Māra and his daughters, and attains Complete Awakening at the foot of the Bodhi Tree.

His story could have finished there and then, in that glorious liberation from the sorry round of birth and death, but if it had he would not have been the Sambuddha of his aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup> Noticeably the confirmation of the Bodhisatta's vow under the intervening Buddhas; and a number of the early conversions are omitted.

Instead, being inspired by his realisation that he could help others also to attain the liberation he had gained, he began his ministry, which was to last for forty-five long years, selflessly teaching beings how to escape from the unsatisfactory nature of existence, both by word and example.

The story continues with the Buddha's first teaching, the fulfilment of his promise to teach King Bimbisāra at Rājagaha, and his journey back to his home town of Kapilavatthu, and conversion of his close family and other clan members.

The last event related in the story in any detail, as in the Jātakanidānaṃ is the Buddha's meeting with the rich merchant Anāthapiṇḍika, and his journey to Sāvattḥī, where the merchant purchases and donates Jeta's Wood to the Saṅgha with the Buddha at its head, by which time the Sāsana is firmly establishing in the Middle Regions of India.

There is then a synoptic section which Ven. Medhaṅkara adds to what is found in his source relating where the Buddha spent the Rains Retreats during the 45 years of his teaching career, and indicating the main events that took place during the first twenty of those Retreats.

The poem concludes with the author making an extraordinary wish to have the chance to meet the coming Buddha Metteyya and then make his own aspiration for Buddhahood under Him, and getting it confirmed by the future Buddhas.<sup>2</sup>

## STYLE

Ven. Medhaṅkara manages to tell this beautiful story in a concise, vivid and quick-moving poem, that is at once informative and inspiring. Along the way there are many lyrical passages where the poet, who is a true wordsmith, describes the ancient cities and countryside against which the main drama unfolds. See for instance the following description of the road to Kapilavatthu in the Springtime:

The season of Spring has produced colourful and delightful buds and foliage, a thousand delightful branches together with glorious, and deep-green coloured leaves, trees crowded with various extraordinarily fragrant and variegated blossoms, many very beautiful animals, and flocks of birds singing in the excellent groves.

There are now countless delightful lakes, full of very blue and agreeable waters, which are decorated with very fragrant blue, white, copper-coloured, and red lotuses, having unstained and extremely pearly white sandbanks, with a multitude of sweet-sounding grey geese, and a variety of trees along the banks.

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<sup>2</sup> This is then an aspiration to have the chance to make a Bodhisatta vow, something I have never seen elsewhere.

The banks themselves are resplendent with rows of flowers and blossoms, having plains covered with fresh and very green lawns, as though covered with pleasing lapis-lazuli, and skies full of light breezes. [vv. 347-351]

There are also numerous deft pen-portraits of the main characters involved in the story, and their appearance and character come to life as we read. Witness the Bodhisatta on alms-round in Rājagaha:

Because of (his) radiance the walls and gates, which were made of sapphire rock, appeared like a golden mountain. The mass of the people having seen him, became greatly excited, and asked: “Who is this? Is it a God, a Supreme Divinity, a Devil, or a Demon?” and so forth.

Having entered the city and gathered just enough food for sustenance, looking just a yoke’s distance ahead of him he went along the Royal Highway. The people were disturbed by him, just as the ocean that was churned with Mount Meru as a churning stick was disturbed. [vv. 204-206]

Or see how he describes the effect the Buddha had on his wife, whom he was meeting for the first time since the Awakening:

Queen Yasodharā, known as Bimbā, whose body was resplendent with rays of light like one powdered with realgar, whose lips were as red as the Bimba fruit, trembling like a golden creeper approached the Teacher. The touch of the Teacher’s feet, like supremely cool water, extinguished the great fiery grief burning in the fuel of her heart. [vv. 395-396]

The poem is full of such vivid and memorable scenes, which, as with all true works of art, remain in the mind long after one has put down the book.

### THE PRESENT TRANSLATION

The original poem is written in High Medieval Pāli which has been influenced by the Sanskrit literature of mainland India. Both the metres (*chanda*) and the decorations (*alaṅkāra*) are at a high state of development, and the grammar of the work is often very involved, with complex sentences sometimes drawn out over a number of verses.

In simplifying this translation of Jinacaritaṃ my aim has been to make the text more presentable to an English reader. This has mainly entailed cutting down on the use of adjectives and adjectival phrases, which are often piled up in the Pāli; and simplifying the sentence structure, especially in the use of infinitives where we would normally use finite verb forms in English.

On the other hand I have also occasionally filled in quotations that were only hinted at in the original, and spelled out some references which may not now be clear. While making these changes I have endeavoured to remain as faithful as possible to the original, while making it more accessible to an English reading audience.

In preparing this edition of the work I have divided it into 3 sections in accordance with the Jātakanidānaṃ, which covers the Far Distant Past, the Not-so-Distant Past, and The Present Time. I have further added in Chapter Titles to help outline the progress of the story and the subject matter that is covered.

For a more literal line-by-line translation together with the Pāli text itself, please see *Jinacaritaṃ - The Life of the Victorious Buddha* in the *Texts and Translations* section of my website Ancient Buddhist Texts ([www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net](http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net)); and for the establishment of the text itself, complete with metrical analysis, see *Jinacaritaṃ* in the *Buddhist Texts and Studies* section. In the Audio section of the website you can now find a reading of the complete English text which I have recently published.

### A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Nothing for certain is known about the historical life of Ven. Medhaṅkara, the author of *Jinacaritaṃ*. In the colophon to the work he merely states that he is living in a residence built by, and named after, King Vijayabāhu, and no further information is given. He doesn't mention his teachers or pupils (if he had any), and he doesn't say he is the author of any other work.

Malalasekera (DPPN, pg. 230) may be right in identifying him with the author of *Payogasiddhi*, as the author of that treatise states that he was living in the Jambuddoṇi Āvāsa. But Malalasekera then identifies the vihāra with the one mentioned in Mhv. 81.58, which was built at Wattalagama.<sup>3</sup> However, Medhaṅkara is a common name and it seems to me to be significant that neither work refers to the other, which is what we might expect if their author was one and the same person.

Given the style and content of the work, however, it seems reasonable to assume that the historians are right in believing that the work was composed during the late 12th or early 13th centuries, which, under the influence of the Sanskrit literature which was flourishing on the mainland, saw a great renaissance in learning and the arts in Śrī Laṅkā.

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu  
June, 2007

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<sup>3</sup> We learn from Mhv. 81.51, that King Vijayabāhu III also built a vihāra called Vijayasundara, and from Mhv. 85.90 that that very vihāra was in Jambuddoṇi, so it seems that this is the more likely residence referred to.

# THE LIFE OF THE VICTORIOUS BUDDHA

*REVERENCE TO HIM, THE GRACIOUS ONE, THE WORTHY ONE, THE PERFECT SAMBUDDHA*

## HOMAGE TO THE THREE TREASURES [VV. 1-7]

I worship the Great Seer's supreme lotus feet with my head, which give sweet Emancipation to good men, like honey gives sweetness to bees, and the sun-like Dhamma, which arose from the immoveable King of Dhamma, which now by its splendour dispels the great darkness of ignorance in the world, and the moon-like Saṅgha, with its refulgent and glorious virtue, which awakens faith in the minds of the people. I will now tell in short the life of the Victorious Buddha, which is of widespread benefit both near and far, the value of which I always remember.

To those who remember it, the excellent, rare, and safe state of Nibbāna becomes not so rare, so why speak about the acquisition of wealth? Those good people who listen, who constantly wish for that which is free from old-age and death, should enjoy my poem, which is made in lovely verses and orderly lines, which are beautiful, sweet, and pure, and bring pleasure to the ears of those who listen.

## **PART ONE: THE FAR DISTANT PAST [vv. 8-69]**

### **SUMEDHA [vv. 8-19]**

At a time of four immeasurables and a hundred thousand aeons ago there was a city where meritorious people lived: it was endowed with jewels, crowded with people, full of beautiful shops, and adorned with decorated towers. It had the ten sounds, and was like the city of Sakka, the Lord of the Gods - it was a brilliant, excellent city named Amaravati.

A brahmin was born in that place, who was greatly honoured by the whole world. He was one of great compassion and wisdom, he was handsome and delightful, a youth named Sumedha, who had learned the Vedas.

That Budding Victor, after the death of his parents, was shown the immeasurable wealth of his inheritance by the councillor who managed the estate, and after surveying that mass of wealth in the countless hundreds of storerooms, and piling it up, he said: "Alas! My father and the rest of my relatives have gone to the gods and have not taken even one cent with them!" That Mine of Virtue became anxious, and reflected thus: "Although I have received this valuable wealth, I am bound to die."

Then sitting down in seclusion in his own beautiful home, while surveying the faults in the body, he advised himself thus: "Painful is the break-up of the body, painful also is its arising again - I am subject to death, old age, and sickness."

Having thus seen the countless faults in the body, and informing the king, he had drums beaten in the city, and for seven days thereafter he satisfied the beggars who gathered at the sound of the drum with a flood of gifts, just as bees gather and are satisfied with the sweet scent of a multitude of blossoms.

### **THE GOING-FORTH [vv. 20-31]**

Having seen that just as a lotus grove does not go to destruction by the falling of snowflakes so his treasures did not go to destruction through his supreme generosity, like a lordly elephant from a raging forest fire, he departed from his crying relatives and from his delightful home.

The Champion then went to the Great Himālayas, which are perfumed with yellow sandalwood, camphor, and aloe; adorned with blossoming Champa, Asoka, and trumpet-flower trees; and embellished with Areca Palms, Punnāga, and Ironwood trees. They are crowded with various animals, such as lions, tigers, hyenas, elephants, leopards, monkeys and horses, and filled with the sounds of mynahs, swans, geese, herons, parrots, doves, cuckoos and blue jays.

They are frequented by Divinities, Gods, and Angels, and by Adepts and Wizards. They shine with charming realgar and sapphire mountain ranges, and places having uncountable silver and gold deposits. They have innumerable lakes and tanks with golden and jewelled staircases and have hundreds of waterfalls covered with cool mist, with countless Goddesses playing in the clearings. They shimmer with delightful and colourful semi-divine birds and snakes, and have peacocks dancing in the groves. There are arbours of vine adorned with enclosures covered with white sand. It has countless stores of treasures, with gold, jewels, pearls, and so on - the Himālayas are an abode for people who are longing for merit, just as bees are longing for flowers-blossoms.

### **BUDDHA DĪPAṆKARA [VV. 32-45]**

That Hero entered into that region, and saw there the requisites for a sage inside an excellent leaf-hut that had been made by Sakka, the Thousand-Eyed One, and put on the dress of a sage. Then he attained the eightfold blissful states of concentration and the five deep knowledges within seven days, and lived on there intent on meditation.

One day when the Sage, the Great Ascetic Sumedha, was flying through the air, he saw people clearing the road, and descended from the sky, and asked them: “Why are you clearing the road?”

“Do you not know, Sumedha? The Buddha Dīpaṅkara, after attaining Supreme Awakening and setting rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel, while teaching the Dhamma to the world, has come to our fair city named Delight, and is residing here in the Beautiful Monastery. We have invited that Sole Leader of the World and four hundred thousand pure monks for alms. Visionary One! We are clearing the path for his arrival.” So the people spoke, bringing pleasure to his ears.

His mind upraised with joy, that Mine of Virtue, having heard the word ‘Buddha’, was not able to restrain his emotion. Therefore the Hero begged for a small section of the road to clear, and having received an uneven spot, he began to even it out.

But before that place was prepared, the Sole Protector of the World, who is worshipped by men and gods, the Benefitter of the World, the Great Seer, entered the path along with the monks. Having seen the Realised One with his bright six-coloured halo blazing forth entering that place, he thought rejoicing: “What if I were to lie down in the mud, having made a bridge of my very self for that Hero, that Great Seer, together with his Saṅgha,” and realising that would be for his benefit and happiness for a long time, the Budding Victor Sumedha lay down.

### THE RESOLUTION [VV. 46-59]

The Firm One, while lying in that place, after raising his charming lotus-like eyes, and once more contemplating the Buddha Dīpaṅkara, thought thus: “If I so wished, after bringing to an end the endless battle of existence today, and becoming a novice in the Saṅgha, I could enter the excellent city of Nibbāna. But what is there for me in ordination, or in the destruction of the defilements? Like this Buddha, Complete Emancipation is best for me only after becoming a supreme Buddha myself and carrying the people across the ocean of existence with the boat of the Dhamma, and bringing them to the City of Nibbāna.” After reflecting thus he lay there in the mud radiating beautifully.

So the Hero, after seeing the pleasing and Fortunate Buddha Dīpaṅkara with his mind detached and his six-coloured rays, with his heart uplifted with joy, thus made his aspiration for Complete Awakening.

After approaching the place where the sage was lying in the mud, and seeing him making a bridge out of himself, Dīpaṅkara, the Realised One, the Hero, the World’s Sole Eye, the World’s Sole Bridge, stood near his head and announced: “In the future he will be a Sambuddha known by the name of Gotama,” and he spoke about his disciples, his city, and so on. Having said this, that Buddha of Lovely Virtue, together with his Saṅgha, circumbulated him, and worshipped him with eight handfuls of flowers. Having done this, the Leader of the World, together with the Saṅgha, entered into the city called Delight, which has fair pleasure gardens and dwelling places.

Sumedha, the great ascetic, having great wisdom, and controlled senses, after hearing the Buddha’s pronouncement, rejoiced, arose from the mud, folded his legs crosswise, and sat down on the flower-seat, and was worshipped by the assembly of Gods with flowers and so on. Rejoicing, the Gods from the ten thousand world-systems praised the Hero who was sitting on the flower-seat.

### THE PERFECTIONS [VV. 60-69]

Then, while sitting there, Sumedha examined above, below, and in the main and intermediate directions what things go to make one a Buddha, and he examined all the elements of the Dhamma in this way. The first thing he saw in his mind was the perfection of giving, and when he had understood it fully, he sought out the next perfection.

In this way he saw by himself with the eye of knowledge all the perfections, and enduring a great deal of suffering in the rolling on of Saṃsāra, seeking the peaceful, the deathless, he fulfilled the perfection of giving by giving to all beings, like a wish-fulfilling tree or a wish-fulfilling jewel, and gave whatever they desired, beginning with excellent food and so forth.

## The Far Distant Past

After doing a good many other things, as many as the stars in the sky, gladly the Hero, tore out his charming eyes and gave them to beggars. He also gave his body's flesh, more than the dust on the earth; and his blood, more than the waters in the ocean. After giving away his diadem-adorned heads countless times, while making the earth shake, he even gave away his wife and children.

Thus after fulfilling all the perfections of generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, resolution, friendliness, and equanimity, he was born as Vessantara. From that life he passed away and re-arose in the Tusita Heaven, the beautiful abode of the Gods, and for a very long time he dwelt there enjoying endless blessings.

## **PART TWO: THE NOT-SO-DISTANT PAST [vv. 70-267]**

### **THE CONCEPTION [vv. 70-81]**

The Gods, with their hands held in reverential salutation, begged the Supreme Man, saying: “Great Champion, it’s time for your Complete Awakening”. After examining the time and understanding it was indeed the time for his Awakening, he gave his promise to the assembly of Gods, and went to the Nandana Grove with them, and there he heard them say: “Having passed away from here, pass on to a good state of being.”

The Wise One passed away and in this existence arose in the beautiful city called Kapilavatthu, which was a city crowded having great horses with decorated limbs and delightfully tall lordly elephants. It had various beautiful shops rich in wares, towers adorned with a mass of flags, great houses decorated with watchtowers, lovely city gates, beautiful women’s houses, a city more joyful than the Lord of the Gods’ city Purindada.

He was born to King Suddhodana, who was an excellent Master of Men, a protector of those without protection, the pride of the family descended from King Okkāka, a pure dwelling place of countless virtues, whose lotus-like feet were served by bejeweled princes, as many as a swarm of bees.

The Bodhisatta, after showing himself in a dream as a beautiful, noble elephant as white as the moon, with an excellent white lotus in his lovely pure white trunk, which was like a silver chain, descended to the womb of Queen Māyā, who had very red lips, eyes like blossoming lotuses, eyebrows like delightful rainbows, a noble face like a pure and pleasing full moon, charming breasts, hands and feet which were as lovely as lotus shoots, beautiful skin and body, and was adorned with countless good qualities such as virtue and so forth.

At the moment he was conceived countless wonders arose, and afterwards he was taken care of by gods and men. Like a delightful golden image sitting in a pleasing red lotus, the golden-skinned Lord of Men sat cross-legged in his mother’s womb, and like a red thread strung through a clear jewel, the Hero enlightened his mother’s mind.

### **THE BIRTH [vv. 82-96]**

At the end of ten months the Queen said to the King: “Your Majesty! I wish to go to my relatives’ house.” She received permission from the King, and while going along a smooth road - like a heavenly road - under the protection of a great retinue of her own clan, she saw the Lumbini Grove, an extensive, delightful abode, having Sal groves decorated with bunches of fragrant flowers, with the sound of rapt bees humming.

## The Not-So-Distant Past

She was summoned, as it were, by flocks of birds who led her on, and after delighting in her charming play in that place, which was like the play of a young immortal, she went to the root of an excellent blossoming Sal tree, and grasped a branch which bent itself down for her, and at that time she was shaken by the pangs of childbirth. The people threw a screen around the Queen and retreated from that place and stood around guarding her.

Standing there hanging on to the branch with her cotton-soft lotus-like hands, which had beautiful fingers with copper-coloured nails, which were adorned with charming golden bracelets, she gave birth to the Hero.

He descended from the unequalled womb of his mother, with his golden-skinned, beautiful body and delightful eyes, and with his delightful hands and feet stretched forth, like a golden goose from a lotus. The Supreme Divinities, after taking a priceless, golden net, approached and caught him as he was born, and stood in front of her, saying: "Rejoice, Your Majesty, an excellent son has been born to you."

Other men are born with their limbs smeared with impurities, but this excellent Lord of Men was born pure, like a priceless jewel deposited on exceedingly soft, spotless silk. Then two streams of water fell from the sky, making his body and his Mother's body cool and pleasing on that auspicious occasion.

From the Supreme Divinities' delightful hands the Gods, having approached, took him on an antelope skin mat, and from their hands noblemen received that Champion Lion of a Man, with a pillow made of silk, and from their hands, like a delightful spotless moon, having placed his broad wheel-marked feet on the plains of the earth, he looked to the easterly direction with his long lotus-like eyes. Then countless hundreds of universes became clear to him, with their men and gods worshipping him with perfumes and so on, and to the Hero they said this: "Sage! There is not even one man here who is your equal, how to say greater?"

In this way the Protector of the World, looking in all directions, and not seeing one who was his equal, having taken seven steps in the northerly direction said this:

"I am the greatest in the world,  
I am the elder in the world,  
I am the best in the world.  
This is my last birth,  
There is no more rebirth for me".

*(from DN 14)*

### THE 32 WONDERS [VV. 87-117]

At this supreme, rare and extraordinary sound the Supreme Divinities and other Gods worshipped the Lord of Men, and a great number of people, taking the Lord of Men, went to the beautiful city called Kapilavatthu. The Earth, though strong enough to bear the great weight of the forests, the King of mountains Meru, and all the waters of the ocean, as though unable to bear the weight of the virtues of that most excellent being, at the moment of his birth trembled. And at that time 32 wonders arose:

Dogs sported with deer, crows with owls, snakes with birds, and gangs of cats sported with rats. Just as parents associate with their children, so animals associated with lions, which are known as the Lords of Animals.

Just as the teacher Sarabhaṅga's arrow returned to him, so ships which had gone to foreign lands returned to their home lands; the great ocean was decorated with variously coloured lotuses; the foaming waves became peaceful, and its waters became exceedingly sweet. The sky became crowded with hanging lotuses in full bloom; the birds abandoned their flight through the air; the rivers stood still, and did not flow.

As a bride becomes supremely beautiful through loving intercourse, so the Earth became supremely beautiful through a meeting with an out-of-season cloud, and it was adorned with countless flowers which rained down as if sent by the Gods. Lordly trees were surrounded by creepers and slender women bearing delightful blooming flowers. The clearings in all directions were resplendent, and the sky was filled with fragrant blossoms; the whole sky, being scented with fragrant perfumes, was most delightful.

The Gods and Demons clad in festive clothes went about joined together in song. All people spoke kindly, and it became clear in all directions. Elephants trumpeted, lions roared, and there was the neighing of horses. Flutes, lutes, and the drums of the Gods in the sky each let loose their charming sounds. The various world-elements with their lordly mountains were pervaded by delightful and great rays of light. A pleasing, fragrant, soft, cool breeze blew pleasantly over all the people.

People oppressed in their limbs with countless diseases and so on were freed therefrom and became happy. The worlds were aroused and became delightful with an immeasurable covering of light, and the waters having broken free from the earth flowed along. The limbs of cripples were straightened out, the blind saw the lame dancing and sporting, and the deaf heard the delightful songs of the dumb.

Even as far as the fires of hell all became cool, and those born in water rejoiced, and the creatures of the earth made merry. For Hungry Ghosts who were overwhelmed with hunger and thirst there was food. In the unbroken darkness of space there was light, and in the sky the multitude of stars, the moon, and the sun shone surpassingly bright, as also the treasures hidden in the earth.

Large blossoming lotuses, having the five variegated colours, after breaking through the surface of the earth, sprang up one on top of the other. Without being played upon or struck, kettle-drums, ornaments and so on let loose an endlessly sweet sound on earth. Men bound with chains and so forth were loosened therefrom. The doors and windows in the various abodes in the world opened by themselves, and because of that the rejoicing hosts of Gods in the Heavens went around sporting, throwing up their clothes and so forth.

### **THE ASCETIC KĀLADEVALA [VV. 118-128]**

The ascetic Kāladevala, who had supernatural power and great wisdom, was the family advisor of the devout King Suddhodana. At the end of his meal, he went to Heaven and sat down to spend the day there. He saw that the Gods had put on festive clothes and were sporting around, and he asked them the reason for their great joy, and they answered him: “In the city of Kapilavatthu there is born to King Suddhodana a son, who, near the Bodhi Tree, will become a Buddha.” After hearing about this, with his mind joyful and elated he instantly departed from there and entered King Suddhodana’s dwelling. While sitting on the prepared seat, the seer said: “It seems, Great King, an unsurpassed and sagacious son has been born to you, I long to see him”.

The King, summoned the Prince, and approached to make him pay his respects to Kāladevala, but instantly, by the power of the Prince’s virtues, his delightful lotus-like feet turned about and were placed on the ascetic’s head - in that life there was no one in the three realms of existence the Supreme Man should pay respects to. If the head of the Protector of the Three Worlds had been placed at the ascetic’s feet the ascetic’s head would surely have split asunder. And so with his hands raised in reverential salutation to the Hero, Kāladeva thought: “It is not suitable to destroy myself.”

The Lord of Men Suddhodana, the Gods beyond all Gods, having seen that wonder, was satisfied, and paid great respect to his son’s tender, beautiful, wheel-marked lotus feet.

### **THE PLOUGHING FESTIVAL [VV. 129-135]**

When it was time for the King’s Ploughing Festival, the city was decked out like a city in Heaven, and the delighted people in their finery assembled at King Suddhodana’s supreme residence. With his body adorned, at the head of the people, having taken his son, who was adorned with many adornments, like Sakka the Lord of the Gods at play, that Master of Men went to the Ploughing Festival.

Having laid the Bodhisatta at the root of a certain Rose Apple tree, which was surrounded with a glorious and charming screen, the nurses went outside to watch the Festival. While sitting on that pleasant couch at the root of that glorious, canopied Rose Apple tree, which was resplendent with golden stars and so on, taking the opportunity, the Hero attained meditative absorption.

Having seen him sitting there like a golden statue, and the Rose Apple tree's shadow standing still, the nurses said to the King: "Such is the wonderful nature of your son." After hearing this about him whose face shone like a clear moon, and whose eyes were like lotuses, he announced: "This is the second time I pay my respects to him", and with his head he paid his respects at his son's feet.

This and countless other wonders occurred in the world, but through fear of extending this book, I have shown only a few, and in brief.

### **THE PALACES [VV. 136-141]**

In that place there were three palaces decorated with variegated jewels, having manifold lodgings with decorated canopies. They were many-storied, adorned with rows of stairs, decked out and suitable for the three seasons. There were a multitude of rays around their turrets, which in their glory put the eternal rays around the turrets of the Palaces of the Gods to shame, and as the rays of the sun illumine the lotus-groves, so these illuminated the lotus-like faces of the people.

Near the many bejeweled walls, the women ornamented their slender bodies, without the help of mirrors. There was a decorated, whitewashed rampart enclosure similar to Mount Kailash, which brought pleasure to the eyes, and moats, which always had countless lotuses, like large sapphire bracelets adorned with many treasures.

Therein the Sole Seer of the Three Worlds lived and, after attaining maturity and enjoying pleasant sensual pleasures, one day he went along the main path to play in the garden.

### **THE SIGNS [VV. 142-158]**

While going along the path, he saw an old man, a sick man, and a dead man, and he lost his attachment to the three realms of existence. On the fourth occasion he saw the delightful form of a renunciant, and delighting in it the Famous One went to a beautiful and delightful garden, which, like the Nandana Wood in Tāvātimsa Heaven, was adorned with many blossoming trees, and the birdsong of a multitude of peacocks and so on.

There the Lord of Men, like the Lord of the Gods Sakka at play, delighted in the sensual pleasures of the delightful music, dance and song of the beautiful Feminine Divinities. While sitting on his radiant seat, after crossing his legs, he thought about how he would be able to adorn his body.

Then the Master of the Gods Sakka, having understood his thoughts, said this to Vissakamma: “Please go and adorn Siddhattha.” Hearing that command Vissakamma approached him and wrapped the Famous One’s beautiful head with ten thousand cloths. He also beautified his body, which was glorious with rare and extraordinary signs, with many superb ornaments, and with the sweet perfume of flowers, sandalwood, and so forth. Adorned by Vissakamma, he sat there on a spotless flat slab of stone, surrounded by beautiful Feminine Divinities, and shone like Sakka, the Master of the Gods.

A message was sent by Suddhodana, the Lord of Men saying: “My son! A son has been born to you!” The Supreme Man, after hearing this and exclaiming: “Today Rāhula, a bond, has been born to me!” at once went to the beautiful city of Kapilavatthu, which was furnished with all sensual pleasures.

Then Kisāgotami, standing on the top floor of the palace, having seen the Prince shining like the sun, said this: “Those to whom this Hero is a son, she who is the wife of this one complete in virtue, all of them are truly satisfied forever.” He heard the pleasant utterance, and full of the joy that had arisen in his heart, he proceeded to his home, and after removing his delightful pearl necklace from his neck, he send it to her.

Then ascending his beautiful palace, which was like Sakka’s palace Vejayanta, he sat down like Sakka the King of the Gods on his couch. Beautiful women like Feminine Divinities surrounded him and performed various songs and dances. But the Hero, greatly delighting in the thought of renunciation and being detached from the five strands of sense pleasure, did not delight in those songs and dances.

### **THE GREAT RENUNCIATION [VV. 159-173]**

The Great Champion, the Master of the Earth, after lying down, reposed a little on the couch, then he folded his legs crosswise. While sitting there he saw the change in the condition of the women who had fallen asleep, and fearful of continued existence, he thought: “I will renounce the world now”.

He approached the doorsill, and called Channa, his attentive, well-controlled, faith-inspiring, highly meritorious friend and councillor, who had placed his head on the beautiful threshold and was reposing, with the thought: “I will hear the Hero if he calls me”. The Bodhisatta said this to Channa: “Prepare the horse named Kanthaka and bring him here”.

Channa accepted the order that was given by the Bodhisatta, and after going from there and preparing the horse, he quickly brought him. Having understood he was being prepared for the Bodhisatta’s Great Renunciation that noble horse, while being harnessed by Channa, neighed excitedly. That noise went out and spread over the whole city, but the Hosts of Gods in the city allowed no one to hear it.

Then that Good Man thought joyously: “I will first see my son and afterwards depart and become a Buddha.” Therefore he went to his wife’s apartments, placed his foot on the threshold, and looked inside. On a couch, which was bestrewn with flowers, like Sakka the Lord of the Gods’ couch, lay Mother Yasodharā together with his son. The Sole Leader of the World, having seen that, thought thus: “If I, having removed her Majesty’s arm, would take my son, she might wake and, through her great love, put an obstacle in the way of my departure. After becoming a Buddha I will return and see my son.” Then the Ruler of Men descended from that place.

Yasodharā, with her well-formed face and lotus-like hands and feet, her laughing, bubbling, bright eyebrows, her eyes like blue lotuses, who was like the full moon, and very desirable - who would be able to abandon enjoying possession of her body, apart from the Hero, standing on perfection’s heights?

### THE DEPARTURE [VV. 174-203]

“Sire, I have brought the horse, now is the time, O Best of Charioteers,” so said Channa to the Famous Protector of the Earth.

Then the Master of the Earth, after hearing the word spoken by Channa, descended from the palace, went to Kanthaka, and said this to him: “Delighting in the welfare of all beings, Kanthaka, carry me today for this one night, and having become an unsurpassed Buddha, I will carry the world with its men and Gods, across the ocean of existence, which is a great repository of terrors such as old-age, sickness and death.”

Having said this, he mounted the white horse, and with Channa holding his tail firmly, the One of Great Strength, having come close to the main gate, thought thus: “If the door is not opened by anyone, then together with Channa holding on to the tail, I will grip Kanthaka with my thighs, and jump over this tall, beautiful wall and depart.” Channa, who was endowed with firm strength, and Kanthaka the supreme horse, both thought of overcoming the wall in the same way. Then, having understood the Bodhisatta’s mind, the Gods who were in possession of the door, rejoicing in the auspicious departure, opened the door.

Then Māra the Murderer thought: “This Siddhattha, the one who has accomplished his aim, I will make one who has not accomplished his aim,” and after going up and standing in the firmament he said this to him: “Do not renounce the world, Great Champion, seven days from now the divine Wheel Treasure will certainly appear to you.” The Murderer speaking thus, the Famous One said this to him: “Who are you?” and Māra showed himself. “Māra, I know my divine Wheel will appear! But you must go! Do not stand here! I have no need of Sovereignty, for, after making the whole of the ten-thousand world system resound, I will become a Buddha, the Sole Leader of the World.” The Great Being said this and Māra, being unable to accept the utterance, vanished right there and then. By saying this to the Wicked One he gave up the glory of the Universal Monarchy, as though it were a lump of spit in the early morning.

The Gods, bearing a thousand jewelled torches went to worship him, and having gathered in that place went before and behind him, and on both sides. The Lesser Divinities worshipped him right there, while a truly great army of Gods, delighting in play, like a shower of flowers raining down from the sky, came there from the ten-thousand world-systems, and, being greatly elated, they wandered around to and fro with their supremely subtle bodies.

The speedy noble-bodied kings of horses, going along that charming path, which had fragrant and excellent flowers and sweet incense powder, and golden flags and so on blazing forth, were impeded by the mass of flowers and were unable to go quickly. While the great festival was continuing on the delightful path in this way, going thirty leagues along the road for the rest of the night, and reaching the bank of the river Anomā, he descended from the back of the horse onto the spotless, cool, sandy ground, and resting, he said: “Channa, take this horse and the things that were brought and go back to the city.”

Having said this, while standing in that place, the Great Champion, with a very sharp sword cut off his fragrantly perfumed top-knot, and threw it into the sky. Sakka the Thousand-Eyed One, desiring to worship it, rose into the sky and received the Hair Relic in a charming, golden casket, and installed it in the spotless Tāvātimsa Heaven, in the top of the Crest-Jewel Shrine, which was about a league in height, made of sapphire, and was such as brings joy to the eyes.

Having taken the eight requisites of a monk which had been brought by the Supreme Divinities, he also threw his excellent clothes into the sky. A Great Divinity caught it and made a delightful twelve-league high Clothes Shrine in the Heavely world.

Then, after going to the Anupiya mango grove, and spending seven days there in the bliss of having gone forth, he went thirty leagues along the road in just one day, and reached Rājagaha and went out on alms-round.

### **RĀJAGAHA [VV. 204-211]**

Because of the Bodhisatta’s radiance the walls and gates, which were made of sapphire rock, appeared like a golden mountain. The mass of the people having seen him, became greatly excited, and asked: “Who is this? Is it a God, a Supreme Divinity, a Devil, or a Demon?” and so forth.

Having entered the city and gathered just enough food for sustenance, looking just a yoke’s distance ahead of him he went along the Royal Highway. The people were disturbed by him, just as the ocean that was churned with Mount Meru as a churning stick was disturbed.

Then having gone to Mount Paṇḍava, and sitting in its shade on a delightful piece of land, he began to eat his mixed-up and soiled food, and the Hero of Great Strength only managed to prevent himself from vomiting through the power of his reflection.

After he had eaten, King Bimbisāra approached and offered the Kingdom countless times to the Best of Men, but he refused it. Then he was begged by the King, saying: “Having become an unsurpassed Buddha, please teach me the Dhamma.”

### SUJĀTĀ [VV. 212-219]

The Hero gave his promise to the Ruler of Men and approached the place for his striving. After going through extraordinary difficulties, and seeing that nothing came of it, and consuming material food and drink he regained bodily strength. Then like a God he reached the root of the Goatherder’s Banyan tree. While the Brilliant One was sitting facing the East, through the radiant colour of his body, the Banyan tree became golden-coloured.

A beautiful lady named Sujātā, who was wishing for success, took a golden bowl with milk-rice on her head, thinking: “I will straight away give an offering to the excellent Spirit of the Tree who has taken up residence in this place.” Then, after seeing the Supreme Man, and thinking: “This is the Tree Spirit!”, with her heart uplifted she gave the bowl of rice to the Excellent One, and said: “Sire! In the same way as my hopes have been successful, may yours also succeed.” After saying this, the noble lady left that place.

Then that Noble Sage, took the bowl of rice and went to the bank of the river Nerañjarā, and ate that excellent food, and after his meal he cast the delightful bowl into the stream and it miraculously floated upstream.

### THE BODHI TREE [VV. 220-241]

The Excellent One approached the grove, which was like the Lord of the Gods’ Nandana Grove in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven, a grove shining with rows of full-blossoming Sal trees, which stole away the people’s minds and eyes, and having spent the day in that place, in the evening-time, with the grace of a lion he went to the Bodhi Tree.

The Lord of Men set out along a wide road which had been prepared by the Divinities, Gods and semi-divine beings. The twice-born brahmin Sothiya, a grass collector, having seen him, offered him a handful of grass to be used as a seat.

As the Supreme Man was going along blue water-lilies, lotuses, and other flowers fell like showers of rain from the sky; the sky was filled with a great deal of charming fragrant incense made of sandalwood, glorious jewelled umbrellas, and charming golden flags. In the sky thousands of Gods sporting garments that they were waving about beat the Gods’ musical drums, and countless chants were sung by Feminine Divinities; and delightful semi-divine beings with delightful limbs performed delightful dances and songs in countless delightful ways.

Then the Sole Leader of the Three Realms of Existence, the Famous One, as the great festival was continuing like a great torrent, took the grass and proceeded to the vicinity of the Lordly Bodhi Tree.

The Supreme Man, the Hero, after circumambulating the Bodhi tree, which was like the top of a silver mountain covered in coral and sapphire, while standing on firm ground on the Eastern side of the tree, threw a fistful of grass, and at once there was a fourteen-cubit seat. Then the One of Great Wisdom, having seen that wonder, thought: “Let my flesh, blood, bones, muscles and skin dry up, but I will surely never give up the effort to attain Awakening.” Then the Great Champion, the Supreme Man, sat in that place in cross-legged position facing the East.

At once Sakka the Lord of the Gods, having taken the Gods’ conch, which was more than two thousand cubits in height, stood there sounding it. The Supreme Divinity Sahampati stood there like a second full-moon, holding aloft a three-league high white umbrella. Suyāma, the Ruler of the Gods, stood there slowly fanning a charming three league high chowrie. The God Pañcasikhā stood there playing many different melodies on a beluva-wood lute he had taken up. The King of the Demons Kāla stood at the head of the dancing-girls singing songs of praise, and thirty-two princesses stood there worshipping with a golden casket full of divine flowers they had taken hold of.

### THE DEFEAT OF MĀRA [VV. 242-266]

Then, as this great festival with the Lord of the Gods and his hosts was proceeding, the Wicked Māra thought thus: “So this successful prince Siddhattha wishes to escape from my sphere of influence, straight away I will make him unsuccessful”, and he created a thousand broad and terrible arms, and collected various blazing weapons with them, and mounted the charming and fierce tusker called Girimekhala, who was one hundred and fifty leagues in extent. Then, surrounded by his army, which had many faces, fire-coloured hair, broad red circular protruding eyes, terrible lip-biting mouths, snake-like arms, and various weapons, he approached that place, and while roaring a most terrible roar, he ordered: “Seize and bind Siddhattha”; and with the sight of that the hosts of Gods were put to flight, like cotton that has arisen in a violent wind.

Māra the Murderer first made a fierce and noisy wind like a deep roaring storm-cloud, but was not able to move even a corner of his robe with it; then he made fall a terrible and awful rain, like the heavy rain at the dissolution of the world, but not even a drop of water was able to fall near the Incomparable One; then having seen that wonder, with a very sad face, he caused to rain down, an extremely terrible fire like fiery great rocks, ashes and mud, a torrent of weapons like rain, a torrent of blazing charcoal, and sand like rain; but all of these after falling from the sky through the strength and power of Māra, into the vicinity of him who had reached the peak of merit, changed into garlands of flowers.

Then having made a supremely awful darkness, like the darkness between the worlds, the One of Wicked Character only beheld a mass of exceedingly beautiful light that arose and shone from the Bodhisatta’s body like a hundred risen suns destroying the darkness of delusion.

Then his face altogether red with anger, with a frowning appearance, having an extremely fearsome, deformed appearance, he let fly his most excellent and extremely sharp Wheel-Weapon, which could surely split into pieces Meru the King of mountains, as though it were the soft stem of a palm tree, but with the approach of that weapon he was unable to do anything to that Mine of Virtue. Rather, having ascended into the sky from that place, it became a sunshade made of flowers over his head. And the great many blazing rocky peaks which were hurled at him, having fallen from the sky, became garlands of flowers.

Having seen that, Māra grieved and having approached the vicinity of the Hero, he said: “This unconquered seat has come to me, rise from this seat!” Then the Devout One, who had done many good and meritorious deeds said: “Māra, you said you have earned this seat, who is your witness?”

Called upon like this the Wicked One stretched forth his hand towards his army and said: “All these are my witnesses!” and with a terrible roar of “I am witness, I am witness”, he made them declare their witness. Then he addressed the Bodhisatta thus: “Who is your witness, Siddhattha?”

Then that Incomparable One said: “Here, Māra, I have no sentient witnesses,” and he withdrew his shining right hand from his beautiful dyed robe, like golden lightning emerging from a glittering cloud, and pointed towards the earth - the earth which had witnessed his perfections - and said: “Why are you so silent now?” and having made the earth resound and roar countless hundreds of times, like a roaring storm-cloud, with the elephant-like strength of a Buddha, he brought the elephant Girimekhala to his knees.

Having seen that, Māra having a very sad face, thought: “Now, let him have it, now let him have it!” and like a broken-toothed snake with its arrogance destroyed he abandoned his countless weapons, clothes, and ornaments, and fled with his army as far as the Cakkavāḷa mountain on the edge of the universe.

The hosts of Gods, after seeing Māra’s army fleeing in fear and grief, spoke thus: “This is the defeat of Māra, and the victory of Prince Siddhattha!” They rejoiced and worshipped the Hero with fragrant perfumes and so on, and returned to their abodes with countless shouts of righteous praise, clad in festive clothes.

### **THE PERFECT AWAKENING [VV. 267-271]**

The Hero of Great Strength defeated the strength of Māra, and while the sun continued to shine, he sat down on the immoveable seat. The Supreme One purified his knowledge of former existences in the first watch of the night, and the divine-eye in the middle watch, and having dived into that part of knowledge which deals with Conditional Origination in the last watch, he meditated on it in countless ways.

At the rise of dawn the lotus-eyed Perfect Sambuddha made the hundred world elements resound, awoke completely, and after becoming a Buddha, with great joy he uttered this matchless exalted utterance:

## The Not-So-Distant Past

Through countless births in Samsāra  
I have wandered without finding  
The house-builder I was seeking:  
Born and suffering again and again.

O house-builder, now you are seen!  
You will not build the house again:  
All your rafters have been broken,  
And the ridgepole has been destroyed,  
My mind has reached the unconditioned,  
And craving's end has been achieved.

*(Dhp. 153-154)*

## **PART THREE: THE PRESENT TIME [vv. 272-457]**

### **THE SEVEN WEEKS [vv. 272-280]**

Having considered in countless ways the virtues of that seat, thinking: “I will not rise from this seat just yet,” in the first week the Teacher sat right there on that immovable seat for seven days, and attained the countless ten hundred million attainments.

Then some Divine Beings had doubts thinking: “Perhaps there is something more for the Famous Hero Siddhattha to do, therefore he does not abandon his place on the seat.” Having known their thought, and to appease that doubt, He of Peaceful Mind, the golden-skinned Light-Maker, the Protector, rose like a golden-swan ascending into the sky, and performed the Double Miracle, and with this Miracle he thus completely appeased the Divine Beings’ thought.

In the second week he stood for seven days worshipping the Bodhi Tree and the Victory Seat with his unblinking lotus-eyes; in the third week he walked in that excellent walkway, which had treasures, and was resplendently beautiful; and in the fourth week the Pure One thought about the Pure Dhamma in the delightful Treasure House. In the fifth week at the root of the excellent Royal Goat-Herder’s Tree he caused the spotless lotus-like faces of Māra’s daughters to wither completely; then in the sixth week at the root of the Mucalinda Tree he awakened the pure lily-like thoughts of the Coiled Lord of Snakes. In the seventh week the Devout One, with a pleasing appearance, experienced the bliss of attainment at the root of the Kings’ Stead Tree - and so he spent the first forty-nine days after his Awakening.

### **THE DIVINE REQUEST [vv. 281-303]**

After making use of the supreme Anotatta water, the tooth-cleaner made out of betel wood, and the yellow myrobalan medicine brought by Sakka the Lord of the Gods, the Bodhisatta accepted the milk-rice and honey-balls brought by the merchants in the bowl offered by the Great Kings.

At the end of his meal he went to the root of the Goat-Herder’s Tree and recalled the profundity of the Dhamma he had understood thus: “This Dhamma which has been understood by me is deep and peaceful like the mass of water borne by the earth,” and so on.

While the King of the Dhamma was reflecting mindfully on the deep nature of the Dhamma thinking: “While I was practising with great effort and thinking to penetrate this Dhamma, to those who came forward and requested it, I cut off my head, delightfully decorated as it was with a top-knot, and other decorations, and gave it to them; I rooted out my collyrium-annointed eyes, and removed my flowing blood. Then through giving away my beautiful, splendid wife, and my son, the light of his family’s lineage, there was nothing known as a gift that I had not given, and no virtue that was not preserved.

Thus, fearing a break in my virtuous practices, I sacrificed my life in my existences as Saṅkhapāla and at other times; and in countless existences which I attained such as Khantivādī, with the cutting off of my limbs and so on, there was no perfection I left unfulfilled. When Māra's army was destroyed by me the earth did not shake, and nor with the Remembrance of Past Lives, in the middle watch when I purified the Divine Eye it did not shake, but in the last watch when I penetrated Conditional Origination, instantaneously, as though giving a round of applause, while releasing a great roar, the earth shook.

Like a gourd filled with rice-gruel, like a pot full of buttermilk, like a hand besmeared with collyrium, like a cloth soaked with grease, this world, filled with a mass of defilements, defiled and excited by passion, corrupted by anger, confused with very strong delusion, is a place for the production of a great deal of ignorance. What is the name of the one who will penetrate this Dhamma? What is the use of preaching to him?"

Thus in this way the Protector became one lacking the energy to give the Ambrosial Dhamma to the people. Then the Supreme Divinity Sahampati, after emitting the following great shout: "The world is surely perishing! The world is surely perishing!" immediately took a host of Gods and Supreme Divinities from the hundred world-elements, and drew close to the Teacher. After approaching and placing his knee on the plain of the earth and stretching forth his hands in reverential salutation he said: "May the Gracious One preach the Dhamma, may the Fortunate One preach the Dhamma; there are some beings with little dust on their eyes who are going to destruction from not hearing it, they will be able to understand the Dhamma".

Then, being requested by Sahampati in this way, the Victorious One, the lotus-faced Sambuddha, looked around the hundred world-elements with his Buddha-eye, and saw that many mortals had but little dust on their eyes. He then classified beings according to their capacity, shunned those incapable of understanding, and took those who were capable, and answered the hosts of Supreme Divinities with his radiant deathless words: "Now let the people present themselves as recipients of faith and I will fill them with the gift of the deathless and True Dhamma."

### **THE ROLLING OF THE DHAMMA WHEEL [VV. 304-327]**

Then the Buddha rose from the Goat-Herder's Tree, emitting the shining Buddha-rays, like the sun rising with great light into the sky over the mountain, like a shining and bright jewel-light. Then he rejoiced Upaka and so on, and gradually covered an 18-league road, which resounded with the sound of a host of bees active in the blossoming trees. So the Famous One went to the supreme Deer Park, which was continuously resounding with countless birds, and perfumed with the scent of blossoming lotuses.

Then, in that place, the Group of Five ascetics, having seen the God of Gods, the Sole Protector of the Three Realms of Existence, the One who Sees to the End of the World, the Hero with beautiful limbs, the Lion King of Sages, the Fortunate One, counselled an evil counsel:

## The Present Time

“Friends! This ascetic, having enjoyed gross food and drink, now has a very beautiful complexion and a full body, we should not pay respects to him. However, he is born into a great lineage, is venerable, and has been a chief in the world, he is worthy of being offered a seat, therefore let us prepare a seat.”

Then the Gracious One, with keen intelligence, having understood their thoughts, destroyed their conceitedness with the fragrant breeze of his friendliness. And they, being unable to maintain their agreement, paid their respects to the Devout One, the Protector of the World.

The sages, not knowing that the King of Sages had become a Buddha, all spoke to him using the term ‘Friend’. Then, the Knower of the Worlds, the Protector of the World, addressed them saying: “Do not speak to the Teacher using the term ‘Friend’. Monks! I am the Realised One, the Worthy One, the Perfect Sambuddha, the Supreme One”, and so he made known to them that he was a Buddha.

Then he sat down on the beautiful seat they had prepared, and addressed with his Divine voice those elders adorned with the ornament of virtue. At that time, while surrounded by countless tens of millions of Supreme Divinities, he destroyed the blind mass of delusion, and showed them the light of his delightful Dhamma with his lotus-like intelligence, and set rolling the Dhamma-Wheel with his radiant teaching.

Thus in the battle-ground known as the Deer Grove, like a mighty king, the King of the Dhamma, took up the delightful sword-like teaching with the hand of wisdom, and cut down the defilements, which, like an enemy, always work for the great harm of the people, and beat the victory drum of the Dhamma, raised its very difficult to attain flag of victory, and established its supreme victory pillar.

The Safety-Maker, a charming sight while going along, became the Sole King of the World, delighting in the World’s welfare, and desirous of leading all people to the City of Nibbāna, he liberated them from the vast bondage of Saṃsāra. Reaching the road to Uruvela, which was like a road in Heaven, like the top of Meru, the Golden Mountain, and making thirty of the august group of young princes drink the supreme elixir of the three deathless paths, and giving them the supreme going-forth, the Sambuddha sent them off saying: “Monks, walk on pilgrimage for the welfare of the world.”

Then reaching Uruvela, he cut off the inner tangle and the outer tangle of the tangled-haired ones, and made them attain the high road. The Supreme One, surrounded by those Free from the Pollutants, like the moon surrounded by the stars, greatly beautified the clearings in all directions with the supreme ornament of his six-coloured rays, which satisfied even the eyes of the birds.

### **KING BIMBIŚĀRA [VV. 328-338]**

Remembering the promise he had given to the famous King Bimbisāra - an abode of virtue who stood out in the noble line of kings - and wishing to fulfil it, he went to the garden called the Staff Wood, which was ornamented with countless trees, groves, and dancing peacocks.

## The Present Time

King Bimbisāra, having heard of the Great Seer's coming, adorned with the ornament of joy and happiness, surrounded by his great ministers, went to that garden and beautified the hair of his head with the lotus-like feet of the Teacher. Then, while sitting, he gave to Bimbisāra the Deathless waters of the True Dhamma.

Resplendent with the great beauty sung of by Sakka the King of the Gods, the Famous One, who is honoured by Gods and Angels, went to fair Rājagaha, which was like the Lord of the Gods' city, and was led to the King's house by the King himself. Then at the end of the meal, the Best of Men, making the great Earth shake, accepted the fair Bamboo Grove Monastery, which was resplendent with full-flowering kingly trees that brought pleasure to the eyes.

The Lord of Sages, having made a fence out of his mass of pure and excellent moral practice, and raising the brilliant sceptre of concentration, while whirling about the supremely sharp and auspicious arrow of his vast Buddha-knowledge, was respected by Gods and men.

The Protector of those without protection, who was beautiful like a golden effulgence, having charming lotus-like feet, pure lotus-like eyes, delightful jasmine-like teeth, who was an ocean of precious virtues, with a gentle moon-like face, dwelt as he liked in that supreme dwelling place, which was situated in a large, pure, creeper-covered arbour, on a mass of white sand which decorated the earth, which had fragrant flowers, the perfume of which was spread about by a gentle breeze, and which was adorned with various lotus flowers in the nearby lake.

### **KĀLUDĀYĪ [vv. 339-355]**

Then King Suddhodana heard: "My child has attained supreme and Perfect Awakening, and, desiring the welfare of the world, has set the True Dhamma wheel rolling, and recently has been living in the delightful Bamboo Wood, and depending on Rājagaha for support." Then desiring to see his own son, who had become a Buddha, nine times sent nine ministers accompanied by nine thousand warriors into the presence of the Great Seer. They went, but after hearing the Dhamma-King's incomparable preaching, and obtaining the supreme benefit of Nibbāna, they forgot to give the message.

Seeing that not even one of them returned King Suddhodana summoned his great minister Kāludāyī, who always greatly delighted in the thought of the going-forth ordination, and said to him: "Carry away my great treasure of a son by whatever means, and delight my eyes by bringing him into my presence."

Then he sent him also, together with a thousand warriors, and having gone with that group, after hearing the Teacher's beautiful preaching, he attained the road to Worthiness. Then after ordaining he worshipped that Best of Men with his hands at his head in reverential salutation, and said to the Sambuddha:

## The Present Time

“The season of Spring has produced colourful and delightful buds and foliage, a thousand delightful branches together with glorious, and deep-green coloured leaves, trees crowded with various extraordinarily fragrant and variegated blossoms, many very beautiful animals, and flocks of birds singing in the excellent groves.

There are now countless delightful lakes, full of very blue and agreeable waters, which are decorated with very fragrant blue, white, copper-coloured, and red lotuses, having unstained and extremely pearly white sandbanks, with a multitude of sweet-sounding grey geese, and a variety of trees along the banks.

The banks themselves are resplendent with rows of flowers and blossoms, having plains covered with fresh and very green lawns, as though covered with pleasing lapis-lazuli, and skies full of light breezes. Reverend Sir! It is time to go to the Royal City called Kapilavatthu, which is prosperous with people having endless riches!” So in this way he praised the beauty of the road.

The Fortunate One, after hearing this great praise, said: “Udāyī, why did you praise the beauty of this journey?” Then Udāyī said this to that Safety-Maker: “Reverend Sir, your father the famous and excellent King Suddhodana wishes to see you; let the Sole Protector of the World’s Benefit, the Realised One, be of assistance to his relatives.”

When He who delights in the World’s Benefit had heard Udāyī’s sweet utterance, He said: “It is good, Udāyī, I will indeed assist my relatives.”

## THE VISIT TO THE SĀKIYAS [VV. 356-373]

Then travelling along adorned with his red robe, like Golden Mount Meru, like the spotless, full moon surrounded by stars, the glorious and Victorious Buddha, together with twenty-thousand Arahats with their minds at peace went along the road league by league for sixty leagues in all, and within two months arrived at the excellent city of his birth.

The Buddha, whose face was shining like a pure lotus flower, luminous like a new sun having a hundred rays, with broad feet marked with the auspicious wheel, the abode of good conduct, the Sole Refuge of the Three Worlds, having a peaceful and excellent body, was worshipped by the Masters of the Earth beginning with Suddhodana, with full golden water-pots, pandals, perfumed smoke, and flowers, small bamboo drums, and so on, and with variegated umbrellas, flags, and yak-tail fans.

The Lord of Sages, having reached that delightful and well-prepared city, which was decorated with sweet-smelling flowers and blossoms, crowded with broad terraces, having water-born flowers strewn over the pure waters of the tanks, resplendent with a multitude of pleasing and colourful peacocks, entered the delightful and supreme Banyan Tree Monastery, which was decorated with noble and charming walkways, mansions, and creeper-covered pavillions.

After pondering thus: “This Siddhattha is our son or our grandson” and so on, the Sākiyas with their inborn and stubborn pride, said to their children and Princes: “You may worship Siddhattha, but we will not worship him.”

Having said that and placed them at the front, they sat down. Then the Tamer of the untamed, the Trained One, the Sole Eye of the Three Worlds, knowing their intention thought: “My relatives do not worship me, but I will now make them worship me”, and immediately after entering the fourth absorption, which is the basis for deep powers, and rising from that absorption, like a golden swan, the golden-coloured Light-Maker, that Noble Sage, ascended into the sky. While pleasing the eyes of all beings, being unlike others, and delighting greatly in that place, he performed the supreme Double Miracle, which was like the Miracle he had performed earlier at the root of the Gaṇḍamba Tree.

Having seen that wonder, with the joy and delight that had arisen, the Sole Leader of the Sākiya Lineage, the Best of Men, King Suddhodana adorned his charming hair with the Teacher’s lotus feet; and all the Sākiyas did likewise. The Hero, when the rain of flowers had finished, having made the delightful Dhamma-rain fall, raised up the minds of all beings on earth.

### **KING SUDDHODANA [VV. 374-391]**

Having destroyed the great delusion, on the second day, together with the Saṅgha, he entered the supreme city and went on systematic alms-round, and in every place he stepped upon his lotus-like feet were received by the countless lotuses that sprung up. Then through the rays of light emanating from his body the city gates, watchtowers, mansions, ramparts and so on in that place became golden themselves.

The One who Makes Light for the World, the Champion, the Peaceful One, the Tamed One, the Light-Maker entered the city streets and walked for alms, and the faithful Yasodharā, while standing in her delightful palace, saw him through the latticed window, and being overcome with love, she called the noble and resplendent Rāhula, who was decorated with splendid jewels, and pointed Him out, saying: “This is your father.”

Then going to the residence of the famous Suddhodana, surrounded by countless women, and worshipping him, she said: “Your Majesty, formerly your son has walked through this city with the grace of the Lord of Gods, but now he walks for alms from house to house!” Having said that, with her wide eyes full of a great many joyful tears, she returned to her palace.

Then the Lord of all other Lords of Men, decorated like the Lord of the Gods, Sakka, trembling, having quickly gone into the vicinity of the Victor, said: “Noble Sākiya! This is not the way of your lineage! Do not roam about, do not roam about! In our lineage, Son, not even one King in former times roamed about for alms!”

The Lord of Men having spoken thus, the Lord of Sages, the Head of all Virtues, said: “Great King, that is your lineage! But my lineage is the Lineage of the Buddhas”, and so he declared his lineage to be that of the Sambuddhas; then while standing in that very place he preached the Supreme Dhamma saying:

One should rise up, one should not be heedless,  
One should live the Dhamma.  
He who lives by Dhamma lives happily  
Both in this world and the next.  
(*Dhp. 168*)

Then having spoken this supreme, delightful verse, which brought bliss to the ears, the Supreme One satisfied the King with a taste of the foremost insight, and then being requested by the King he went to his residence.

The Master of the Earth, satisfied with sweet rice and drinks the Supreme Man and twenty-thousand Arahats, together with the gold-like Kings, with their bright bejeweled crowns. Then, having worshipped Him with reverential salutation, he sat down in the vicinity of the Victor, and countless hundreds of the King’s beautiful women went, and, with the permission of the Lord of Men, they sat down near Him.

### **YASODHARĀ, RĀHULA, AND NANDA [VV. 392-404]**

Then the Ornament of the Three Worlds, the Victor, having preached the sweet Dhamma thought: “If today I do not go to Bimbā’s palace, her heart through pity might break.” Therefore the One who has Pity as his Abode took the pair of Chief Disciples Sāriputta and Moggallāna, and went to his Father’s palace.

The Buddha entered the palace, and with his six-coloured halo shining forth like the sun he sat down in that place on the Buddha-seat. Queen Yasodharā, known as Bimbā, whose body was resplendent with rays of light like one powdered with realgar, whose lips were as red as the Bimba fruit, trembling like a golden creeper approached the Teacher. The touch of the Teacher’s feet, like supremely cool water, extinguished the great fiery grief burning in the fuel of her heart. Then the King told the Teacher of the very many virtues of Bimbā; and the Lord of Sages related the Candakinnara Jātaka.

Seeking his inheritance, his son Prince Rāhula, wearing his glorious Prince’s ornaments, while following Him, said: “To me even your shadow is pleasant”, and speaking with his lovely voice he said: “Give me my inheritance, give me my inheritance!” Having led him to the monastery, and given him the inheritance of the unsurpassed True Dhamma Treasure, the Buddha gave the going-forth ordination to the devout Rāhula.

Then these three festivals arrived for Prince Nanda: his wedding, consecration, and house-warming. The Light-Maker, just prior to the festivals, having led Nanda to the delightful and supreme Banyan Tree monastery, even without his consent, gave him the going-forth ordination.

Having left Kapilavatthu, the Fortunate Buddha-Sun spread the rays of the True Dhamma on the lotus-like people in this place and that place and later once again entered Rājagaha. The Fortunate Buddha then lived in the beautiful Cool Wood, which is crowded with beautiful flowers and trees in the nearby woods, and has a multitude of lotuses and water-lilies in its shining lakes, and many covered walkways with white sand.

### THE PURCHASING OF JETA'S WOOD [vv. 405-422]

Then the best of merchants, Sudatta by name, took many of his wares, and having gone from his home at Sāvattihī to the house of his merchant friend in the pleasant Rājagaha, he heard his auspicious friend say: "A Buddha, a Lord of Men, has arisen in the world." His heart was uplifted with the joy that had arisen, and thinking that night had become day, he departed from that place.

The darkness along the main road being dispelled by the power of the Gods, he went to the delightful Cool Wood, and saw the Great Seer resplendent like the full moon, blazing forth like a lamp post, which brought joy to the eyes, and accepting on his head His supreme feet, Sudatta, the Devout One, listened to the profound, subtle, spotless, noble Dhamma, which is adorned with a thousand methods, and attained the fruit of Stream-Entry. Then he invited the Leader of the World, the Sambuddha, together with the Saṅgha for a meal.

After giving them a pleasurable alms-meal furnished with good colour, smell, and taste, and obtaining the Teacher's promise for his coming to the noble town of Sāvattihī, while going along the path, he had built league after league charming, beautifully-made, excellent monasteries, and gave a great deal of wealth to support them.

Then, having returned to Sāvattihī, which is adorned with a hundred palaces, and is resplendent with decorated towers, city gates, and so on, which in every way surely mocks the city of the Lord of the Gods, being endowed with every good fortune, and adorned with dance and song, and so on, he thought: "Where will the Leader of the World, the Gracious One, live?"

Then looking on all sides for a place that was suitable for a monastery, he saw Prince Jeta's garden, which was like Sakka's garden Nandana, being furnished with shade and water and so forth. The Greatly Famous One bought that piece of land by covering it with ten million gold pieces and in that noble place, which carried off the minds of men and immortals, he built the very large Fragrant Cottage for the Buddha, which was always agreeable with the sound of nets of jingling bells, crowded with golden turrets, delightful with countless jewels, having a sunshade cover adorned with strings of pearls, which was most resplendent with many-coloured canopies, decorated with flowers, and so forth - a noble, beautiful crown for the earth.

He also built large dwellings for the Victor's spiritual sons, well-decorated with many glorious beds, seats and canopies, pavilions, walkways and so on, which captivated the mind's eye at all times. Then he also built lakes having soft, spotless, white sand, with railings and large charming enclosures, having pleasing and very cool water, and crowded with sweet-smelling white water lilies and lotuses.

The merchant had the best of monasteries made, the delightful Jeta's Wood by name, which was resplendent with full-blossoming Sal, Asana, Asoka, Iron Wood, Alexandrian Laurel, Areca Palms, and so on; which was guarded by a superb, delightful rampart shaped like a lordly snake's hood, as large as Mount Kailash, and that monastery shone like a wish-fulfilling jewel that accomplished all the people's desires and needs.

### THE DONATION OF JETA'S WOOD [VV. 423-435]

Then Anāthapiṇḍika, the supporter of the poor and of the Protector of the World, sent a messenger to invite the Lord of Sages for the meal. The Teacher heard the message and surrounded by a great Saṅgha of monks, he departed from that place and in stages reached Sāvattḥī.

Countless gloriously handsome princes took flags, like Gods, and went out from Sāvattḥī and stood in front of the Teacher. Then behind them young women, took charming and full water-pots, like Feminine Divinities, and in the same way went out. Likewise the merchant's wife took full bowls and went out with countless hundreds of women ornamented with hundreds of ornaments. Then the great merchant Anāthapiṇḍika together with hundreds of other great merchants came before the Leader, and the Great Champion was worshipped by them in countless ways.

Because of his delightful six-coloured halo the noble city of Sāvattḥī took on a golden hue, and the Lord of Sages, the Fortunate One, the Handsome One, entered the Jeta's Wood Monastery.

Anāthapiṇḍika said: "I give this monastery to the Saṅgha of the four quarters with the Sambuddha at its head", and having poured excellent, perfumed water from a golden jug on the Teacher's charming lotus-like hands, he donated the beautiful monastery.

After accepting that very delightful, excellent monastery, the Buddha sat down on a priceless and beautiful seat. The Lord of the Lords of Men, the Sole Leader of the Three Worlds, who brings pleasing joy to the three worlds, the Famous One, the Benefactor, the Great Seer, the Teacher, preached to that lordly merchant Sudatta by name on the great advantages of giving a monastery together with gifts to those without protection.

Except for the One of Extensive Wisdom, the Sole Protector of the Three Worlds, what man would be able to talk about the great advantages of giving a monastery even if he harnessed countless thousands of mouths?

Thus He of Extensive Fame taught the Dhamma to Anāthapiṇḍika and also rejoiced the minds of all the people, and having gone here and there, he beat the great Dhamma drum, which has a supremely sweet sound.

### **THE RAIN'S RESIDENCES [vv. 436-457]**

So now I will show the places used for the Rains Retreat by the One who Gives Benefit to the Three Worlds, the One of Great Pity, the Supreme One in the World, whom the Gods and other Divinities always worship.

The Excellent, Victorious Buddha-Sun dwelt for the first Rains Retreat near the city of Banaras, in the Deer Grove, illuminating those who were responsive like a lotus-wood, with a multitude of rays of the True Dhamma.

The Protector dwelt for the second, third, and also the fourth Rains Retreat in the very agreeable Bamboo Wood, near the delightful and most excellent city of Rājagaha, which has streets full of shops having various treasures.

The Sage-Lion of the Sākiyas, in the fifth Rains Retreat, dwelt in the Great Wood, which was near to the very delightful city known as Vesālī, a place resplendent with the rays of the crown-jewels of many Princes.

The Buddha, the repository of endless virtues, having charming eyes like blossoming, very blue, spotless water-lilies, radiating with his radiant gold-like body, in the sixth Rains Retreat, dwelt on the great Mount Maṅkula.

Preaching the most profound, hard-to-see, sweet Dhamma to the Gods, in the seventh Rains Retreat, the incomparable, glorious Sage dwelt on the cool, large, stone throne of the Lord of Gods Sakka.

He, the Excellent Victor over Māra, the one with blossoming lotus-like feet, the abode of good conduct, in his eighth Rains Retreat, dwelt in the pleasing Bhesakalā Wood on the mountain named Crocodile Hill.

The Ornament of the Three Worlds, the Victorious Eagle, having destroyed the arrogance of a great many snake-like sectarians, who had various opinions, in the ninth Rains Retreat, dwelt in the agreeable, very fair, Silk-cotton Wood near to Kosambī.

To quieten the great dispute amongst the monks, in the tenth Rains Retreat, the Noble Sage dwelt with the noble elephant in the noble and extensive Pārileyya forest, which was strewn with flowers.

The Lord of Sages, who had immeasurable intelligence, mind-captivating eyes, pure teeth, who leads people to the ageless, deathless state of Nibbāna by means of the deathless Dhamma, in the eleventh Rains Retreat, dwelt near the noble brahmin village named Nāla.

## The Present Time

The Omniscient Sakyan Sage, in the twelfth Rains Retreat, dwelt at the foot of a Lordly Neem tree in a monastery having delightful, fragrant flowers and fruits, which was near the charming brahmin village of Verañjā.

The Teacher of the Three Worlds, the Champion, whose face was like a blossoming lotus flower, who shone like a beautiful sun, whose abode was pity, living for the benefit of the world, in the thirteenth Rains Retreat, dwelt on the agreeable Cāliya mountain.

The Master of the Dhamma, whose delightful hands and feet were like Bandhuka flowers, devoted to the welfare of all beings - the Hero, the Sage of Great Power - in the fourteenth Rains Retreat, dwelt in the very delightful and excellent Jeta's Wood.

The Lion King of Sages, having slain the forest of elephant-like passion in his responsive relatives, in the fifteenth Rains Retreat, dwelt in the delightful Jewel Cave in Nigrodha's Monastery, on a broad mountain near Kapilavatthu.

After guiding the very harsh Demon Ālavaka to a state of discipline, while leading a great many people along the Path to Peace, in the sixteenth Rains Retreat, he dwelt near the very excellent city named Ālavaka.

The unsurpassed Great Seer, whose fame had spread throughout the three realms, in the seventeenth Rains Retreat, dwelt near the excellent Rājagaha, which delighted the eyes with its ramparts, gateways, houses, archways, and so forth.

Aṅgīrasa, having slain the terrible stain of passion in the world with the sweet, pleasurable Dhamma-medicine, in the eighteenth Rains Retreat, dwelt on Cāliya mountain.

The sweet-voiced Protector of the World, the Noble King of Dhamma, after slaying with the sword of the Dhamma the great enemy delusion in the responsive people and his kinsmen, in the nineteenth Rains Retreat, again dwelt on Cāliya mountain.

The Lord of Sages, who was an abode of purity, living for the welfare of the world, like the auspicious wish-fulfilling tree, the wish-fulfilling gem, or the excellent lucky pot, in the twentieth Rains Retreat, dwelt near the beautiful and excellent Rājagaha.

Thus the One Honoured by the Three Worlds dwelt nowhere continually; and during the first period after the Awakening, the One of Extensive Wisdom, the Sole Kinsman of the World, the Gracious One, having a beautiful body endowed with a six-coloured halo, travelled for the rest of the time.

The Sage, who delights in the progress of the world, who abides happily, for the next twenty-five Rains Retreats, dwelt near Sāvattihī, in the delightful and excellent Jeta's Wood, and in the decorated Eastern Monastery, which was like an abode of the Gods.

Thus he who has measureless pity, dwelt for forty-five years extinguishing the great fires of passion that had arisen in the forest-like minds of men with the supremely sweet Dhamma-water. May He, the Raincloud-Sage, bring peace to the world!

## CONCLUSION [vv. 458-472]

May the noble lady Wisdom, who has arisen in my mind, while pleasing all the people, increase everyday. May I, through the power of the merit that has accumulated through my writing *The Life of the Victorious Buddha*, attain the Tusita Heaven and while listening to the Dhamma preaching of the Protector of the World, Metteyya, enjoy with him honour and success for a long time.

And when that future Buddha is reborn in that delightful city of Ketumatī, may I, a great being, having been born with the three root conditions of generosity, kindness, and wisdom, arise in a royal lineage, and give robes, alms-food, a priceless, extensive, noble dwelling, and medicine to that Great Seer.

Then after receiving the going-forth ordination, while illuminating that unsurpassed dispensation, being endowed with supernatural powers and mindfulness, and bearing the three baskets of the scriptures well in mind, may I hear his declaration: “This man will be a Buddha in the future.”

Then may I, after giving pleasurable gifts to the various Buddhas who will arise, while travelling on in Saṃsāra, like a wish-fulfilling tree, give sweet excellent food and whatever else they long for to living beings. Then, with well-composed mind, giving flesh, blood, eyes and so on, may I fulfil all the perfections of generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, resolution, friendliness, and equanimity, and attaining the height of perfection, become an unsurpassed Buddha, and teach the sweet Dhamma to the people, and release the whole world, including the Gods, from the bondage of this immense Saṃsāra, and attain the noble, peaceful, safe state of Nibbāna!

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This *Life of the Victorious Buddha* was written by the compassionate, devout elder Medhaṅkara by name, who always associates with the virtuous, while dwelling peacefully in a noble residence, resplendent with lakes, ramparts, gates, and so forth, which is named after its builder, King Vijayabāhu, who is a chief of princely lineage, who has become the ornament of Śrī Laṅkā.

Here there should be four hundred and seventy-three verses, and there will be more than five hundred and fifty-five sections.

*THE LIFE OF THE VICTORIOUS BUDDHA IS FINISHED*