

The Buddhacarita of Aśvaghōṣa

Translated by E. B. Cowell

Book II [Life in the Palace]

1. From the time of the birth of that son of his, who, the true master of himself, was to end all birth and old age, the king increased day by day in wealth, elephants, horses, and friends as a river increases with its influx of waters.

2. Of different kinds of wealth and jewels, and of gold, wrought or unwrought, he found treasures of manifold variety, surpassing even the capacity of his desires.

3. Elephants from Himavat, raging with rut, whom not even princes of elephants like Padma could teach to go round in circles, came without any effort and waited on him.

4. His city was all astir with the crowds of horses, some adorned with various marks and decked with new golden trappings, others unadorned and with long flowing manes, — suitable alike in strength, gentleness, and costly ornaments.

5. And many fertile cows, with tall calves, gathered in his kingdom, well nourished and happy, gentle and without fierceness, and producing excellent milk.

6. His enemies became indifferent; indifference grew into friendship; his friends became specially united; were there two sides, — one passed into oblivion.

7. Heaven rained in his kingdom in due time and place, with the sound of gentle winds and clouds, and adorned with wreaths of lightning, and without any drawback of showers of stones or thunderbolts.

8. A fruitful crop sprang up according to season, even without the labor of ploughing; and the old plants grew more vigorous in juice and substance.

9. Even at that crisis which threatens danger to the body like the collision of battle, pregnant women

brought forth in good health, in safety, and without sickness.

10. And whereas men do not willingly ask from others, even where a surety's property is available, — at that time even one possessed of slender means turned not his face away when solicited.

11. There was no ruin nor murder, — nay, there was not even one ungenerous to his kinsmen, no breaker of obligations, none untruthful nor injurious, — as in the days of Yayāti the son of Nahuṣa.

12. Those who sought religious merit performed sacred works and made gardens, temples, and hermitages, wells, cisterns, lakes, and groves, having beheld heaven as it were visible before their eyes.

13. The people, delivered from famine, fear, and sickness, dwelt happily as in heaven; and in mutual contentment husband transgressed not against wife, nor wife against husband.

14. None pursued love for mere sensual pleasure; none hoarded wealth for the sake of desires; none practiced religious duties for the sake of gaining wealth; none injured living beings for the sake of religious duty.

15. On every side theft and its kindred vices disappeared; his own dominion was in peace and at rest from foreign interference; prosperity and plenty belonged to him, and the cities in his realm were (healthy) like the forests.

16. When that son was born it was in that monarch's kingdom as in the reign of Manu the son of the Sun, — gladness went everywhere and evil perished; right blazed abroad and sin was still.

17. Since at the birth of this son of the king such a universal accomplishment of all objects took place,

the king in consequence caused the prince's name to be Sarvārthasiddha.

18. But the queen Māyā, having seen the great glory of her new-born son, like some Ṛṣi of the gods, could not sustain the joy which it brought; and that she might not die she went to heaven.

19. Then the queen's sister, with an influence like a mother's, undistinguished from the real mother in her affection or tenderness, brought up as her own son the young prince who was like the offspring of the gods.

20. Then like the young sun on the eastern mountain or the fire when fanned by the wind, the prince gradually grew in all due perfection, like the moon in the fortnight of brightness.

21. Then they brought him as presents from the houses of his friends costly unguents of sandalwood, and strings of gems exactly like wreaths of plants, and little golden carriages yoked with deer;

22. Ornaments also suitable to his age, and elephants, deer, and horses made of gold, carriages and oxen decked with rich garments, and carts gay with silver and gold.

23. Thus indulged with all sorts of such objects to please the senses as were suitable to his years, child as he was, he behaved not like a child in gravity, purity, wisdom, and dignity.

24. When he had passed the period of childhood and reached that of middle youth, the young prince learned in a few days the various sciences suitable to his race, which generally took many years to master.

25. But having heard before from the great seer Asita his destined future which was to embrace transcendental happiness, the anxious care of the king of the present Śākya race turned the prince to sensual pleasures.

26. Then he sought for him from a family of unblemished moral excellence a bride possessed of beauty, modesty, and gentle bearing, of wide-spread glory, Yaśodharā by name, having a name well worthy of her, a very goddess of good fortune.

27. Then after that the prince, beloved of the king his father, he who was like Sanatkumāra, rejoiced in the society of that Śākya princess as the thousand-eyed (Indra) rejoiced with his bride Śacī.

28. 'He might perchance see some inauspicious sight which could disturb his mind,' — thus reflecting the king had a dwelling prepared for him apart from the busy press in the recesses of the palace.

29. Then he spent his time in those royal apartments, furnished with the delights proper for every season, gaily decorated like heavenly chariots upon the earth, and bright like the clouds of autumn, amidst the splendid musical concerts of singing-women.

30. With the softly-sounding tambourines beaten by the tips of the women's hands, and ornamented with golden rims, and with the dances which were like the dances of the heavenly nymphs, that palace shone like Mount Kailāsa.

31. There the women delighted him with their soft voices, their beautiful pearl-garlands, their playful intoxication, their sweet laughter, and their stolen glances concealed by their brows.

32. Borne in the arms of these women well-skilled in the ways of love, and reckless in the pursuit of pleasure, he fell from the roof of a pavilion and yet reached not the ground, like a holy sage stepping from a heavenly chariot.

33. Meanwhile the king for the sake of ensuring his son's prosperity and stirred in heart by the destiny which had been predicted for him, delighted himself in perfect calm, ceased from all evil, practiced all self-restraint, and rewarded the good.

34. He turned to no sensual pleasures like one wanting in self-control; he felt no violent delight in any state of birth; he subdued by firmness the restless horses of the senses; and he surpassed his kindred and citizens by his virtues.

35. He sought not learning to vex another; such knowledge as was beneficent, that only he studied; he wished well to all mankind as much as to his own subjects.

36. He worshipped also duly the brilliant (Agni) that tutelary god of the Aṅgirasas, for his son's long life; and he offered oblations in a large fire, and gave gold and cows to the Brāhmans.

37. He bathed to purify his body and mind with the waters of holy places and of holy feelings; and at the same time he drank the soma-juice as enjoined by the Veda, and the heartfelt self-produced happiness of perfect calm.

38. He only spoke what was pleasant and not unprofitable; he discoursed about what was true and not ill-natured, he could not speak even to himself for very shame a false pleasant thing or a harsh truth.

39. In things which required to be done, whether they were pleasant or disagreeable, he found no reason either for desire or dislike; he pursued the advantageous which could be attained without litigation; he did not so highly value sacrifice.

40. When a suppliant came to him with a petition, he at once hastened to quench his thirst with the water sprinkled on his gift; and without fighting, by the battle-axe of his demeanor he smote down the arrogant armed with double pride.

41. Thus he took away the one, and protected the seven; he abandoned the seven and kept the five; he obtained the set of three and learned the set of three; he understood the two and abandoned the two.

42. Guilty persons, even though he had sentenced them to death, he did not cause to be killed nor even looked on them with anger; he bound them with gentle words and with the reform produced in their character, — even their release was accompanied by no inflicted injury.

43. He performed great religious vows prescribed by ancient seers; he threw aside hostile feelings long cherished; he acquired glory redolent with the fragrance of virtue; he relinquished all passions involving defilement.

44. He desired not to take his tribute of one-sixth without acting as the guardian of his people; he had no wish to covet another's property; he desired not to mention the wrong-doing of his enemies; nor did he wish to fan wrath in his heart.

45. When the monarch himself was thus employed his servants and citizens followed his example, like the senses of one absorbed in contemplation whose mind is abstracted in profound repose.

46. In course of time to the fair-bosomed Yaśodharā — who was truly glorious in accordance with her name — there was born from the son of Śuddhodana a son named Rāhula, with a face like the enemy of Rāhu.

47. Then the king who from regard to the welfare of his race had longed for a son and been exceedingly delighted [at his coming] — as he had rejoiced at the birth of his son, so did he now rejoice at the birth of his grandson.

48. 'O how can I feel that love which my son feels for my grandson?' Thus thinking in his joy he at the due time attended to every enjoined rite like one who fondly loves his son and is about to rise to heaven.

49. Standing in the paths of the pre-eminent kings who flourished in primeval ages, he practiced austerities without laying aside his white garments, and he offered in sacrifice only those things which involved no injury to living creatures.

50. He of holy deeds shone forth gloriously, in the splendor of royalty and the splendor of penances, conspicuous by his family and his own conduct and wisdom, and desirous to diffuse brightness like the sun.

51. Having offered worship, he whose own glory was secure muttered repetitions of Vedic texts to Svayambhū for the safety of his son, and performed various ceremonies hard to be accomplished, like the god Ka in the first aeon wishing to create living beings.

52. He laid aside weapons and pondered the Śāstra, he practiced perfect calm and underwent various observances, like a hermit he refused all objects of sense, he viewed all his kingdoms like a father.

53. He endured the kingdom for the sake of his son, his son for his family, his family for fame, fame for heaven, heaven for the soul, — he only desired the soul's continuance for the sake of duty.

54. Thus did he practice the various observances as followed by the pious and established from revelation, he asking himself, 'now that he has seen the face of his son, how may my son be stopped from going to the forest?'

55. The prudent kings of the earth, who wish to guard their prosperity, watch over their sons in the world; but this king, though loving religion, kept his son from religion and set him free towards all objects of pleasure.

56. But all Bodhisattvas, those beings of pre-eminent nature, after knowing the flavour of worldly enjoyments, have departed to the forest as soon as a son is born to them; therefore he too, though he had accomplished all his previous destiny, even when the (final) motive had begun to germinate, still went on pursuing worldly pleasure up to the time of attaining the supreme wisdom.

[Such is the second chapter in the great poem Śrī Buddhacarita, called Life in the Palace]

Book III [The Prince's Perturbation]

1. On a certain day he heard of the forests carpeted with tender grass, with their trees resounding with the kokilas, adorned with lotus-ponds, and which had been all bound up in the cold season.

2. Having heard of the delightful appearance of the city groves beloved by the women, he resolved to go out of doors, like an elephant long shut up in a house.

3. The king, having learned the character of the wish thus expressed by his son, ordered a pleasure-party to be prepared, worthy of his own affection and his son's beauty and youth.

4. He prohibited the encounter of any afflicted common person in the highroad; 'heaven forbid that the prince with his tender nature should even imagine himself to be distressed.'

5. Then having removed out of the way with the greatest gentleness all those who had mutilated limbs or maimed senses, the decrepit and the sick

and all squalid beggars, they made the highway assume its perfect beauty.

6. Along this road thus made beautiful, the fortunate prince with his well-trained attendants came down one day at a proper time from the roof of the palace and went to visit the king by his leave.

7. Then the king, with tears rising to his eyes, having smelt his son's head and long gazed upon him, gave him his permission, saying, 'Go,' but in his heart through affection he could not let him depart.

8. He then mounted a golden chariot, adorned with reins bright like flashing lightning, and yoked with four gentle horses, all wearing golden trappings.

9. With a worthy retinue he entered the road which was strewn with heaps of gleaming flowers, with garlands suspended and banners waving, like the moon with its asterism entering the sky.

10. Slowly, slowly he passed along the highway, watched on every side by the citizens, and beshowered by their eyes opened wide with curiosity like blue lotuses.

11. Some praised him for his gentle disposition, others hailed him for his glorious appearance, others eulogized his beauty from his fine countenance and desired for him length of days.

12. Hump-backed men coming out from the great families, and troops of foresters and dwarfs, and women coming out from the meaner houses bowed down like the banners of some procession of the gods.

13. Hearing the news, 'the prince is going out,' from the attendants of the female apartments, the women hastened to the roofs of the different mansions, having obtained the leave of their lords.

14. Hindered by the strings of their girdles which had slipped down, with their eyes bewildered as just awakened from sleep, and with their ornaments hastily put on in the stir of the news, and filled with curiosity, they crowded round;

15. Frightening the flocks of birds which lived in the houses, with the noise of their girdles and the jingling of their anklets which resounded on the staircases and roofs of the mansions, and mutually reproaching one another for their hurry.

16. Some of these women, even in their haste as they rushed longing to see, were delayed in their going by the weight of their hips and full bosoms.

17. Another, though well able to go herself, checked her pace and forbore to run, hiding with shame her ornaments hitherto worn only in seclusion, and now too boldly displayed.

18. There they were restlessly swaying about in the windows, crowded together in the mutual press, with their earrings polished by the continual collision and their ornaments all jingling.

19. The lotus-like faces of the women gleamed while they looked out from the windows with their earrings coming into mutual proximity, as if they were real lotuses fastened upon the houses.

20. With the palaces all alive with crowds of damsels, every aperture thrown open in eager curiosity, the magnificent city appeared on every side like heaven with its divine chariots thronged with celestial nymphs.

21. The faces of the beautiful women shone like lotuses wreathed in garlands, while through the narrowness of the windows their earrings were transferred to each other's cheeks.

22. Gazing down upon the prince in the road, the women appeared as if longing to fall to the earth; gazing up to him with upturned faces, the men seemed as if longing to rise to heaven.

23. Beholding the king's son thus radiant in his beauty and glory, those women softly whispered, 'happy is his wife,' with pure minds and from no baser feeling.

24. 'He with the long sturdy arms, who stands in his beauty like the flower-armed god visibly present, will leave his royal pomp and devote himself to religion,' thus thinking, full of kindly feelings towards him, they all offered reverence.

25. Beholding for the first time that high-road thus crowded with respectful citizens, all dressed in white sedate garments, the prince for a while did feel a little pleasure and thought that it seemed to promise a revival of his youth.

26. But then the gods, dwelling in pure abodes, having beheld that city thus rejoicing like heaven itself, created an old man to walk along on purpose to stir the heart of the king's son.

27. The prince having beheld him thus overcome with decrepitude and different in form from other men, with his gaze intently fixed on him, thus addressed his driver with simple confidence:

28. 'Who is this man that has come here, O charioteer, with white hair and his hand resting on a staff, his eyes hidden beneath his brows, his limbs bent down and hanging loose, — is this a change produced in him or his natural state or an accident?'

29. Thus addressed, the charioteer revealed to the king's son the secret that should have been kept so carefully, thinking no harm in his simplicity, for those same gods had bewildered his mind:

30. 'That is old age by which he is broken down, — the ravisher of beauty, the ruin of vigor, the cause of sorrow, the destruction of delights, the bane of memories, the enemy of the senses.

31. 'He too once drank milk in his childhood, and in course of time he learned to grope on the ground; having step by step become a vigorous youth, he has step by step in the same way reached old age.'

32. Being thus addressed, the prince, starting a little, spoke these words to the charioteer, 'What! will this evil come to me also?' and to him again spoke the charioteer:

33. 'It will come without doubt by the force of time through multitude of years even to my long-lived lord; all the world knows thus that old age will destroy their comeliness and they are content to have it so.'

34. Then he, the great-souled one, who had his mind purified by the impressions of former good actions, who possessed a store of merits accumulated through many preceding aeons, was

deeply agitated when he heard of old age, like a bull who has heard the crash of a thunderbolt close by.

35. Drawing a long sigh and shaking his head, and fixing his eyes on that decrepit old man, and looking round on that exultant multitude he then uttered these distressed words:

36. 'Old age thus strikes down all alike, our memory, comeliness, and valor; and yet the world is not disturbed, even when it sees such a fate visibly impending.

37. 'Since such is our condition, O charioteer, turn back the horses, — go quickly home; how can I rejoice in the pleasure-garden, when the thoughts arising from old age overpower me?'

38. Then the charioteer at the command of the king's son turned the chariot back, and the prince lost in thought entered even that royal palace as if it were empty.

39. But when he found no happiness even there, as he continually kept reflecting, 'old age, old age,' then once more, with the permission of the king, he went out with the same arrangement as before.

40. Then the same deities created another man with his body all afflicted by disease; and on seeing him the son of Śuddhodana addressed the charioteer, having his gaze fixed on the man:

41. 'Yonder man with a swollen belly, his whole frame shaking as he pants, his arms and shoulders hanging loose, his body all pale and thin, uttering plaintively the word "mother," when he embraces a stranger, — who, pray, is this?'

42. Then his charioteer answered, 'Gentle Sir, it is a very great affliction called sickness, that has grown up, caused by the inflammation of the (three) humors, which has made even this strong man no longer master of himself.'

43. Then the prince again addressed him, looking upon the man compassionately, 'Is this evil peculiar to him or are all beings alike threatened by sickness?'

44. Then the charioteer answered, 'O prince, this evil is common to all; thus pressed round by diseases men run to pleasure, though racked with pain.'

45. Having heard this account, his mind deeply distressed, he trembled like the moon reflected in the waves of water; and full of sorrow he uttered these words in a low voice:

46. 'Even while they see all this calamity of diseases mankind can yet feel tranquility; alas for the scattered intelligence of men who can smile when still not free from the terrors of disease!

47. 'Let the chariot, O charioteer, be turned back from going outside, let it return straight to the king's palace; having heard this alarm of disease, my mind shrinks into itself, repelled from pleasures.'

48. Then having turned back, with all joy departed, he entered his home, absorbed in thought; and having seen him thus return a second time, the king himself entered the city.

49. Having heard the occasion of the prince's return he felt himself as deserted by him, and, although unused to severe punishment, even when displeased, he rebuked him whose duty it was to see that the road was clear.

50. And once more he arranged for his son all kinds of worldly enjoyments to their highest point; imploring in his heart, 'Would that he might not be able to forsake us, even though rendered unable only through the restlessness of his senses.'

51. But when in the women's apartments his son found no pleasure in the several objects of the senses, sweet sounds and the rest, he gave orders for another progress outside, thinking to himself, 'It may create a diversion of sentiment.'

52. And in his affection pondering on the condition of his son, never thinking of any ills that might come from his haste, he ordered the best singing-women to be in attendance, as well-skilled in all the soft arts that can please.

53. Then the royal road being specially adorned and guarded, the king once more made the prince go out, having ordered the charioteer and chariot to

proceed in a contrary direction (to the previous one).

54. But as the king's son was thus going on his way, the very same deities created a dead man, and only the charioteer and the prince, and none else, beheld him as he was carried dead along the road.

55. Then spoke the prince to the charioteer, 'Who is this borne by four men, followed by mournful companions, who is bewailed, adorned but no longer breathing?'

56. Then the driver, — having his mind overpowered by the gods who possess pure minds and pure dwellings, — himself knowing the truth, uttered to his lord this truth also which was not to be told:

57. 'This is some poor man who, bereft of his intellect, senses, vital airs and qualities, lying asleep and unconscious, like mere wood or straw, is abandoned alike by friends and enemies after they have carefully swathed and guarded him.'

58. Having heard these words of the charioteer he was somewhat startled and said to him, 'Is this an accident peculiar to him alone, or is such the end of all living creatures?'

59. Then the charioteer replied to him, 'This is the final end of all living creatures; be it a mean man, a man of middle state, or a noble, destruction is fixed to all in this world.'

60. Then the king's son, sedate though he was, as soon as he heard of death, immediately sank down overwhelmed, and pressing the end of the chariot pole with his shoulder spoke with a loud voice,

61. 'Is this end appointed to all creatures, and yet the world throws off all fear and is infatuated! Hard indeed, I think, must the hearts of men be, who can be self-composed in such a road.

62. 'Therefore, O charioteer, turn back our chariot, this is no time or place for a pleasure-excursion; how can a rational being, who knows what destruction is, stay heedless here, in the hour of calamity?'

63. Even when the prince thus spoke to him, the charioteer did not turn the chariot back; but at his peremptorily reiterated command he retired to the forest Padmakhaṇḍa.

64. There he beheld that lovely forest like Nandana itself, full of young trees in flower with intoxicated kokilas wandering joyously about, and with its bright lakes gay with lotuses and well-furnished with watering-places.

65. The king's son was perforce carried away to that wood filled with troops of beautiful women, just as if some devotee who had newly taken his vow were carried off, feeling weak to withstand temptation, to the palace of the monarch of Alakā, gay with the dancing of the loveliest heavenly nymphs.

[Such is the third chapter in the great poem Śrī Buddhacarita, called The Prince's Perturbation]

Book IV [The Women Rejected]

1. Then from that city-garden, with their eyes restless in excitement, the women went out to meet the prince as a newly-arrived bridegroom;

2. And when they came up to him, their eyes wide open in wonder, they performed their due homage with hands folded like a lotus-calyx.

3. Then they stood surrounding him, their minds overpowered by passion, as if they were drinking him in with their eyes motionless and blossoming wide with love.

4. Some of the women verily thought that he was Kāma incarnate — decorated as he was with his brilliant signs as with connate ornaments.

5. Others thought from his gentleness and majesty that it was the moon with its ambrosial beams as it were visibly come down to the earth.

6. Others, smitten by his beauty, yawned as if to swallow him, and fixing their eyes on each other, softly sighed.

7. Thus the women only looked upon him, simply gazing with their eyes, — they spoke not, nor did they smile, controlled by his power.

8. But having seen them thus listless, bewildered in their love, the wise son of the family priest, Udāyin, thus addressed them:

9. 'Ye are all skilled in all the graceful arts, proficient in understanding the language of amorous sentiments, possessed of beauty and gracefulness, thorough masters in your own styles.

10. 'With these graces of yours ye may embellish even the Northern Kurus, yea, even the dances of Kuvera, much more this little earth.

11. 'Ye are able to move even sages who have lost all their desires, and to ensnare even the gods who are charmed by heavenly nymphs.

12. 'By your skill in expressing the heart's feelings, by your coquetry, your grace, and your perfect beauty, ye are able to enrapture even women, how much more easily men.

13. 'You thus skilled as ye are, each set in her own proper sphere, — such as this is your power, I am not satisfied with your simplicity [when you profess to find him beyond your reach].

14. 'This timid action of yours would be fit for new brides, their eyes closed through shame, — or it might be a blandishment worthy even of the wives of the cowherds.

15. 'What though this hero be great by his exalted glory, yet "great is the might of women," let this be your firm resolve.

16. 'In olden time a great seer, hard to be conquered even by the gods, was spurned by a harlot, the beauty of Kāśī, planting her feet upon him.

17. 'The Bhikṣu Manthālagautama was also formerly spurned by Bālamukhyā with her leg, and wishing to please her he carried out dead bodies for her sake to be buried.

18. 'And a woman low in standing and caste fascinated the great seer Gautama, though a master of long penances and old in years.

19. 'So Śāntā by her various wiles captivated and subdued the sage's son Rṣyaśṛṅga, unskilled in women's ways.

20. 'And the great seer Viśvāmitra, though plunged in a profound penance, was carried captive for ten years in the forests by the nymph Ghṛtācī.

21. 'Many such seers as these have women brought to shame — how much more than a delicate prince in the first flower of his age?

22. 'This being so, boldly put forth your efforts that the prosperity of the king's family may not be turned away from him.

23. 'Ordinary women captivate similar lovers; but they are truly women who subdue the natures of high and low.'

24. Having heard these words of Udāyin these women as stung to the heart rose even above themselves for the conquest of the prince.

25. With their brows, their glances, their coquetries, their smiles, their delicate movements, they made all sorts of significant gestures like women utterly terrified.

26. But they soon regained their confidence through the command of the king and the gentle temperament of the prince, and through the power of intoxication and of love.

27. Then surrounded by troops of women the prince wandered in the wood like an elephant in the forests of Himavat accompanied by a herd of females.

28. Attended by the women he shone in that pleasant grove, as the sun surrounded by Apsarasas in his royal garden.

29. There some of them, urged by passion, pressed him with their full firm bosoms in gentle collisions.

30. Another violently embraced him after making a pretended stumble, — leaning on him with her shoulders drooping down, and with her gentle creeper-like arms dependent.

31. Another with her mouth smelling of spirituous liquor, her lower lip red like copper, whispered in his ear, 'Let my secret be heard.'

32. Another, all wet with unguents, as if giving him her command, clasped his hand eagerly and said, 'Perform thy rites of adoration here.'

33. Another, with her blue garments continually slipping down in pretended intoxication, stood conspicuous with her tongue visible like the night with its lightning flashing.

34. Others, with their golden zones tinkling, wandered about here and there, showing to him their hips veiled with thin cloth.

35. Others leaned, holding a mango-bough in full flower, displaying their bosoms like golden jars.

36. Another, coming from a lotus-bed, carrying lotuses and with eyes like lotuses, stood like the lotus-goddess Padmā, by the side of that lotus-faced prince.

37. Another sang a sweet song easily understood and with the proper gesticulations, rousing him, self-subdued though he was, by her glances, as saying, 'O how thou art deluded!'

38. Another, having armed herself with her bright face, with its brow-bow drawn to its full, imitated his action, as playing the hero.

39. Another, with beautiful full bosoms, and having her earrings waving in the wind, laughed loudly at him, as if saying, 'Catch me, sir, if you can!'

40. Some, as he was going away, bound him with strings of garlands, — others punished him with words like an elephant-driver's hook, gentle yet reproachful.

41. Another, wishing to argue with him, seizing a mango-spray, asked, all bewildered with passion, 'This flower, whose is it?'

42. Another, assuming a gait and attitude like those of a man, said to him, 'Thou who art conquered by women, go and conquer this earth!'

43. Then another with rolling eyes, smelling a blue lotus, thus addressed the prince with words slightly indistinct in her excitement,

44. 'See, my lord, this mango covered with its honey-scented flowers, where the kokila sings, as if imprisoned in a golden cage.

45. 'Come and see this aśoka tree, which augments lovers' sorrows, — where the bees make a noise as if they were scorched by fire.

46. 'Come and see this tilaka tree, embraced by a slender mango-branch, like a man in a white garment by a woman decked with yellow unguents.

47. 'Behold this kuruvaka in flower, bright like fresh resin-juice, which bends down as if it felt reproached by the color of women's nails.

48. 'Come and see this young aśoka, covered all over with new shoots, which stands as it were ashamed at the beauty of our hands.

49. 'See this lake surrounded by the sinduvāra shrubs growing on its banks, like a fair woman reclining, clad in fine white cloth.

50. 'See the imperial power of females — yonder ruddy-goose in the water goes behind his mate following her like a slave.

51. 'Come and listen to the notes of this intoxicated cuckoo as he sings, while another cuckoo sings as if consenting, wholly without care.

52. 'Would that thine was the intoxication of the birds which the spring produces — and not the thought of a thinking man, ever pondering how wise he is!'

53. Thus these young women, their souls carried away by love, assailed the prince with all kinds of stratagems.

54. But although thus attacked, he, having his senses guarded by self-control, neither rejoiced nor smiled, thinking anxiously, 'One must die.'

55. Having seen them in their real condition, that best of men pondered with an undisturbed, and steadfast mind.

56. 'What is it that these women lack that they perceive not that youth is fickle? for this old age will destroy whatever has beauty.

57. 'Verily they do not see any one's plunge into disease, and so dismissing fear, they are joyous in a world which is all pain.

58. 'Evidently they know nothing of death which carries all away; and so at ease and without distress they can sport and laugh.

59. 'What rational being, who knows of old age, death and sickness, could stand or sit down at his ease or sleep, far less laugh?

60. 'But he verily is like one bereft of sense, who, beholding another aged or sick or dead, remains self-possessed and not afflicted.

61. '(So) even when a tree is deprived of its flowers and fruits, or if it is cut down and falls, no other tree sorrows.'

62. Seeing him thus absorbed in contemplation, with his desires estranged from all worldly objects, Udāyin, well skilled in the rules of policy, with kindly feelings addressed him:

63. 'Since I was appointed by the king as a fitting friend for thee, therefore I have a wish to speak to thee in this friendliness of my heart.

64. 'To hinder from what is disadvantageous, to urge to what is advantageous — and not to forsake in misfortune, — these are the three marks of a friend.

65. 'If I, after having promised my friendship, were not to heed when thou turnest away from the great end of man, there would be no friendship in me.

66. 'Therefore I speak as thy friend, — such rudeness as this to women is not befitting for one young in years and graceful in person.

67. 'It is right to woo a woman even by guile, this is useful both for getting rid of shame and for one's own enjoyment.

68. 'Reverential behavior and compliance with her wishes are what binds a woman's heart; good qualities truly are a cause of love, and women love respect.

69. 'Wilt thou not then, O large-eyed prince, even if thy heart is unwilling, seek to please them with a courtesy worthy of this beauty of thine?

70. 'Courtesy is the balm of women, courtesy is the best ornament; beauty without courtesy is like a grove without flowers.

71. 'But of what use is courtesy by itself? let it be assisted by the heart's feelings; surely, when worldly objects so hard to attain are in thy grasp, thou wilt not despise them.

72. 'Knowing that pleasure was the best of objects, even the god Purāṁdara (Indra) wooed in olden time Ahalyā the wife of the saint Gautama.

73. 'So too Agastya wooed Rohiṇī, the wife of Soma; and therefore, as Śruti saith, a like thing befell Lopāmudrā.

74. 'The great ascetic Vṛhaspati begot Bharadvāja on Mamatā the daughter of the Maruts, the wife of Autathya.

75. 'The Moon, the best of offerors, begat Budha of divine nature on the spouse of Vṛhaspati as she was offering a libation.

76. 'So too in old time Parāśara, overpowered by passion on the bank of the Yamunā, lay with the maiden Kālī who was the daughter of the son of the Water (Agni).

77. 'The sage Vaśiṣṭha through lust begot a son Kapiṅjalāda on Akṣamālā a despised low-caste woman.

78. 'And the seer-king Yayāti, even when the vigor of his prime was gone, sported in the Caitraratha forest with the Apsaras Viśvācī.

79. 'And the Kaurava king Pāṇḍu, though he knew that intercourse with his wife would end in death, yet overcome by the beauty and good qualities of Mādī yielded to the pleasures of love.

80. 'And so Karālanaka, when he carried off the Brāhman's daughter, incurred loss of caste thereby, but he would not give up his love.

81. 'Great heroes such as these pursued even contemptible desires for the sake of pleasure, how much more so when they are praiseworthy of their kind?

82. 'And yet thou, a young man, possessed of strength and beauty, despisest enjoyments which rightly belong to thee, and to which the whole world is devoted.'

83. Having heard these specious words of his, well-supported by sacred tradition, the prince made reply, in a voice like the thundering of a cloud:

84. 'This speech manifesting affection is well-befitting in thee; but I will convince thee as to where thou wrongly judgest me.

85. 'I do not despise worldly objects, I know that all mankind are bound up therein; but remembering that the world is transitory, my mind cannot find pleasure in them.

86. 'Old age, disease, and death — if these three things did not exist, I too should find my enjoyment in the objects that please the mind.

87. 'Yet even though this beauty of women were to remain perpetual, still delight in the pleasures of desire would not be worthy of the wise man.

88. 'But since their beauty will be drunk up by old age, to delight therein through infatuation cannot be a thing approved even by thyself.

89. 'He who himself subject to death, disease, and old age, can sport undisturbed with those whose very nature implies death, disease, and old age, such a man is on a level with birds and beasts.

90. 'And as for what thou sayest as to even those great men having become victims to desire, do not

be bewildered by them, for destruction was also their lot.

91. 'Real greatness is not to be found there, where there is universal destruction, or where there is attachment to earthly objects, or a want of self-control.

92. 'And when thou sayest, "Let one deal with women even by guile," I know naught about guile, even if it be accompanied with courtesy.

93. 'That compliance too with a woman's wishes pleases me not, if truthfulness be not there; if there be not a union with one's whole soul and nature, then "out upon it" say I.

94. 'A soul overpowered by passion, believing in falsehood, carried away by attachment and blind to the faults of its objects, — what is there in it worth being deceived?

95. 'And if the victims of passion do deceive one another, — are not men unfit for women to look at and women for men?

96. Since then these things are so, thou surely wouldest not lead me astray into ignoble pleasures, — me afflicted by sorrow, and subject to old age and death?

97. 'Ah! thy mind must be very firm and strong, if thou canst find substance in the transitory pleasures of sense; even in the midst of violent alarm thou canst cling to worldly objects, when thou seest all created beings in the road of death.

98. 'But I am fearful and exceedingly bewildered, as I ponder the terrors of old age, death, and disease; I can find no peace, no self-command, much less can I find pleasure, while I see the world as it were ablaze with fire.

99. 'If desire arises in the heart of the man, who knows that death is certain, — I think that his soul must be made of iron, who restrains it in this great terror and does not weep.'

100. Then the prince uttered a discourse full of resolve and abolishing the objects of desire; and the

lord of day, whose orb is the worthy centre of human eyes, departed to the Western Mountain.

101. And the women, having worn their garlands and ornaments in vain, with their graceful arts and endearments all fruitless, concealing their love deep in their hearts, returned to the city with broken hopes.

102. Having thus seen the beauty of the troop of women who had gone out to the city-garden, now withdrawn in the evening, — the prince, pondering the transitoriness which envelopes all things, entered his dwelling.

103. Then the king, when he heard how his mind turned away from all objects of sense, could not lie down all that night, like an elephant with an arrow in its heart; but wearied in all sorts of consultation, he and his ministers could find no other means beside these (despised) pleasures to restrain his son's purpose.

[Such is the fourth chapter in the great poem Śrī Buddhacarita, called The Women Rejected]

Book V [Flight]

1. He, the son of the Śākya king, even though thus tempted by the objects of sense which infatuate others, yielded not to pleasure and felt not delight, like a lion deeply pierced in his heart by a poisoned arrow.

2. Then one day accompanied by some worthy sons of his father's ministers, friends full of varied converse — with a desire to see the glades of the forest and longing for peace, he went out with the king's permission.

3. Having mounted his good horse Kamthaka, decked with bells and bridle-bit of new gold, with beautiful golden harness and the chowrie waving, he went forth like the moon mounted on a comet.

4. Lured by love of the wood and longing for the beauties of the ground, he went to a spot near at hand on the forest-outskirts; and there he saw a

piece of land being ploughed, with the path of the plough broken like waves on the water.

5. Having beheld the ground in this condition, with its young grass scattered and torn by the plough, and covered with the eggs and young of little insects which were killed, he was filled with deep sorrow as for the slaughter of his own kindred.

6. And beholding the men as they were ploughing, their complexions spoiled by the dust, the sun's rays, and the wind, and their cattle bewildered with the burden of drawing, the most noble one felt extreme compassion.

7. Having alighted from the back of his horse, he went over the ground slowly, overcome with sorrow, — pondering the birth and destruction of the world, he, grieved, exclaimed, 'this is indeed pitiable.'

8. Then desiring to become perfectly lonely in his thoughts, having stopped those friends who were following him, he went to the root of a rose-apple in a solitary spot, which had its beautiful leaves all tremulous (in the wind).

9. There he sat down on the ground covered with leaves, and with its young grass bright like lapis lazuli; and, meditating on the origin and destruction of the world, he laid hold of the path that leads to firmness of mind.

10. Having attained to firmness of mind, and being forthwith set free from all sorrows such as the desire of worldly objects and the rest, he attained the first stage of contemplation, unaffected by sin, calm, and 'argumentative.'

11. Having then obtained the highest happiness sprung from deliberation, he next pondered this meditation — having thoroughly understood in his mind the course of the world:

12. 'It is a miserable thing that mankind, though themselves powerless and subject to sickness, old age, and death, yet, blinded by passion and ignorant, look with disgust on another who is afflicted by old age or diseased or dead.

13. 'If I here, being such myself, should feel disgust for another who has such a nature, it would not be worthy or right in me who know this highest duty.'

14. As he thus considered thoroughly these faults of sickness, old age, and death which belong to all living beings, all the joy which he had felt in the activity of his vigor, his youth, and his life, vanished in a moment.

15. He did not rejoice, he did not feel remorse; he suffered no hesitation, indolence, nor sleep; he felt no drawing towards the qualities of desire; he hated not nor scorned another.

16. Thus did this pure passionless meditation grow within the great-souled one; and unobserved by the other men, there crept up a man in a beggar's dress.

17. The king's son asked him a question, — he said to him, 'Tell me, who art thou?' and the other replied, 'Oh bull of men, I, being terrified at birth and death, have become an ascetic for the sake of liberation.

18. 'Desiring liberation in a world subject to destruction, I seek that happy indestructible abode, isolated from mankind, with my thoughts unlike those of others, and with my sinful passions turned away from all objects of sense.

19. 'Dwelling anywhere, at the root of a tree, or in an uninhabited house, a mountain or a forest, — I wander without a family and without hope, a beggar ready for any fare, seeking only the highest good.'

20. When he had thus spoken, while the prince was looking on, he suddenly flew up to the sky; it was a heavenly inhabitant who, knowing that the prince's thoughts were other than what his outward form promised, had come to him for the sake of rousing his recollection.

21. When the other was gone like a bird to heaven, the foremost of men was rejoiced and astonished; and having comprehended the meaning of the term dharma, he set his mind on the manner of the accomplishment of deliverance.

22. Then like Indra himself, and having tamed his senses, — desiring to return home he mounted his noble steed; and having made him turn back as he

looked for his friends, from that moment he sought no more the desired forest.

23. Ever seeking to make an end of old age and death, fixing his thoughts in memory on dwelling in the woods, he entered the city again but with no feelings of longing, like an elephant entering an exercise-ground after roaming in a forest-land.

24. 'Happy truly and blessed is that woman whose husband is such as thou, O long-eyed prince!' So, on seeing him, the princess exclaimed, folding her hands to welcome him, as he entered the road.

25. He whose voice was deep-sounding like a cloud heard this address and was filled with profound calm; and as he heard the word 'blessed' he fixed his mind on the attainment of Nirvāṇa.

26. Then the prince whose form was like the peak of a golden mountain, — whose eye, voice, and arm resembled a bull, a cloud, and an elephant, — whose countenance and prowess were like the moon and a lion, — having a longing aroused for something imperishable, — went into his palace.

27. Then stepping like a lion he went towards the king who was attended by his numerous counsellors, like Sanatkumāra in heaven waiting on Indra resplendent in the assembly of the Maruts.

28. Prostrating himself, with folded hands, he addressed him, 'Grant me graciously thy permission, O lord of men, — I wish to become a wandering mendicant for the sake of liberation, since separation is appointed for me.'

29. Having heard his words, the king shook like a tree struck by an elephant, and having seized his folded hands which were like a lotus, he thus addressed him in a voice choked with tears:

30. 'O my son, keep back this thought, it is not the time for thee to betake thyself to dharma; they say that the practice of religion is full of evils in the first period of life when the mind is still fickle.

31. 'The mind of the thoughtless ignorant young man whose senses are eager for worldly objects, and who has no power of settled resolution for the hardships of vows of penance, shrinks back from

the forest, for it is especially destitute of discrimination.

32. 'It is high time for me to practice religion, O my child of loved qualities, leaving my royal glory to thee who art well worthy to be distinguished by it; but thy religion, O firm-striding hero, is to be accomplished by heroism; it would be irreligion if thou wert to leave thine own father.

33. 'Do thou therefore abandon this thy resolution; devote thyself for the present to the duties of a householder; to a man who has enjoyed the pleasures of his prime, it is delightful to enter the penance-forest.'

34. Having heard these words of the king, he made his reply in a voice soft like a sparrow's: 'If thou wilt be my surety, O king, against four contingencies, I will not betake myself to the forest.

35. 'Let not my life be subject to death, and let not disease impair this health of mine; let not old age attack my youth, and let not misfortune destroy my weal.'

36. When his son uttered a speech so hard to be understood, the king of the Śākya thus replied: 'Abandon this idea bent upon departure; extravagant desires are only ridiculous.'

37. Then he who was firm as Mount Meru addressed his father: 'If this is impossible, then this course of mine is not to be hindered; it is not right to lay hold of one who would escape from a house that is on fire.

38. 'As separation is inevitable to the world, but not for Dharma, this separation is preferable; will not death sever me helplessly, my objects unattained and myself unsatisfied?'

39. The monarch, having heard this resolve of his son longing for liberation, and having again exclaimed, 'He shall not go,' set guards round him and the highest pleasures.

40. Then having been duly instructed by the counsellors, with all respect and affection, according to the śāstras, and being thus forbidden with tears by his father, the prince, sorrowing, entered into his palace.

41. There he was gazed at by his wives with restless eyes, whose faces were kissed by their dangling earrings, and whose bosoms were shaken with their thick-coming sighs, — as by so many young fawns.

42. Bright like a golden mountain, and bewitching the hearts of the noble women, he enraptured their ears, limbs, eyes, and souls by his speech, touch, form, and qualities.

43. When the day was gone, then, shining with his form like the sun, he ascended the palace, as the rising sun ascends Mount Meru, desiring to dispel the darkness by his own splendor.

44. Having ascended, he repaired to a special golden seat decorated with embellishments of diamond, with tall lighted candlesticks ablaze with gold, and its interior filled with the incense of black aloe-wood.

45. Then the noblest of women waited during the night on the noblest of men who was like Indra himself, with a concert of musical instruments, as the crowds of heavenly nymphs wait on the son of the Lord of wealth upon the summit of Himavat, white like the moon.

46. But even by those beautiful instruments like heavenly music he was not moved to pleasure or delight; since his desire to go forth from his home to seek the bliss of the highest end was never lulled.

47. Then by the power of the heavenly beings most excellent in self-mortification, the Akaniṣṭhas, who knew the purpose of his heart, deep sleep was suddenly thrown on that company of women and their limbs and gestures became distorted.

48. One was lying there, resting her cheek on her trembling arm; leaving as in anger her lute, though dearly loved, which lay on her side, decorated with gold-leaf.

49. Another shone with her flute clinging to her hand, lying with her white garments fallen from her bosom, — like a river whose banks are smiling with the foam of the water and whose lotuses are covered with a straight line of bees.

50. Another was sleeping, embracing her drum as a lover, with her two arms tender like the shoot of

young lotus and bearing their bracelets closely linked, blazing with gold.

51. Others, decked with new golden ornaments and wearing peerless yellow garments, fell down alas! helpless with sleep, like the boughs of the Karṇikāra broken by an elephant.

52. Another, leaning on the side of a window, with her willow-form bent like a bow, shone as she lay with her beautiful necklace hanging down, like a statue in an archway made by art.

53. The lotus-face of another, bowed down, with the pinguent-lines on her person rubbed by the jeweled earrings, appeared to be a lotus with its stalk bent into a half-circle, and shaken by a duck standing on it.

54. Others, lying as they sat, with their limbs oppressed by the weight of their bosoms, shone in their beauty, mutually clasping one another with their twining arms decorated with golden bracelets.

55. And another damsel lay sound asleep, embracing her big lute as if it were a female friend, and rolled it about, while its golden strings trembled, with her own face bright with her shaken earrings.

56. Another lay, with her tabour,

57. Others showed no luster with their eyes shut, although they were really full-eyed and fair-browed, — like the lotus-beds with their buds closed at the setting of the sun.

58. Another, with her hair loose and disheveled, and her skirts and ornaments fallen from her loins, lay with her necklace in confusion, like a woman crushed by an elephant and then dropped.

59. Others, helpless and lost to shame, though naturally self-possessed and endued with all graces of person, breathed violently as they lay and yawned with their arms distorted and tossed about.

60. Others, with their ornaments and garlands thrown off, — unconscious, with their garments spread out unfastened, — their bright eyes wide

open and motionless, — lay without any beauty as if they were dead.

61. Another, with fully-developed limbs, her mouth wide open, her saliva dropping, and her person exposed, lay as though sprawling in intoxication, — she spoke not, but bore every limb distorted.

62. Thus that company of women, lying in different attitudes, according to their disposition and family, bore the aspect of a lake whose lotuses were bent down and broken by the wind.

63. Then having seen these young women thus lying distorted and with uncontrolled gestures, however excellent their forms and graceful their appearance, — the king's son felt moved with scorn.

64. 'Such is the nature of women, impure and monstrous in the world of living beings; but deceived by dress and ornaments a man becomes infatuated by a woman's attractions.

65. 'If a man would but consider the natural state of women and this change produced in them by sleep, assuredly he would not cherish his folly; but he is smitten from a right will and so succumbs to passion.'

66. Thus to him having recognized that difference there arose a desire to escape in the night; and then the gods, knowing his purpose, caused the door of the palace to fly open.

67. Then he went down from the roof of the palace, scorning those women who lay thus distorted; and having descended, undauntedly he went out first into the courtyard.

68. Having awakened his horse's attendant, the swift Charṇḍaka, he thus addressed him: 'Bring me quickly my horse Karṇthaka, I wish to-day to go hence to attain immortality.

69. 'Since such is the firm content which to-day is produced in my heart, and since my determination is settled in calm resolve, and since even in loneliness I seem to possess a guide, — verily the end which I desire is now before me.

70. 'Since abandoning all shame and modesty these women lay before me as they did, and the two doors opened of their own accord, verily the time is come to depart for my true health.'

71. Then, accepting his lord's command, though he knew the purport of the king's injunctions, as being urged by a higher power in his mind, he set himself to bring the horse.

72. Then he brought out for his master that noble steed, his mouth furnished with a golden bit, his back lightly touched by the bed on which he had been lying, and endued with strength, vigor, speed, and swiftness;

73. With a long chine, and root of the tail and heel, — gentle, with short hair, back, and ears, — with his back, belly, and sides depressed and elevated, with broad nostrils, forehead, hips, and breast.

74. The broad-chested hero, having embraced him, and caressing him with his lotus-like hand, ordered him with a gentle-toned voice, as if he were desirous to plunge into the middle of an army:

75. 'Oftentimes have evil enemies been overthrown by the king when mounted on thee; do thou, O best of steeds, so exert thyself that I too may obtain the highest immortality.

76. 'Companions are easy to be found in battle or in the happiness obtained by winning worldly objects or in attaining wealth; but companions are hard for a man to find who has fallen into misfortune or when he flies for refuge to Dharma.

77. 'And yet all those who in this world are companions, whether in sinful custom or in seeking for Dharma — as my inner soul now recognizes — they too are verily sharers in the common aim.

78. 'Since then, when I attain this righteous end, my escape from hence will be for the good of the world, — O best of steeds, by thy speed and energy, strive for thine own good and the good of the world.'

79. Thus having exhorted the best of steeds like a friend to his duty, he, the best of men, longing to go to the forest, wearing a noble form, in brightness

like fire, mounted the white horse as the sun an autumnal cloud.

80. Then that good steed, avoiding all noises which would sound startling in the dead of night and awaken the household, — all sound of his jaws hushed and his neighing silenced, — went forth, planting his hurrying steps at full speed.

81. With their lotus-like hands, whose fore-arms were adorned with golden bracelets, the Yakṣas, with their bodies bent down, threw lotuses and bore up his hoofs as he rushed in startled haste.

82. The city-roads which were closed with heavy gates and bars, and which could be with difficulty opened even by elephants, flew open of their own accord without noise, as the prince went through.

83. Firm in his resolve and leaving behind without hesitation his father who turned ever towards him, and his young son, his affectionate people and his unparalleled magnificence, he then went forth out of his father's city.

84. Then he with his eyes long and like a full-blown lotus, looking back on the city, uttered a sound like a lion, 'Till I have seen the further shore of birth and death I will never again enter the city called after Kapila.'

85. Having heard this his utterance, the troops of the court of the Lord of wealth rejoiced; and the hosts of the gods, triumphing, wished him a successful accomplishment of his purpose.

86. Other heavenly beings with forms bright like fire, knowing that his purpose was hard to fulfil, produced a light on his dewy path like the rays of the moon issuing from the rift of a cloud.

87. But he with his horse like the horse of Indra, the lord of bay horses, hurrying on as if spurred in his mind, went over the leagues full of many conflicting emotions — the sky all the while with its cloud-masses checkered with the light of the dawn.

[Such is the fifth chapter in the great poem Śrī Buddhacarita, called Flight]