

Abhiniskramana sutra

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THE

ROMANTIC LEGEND

OF

SÂKYA BUDDHA:

FROM THE

CHINESE-SANSCRIT.

BY

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last excursion. After which he resolved once more to increase the temptations to pleasure within the palace; he also surrounded it with additional enclosures, and at every gate placed guards of various descriptions to prevent all possible intercourse betwixt the prince and the outer world.

[Kiouen XV. contains 6,360 words, and cost 3.18 taels.]

CHAPTER XIV.

The Exhortation of Udâyi.

At this time the Chief Officer of State¹ had a son called Udâyi, a young man of distinguished ability and rising talent. Suddhódana Râja, having called this youth to his presence, laid the case of the prince before him, seeking counsel and advice. "By what stratagem," said he, "can we keep Siddârtha in the palace, and prevent him becoming a Recluse?"

At the same time, the Râja summoned all the Sâkyas princes and begged [laid the same case before them] them also to use such expedients as they thought necessary to effect the same purpose. Then the Sâkyas princes undertook to assist in carrying out any measures necessary to prevent Siddârtha leaving his home.

And now Suddhódana and the Sâkyas princes surrounded Kapilavastu with additional guards, placing at the head of each cross-road patrols of chariots, horses, elephants—who continually circumambulated the royal palace, so as effectually to prevent any escape.

Then again Mahâprajâpati Gôtamî within the palace assembled all the women of pleasure and upbraided them with their want of influence over the mind of the prince—"Let none of you," she said, "fail to provide amusement for him night and day; let there be no interval of darkness, and never be without wine and burning perfumes; let there be guards at every door to prevent ingress or egress. For, remember, if the prince escape, there will be no other sources of pleasure within the palace."

¹ That is, Mahânâma or Basitu.

Then Udāyi also entered into the quarters of the women, and urged them to use every desire to keep the prince engrossed in pleasure.¹ And when he saw them all sitting silent and sad he likewise reproached them and said, "Why sit ye thus silent and dejected, so incomparably fair and accomplished in every art of discourse as you are?" And then he reminded them of the Rishi's Devayana and Ekasinga², and others, who were all overcome by the fascinations of fair women, "and shall not you be able to enlist the affections or excite the desire of the prince with whom you live?" Then these women, having heard these words, conceived in themselves a very strong desire, and forthwith set themselves to employ every art to enamour the prince. Some postured themselves before him, others offered him flowers, others with their fingers in their mouths produced every sort of bird-like whistle, others told him different kinds of lascivious story. And yet amidst all this the prince was unmoved, absorbed in his thoughts about disease, old age, and death. "How may I hope to escape these, he thought?"—and paid but little heed to the wiles of the women. Now there was one woman amongst the rest who, with her own hand taking a Malika flower from the front of her head-dress, fastened it on to the breast of the prince. The prince, looking on with a sort of vacant stare, forthwith drew the flower out and, twirling it in his hand, scattered the leaves on the ground.³

Then Udāyi, seeing that all these means were useless, besought

¹ This appearance of Udāyi in the interior of the palace seems to be the subject of Fig. 1, Plate lxxiii, *Tree and Serpent Worship*.

² This story of Ekasinga (Unicorn) is one frequently alluded to in Buddhist books (*Catena*, p. 260; *Eitel's Handbook*, *sub. voce*). It was probably the origin of the story of Sringha found in the Rāmāyana (*Talboys Wheeler, Hist. of India*, vol. ii., p. 11). The original myth was doubtless derived from the shadow of the Sun when on the meridian, added to the Horse, the emblem of the Sun, to denote strength or juvenescence. This one-horned figure became afterwards known as the *Unicorn*. The later story of his seduction by the maids of Anga probably alludes to the Sun's passage westward, enamoured by the breezes of the evening. The connection of this myth with the mediæval story of the Unicorn being capable of capture only by a chaste maiden is too evident to require proof. (*Vide Yule's Marco Polo*.)

³ This also seems to be the case in Fig. 1, Plate lxxiii, *Tree and Serpent Worship*.

the prince to listen to his friendly advice, and repeated this Gâthâ—

“ I will recount in brief the marks of a friend,

When doing wrong, to warn; when doing well to exhort to perseverance;

When in difficulty or danger, to assist, relieve, and deliver.

Such a man is indeed a true and illustrious friend.”

Then Udâyi, having uttered this Gâthâ, continued his conversation thus—“ Great and holy Prince! as I have now undertaken to act as a friend to your Highness, it would be unfriendly if I remained silent after observing that which I consider commendable, or the contrary, in your conduct. I wish, therefore, to speak plainly on the present occasion, and I ask you to bear with me—as with a friend. I observe that your Highness is wrong in not yielding to the importunities of the ladies of your palace; but that you rather hate, avoid, and dislike their society. But why should you think it wrong to act according to our natural tendencies? The very first principle of a woman’s being is to allow her the privilege of loving some one, and seeking the gratification of her desire. Respect to a husband is won only by his being capable of participation in pleasure. If your Highness persistently refuses to indulge yourself in these objects of desire, then the world, rich and poor, however well they may speak of you with flattering lips, as courteous, will find it difficult to honour you at heart.” Then he added this Gâthâ—

“ The happiness of a woman is to respect¹ (her husband);

This respect is the highest source of her content.

Without respect, having only beauty,

Is to be like a tree without flowers.”

Then the prince, having heard the discourse of Udâyi, replied in words of deepest meaning, and in tones like the thunder-roll, and said, “ Udâyi! I accept your offer of friendship, and I reject none of your advice; but yet what are these pleasures of which you speak to me? I see only one thing, that worldly enjoyments are perishable, and therefore the thoughts of my heart are sad and not tending to outward exhibition of joy.” Then he added a Gâthâ—

¹ That is to respect in the discharge of all conjugal duties.

“ The glories of the world though they be joy-giving,
 Yet there is birth and old age, disease and death;
 These four—only extirpate them,—
 And my heart—whom will it not love?”

And then he continued—“ Uđáyi! only regard these women in another light! see them as they will be when they are old, their skins wrinkled, their beauty faded and gone, and on seeing one another think how sad their reflections then! how much more stupid of a man in such a place and surrounded by such companions to be merry and amorous!” Then he added this Gátha—

“ The condition of birth, death, old age, disease,
 Fix (the mind on) these (three), birth, old age, disease—
 If thus fixed, nevertheless an amorous desire is present,
 A man is but as a brute-beast or a bird.”

And so they discoursed until the sun went down; on which the prince, seeing the darkness coming on, went once more into the chamber of the women, who surrounded him on every side as they practised their arts in causing pleasure. [*On this night the Queen Yasódhará found herself about to be delivered.*¹] On this night, also, the Queen Mother Gótamí, called Prajâpati, in her sleep had the following dream—she thought she saw a white ox-King in the midst of the city going on in a wistful way bellowing and crying, whilst no one in the place was able to get before it to stop it or hinder it. Again, Suddhódana on that night dreamt that he saw in the midst of the city a royal standard like that of Indra fixed in the ground. It was adorned with every kind of jewel and beautifully formed. It appeared even like the Royal Mount Sumeru standing up from the midst of the watery earth, and reaching high up into space. Again, it seemed that from the midst of this royal standard a bright light shone out, which lit up the world on every side. And then from the four quarters of heaven he thought he

¹ This is an ambiguous sentence. According to the subsequent narrative Yasódhará was not delivered till six years after. Doubtless the passage in the text is an attempt to reconcile the accounts found in the different schools. We may observe, however, that the agreement of the passage cited from the *Abhinishkramana* by M. Foucaux (*Lalita Vistara*, p. 389, n.), with the events narrated in the subsequent pages, proves that the work we are now translating is known in Thibet.

saw some clouds rising, and these, gathering together over the standard, distilled a soft rain above it, whilst flowers fell round it and soft voices sang sweetly, and a beautiful white umbrella with a golden handle appeared over it, and at last the four Kings of heaven, with their retinues, appeared coming towards the city, and having taken the standard the gates opened and they went out.

The same night Yasódhará was greatly troubled in her sleep, and had twelve dreams which disturbed her exceedingly. Being unable to rest, the prince turned to her and said, "Yasódhará, beloved! why are you so restless and alarmed? Your breathing indicates distress, and your heart is oppressed; what is it affects you that you start so? My Yasódhará is not in a Sitavana (cemetery), nor in a place for burning bodies, nor amidst the mountains, or in a desert; but you are within the city surrounded by guards, in the King's palace, well protected; there are no wild beasts here, or robbers to frighten you; but in this place there is peace and safety and no cause for alarm! But yet I see my Yasódhará's heart is greatly affected, filled with doubt and anxiety; tell me, then, as you have just awoken, the cause of all this?" Then Yasódhará, with many tears and almost choked with sobbing, replied as follows—"My prince! in my sleep this night I have beheld twelve visions—oh! let me tell them! and bear with me whilst I speak. Sacred one! in my sleep I saw all the great earths around us shaking and trembling! I saw the great standard of Indra, broken in twain, fall to the earth. I saw the Sun and Moon, and all the stars falling through space. I saw a very beautiful umbrella spread over myself and affording me a grateful shade—when, suddenly, that son of the slave, whose name is Tchandaka, came and snatched it away and went off with it. I saw all the choicest jewels that adorn my head-dress, cut off and dispersed here and there. I saw the various ornaments worn on my body, necklets and bracelets (scattered) as the water is driven, I saw my body, naturally so graceful and attractive, suddenly become perfectly horrible and ugly. I saw my hands and my feet of themselves drop off from my body. I saw myself suddenly stripped to the skin and left without clothing. I saw my chair, on which I have sat for so many years, suddenly overturned. I saw the couch on which I have so often reposed with you, and enjoyed your caresses, suddenly, deprived of its four legs, fall to the earth. I saw a great mountain, composed

of all the precious substances, suddenly burst into flames from its four corners and fall down in utter ruin. I saw a beautiful tree within the Mahārāja's Palace enclosure, blown down by the wind. I saw the moon and all the stars which surround it suddenly fall down and perish. I saw the Sun, with its glorious light, disappear, and the entire world left in pitchy darkness. I saw a lighted torch which was in the city depart from it. I saw the guardian spirit of this city, who protects it on every side, his person so beautiful and so magnificently attired, suddenly stand without one of the gates and raise his voice in lamentation and wailing. I saw the city of Kapilavastu suddenly converted into a waste, frightful to behold, without one spot of delight. I saw all the trees and flowers scatter their leaves and the tanks all dry up. I saw a number of fully-armed men hastening in every direction towards the four quarters of the world.

"Such were the dreams, O Prince! which cause me this distress, and indeed I cannot tell whether they be indications of good or bad fortune—or what will be the result, whether my life is coming to an end, or whether your love and society is to be taken from me; on these accounts I was troubled in my sleep, and am still distressed in mind."

Then the prince began to reflect, and thought thus with himself—"It is because I shall soon leave my home and become a Recluse, that these dreams have appeared to Yasódhará."

Then he addressed her and said, "Dear wife! though you had seen a thousand standards broken and fall to the earth, or a thousand suns and stars showering through space, yet let none of these things trouble or alarm you—dreams are but the empty products of a universal law; return, dear wife, to your rest! You are young in years and your body delicate and soft, let not such anxieties as these molest you or cause you distress!" Then Yasódhará, having heard the words of the prince, returned to her couch and slept, whilst the prince reposed by her side.¹

Moreover, on the same night the prince himself had five dreams,²

¹ The original is more explicit. Sufficient at any rate to show that up to this time the prince was not weaned from the gratification of his senses. But the text explains this by saying that he desired to hush Yasódhará's suspicions.

² These five dreams are given with slight variation by Spence Hardy, *Manual*, p. 167.

which were these:—first, he dreamt he saw the great earth stretched out for him to use as a bed, his head reposed on Mount Sumeru as a pillow, the great sea on the East supported his left arm, his right arm rested on the great Western Sea, and both his feet stretched out to the great Southern Sea. Secondly, he dreamt that he saw a certain plant called *Kin-leh*¹, growing up out of his navel, and the top of it reaching even to the Akanishta Heaven. Thirdly, he dreamt that he saw four birds, flying from each Quarter, come towards him, they were of every colour, but as they came and fell at his feet, they all became white. Fourthly, he saw in his dreams four head of white cattle, black from their feet up to their knees, come and lick his feet. Fifthly, he saw a lofty and wide mount of impure substance, on which he reposed and went round it on foot without pollution.

The Flight from the Palace.

§ 2. At this time, whilst the Prince dwelt within the palace and slept, the chief officer of the guard, who protected the precincts, told the persons composing the guard that during the watches the pass-words should be these, “Komperah,” “Mudra,” “Angana.” And he, moreover, warned them to be especially watchful throughout this particular night, to see that the prince did not escape, informing them of the anxiety of Suddhōdana, and the predictions of the soothsayers respecting his either being a Chakravarti or a Recluse.

Then the first watch being passed, at midnight the guard exclaimed in a loud voice, “Prosperity to his Sacred Majesty—long life and happiness!” And so the first half of the middle watch went by, and it was just beginning the second half.

At this time all the Devas of the Suddhavasa Heavens came down to Kapilavastu. The men of the city were wrapped in sleep, and all within the palace was still and quiet. One of the Devas,

¹ The Sinhalese account says it was an arrow that proceeded from the navel. I do not know what plant *Kin-leh* can be. Compare this with the story about Vishnu.