DN 16 — Maha-parinibbana Sutta: Last Days of the Buddha

English translation by Sister Vajira & Francis Story.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved; source ellipsis or repetition-omission statement retained. Canonical repetitions were not reconstructed.

Text

Foreword

The translation of the Maha-parinibbana Sutta which is offered here is a work of collaboration, but is based upon a text prepared by Sister Vajira of Germany, to whom credit for the initial work must be given. The final revision of the text was done by Mr Francis Story. The notes and references which, it is hoped, will help in the understanding of the text have been contributed by the Venerable Nyanaponika Mahathera, much of the material for them being taken from the Pali Commentary.

Every effort has been made to give a faithful rendering of the original Pali. The greater part of the sutta is straight forward narrative, but it also includes references to profound aspects of the Dhamma, which have to be understood in their precise meaning if the full

import of the Buddha's last exhortations is to be conveyed. In the choice which inevitably arises between terminological exactitude and literary form, the translators have endeavored to preserve the former with as little sacrifice as possible of the latter. Those who understand the difficulties of Pali translation will appreciate that this is no easy task, and will readily overlook the absence of those literary graces which only a freer rendering would have permitted.

As in previous translations, some repetitions have been omitted and some repetitive passages condensed.

— Buddhist Publication Society

Foreword to the Revised Edition

In this revised edition of Last Days of the Buddha, a number of stylistic changes have been made, aimed at improved readability. The word "Bhagava," untranslated in the original edition, has been replaced by "the Blessed One"; several archaic expressions, which gave a slightly Biblical flavor to the diction, have been replaced by their modern counterparts; awkward sentences have been reformulated; and greater consistency was aimed at in the rendering of certain terms and expressions. The notes have also been revised in certain respects. The titles of the chapters and sections have been supplied by the translator and editors, though the division of the work into six recitation units dates back to the period when the Canon was transmitted orally from one generation to the next.

Introduction

Of the thirty-four discourses (suttas) that make up the Digha Nikaya (Collection of Long Discourses), ours, the sixteenth, is the longest, and so altogether maintains the first place where length is concerned.

It preserves the principal feature of the Buddhist sutta, insofar as it is, like others, a rehearsal of events as they have been witnessed. On account of its unique composition, however, it is, more than other suttas, capable not only of winning the affection of the pious Buddhist, as it naturally does, but also of attracting the general reader, since it is indeed a fine specimen of sacred universal literature.

It gives a good general idea of the Buddha's Teaching, too, even though it hardly offers anything that is not found — and often more extensively dealt with — in other suttas.

At the end of his life, after almost half a century's ministry, the Master had long since taught all that was necessary for attaining the ideal. During the last period his primary concern, therefore, was to impress on his followers the necessity of unflinchingly putting into practice those very same teachings: an appeal that could, of course, hardly fail in stirring their hearts more than ever before.

The Sangha came, indeed, to witness the greatest event in its history, and was keenly aware of it, especially since the Master had announced his Parinibbana three months ahead. The impression on the bhikkhus who flocked to him in large numbers as he was pressing northward was tremendous, and could not fail to be reflected vividly in the oral account. (The Buddhist canon was originally, as is well known, altogether oral.) Because of its particular import and abundance, this material was soon formed into one body; and so our sutta came to be.

In this connection, it is hardly possible not to remember gratefully the Venerable Ananda. His share in the preservation of the Master's word is paramount to any other bhikkhu's, and his figure is inseparable from our texts. This was to become manifest for all time in the Maha-parinibbana Sutta, which is plainly unimaginable without him. For it is Ananda, and again Ananda, whom the Master addresses, having tested for twenty-five years his sure grasp and brilliant memory and also his indefatigable personal devotion. But Ananda too, here more than elsewhere, by his constant queries, worries, and amazements, becomes without intending it a central figure beside the Master himself, which undoubtedly increases the attractiveness of the text. Thus, then, Ananda, gentle and pleasant as his name, and yet almost throughout his career incurring the reproach of the brethren, was immortalized along with his beloved Master, and — as we may add — along with his strange position between praise and blame, assuming mystic character in the third chapter.

The third chapter, almost exclusively, is devoted to depicting the circumstances connected with the Master's relinquishment of life, which is the dramatic culmination of events. It overwhelmingly drives home the purely metaphysical significance of the Parinibbana, or at least ought to do so. For the Buddha neither succumbed to his fatal illness nor did he give way to the appeal of Mara (which is identical with the non-appeal of Ananda), but sovereignly let go of existence at a timely hour, just as forty-five years earlier, on becoming fully enlightened, he had duly taken upon himself the wearisome task of teaching men. This fact is most thought-provoking, and consistently leads to the conclusion that by his Parinibbana, indeed, the Buddha bore the last and highest possible testimony to his Teaching, which permits of no lingering inclination to self-preservation and continuance, but on the contrary reaches the highest exultation ending it all. The Master's Parinibbana is, therefore, the one sorrowful event in the history of Buddhism that turns out, in its true meaning, to be really the most blissful.

— Sister Vajira

Ceylon

May 1961

Part One: In Magadha

1. Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One [1] dwelt at Rajagaha, on the hill called Vultures' Peak. At that time the king of Magadha, Ajatasattu, son of the Videhi queen, [2] desired to wage war against the Vajjis. He spoke in this fashion: "These Vajjis, powerful and

glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them."

2. And Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha, addressed his chief minister, the brahman Vassakara, saying: "Come, brahman, go to the Blessed One, pay homage in my name at his feet, wish him good health, strength, ease, vigour, and comfort, and speak thus: 'O Lord, Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha, desires to wage war against the Vajjis. He has spoken in this fashion: "These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them."' And whatever the Blessed One should answer you, keep it well in mind and inform me; for Tathagatas [3] do not speak falsely."

3. "Very well, sire," said the brahman Vassakara in assent to Ajatasattu, king of Magadha. And he ordered a large number of magnificent carriages to be made ready, mounted one himself, and accompanied by the rest, drove out to Rajagaha towards Vultures' Peak. He went by carriage as far as the carriage could go, then dismounting, he approached the Blessed One on foot. After exchanging courteous greetings with the Blessed One, together with many pleasant words, he sat down at one side and addressed the Blessed One thus: "Venerable Gotama, Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha, pays homage at the feet of the Venerable Gotama and wishes him good health, strength, ease, vigour, and comfort. He desires to wage war against the Vajjis, and he has spoken in this fashion: 'These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them.'"

Conditions of a Nation's Welfare

4. At that time the Venerable Ananda [4] was standing behind the Blessed One, fanning him, and the Blessed One addressed the Venerable Ananda thus: "What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis have frequent gatherings, and are their meetings well attended?"

"I have heard, Lord, that this is so."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.

"What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis assemble and disperse peacefully and attend to their affairs in concord?"

"I have heard, Lord, that they do."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.

"What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis neither enact new decrees nor abolish existing ones, but proceed in accordance with their ancient constitutions?"

"I have heard, Lord, that they do."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.

"What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis show respect, honor, esteem, and veneration towards their elders and think it worthwhile to listen to them?"

"I have heard, Lord, that they do."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.

"What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis refrain from abducting women and maidens of good families and from detaining them?"

"I have heard, Lord, that they refrain from doing so."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.

"What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis show respect, honor, esteem, and veneration towards their shrines, both those within the city and those outside it, and do not deprive them of the due offerings as given and made to them formerly?"

"I have heard, Lord, that they do venerate their shrines, and that they do not deprive them of their offerings."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.

"What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis duly protect and guard the arahats, so that those who have not come to the realm yet might do so, and those who have already come might live there in peace?"

"I have heard, Lord, that they do."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline."

5. And the Blessed One addressed the brahman Vassakara in these words: "Once, brahman, I dwelt at Vesali, at the Sarandada shrine, and there it was that I taught the Vajjis these seven conditions leading to (a nation's) welfare. [5] So long, brahman, as these endure among the Vajjis, and the Vajjis are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline."

Thereupon the brahman Vassakara spoke thus to the Blessed One: "If the Vajjis, Venerable Gotama, were endowed with only one or another of these conditions leading to welfare,

their growth would have to be expected, not their decline. What then of all the seven? No harm, indeed, can be done to the Vajjis in battle by Magadha's king, Ajatasattu, except through treachery or discord. Well, then, Venerable Gotama, we will take our leave, for we have much to perform, much work to do."

"Do as now seems fit to you, brahman." And the brahman Vassakara, the chief minister of Magadha, approving of the Blessed One's words and delighted by them, rose from his seat and departed.

Welfare of the Bhikkhus

6. Then, soon after Vassakara's departure, the Blessed One addressed the Venerable Ananda thus: "Go now, Ananda, and assemble in the hall of audience as many bhikkhus as live around Rajagaha."

"Very well, Lord." And the Venerable Ananda did as he was requested and informed the Blessed One: "The community of bhikkhus is assembled, Lord. Now let the Blessed One do as he wishes."

Thereupon the Blessed One rose from his seat, went up to the hall of audience, took his appointed seat there, and addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Seven conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I shall say."

"So be it, Lord."

"The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, bhikkhus, so long as they assemble frequently and in large numbers; meet and disperse peacefully and attend to the affairs of the Sangha in concord; so long as they appoint no new rules, and do not abolish the existing ones, but proceed in accordance with the code of training (Vinaya) laid down; so long as they show respect, honor, esteem, and veneration towards the elder bhikkhus, those of long standing, long gone forth, the fathers and leaders of the Sangha, and think it worthwhile to listen to them; so long as they do not come under the power of the craving that leads to fresh becoming; so long as they cherish the forest depths for their dwellings; so long as they establish themselves in mindfulness, so that virtuous brethren of the Order who have not come yet might do so, and those already come might live in peace; so long, bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.

7. "Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I shall say."

"So be it, Lord."

"The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, bhikkhus, so long as they do not delight in, are not pleased with, and are not fond of activities, talk, sleep, and company; so long as they do not harbor, do not come under the spell of evil desires; have

no bad friends, associates, or companions; and so long as they do not stop halfway on account of some trifling achievement. So long, bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.

Seven Good Qualities [6]

8. "Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I shall say."

"So be it, Lord."

"The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, bhikkhus, so long as they shall have faith, so long as they have moral shame and fear of misconduct, are proficient in learning, resolute, mindful, and wise. So long, bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.

Seven Factors of Enlightenment [7]

9. "Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I shall say."

"So be it, Lord."

"The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, bhikkhus, so long as they cultivate the seven factors of enlightenment, that is: mindfulness, investigation into phenomena, energy, bliss, tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity. So long, bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.

Seven Perceptions

10. "Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I shall say."

"So be it, Lord."

"The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, bhikkhus, so long as they cultivate the perception of impermanence, of egolessness, of (the body's) impurity, of (the body's) wretchedness, of relinquishment, of dispassion, and of cessation. So long, bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.

Six Conditions to be Remembered [8]

11. "Six further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I shall say."

"So be it, Lord."

"The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, bhikkhus, so long as they attend on each other with loving-kindness in deed, word, and thought, both openly and in private; so long as in respect of what they receive as due offerings, even the contents of their alms bowls, they do not make use of them without sharing them with virtuous members of the community; so long as, in company with their brethren, they train themselves, openly and in private, in the rules of conduct, which are complete and perfect, spotless and pure, liberating, praised by the wise, uninfluenced (by mundane concerns), and favorable to concentration of mind; and in company with their brethren, preserve, openly and in private, the insight that is noble and liberating, and leads one who acts upon it to the utter destruction of suffering. So long, bhikkhus, as these six conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.

Counsel to the Bhikkhus

12. And the Blessed One, living at Rajagaha, at the hill called Vultures' Peak, often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus:

"Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. [9] Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints [10] of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

13. When the Blessed One had stayed at Rajagaha as long as he pleased, he addressed the Venerable Ananda thus: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Ambalatthika."

"So be it, Lord."

And the Blessed One took up his abode at Ambalatthika, together with a large community of bhikkhus.

14. At Ambalatthika the Blessed One came to stay in the king's rest house; and there, too, the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus:

"Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

15. When the Blessed One had stayed at Ambalatthika as long as he pleased, he addressed the Venerable Ananda thus: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Nalanda."

"So be it, Lord."

And the Blessed One took up his abode at Nalanda together with a large community of bhikkhus, and came to stay in the mango grove of Pavarika.

Sariputta's Lion's Roar [11]

16. Then the Venerable Sariputta went to the Blessed One, respectfully greeted him, sat down at one side, and spoke thus to him:

"This faith, Lord, I have in the Blessed One, that there has not been, there will not be, nor is there now, another recluse or brahman more exalted in Enlightenment than the Blessed One."

"Lofty indeed is this speech of yours, Sariputta, and lordly! A bold utterance, a veritable sounding of the lion's roar! But how is this, Sariputta? Those Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of the past — do you have direct personal knowledge of all those Blessed Ones, as to their virtue, their meditation, [12] their wisdom, their abiding, and their emancipation?" [13]

"Not so, Lord."

"Then how is this, Sariputta? Those Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of the future — do you have direct personal knowledge of all those Blessed Ones, as to their virtue, their meditation, their wisdom, their abiding, and their emancipation?"

"Not so, Lord."

"Then how is this, Sariputta? Of me, who am at present the Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One, do you have direct personal knowledge as to my virtue, my meditation, my wisdom, my abiding, and my emancipation?"

"Not so, Lord."

"Then it is clear, Sariputta, that you have no such direct personal knowledge of the Arahats, the Fully Enlightened Ones of the past, the future, and the present. How then dare you set forth a speech so lofty and lordly, an utterance so bold, a veritable sounding of the lion's roar, saying: 'This faith, Lord, I have in the Blessed One, that there has not been, there will not be, nor is there now another recluse or brahman more exalted in Enlightenment than the Blessed One'?"

17. "No such direct personal knowledge, indeed, is mine, Lord, of the Arahants, the Fully Enlightened Ones of the past, the future, and the present; and yet I have come to know the

lawfulness of the Dhamma. Suppose, Lord, a king's frontier fortress was strongly fortified, with strong ramparts and turrets, and it had a single gate, and there was a gatekeeper, intelligent, experienced, and prudent, who would keep out the stranger but allow the friend to enter. As he patrols the path that leads all around the fortress, he does not perceive a hole or fissure in the ramparts even big enough to allow a cat to slip through. So he comes to the conclusion: 'Whatever grosser living things are to enter or leave this city, they will all have to do so just by this gate.' In the same way, Lord, I have come to know the lawfulness of the Dhamma.

"For, Lord, all the Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of the past had abandoned the five hindrances, [14] the mental defilements that weaken wisdom; had well established their minds in the four foundations of mindfulness; [15] had duly cultivated the seven factors of enlightenment, and were fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment.

"And, Lord, all the Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of the future will abandon the five hindrances, the mental defilements that weaken wisdom; will well establish their minds in the four foundations of mindfulness; will duly cultivate the seven factors of enlightenment, and will be fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment.

"And the Blessed One too, Lord, being at present the Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One, has abandoned the five hindrances, the mental defilements that weaken wisdom; has well established his mind in the four foundations of mindfulness; has duly cultivated the seven factors of enlightenment, and is fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment."

18. And also in Nalanda, in the mango grove of Pavarika, the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus:

"Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

19. When the Blessed One had stayed at Nalanda as long as he pleased, he addressed the Venerable Ananda thus:

"Come, Ananda, let us go to Pataligama."

"So be it, Lord."

And the Blessed One took up his abode at Pataligama together with a large community of bhikkhus.

20. Then the devotees of Pataligama came to know: "The Blessed One, they say, has arrived at Pataligama." And they approached the Blessed One, respectfully greeted him, sat down at one side, and addressed him thus: "May the Blessed One, Lord, kindly visit our council hall." And the Blessed One consented by his silence.

21. Knowing the Blessed One's consent, the devotees of Pataligama rose from their seats, respectfully saluted him, and keeping their right sides towards him, departed for the council hall. Then they prepared the council hall by covering the floor all over, arranging seats and water, and setting out an oil lamp. Having done this, they returned to the Blessed One, respectfully greeted him, and standing at one side, announced: "Lord, the council hall is ready, with the floor covered all over, seats and water prepared, and an oil lamp has been set out. Let the Blessed One come, Lord, at his convenience.

22. And the Blessed One got ready, and taking his bowl and robe, went to the council hall together with the company of bhikkhus. After rinsing his feet, the Blessed One entered the council hall and took his seat close to the middle pillar, facing east. The community of bhikkhus, after rinsing their feet, also entered the council hall and took seats near the western wall, facing east, so that the Blessed One was before them. And the devotees of Pataligama, after rinsing their feet and entering the council hall, sat down near the eastern wall, facing west, so that the Blessed One was in front of them.

The Fruits of an Immoral and a Moral Life

23. Thereupon the Blessed One addressed the devotees of Pataligama thus: "The immoral man, householders, by falling away from virtue, encounters five perils: great loss of wealth through heedlessness; an evil reputation; a timid and troubled demeanor in every society, be it that of nobles, brahmans, householders, or ascetics; death in bewilderment; and, at the breaking up of the body after death, rebirth in a realm of misery, in an unhappy state, in the nether world, in hell.

24. "Five blessings, householders, accrue to the righteous man through his practice of virtue: great increase of wealth through his diligence; a favorable reputation; a confident deportment, without timidity, in every society, be it that of nobles, brahmans, householders, or ascetics; a serene death; and, at the breaking up of the body after death, rebirth in a happy state, in a heavenly world."

25. And the Blessed One spent much of the night instructing the devotees of Pataligama in the Dhamma, rousing, edifying, and gladdening them, after which he dismissed them, saying: "The night is far advanced, householders. You may go at your convenience.

"So be it, Lord." And the devotees of Pataligama rose from their seats, respectfully saluted the Blessed One, and keeping their right sides towards him, departed. And the Blessed One, soon after their departure, retired into privacy.

26. At that time Sunidha and Vassakara, the chief ministers of Magadha, were building a fortress at Pataligama in defense against the Vajjis. And deities in large numbers, counted

in thousands, had taken possession of sites at Pataligama. In the region where deities of great power prevailed, officials of great power were bent on constructing edifices; and where deities of medium power and lesser power prevailed, officials of medium and lesser power were bent on constructing edifices.

27. And the Blessed One saw with the heavenly eye, pure and transcending the faculty of men, the deities, counted in thousands, where they had taken possession of sites in Pataligama. And rising before the night was spent, towards dawn, the Blessed One addressed the Venerable Ananda thus: "Who is it, Ananda, that is erecting a city at Pataligama?"

"Sunidha and Vassakara, Lord, the chief ministers of Magadha, are building a fortress at Pataligama, in defence against the Vajjis."

28. "It is, Ananda, as if Sunidha and Vassakara had taken counsel with the gods of the Thirty-three. For I beheld, Ananda, with the heavenly eye, pure and transcending the faculty of men, a large number of deities, counted in thousands, that have taken possession of sites at Pataligama. In the region where deities of great power prevail, officials of great power are bent on constructing edifices; and where deities of medium and lesser power prevail, officials of medium and lesser power are bent on constructing edifices. Truly, Ananda, as far as the Aryan race extends and trade routes spread, this will be the foremost city Pataliputta, a trade-center. [16] But Pataliputta, Ananda, will be assailed by three perils — fire, water, and dissension."

29. Then Sunidha and Vassakara went to the Blessed One, and after courteous greeting to the Blessed One, and exchanging many pleasant words, they stood at one side and addressed him thus: "May the Venerable Gotama please accept our invitation for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus." And the Blessed One consented by his silence.

30. Knowing the Blessed One's consent, Sunidha and Vassakara departed for their own abodes, where they had choice food, hard and soft, prepared. And when it was time, they announced to the Blessed One: "It is time, Venerable Gotama; the meal is ready."

Thereupon the Blessed One got ready in the forenoon, and taking bowl and robe, he went together with the community of bhikkhus to the abode of Sunidha and Vassakara, where he took the seat prepared for him. And Sunidha and Vassakara themselves attended on the community of bhikkhus headed by the Buddha, and served them with choice food, hard and soft. When the Blessed One had finished his meal and had removed his hand from the bowl, they took low seats and sat down at one side.

31. And the Blessed One thanked them with these stanzas:

Wherever he may dwell, the prudent man Ministers to the chaste and virtuous; And having to these worthy ones made gifts, He shares his merits with the local devas. And so revered, they honor him in turn, Are gracious to him even as a mother Is towards her own, her only

son; And he who thus enjoys the devas' grace, And is by them beloved, good fortune sees.

After this, the Blessed One rose from his seat and departed.

Crossing the Ganges

32. Then Sunidha and Vassakara followed behind the Blessed One, step by step, saying: "Through whichever gate the recluse Gotama will depart today, that we will name the Gotama-gate; and the ford by which he will cross the river Ganges shall be named the Gotama-ford." And so it came to pass, where the gate was concerned.

33. But when the Blessed One came to the river Ganges, it was full to the brim, so that crows could drink from it. And some people went in search of a boat or float, while others tied up a raft, because they desired to get across. But the Blessed One, as quickly as a strong man might stretch out his bent arm or draw in his outstretched arm, vanished from this side of the river Ganges, and came to stand on the yonder side.

34. And the Blessed One saw the people who desired to cross searching for a boat or float, while others were binding rafts. And then the Blessed One, seeing them thus, gave forth the solemn utterance:

They who have bridged the ocean vast, Leaving the lowlands far behind, While others still their frail rafts bind, Are saved by wisdom unsurpassed.

Part Two: The Journey to Vesali

The Four Noble Truths

1. Now the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Kotigama."

"So be it, Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode at Kotigama together with a large community of bhikkhus.

2. And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Bhikkhus, it is through not realizing, through not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that this long course of birth and death has been passed through and undergone by me as well as by you. What are these four? They are the noble truth of suffering; the noble truth of the origin of suffering; the noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and the noble truth of the way to the cessation of suffering. But now, bhikkhus, that these have been realized and penetrated, cut off is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no fresh becoming."

3. Thus it was said by the Blessed One. And the Happy One, the Master, further said:

Through not seeing the Four Noble Truths, Long was the weary path from birth to birth. When these are known, removed is rebirth's cause, The root of sorrow plucked; then ends rebirth.

4. And also at Kotigama the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: "Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

5. When the Blessed One had stayed at Kotigama as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Nadika."

"So be it, Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode in Nadika together with a large community of bhikkhus, staying in the Brick House.

The Four Specific Attainments

6. Then the Venerable Ananda approached the Blessed One and, after greeting him respectfully, sat down at one side. And he said to the Blessed One: "Here in Nadika, Lord, there have passed away the bhikkhu Salha and the bhikkhuni Nanda. Likewise there have passed away the layman Sudatta and the laywoman Sujata; likewise the layman Kakudha, Kalinga, Nikata, Katissabha, Tuttha, Santuttha, Bhadda, and Subhadda. What is their destiny, Lord? What is their future state?"

7. "The bhikkhu Salha, Ananda, through the destruction of the taints in this very lifetime has attained to the taint-free deliverance of mind and deliverance through wisdom, having directly known and realized it by himself. [17]

"The bhikkhuni Nanda, Ananda, through the destruction of the five lower fetters (that bind beings to the world of the senses), has arisen spontaneously (among the Suddhavasa deities) and will come to final cessation in that very place, not liable to return from that world.

"The layman Sudatta, Ananda, through the destruction of the three fetters (self-belief, doubt, and faith in the efficacy of rituals and observances), and the lessening of lust, hatred, and delusion, has become a once-returner and is bound to make an end of suffering after having returned but once more to this world.

"The laywoman Sujata, Ananda, through the destruction of the three fetters has become a stream-enterer, and is safe from falling into the states of misery, assured, and bound for Enlightenment.

"The layman Kakudha, Ananda, through the destruction of the five lower fetters (that bind beings to the world of the senses), has arisen spontaneously (among the Suddhavasa

deities), and will come to final cessation in that very place, not liable to return from that world.

"So it is with Kalinga, Nikata, Katissabha, Tuttha, Santuttha, Bhadda, and Subhadda, and with more than fifty laymen in Nadika. More than ninety laymen who have passed away in Nadika, Ananda, through the destruction of the three fetters, and the lessening of lust, hatred, and delusion, have become once-returners and are bound to make an end of suffering after having returned but once more to this world.

"More than five hundred laymen who have passed away in Nadika, Ananda, through the complete destruction of the three fetters have become stream-enterers, and are safe from falling into the states of misery, assured, and bound for Enlightenment.

The Mirror of the Dhamma

8. "But truly, Ananda, it is nothing strange that human beings should die. But if each time it happens you should come to the Tathagata and ask about them in this manner, indeed it would be troublesome to him. Therefore, Ananda, I will give you the teaching called the Mirror of the Dhamma, possessing which the noble disciple, should he so desire, can declare of himself: 'There is no more rebirth for me in hell, nor as an animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A stream-enterer am I, safe from falling into the states of misery, assured am I and bound for Enlightenment.'"

9. "And what, Ananda, is that teaching called the Mirror of Dhamma, possessing which the noble disciple may thus declare of himself?

"In this case, Ananda, the noble disciple possesses unwavering faith in the Buddha thus: 'The Blessed One is an Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One, perfect in knowledge and conduct, the Happy One, the knower of the world, the paramount trainer of beings, the teacher of gods and men, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.'

"He possesses unwavering faith in the Dhamma thus: 'Well propounded by the Blessed One is the Dhamma, evident, timeless, [18] inviting investigation, leading to emancipation, to be comprehended by the wise, each for himself.'

"He possesses unwavering faith in the Blessed One's Order of Disciples thus: 'Well faring is the Blessed One's Order of Disciples, righteously, wisely, and dutifully: that is to say, the four pairs of men, the eight classes of persons. The Blessed One's Order of Disciples is worthy of honor, of hospitality, of offerings, of veneration — the supreme field for meritorious deeds in the world.'

"And he possesses virtues that are dear to the Noble Ones, complete and perfect, spotless and pure, which are liberating, praised by the wise, uninfluenced (by worldly concerns), and favorable to concentration of mind.

10. "This, Ananda, is the teaching called the Mirror of the Dhamma, whereby the noble disciple may thus know of himself: 'There is no more rebirth for me in hell, nor as an animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A stream-enterer am I, safe from falling into the states of misery, assured am I and bound for Enlightenment.'"

11. And also in Nadika, in the Brick House, the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: "Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

12. When the Blessed One had stayed in Nadika as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Vesali."

"So be it, O Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode in Vesali together with a large community of bhikkhus, and stayed in Ambapali's grove.

Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension

13. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Mindful should you dwell, bhikkhus, clearly comprehending; thus I exhort you.

14. "And how, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu mindful? When he dwells contemplating the body in the body, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world; and when he dwells contemplating feelings in feelings, the mind in the mind, and mental objects in mental objects, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world, then is he said to be mindful.

15. "And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu have clear comprehension? When he remains fully aware of his coming and going, his looking forward and his looking away, his bending and stretching, his wearing of his robe and carrying of his bowl, his eating and drinking, masticating and savoring, his defecating and urinating, his walking, standing, sitting, lying down, going to sleep or keeping awake, his speaking or being silent, then is he said to have clear comprehension.

"Mindful should you dwell, bhikkhus, clearly comprehending; thus I exhort you."

Ambapali and the Licchavis

16. Then Ambapali the courtesan came to know: "The Blessed One, they say, has arrived at Vesali and is now staying in my Mango Grove." And she ordered a large number of magnificent carriages to be made ready, mounted one of them herself, and accompanied by the rest, drove out from Vesali towards her park. She went by carriage as far as the carriage could go, then alighted; and approaching the Blessed One on foot, she

respectfully greeted him and sat down at one side. And the Blessed One instructed Ambapali the courtesan in the Dhamma and roused, edified, and gladdened her.

17. Thereafter Ambapali the courtesan spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "May the Blessed One, O Lord, please accept my invitation for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus." And by his silence the Blessed One consented.

Sure, then, of the Blessed One's consent, Ambapali the courtesan rose from her seat, respectfully saluted him, and keeping her right side towards him, took her departure.

18. Then the Licchavi of Vesali came to know: "The Blessed One, they say, has arrived at Vesali and is now staying in Ambapali's grove." And they ordered a large number of magnificent carriages to be made ready, each mounted one, and accompanied by the rest, drove out from Vesali. Now, of these Licchavis, some were in blue, with clothing and ornaments all of blue, while others were in yellow, red, and white.

19. And it so happened that Ambapali the courtesan drove up against the young Licchavis, axle by axle, wheel by wheel, and yoke by yoke. Thereupon the Licchavis exclaimed: "Why do you drive up against us in this fashion, Ambapali?"

"Thus it is, indeed, my princes, and not otherwise! For the Blessed One is invited by me for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus!"

"Give up the meal, Ambapali, for a hundred thousand!"

But she replied: "Even if you were to give me Vesali, sirs, together with its tributary lands, I would not give up a meal of such importance."

Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers in annoyance: "See, friends! We are defeated by this mango lass! We are utterly outdone by this mango lass!" But they continued on their way to Ambapali's grove.

20. And the Blessed One beheld the Licchavis from afar, as they drove up. Then he spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: "Those of you, bhikkhus, who have not yet seen the Thirty-three gods, may behold the assembly of the Licchavis, and may gaze on them, for they are comparable to the assembly of the Thirty-three gods."

21. Then the Licchavis drove their carriages as far as the carriages could go, then alighted; and approaching the Blessed One on foot, they respectfully greeted him and sat down at one side. The Blessed One instructed the Licchavis in the Dhamma, and roused, edified, and gladdened them.

22. Thereafter the Licchavis spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "May the Blessed One, O Lord, please accept our invitation for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus."

"The invitation for tomorrow's meal, Licchavis, has been accepted by me from Ambapali the courtesan."

Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers in annoyance: "See, friends! We are defeated by this mango lass! We are utterly outdone by this mango lass!" And then the Licchavis, approving of the Blessed One's words and delighted with them, rose from their seats, respectfully saluted him, and keeping their right sides towards him, took their departure.

23. Then, after the night had passed, Ambapali the courtesan had choice food, hard and soft, prepared in her park, and announced it to the Blessed One: "It is time, O Lord; the meal is ready." Thereupon the Blessed One got ready in the forenoon, and taking bowl and robe, he went together with the community of bhikkhus to Ambapali's dwelling, and there he took the seat prepared for him. And Ambapali herself attended on the community of bhikkhus headed by the Buddha, and served them with choice food, hard and soft.

24. And when the Blessed One had finished his meal and had removed his hand from his bowl, Ambapali the courtesan took a low seat, and placing herself at one side, spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "This park, O Lord, I offer to the community of bhikkhus headed by the Buddha." And the Blessed One accepted the park. He then instructed Ambapali in the Dhamma, and having roused, edified, and gladdened her, he rose from his seat and departed.

25. And also at Vesali, in Ambapali's grove, the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: "Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

26. When the Blessed One had stayed in Ambapali's grove as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Come, Ananda, let us go to the village of Beluva."

"So be it, Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode in the village of Beluva together with a large community of bhikkhus.

The Blessed One's Deadly Sickness

27. At that time the Blessed One spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: "Go now, bhikkhus, and seek shelter anywhere in the neighborhood of Vesali where you are welcome, among acquaintances and friends, and there spend the rainy season. As for me, I shall spend the rainy season in this very place, in the village of Beluva."

"So be it, O Lord," the bhikkhus said.

28. But when the Blessed One had entered upon the rainy season, there arose in him a severe illness, and sharp and deadly pains came upon him. And the Blessed One endured

them mindfully, clearly comprehending and unperturbed.

29. Then it occurred to the Blessed One: "It would not be fitting if I came to my final passing away without addressing those who attended on me, without taking leave of the community of bhikkhus. Then let me suppress this illness by strength of will, resolve to maintain the life process, and live on."

30. And the Blessed One suppressed the illness by strength of will, resolved to maintain the life process, and lived on. So it came about that the Blessed One's illness was allayed.

31. And the Blessed One recovered from that illness; and soon after his recovery he came out from his dwelling place and sat down in the shade of the building, on a seat prepared for him. Then the Venerable Ananda approached the Blessed One, respectfully greeted him, and sitting down at one side, he spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Fortunate it is for me, O Lord, to see the Blessed One at ease again! Fortunate it is for me, O Lord, to see the Blessed One recovered! For truly, Lord, when I saw the Blessed One's sickness it was as though my own body became weak as a creeper, every thing around became dim to me, and my senses failed me. Yet, Lord, I still had some little comfort in the thought that the Blessed One would not come to his final passing away until he had given some last instructions respecting the community of bhikkhus."

32. Thus spoke the Venerable Ananda, but the Blessed One answered him, saying: "What more does the community of bhikkhus expect from me, Ananda? I have set forth the Dhamma without making any distinction of esoteric and exoteric doctrine; there is nothing, Ananda, with regard to the teachings that the Tathagata holds to the last with the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back. Whosoever may think that it is he who should lead the community of bhikkhus, or that the community depends upon him, it is such a one that would have to give last instructions respecting them. But, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such idea as that it is he who should lead the community of bhikkhus, or that the community depends upon him. So what instructions should he have to give respecting the community of bhikkhus?

"Now I am frail, Ananda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightieth year, and my life is spent. Even as an old cart, Ananda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathagata is kept going only with supports. It is, Ananda, only when the Tathagata, disregarding external objects, with the cessation of certain feelings, attains to and abides in the signless concentration of mind, [19] that his body is more comfortable.

33. "Therefore, Ananda, be islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge.

"And how, Ananda, is a bhikkhu an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as his island, the Dhamma as his refuge, seeking no other refuge?

34. "When he dwells contemplating the body in the body, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world; when he dwells contemplating feelings in feelings, the mind in the mind, and mental objects in mental objects, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world, then, truly, he is an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, seeking no external refuge; having the Dhamma as his island, the Dhamma as his refuge, seeking no other refuge.

35. "Those bhikkhus of mine, Ananda, who now or after I am gone, abide as an island unto themselves, as a refuge unto themselves, seeking no other refuge; having the Dhamma as their island and refuge, seeking no other refuge: it is they who will become the highest, [20] if they have the desire to learn."

Part Three: Relinquishing the Will to Live

The Blessed One's Prompting

1. Then the Blessed One, getting ready in the forenoon, took bowl and robe and went into Vesali for alms. After the alms round and meal, on his return, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Take up a mat, Ananda, and let us spend the day at the Capala shrine."

"So be it, Lord." And the Venerable Ananda took up a mat and followed behind the Blessed One, step by step.

2. And the Blessed One went to the Capala shrine and sat down on the seat prepared for him. And when the Venerable Ananda had seated himself at one side after he had respectfully saluted the Blessed One, the Lord said to him: "Pleasant, Ananda, is Vesali; pleasant are the shrines of Udena, Gotamaka, Sattambaka, Bahuputta, Sarandada, and Capala."

3. And the Blessed One said: "Whosoever, Ananda, has developed, practiced, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinized, and brought to perfection the four constituents of psychic power could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it. [21] The Tathagata, Ananda, has done so. Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it."

4. But the Venerable Ananda was unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given by the Blessed One. As though his mind was influenced by Mara, [22] he did not beseech the Blessed One: "May the Blessed One remain, O Lord!. May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the world-period, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men!"

5. And when for a second and a third time the Blessed One repeated his words, the Venerable Ananda remained silent.

6. Then the Blessed One said to the Venerable Ananda: "Go now, Ananda, and do as seems fit to you."

"Even so, O Lord." And the Venerable Ananda, rising from his seat, respectfully saluted the Blessed One, and keeping his right side towards him, took his seat under a tree some distance away.

Mara's Appeal

7. And when the Venerable Ananda had gone away, Mara, the Evil One, approached the Blessed One. And standing at one side he spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Now, O Lord, let the Blessed One come to his final passing away; let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time has come for the Parinibbana of the Lord.

"For the Blessed One, O Lord, spoke these words to me: 'I shall not come to my final passing away, Evil One, until my bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, have come to be true disciples — wise, well disciplined, apt and learned, preservers of the Dhamma, living according to the Dhamma, abiding by the appropriate conduct, and having learned the Master's word, are able to expound it, preach it, proclaim it, establish it, reveal it, explain it in detail, and make it clear; until, when adverse opinions arise, they shall be able to refute them thoroughly and well, and to preach this convincing and liberating Dhamma.' [23]

8. "And now, O Lord, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, have become the Blessed One's disciples in just this way. So, O Lord, let the Blessed One come to his final passing away! The time has come for the Parinibbana of the Lord.

"For the Blessed One, O Lord, spoke these words to me: 'I shall not come to my final passing away, Evil One, until this holy life taught by me has become successful, prosperous, far-renowned, popular, and widespread, until it is well proclaimed among gods and men.' And this too has come to pass in just this way. So, O Lord, let the Blessed One come to his final passing away, let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time has come for the Parinibbana of the Lord."

The Blessed One Relinquishes His Will to Live

9. When this was said, the Blessed One spoke to Mara, the Evil One, saying: "Do not trouble yourself, Evil One. Before long the Parinibbana of the Tathagata will come about. Three months hence the Tathagata will utterly pass away."

10. And at the Capala shrine the Blessed One thus mindfully and clearly comprehending renounced his will to live on. And upon the Lord's renouncing his will to live on, there came a tremendous earthquake, dreadful and astonishing, and thunder rolled across the heavens. And the Blessed One beheld it with understanding, and made this solemn utterance:

What causes life, unbounded or confined [24] — His process of becoming [25] — this the Sage Renounces. With inward calm and joy he breaks, As though a coat of mail, his own life's cause. [26]

11. Then it came to the mind of the Venerable Ananda: "Marvellous it is indeed, and most wonderful! The earth shakes mightily, tremendously! Dreadful and astonishing it is, how the thunders roll across the heavens! What could be the reason, what the cause, that so mighty an earthquake should arise?"

Eight Causes of Earthquakes

12. And the Venerable Ananda approached the Blessed One, and respectfully greeting him, sat down at one side. Then he spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Marvellous it is indeed, and most wonderful! The earth shakes mightily, tremendously! Dreadful and astonishing it is how the thunders roll across the heavens! What could be the reason, what the cause, that so mighty an earthquake should arise?"

13. Then the Blessed One said: "There are eight reasons, Ananda, eight causes for a mighty earthquake to arise. What are those eight?

14. "This great earth, Ananda, is established upon liquid, the liquid upon the atmosphere, and the atmosphere upon space. And when, Ananda, mighty atmospheric disturbances take place, the liquid is agitated. And with the agitation of the liquid, tremors of the earth arise. This is the first reason, the first cause for the arising of mighty earthquakes.

15. "Again, Ananda, when an ascetic or holy man of great power, one who has gained mastery of his mind, or a deity who is mighty and potent, develops intense concentration on the delimited aspect of the earth element, and to a boundless degree on the liquid element, he, too, causes the earth to tremble, quiver, and shake. This is the second reason, the second cause for the arising of mighty earthquakes.

16-21. "Again, Ananda, when the Bodhisatta departs from the Tusita realm and descends into his mother's womb, mindfully and clearly comprehending; and when the Bodhisatta comes out from his mother's womb, mindfully and clearly comprehending; and when the Tathagata becomes fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment; when the Tathagata sets rolling the excellent Wheel of the Dhamma; when the Tathagata renounces his will to live on; and when the Tathagata comes to pass away into the state of Nibbana in which no element of clinging remains — then, too, Ananda, this great earth trembles, quivers, and shakes.

"These, Ananda, are the eight reasons, the eight causes for a great earthquake to arise. [27]

Eight Assemblies

22. "Now there are eight kinds of assemblies, Ananda, that is to say, assemblies of nobles, brahmans, householders, ascetics, of the Four Great Kings, of the Thirty-three gods, of Maras, and of Brahmas.

23. "And I recall, Ananda, how I have attended each of these eight kinds of assemblies, amounting to hundreds. [28] And before seating myself and starting the conversation or the discussion, I made my appearance resemble theirs, my voice resemble theirs. And so I taught them the Dhamma, and roused, edified, and gladdened them. Yet while I was speaking to them thus, they did not know me, and they would enquire of one another, asking: 'Who is he that speaks to us? Is it a man or a god?'

"Then having taught them the Dhamma, and roused, edified, and gladdened them, I would straightaway vanish. And when I had vanished, too, they did not know me, and they would enquire of one another, asking: 'Who is he that has vanished? Is it a man or a god?'

"And such, Ananda, are the eight kinds of assemblies.

Eight Fields of Mastery

24. "Now there are eight fields of mastery, [29] Ananda. What are those eight?

25. "When one, perceiving forms subjectively, [30] sees small forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, [31] and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the first field of mastery.

26. "When one, perceiving forms subjectively, sees large forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the second field of mastery.

27. "When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, [32] sees small forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the third field of mastery.

28. "When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees large forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the fourth field of mastery.

29. "When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are blue, blue in color, of a blue luster like the blossoms of flax, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is blue, blue in color, of a blue luster — when such a one sees forms external to himself that are blue, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the fifth field of mastery.

30. "When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are yellow, yellow in color, of a yellow luster like the Kanikara blossom, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is yellow, yellow in color, of a yellow luster — when

such a one sees forms external to himself that are yellow, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the sixth field of mastery.

31. "When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are red, red in color, of a red luster like the Bandhujivaka blossom, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is red, red in color, of a red luster — when such a one sees forms external to himself that are red, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the seventh field of mastery.

32. "When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are white, white in color, of a white luster like the morning star, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is white, white in color, of a white luster — when such a one sees forms external to himself that are white, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are — this is the eighth field of mastery.

"These, Ananda, are the eight fields of mastery.

Eight Liberations

33. "Now there are eight liberations, Ananda. What are those eight? [33]

34. "Oneself having form, [34] one perceives forms; this is the first liberation.

35. "Being unaware of one's own form, one perceives forms external to oneself; this is the second liberation.

36. "Experiencing loveliness, one is intent upon it; [35] this is the third liberation.

37. "By utterly transcending the perceptions of matter, by the disappearance of the perceptions of sense-reaction, and by giving no attention to diversity-perceptions, one becomes aware of, attains to, and abides in the sphere of infinite space; this is the fourth liberation.

38. "By utterly transcending the sphere of infinite space, one becomes aware of, attains to, and abides in the sphere of infinite consciousness; this is the fifth liberation.

39. "By utterly transcending the sphere of infinite consciousness, one becomes aware of, attains to, and abides in the sphere of nothingness; this is the sixth liberation.

40. "By utterly transcending the sphere of nothingness, one attains to and abides in the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; this is the seventh liberation.

41. "By utterly transcending the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, one attains to and abides in the cessation of perception and sensation; this is the eighth liberation.

"These, Ananda, are the eight liberations.

Mara's Former Temptation

42. "There was a time, Ananda, when I dwelt at Uruvela, on the bank of the Nerañjara River, at the foot of the goatherds' banyan-tree, soon after my supreme Enlightenment. And Mara, the Evil One, approached me, saying: 'Now, O Lord, let the Blessed One come to his final passing away! Let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time has come for the Parinibbana of the Lord.'

43. "Then, Ananda, I answered Mara, the Evil One, saying: 'I shall not come to my final passing away, Evil One, until my bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, have come to be true disciples — wise, well disciplined, apt and learned, preservers of the Dhamma, living according to the Dhamma, abiding by appropriate conduct and, having learned the Master's word, are able to expound it, preach it, proclaim it, establish it, reveal it, explain it in detail, and make it clear; until, when adverse opinions arise, they shall be able to refute them thoroughly and well, and to preach this convincing and liberating Dhamma.

44. "'I shall not come to my final passing away, Evil One, until this holy life taught by me has become successful, prosperous, far-renowned, popular, and widespread, until it is well proclaimed among gods and men.'

45. "And again today, Ananda, at the Capala shrine, Mara, the Evil One, approached me, saying: 'Now, O Lord, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, have come to be true disciples of the Blessed One — wise, well disciplined, apt and learned, preservers of the Dhamma, living according to the Dhamma, abiding in the appropriate conduct, and having learned the Master's word, are able to expound it, preach it, proclaim it, establish it, reveal it, explain it in detail, and make it clear; and when adverse opinions arise, they are now able to refute them thoroughly and well, and to preach this convincing and liberating Dhamma.

"'And now, O Lord, this holy life taught by the Blessed One has become successful, prosperous, far-renowned, popular and widespread, and it is well proclaimed among gods and men. Therefore, O Lord, let the Blessed One come to his final passing away! Let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time has come for the Parinibbana of the Lord.'

46. "And then, Ananda, I answered Mara, the Evil One, saying: 'Do not trouble yourself, Evil One. Before long the Parinibbana of the Tathagata will come about. Three months hence the Tathagata will utterly pass away.'

47. "And in this way, Ananda, today at the Capala shrine the Tathagata has renounced his will to live on."

Ananda's Appeal

48. At these words the Venerable Ananda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "May the Blessed One remain, O Lord! May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the

world-period, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men!"

49. And the Blessed One answered, saying: "Enough, Ananda. Do not entreat the Tathagata, for the time is past, Ananda, for such an entreaty."

50-51. But for a second and a third time, the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: "May the Blessed One remain, O Lord! May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the world-period, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men!"

52. Then the Blessed One said: "Do you have faith, Ananda, in the Enlightenment of the Tathagata?" And the Venerable Ananda replied: "Yes, O Lord, I do."

"Then how, Ananda, can you persist against the Tathagata even up to the third time?"

53. Then the Venerable Ananda said: "This, O Lord, I have heard and learned from the Blessed One himself when the Blessed One said to me: 'Whosoever, Ananda, has developed, practiced, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinized, and brought to perfection the four constituents of psychic power could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it. The Tathagata, Ananda, has done so. Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'"

54. "And did you believe it, Ananda?"

"Yes, O Lord, I did."

"Then, Ananda, the fault is yours. Herein have you failed, inasmuch as you were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting given by the Tathagata, and you did not then entreat the Tathagata to remain. For if you had done so, Ananda, twice the Tathagata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ananda, the fault is yours; herein have you failed.

55. "At Rajagaha, Ananda, when dwelling at Vultures' Peak, I spoke to you, saying: 'Pleasant, Ananda, is Rajagaha; pleasant is Vultures' Peak. Whosoever, Ananda, has developed... Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'

56. "So also at the Banyan Grove, at Robbers' Cliff, at the Sattapanni Cave on the Vebhara Mountain, at the Black Rock of Isigili, at the Serpents' Pool in the Cool Forest, at the Tapoda Grove, at the Bamboo Grove in the Squirrels' Feeding-ground, at Jivaka's Mango Grove, and at Small Nook in the Deer Park I spoke to you in the same words, saying: 'Pleasant, Ananda, is Rajagaha, pleasant are these places. Whosoever, Ananda, has developed... Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'

"But you, Ananda, were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting given you by the Tathagata, and you did not entreat the Tathagata to remain. For if you had done so, Ananda, twice the Tathagata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ananda, the fault is yours; herein you have failed.

57. "So also at Vesali, Ananda, at different times the Tathagata has spoken to you, saying: 'Pleasant, Ananda, is Vesali; pleasant are the shrines of Udena, Gotamaka, Sattambaka, Bahuputta, Sarandada, and Capala. Whosoever, Ananda, has developed... Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'

"But you, Ananda, were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given you by the Tathagata, and you did not entreat the Tathagata to remain. For if you had done so, Ananda, twice the Tathagata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ananda, the fault is yours; herein you have failed.

58. "Yet, Ananda, have I not taught from the very beginning that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation, and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, is compounded and subject to decay, how can one say: 'May it not come to dissolution!' There can be no such state of things. And of that, Ananda, which the Tathagata has finished with, that which he has relinquished, given up, abandoned, and rejected — his will to live on — the Tathagata's word has been spoken once for all: 'Before long the Parinibbana of the Tathagata will come about. Three months hence the Tathagata will utterly pass away.' And that the Tathagata should withdraw his words for the sake of living on — this is an impossibility.

The Last Admonition

59. "So, then, Ananda, let us go to the hall of the Gabled House, in the Great Forest." And the Venerable Ananda replied: "So be it, Lord."

60. Then the Blessed One, with the Venerable Ananda, went to the hall of the Gabled House, in the Great Forest. And there he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Go now, Ananda, and assemble in the hall of audience all the bhikkhus who dwell in the neighborhood of Vesali."

"So be it, Lord." And the Venerable Ananda gathered all the bhikkhus who dwelt in the neighborhood of Vesali, and assembled them in the hall of audience. And then, respectfully saluting the Blessed One, and standing at one side, he said: "The community of bhikkhus is assembled, Lord. Now let the Blessed One do as he wishes."

61. Thereupon the Blessed One entered the hall of audience, and taking the seat prepared for him, he exhorted the bhikkhus, saying: "Now, O bhikkhus, I say to you that these teachings of which I have direct knowledge and which I have made known to you — these you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop, and frequently practice, that the life of purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of

gods and men.

62. "And what, bhikkhus, are these teachings? They are the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four constituents of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path. These, bhikkhus, are the teachings of which I have direct knowledge, which I have made known to you, and which you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop, and frequently practice, that the life of purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men."

63. Then the Blessed One said to the bhikkhus: "So, bhikkhus, I exhort you: All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness. The time of the Tathagata's Parinibbana is near. Three months hence the Tathagata will utterly pass away."

64. And having spoken these words, the Happy One, the Master, spoke again, saying:

My years are now full ripe, the life span left is short. Departing, I go hence from you, relying on myself alone. Be earnest, then, O bhikkhus, be mindful and of virtue pure! With firm resolve, guard your own mind! Whoso untiringly pursues the Dhamma and the Discipline Shall go beyond the round of births and make an end of suffering.

Part Four: The Last Meal

The Elephant's Look

1. Then the Blessed One, getting ready in the forenoon, took bowl and robe and went into Vesali for alms. After the alms round and meal, on his return, he looked upon Vesali with the elephant's look, [36] and said to the Venerable Ananda: "This, Ananda, is the last time that the Tathagata will look upon Vesali. Come, Ananda, let us go to Bhandagama."

"So be it, O Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode at Bhandagama together with a large community of bhikkhus.

2. And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Bhikkhus, it is through not realizing, through not penetrating four principles that this long course of birth and death has been passed through and undergone by me as well as by you. What are those four? They are: noble virtue, noble concentration, noble wisdom, and noble emancipation. But now, bhikkhus, that these have been realized and penetrated, cut off is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no fresh becoming."

3. And having spoken these words, the Happy One, the Master, spoke again, saying:

"Virtue, concentration, wisdom, and emancipation unsurpassed —

These are the principles realized by Gotama the renowned;

And, knowing them, he, the Buddha, to his monks has taught the Dhamma.

He, the destroyer of suffering, the Master, the Seer, is at peace."

4. And also at Bhandagama the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: "Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

5. When the Blessed One had stayed at Bhandagama as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Hatthigama."

"So be it, Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode at Hatthigama together with a large community of bhikkhus.

And when the Blessed One had stayed at Hatthigama as long as he pleased, he took up his abode at Ambagama, then at Jambugama. And at each of these places the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: "Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

6. And when the Blessed One had stayed at Jambugama as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Bhoganagara."

"So be it, Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode at Bhoganagara together with a large community of bhikkhus, and stayed in the Ananda shrine.

The Four Great References

7. And there the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Now, bhikkhus, I shall make known to you the four great references. [37] Listen and pay heed to my words." And those bhikkhus answered, saying:

"So be it, Lord."

8-11. Then the Blessed One said: "In this fashion, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu might speak: 'Face to face with the Blessed One, brethren, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the Master's Dispensation'; or: 'In an abode of such and such a name lives a community with elders and a chief. Face to face with that community, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the Master's Dispensation'; or: 'In

an abode of such and such a name live several bhikkhus who are elders, who are learned, who have accomplished their course, who are preservers of the Dhamma, the Discipline, and the Summaries. Face to face with those elders, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the Master's Dispensation'; or: 'In an abode of such and such a name lives a single bhikkhu who is an elder, who is learned, who has accomplished his course, who is a preserver of the Dhamma, the Discipline, and the Summaries. Face to face with that elder, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the Master's Dispensation.'

"In such a case, bhikkhus, the declaration of such a bhikkhu is neither to be received with approval nor with scorn. Without approval and without scorn, but carefully studying the sentences word by word, one should trace them in the Discourses and verify them by the Discipline. If they are neither traceable in the Discourses nor verifiable by the Discipline, one must conclude thus: 'Certainly, this is not the Blessed One's utterance; this has been misunderstood by that bhikkhu — or by that community, or by those elders, or by that elder.' In that way, bhikkhus, you should reject it. But if the sentences concerned are traceable in the Discourses and verifiable by the Discipline, then one must conclude thus: 'Certainly, this is the Blessed One's utterance; this has been well understood by that bhikkhu — or by that community, or by those elders, or by that elder.' And in that way, bhikkhus, you may accept it on the first, second, third, or fourth reference. These, bhikkhus, are the four great references for you to preserve."

12. And also at Bhoganagara, at the Ananda shrine, the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: "Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom."

13. When the Blessed One had stayed at Bhoganagara as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Pava."

"So be it, Lord." And the Blessed One took up his abode at Pava together with a great community of bhikkhus, and stayed in the Mango Grove of Cunda, who was by family a metalworker.

The Buddha's Last Meal

14. And Cunda the metalworker came to know: "The Blessed One, they say, has arrived at Pava, and is staying in my Mango Grove." And he went to the Blessed One, and having respectfully greeted him, sat down at one side. And the Blessed One instructed Cunda the metalworker in the Dhamma, and roused, edified, and gladdened him.

15. Then Cunda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "May the Blessed One, O Lord, please accept my invitation for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus." And by his silence the Blessed One consented.

16. Sure, then, of the Blessed One's consent, Cunda the metalworker rose from his seat, respectfully saluted the Blessed One, and keeping his right side towards him, took his departure.

17. And Cunda the metalworker, after the night had passed, had choice food, hard and soft, prepared in his abode, together with a quantity of sukara-maddava, [38] and announced it to the Blessed One, saying: "It is time, O Lord, the meal is ready."

18. Thereupon the Blessed One, in the forenoon, having got ready, took bowl and robe and went with the community of bhikkhus to the house of Cunda, and there sat down on the seat prepared for him. And he spoke to Cunda, saying: "With the sukara-maddava you have prepared, Cunda, you may serve me; with the other food, hard and soft, you may serve the community of bhikkhus."

"So be it, Lord." And with the sukara-maddava prepared by him, he served the Blessed One; and with the other food, hard and soft, he served the community of bhikkhus.

19. Thereafter the Blessed One spoke to Cunda, saying: "Whatever, Cunda, is left over of the sukara-maddava, bury that in a pit. For I do not see in all this world, with its gods, Maras, and Brahmas, among the host of ascetics and brahmans, gods and men, anyone who could eat it and entirely digest it except the Tathagata alone."

And Cunda the metalworker answered the Blessed One saying: "So be it, O Lord."And what remained over of the sukara-maddava he buried in a pit.

20. Then he returned to the Blessed One, respectfully greeted him, and sat down at one side. And the Blessed One instructed Cunda the metalworker in the Dhamma, and roused, edified, and gladdened him. After this he rose from his seat and departed.

21. And soon after the Blessed One had eaten the meal provided by Cunda the metalworker, a dire sickness fell upon him, even dysentery, and he suffered sharp and deadly pains. But the Blessed One endured them mindfully, clearly comprehending and unperturbed.

22. Then the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Come, Ananda, let us go to Kusinara." And the Venerable Ananda answered: "So be it, Lord."

23. When he had eaten Cunda's food, I heard, With fortitude the deadly pains he bore. From the sukara-maddava a sore And dreadful sickness came upon the Lord. But nature's pangs he endured. "Come, let us go To Kusinara," was his dauntless word. [39]

The Clearing of the Waters

24. Now on the way the Blessed One went aside from the highway and stopped at the foot of a tree. And he said to the Venerable Ananda: "Please fold my upper robe in four, Ananda, and lay it down. I am weary and want to rest awhile."

"So be it, Lord." And the Venerable Ananda folded the robe in four and laid it down.

25. And the Blessed One sat down on the seat prepared for him and said to the Venerable Ananda: "Please bring me some water, Ananda. I am thirsty and want to drink."

26. And the Venerable Ananda answered the Blessed One: "But just now, Lord, a great number of carts, five hundred carts, have passed over, and the shallow water has been cut through by the wheels, so that it flows turbid and muddy. But the Kakuttha River, Lord, is quite close by, and its waters are clear, pleasant, cool, and translucent. It is easily approachable and delightfully placed. There the Blessed One can quench his thirst and refresh his limbs."

27-29. But a second time the Blessed One made his request, and the Venerable Ananda answered him as before. And then for a third time the Blessed One said: "Please bring me some water, Ananda. I am thirsty and want to drink."

30. Then the Venerable Ananda answered, saying: "So be it, Lord." And he took the bowl and went to the stream. And the shallow water, which had been cut through by the wheels so that it flowed turbid and muddy, became clear and settled down, pure and pleasant as the Venerable Ananda drew near.

31. Then the Venerable Ananda thought: "Marvellous and most wonderful indeed is the power and glory of the Tathagata!"

32. And he took up water in the bowl and carried it to the Blessed One, and said: "Marvellous and most wonderful indeed is the power and glory of the Tathagata! For this shallow water, which had been cut through by the wheels so that it flowed turbid and muddy, became clear and settled down, pure and pleasant as I drew near. Now let the Blessed One drink the water. Let the Happy One drink." And the Blessed One drank the water.

Pukkusa the Malla

33. Now it so happened that one Pukkusa of the Malla clan, who was a disciple of Alara Kalama, was passing by on his way from Kusinara to Pava.[40]

34. And when he saw the Blessed One seated at the foot of a tree, he approached him, respectfully greeted him, and sat down at one side. And he spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Marvellous it is, Lord, most wonderful it is, O Lord, the state of calmness wherein abide those who have gone forth from the world.

35. "For at one time, Lord, Alara Kalama was on a journey, and he went aside from the highway and sat down by the wayside at the foot of a tree to pass the heat of the day. And it came about, Lord, that a great number of carts, even five hundred carts, passed by him, one by one. And then, Lord, a certain man who was following behind that train of carts, approached and spoke to him, saying: 'Did you, sir, see a great number of carts that

passed you by?' And Alara Kalama answered him: 'I did not see them, brother.' 'But the noise, sir, surely you heard?' 'I did not hear it, brother.' Then that man asked him: 'Then, sir, perhaps you slept?' 'No, brother, I was not sleeping.' 'Then, sir, were you conscious?' 'I was, brother.' Then that man said: 'Then, sir, while conscious and awake you still did not see the great number of carts, even five hundred carts, that passed you by one after another, nor heard the noise? Why, sir, your very robe is covered with their dust!' And Alara Kalama replied, saying: 'So it is, brother.'

36. "And to that man, O Lord, came the thought: 'Marvellous it is, most wonderful indeed it is, the state of calmness wherein abide those who have gone forth from the world!' And there arose in him great faith in Alara Kalama, and he went his way."

37. "Now what do you think, Pukkusa? What is more difficult to do, more difficult to meet with — that a man, while conscious and awake, should not see a great number of carts, even five hundred carts, that passed him by one after another, nor hear the noise, or that one conscious and awake, in the midst of a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing, and thunderbolts crashing, should neither see it nor hear the noise?"

38. "What, O Lord, are five hundred carts — nay, six, seven, eight, nine hundred, or a thousand or even hundreds of thousands of carts — compared with this?"

39. "Now one time, Pukkusa, I was staying at Atuma, and had my abode in a barn there. And at that time there was a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing, and thunderbolts crashing. And two farmers who were brothers were killed close to the barn, together with four oxen, and a great crowd came forth from Atuma to the spot where they were killed.

40. "Now at that time, Pukkusa, I had come out of the barn and was walking up and down in thought before the door. And a certain man from the great crowd approached me, respectfully greeted me, and stood at one side.

41. "And I asked him: 'Why, brother, has this great crowd gathered together?' And he answered me: 'Just now, Lord, there was a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing, and thunderbolts crashing. And two farmers who were brothers were killed close by, together with four oxen. It is because of this that the great crowd has gathered. But where, Lord, were you?'

"'I was here, brother.' 'Yet, Lord, did you not see it?' 'I did not see it, brother.' 'But the noise, Lord, you surely heard?' 'I did not hear it, brother.' Then that man asked me: 'Then, Lord, perhaps you slept?' 'No, brother, I was not sleeping.' 'Then, Lord, you were conscious?' 'I was, brother.' Then that man said: 'Then, Lord, while conscious and awake, in the midst of a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing, and thunderbolts crashing, you neither saw it nor heard the noise?' And I answered him, saying: 'I did not, brother.'

42. "And to that man, Pukkusa, came the thought: 'Marvellous it is, most wonderful indeed it is, the state of calmness wherein abide those who have gone forth from the world!' And

there arose in him great faith in me, and he respectfully saluted me, and keeping his right side towards me, he went his way."

43. When this had been said, Pukkusa of the Malla clan said to the Blessed One: "The faith, Lord, that I had in Alara Kalama I now scatter to the mighty wind, I let it be carried away as by a flowing stream! Excellent, O Lord, most excellent, O Lord! It is as if, Lord, one were to set upright what had been overthrown, or to reveal what had been hidden, or to show the path to one who had gone astray, or to light a lamp in the darkness so that those having eyes might see — even so has the Blessed One set forth the Dhamma in many ways. And so, O Lord, I take my refuge in the Blessed One, the Dhamma, and the Community of Bhikkhus. May the Blessed One accept me as his disciple, one who has taken refuge until the end of life."

44. Then Pukkusa of the Malla clan spoke to a certain man, saying: "Bring me at once, friend, two sets of golden-hued robes, burnished and ready for wear." And the man answered him: "So be it, sir."

45. And when the robes were brought, Pukkusa of the Malla clan offered them to the Blessed One, saying: "May the Blessed One, O Lord, out of compassion, accept this from me." And the Blessed One said: "Robe me, then in one, Pukkusa, and in the other robe Ananda."

"So be it, Lord." And he thereupon robed the Blessed One in one, and in the other he robed the Venerable Ananda.

46. And then the Blessed One instructed Pukkusa of the Malla clan in the Dhamma, and roused, edified, and gladdened him. And after that, Pukkusa rose from his seat, respectfully saluted the Blessed One, and keeping his right side towards him, went his way.

47. And soon after Pukkusa of the Malla clan had departed, the Venerable Ananda arranged the set of golden-hued robes, burnished and ready for wear, about the body of the Blessed One. But when the set of robes was arranged upon the body of the Blessed One, it became as though faded, and its splendor dimmed.

48. And the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: "Marvellous it is, O Lord, most wonderful indeed it is, how clear and radiant the skin of the Tathagata appears! This set of golden-hued robes, burnished and ready for wear, Lord, now that it is arranged upon the body of the Blessed One seems to have become faded, its splendor dimmed."

49. "It is so, Ananda. There are two occasions, Ananda, when the skin of the Tathagata appears exceedingly clear and radiant. Which are these two? The night, Ananda, when the Tathagata becomes fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment, and the night when the Tathagata comes to his final passing away into the state of Nibbana in which no element of clinging remains. These, Ananda, are the two occasions on which the skin of the Tathagata appears exceedingly clear and radiant.

50. "And now today, in the last watch of this very night, Ananda, in the Mallas' Sala Grove, in the vicinity of Kusinara, between two sala trees, the Tathagata will come to his Parinibbana. So now, Ananda, let us go to the Kakuttha River."

51. Clad in Pukkusa's gift, the robes of gold, The Master's form was radiant to behold.

At the Kakuttha River

52. Then the Blessed One went to the Kakuttha River together with a great community of bhikkhus.

53. And he went down into the water and bathed and drank. And coming forth from the water again, he went to the Mango Grove, and there spoke to the Venerable Cundaka, saying: "Please fold my upper robe in four, Cundaka, and lay it down. I am weary and would rest awhile."

"So be it, Lord." And Cundaka folded the robe in four and laid it down.

54. And the Blessed One lay down on his right side, in the lion's posture, resting one foot upon the other, and so disposed himself, mindfully and clearly comprehending, with the time for rising held in mind. And the Venerable Cundaka sat down right in front of the Blessed One.

55. The Buddha to Kakuttha's river came, Where cool and limpid flows the pleasant stream; There washed in water clear his weary frame The Buddha — he in all the world supreme! And having bathed and drank, the Teacher straight Crossed over, the bhikkhus thronging in his wake. Discoursing holy truths, the Master great Towards the Mango Grove his path did take. There to the elder Cundaka he spoke: "Lay down my robe, please, folded into four." Then the elder, swift as lightning stroke, Hastened the Teacher's bidding to obey. Weary, the Lord then lay down on the mat, And Cunda on the ground before him sat.

Relieving Cunda's Remorse

56. Then the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "It may come to pass, Ananda, that someone will cause remorse to Cunda the metalworker, saying: 'It is no gain to you, friend Cunda, but a loss, that it was from you the Tathagata took his last alms meal, and then came to his end.' Then, Ananda, the remorse of Cunda should be dispelled after this manner: 'It is a gain to you, friend Cunda, a blessing that the Tathagata took his last alms meal from you, and then came to his end. For, friend, face to face with the Blessed One I have heard and learned: "There are two offerings of food which are of equal fruition, of equal outcome, exceeding in grandeur the fruition and result of any other offerings of food. Which two? The one partaken of by the Tathagata before becoming fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment; and the one partaken of by the Tathagata before passing into the state of Nibbana in which no element of clinging remains. By his deed the worthy Cunda has accumulated merit which makes for long life, beauty, well being, glory, heavenly rebirth, and sovereignty."' Thus, Ananda, the remorse of Cunda the metalworker

should be dispelled."

57. Then the Blessed One, understanding that matter, breathed forth the solemn utterance:

Who gives, his virtues shall increase; Who is self-curbed, no hatred bears; Whoso is skilled in virtue, evil shuns, And by the rooting out of lust and hate And all delusion, comes to be at peace.

Part Five: At Kusinara

Last Place of Rest

1. Then the Blessed One addressed the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Come, Ananda, let us cross to the farther bank of the Hiraññavati, and go to the Mallas' Sala Grove, in the vicinity of Kusinara."

"So be it, Lord."

2. And the Blessed One, together with a large company of bhikkhus, went to the further bank of the river Hiraññavati, to the Sala Grove of the Mallas, in the vicinity of Kusinara. And there he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying:

3. "Please, Ananda, prepare for me a couch between the twin sala trees, with the head to the north. I am weary, Ananda, and want to lie down."[41]

"So be it, Lord." And the Venerable Ananda did as the Blessed One asked him to do.

Then the Blessed One lay down on his right side, in the lion's posture, resting one foot upon the other, and so disposed himself, mindfully and clearly comprehending.

4. At that time the twin sala trees broke out in full bloom, though it was not the season of flowering. And the blossoms rained upon the body of the Tathagata and dropped and scattered and were strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And celestial mandarava flowers and heavenly sandalwood powder from the sky rained down upon the body of the Tathagata, and dropped and scattered and were strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And the sound of heavenly voices and heavenly instruments made music in the air out of reverence for the Tathagata.

5. And the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Ananda, the twin sala trees are in full bloom, though it is not the season of flowering. And the blossoms rain upon the body of the Tathagata and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And celestial coral flowers and heavenly sandalwood powder from the sky rain down upon the body of the Tathagata, and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And the sound of heavenly voices and heavenly instruments makes music in the air out of reverence for the Tathagata.

6. "Yet it is not thus, Ananda, that the Tathagata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped, and honored in the highest degree. But, Ananda, whatever bhikkhu or bhikkhuni, layman or laywoman, abides by the Dhamma, lives uprightly in the Dhamma, walks in the way of the Dhamma, it is by such a one that the Tathagata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped, and honored in the highest degree. Therefore, Ananda, thus should you train yourselves: 'We shall abide by the Dhamma, live uprightly in the Dhamma, walk in the way of the Dhamma.'"

The Grief of the Gods

7. At that time the Venerable Upavana was standing before the Blessed One, fanning him. And the Blessed One rebuked him, saying: "Move aside, bhikkhu, do not stand in front of me."

8. And to the Venerable Ananda came the thought: "This Venerable Upavana has been in attendance on the Blessed One for a long time, closely associating with him and serving him. Yet now, right at the end, the Blessed One rebukes him. What now could be the reason, what the cause for the Blessed One to rebuke the Venerable Upavana, saying: 'Move aside, bhikkhu, do not stand in front of me'?"

9-10. And the Venerable Ananda told his thought to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said: "Throughout the tenfold world-system, Ananda, there are hardly any of the deities that have not gathered together to look upon the Tathagata. For a distance of twelve yojanas around the Sala Grove of the Mallas in the vicinity of Kusinara there is not a spot that could be pricked with the tip of a hair that is not filled with powerful deities. And these deities, Ananda, are complaining: 'From afar have we come to look upon the Tathagata. For rare in the world is the arising of Tathagatas, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones. And this day, in the last watch of the night, the Tathagata's Parinibbana will come about. But this bhikkhu of great powers has placed himself right in front of the Blessed One, concealing him, so that now, at the very end, we are prevented from looking upon him.' Thus, Ananda, the deities complain."

11. "Of what kind of deities, Lord, is the Blessed One aware?"

12-13. "There are deities, Ananda, in space and on earth, who are earthly-minded; with dishevelled hair they weep, with uplifted arms they weep; flinging themselves on the ground, they roll from side to side, lamenting: 'Too soon has the Blessed One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon will the Eye of the World vanish from sight!'

14. "But those deities who are freed from passion, mindful and comprehending, reflect in this way: 'Impermanent are all compounded things. How could this be otherwise?'"

Ananda's Concern

15. "Formerly, Lord, on leaving their quarters after the rains, the bhikkhus would set forth to see the Tathagata, and to us there was the gain and benefit of receiving and associating with those very revered bhikkhus who came to have audience with the Blessed One and to wait upon him. But, Lord, after the Blessed One has gone, we shall no longer have that gain and benefit."

Four Places of Pilgrimage

16. "There are four places, Ananda, that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.[42] What are the four?

17. "'Here the Tathagata was born!'[43] This, Ananda, is a place that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

18. "'Here the Tathagata became fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment!'[44] This, Ananda, is a place that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

19. "'Here the Tathagata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Dhamma!'[45] This, Ananda, is a place that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

20. "'Here the Tathagata passed away into the state of Nibbana in which no element of clinging remains!' This, Ananda, is a place that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

21. "These, Ananda, are the four places that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence. And truly there will come to these places, Ananda, pious bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, reflecting: 'Here the Tathagata was born! Here the Tathagata became fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment! Here the Tathagata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Dhamma! Here the Tathagata passed away into the state of Nibbana in which no element of clinging remains!'

22. "And whoever, Ananda, should die on such a pilgrimage with his heart established in faith, at the breaking up of the body, after death, will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness."

23. Then the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: "How, Lord, should we conduct ourselves towards women?"

"Do not see them, Ananda."

"But, Lord, if we do see them?"

"Do not speak, Ananda."

"But, Lord, if they should speak to us?"

"Then, Ananda, you should establish mindfulness."

24. Then the Venerable Ananda said: "How should we act, Lord, respecting the body of the Tathagata?"

"Do not hinder yourselves, Ananda, to honor the body of the Tathagata. Rather you should strive, Ananda, and be zealous on your own behalf,[46] for your own good. Unflinchingly, ardently, and resolutely you should apply yourselves to your own good. For there are, Ananda, wise nobles, wise brahmans, and wise householders who are devoted to the Tathagata, and it is they who will render the honor to the body of the Tathagata."

25. Then the Venerable Ananda said: "But how, Lord, should they act respecting the body of the Tathagata?"

"After the same manner, Ananda, as towards the body of a universal monarch."[47]

"But how, Lord, do they act respecting the body of a universal monarch?"

26. "The body of a universal monarch, Ananda, is first wrapped round with new linen, and then with teased cotton wool, and so it is done up to five hundred layers of linen and five hundred of cotton wool. When that is done, the body of the universal monarch is placed in an iron[48] oil vessel, which is enclosed in another iron vessel, a funeral pyre is built of all kinds of perfumed woods, and so the body of the universal monarch is burned; and at a crossroads a stupa is raised for the universal monarch. So it is done, Ananda, with the body of a universal monarch. And even, Ananda, as with the body of a universal monarch, so should it be done with the body of the Tathagata; and at a crossroads also a stupa should be raised for the Tathagata. And whosoever shall bring to that place garlands or incense or sandalpaste, or pay reverence, and whose mind becomes calm there — it will be to his well being and happiness for a long time.

27. "There are four persons, Ananda, who are worthy of a stupa. Who are those four? A Tathagata, an Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One is worthy of a stupa; so also is a Paccekabuddha,[49] and a disciple of a Tathagata, and a universal monarch.

28-31. "And why, Ananda, is a Tathagata, an Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One worthy of a stupa? Because, Ananda, at the thought: 'This is the stupa of that Blessed One, Arahant, Fully Enlightened One!' the hearts of many people will be calmed and made happy; and so calmed and with their minds established in faith therein, at the breaking up of the body, after death, they will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness. And so also at the thought: 'This is the stupa of that Paccekabuddha!' or 'This is the stupa of a disciple of that Tathagata, Arahant, Fully Enlightened One!' or 'This is the stupa of that righteous monarch who ruled according to Dhamma!' — the hearts of many people are calmed and made happy; and so calmed and with their minds established in faith therein, at the breaking up of the body, after death, they will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness. And it is

because of this, Ananda, that these four persons are worthy of a stupa."

Ananda's Grief

32. Then the Venerable Ananda went into the vihara[50] and leaned against the doorpost and wept: "I am still but a learner,[51] and still have to strive for my own perfection. But, alas, my Master, who was so compassionate towards me, is about to pass away!"

33. And the Blessed One spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: "Where, bhikkhus, is Ananda?"

"The Venerable Ananda, Lord, has gone into the vihara and there stands leaning against the door post and weeping: 'I am still but a learner, and still have to strive for my own perfection. But, alas, my Master, who was so compassionate towards me, is about to pass away!'"

34. Then the Blessed One asked a certain bhikkhu to bring the Venerable Ananda to him, saying: "Go, bhikkhu, and say to Ananda, 'Friend Ananda, the Master calls you.'"

"So be it, Lord." And that bhikkhu went and spoke to the Venerable Ananda as the Blessed One had asked him to. And the Venerable Ananda went to the Blessed One, bowed down to him, and sat down on one side.

35. Then the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Enough, Ananda! Do not grieve, do not lament! For have I not taught from the very beginning that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation, and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, compounded, and subject to decay, how can one say: 'May it not come to dissolution!'? There can be no such state of things. Now for a long time, Ananda, you have served the Tathagata with loving-kindness in deed, word, and thought, graciously, pleasantly, with a whole heart and beyond measure. Great good have you gathered, Ananda! Now you should put forth energy, and soon you too will be free from the taints."[52]

Praise of Ananda

36. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Bhikkhus, the Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of times past also had excellent and devoted attendant bhikkhus, such as I have in Ananda. And so also, bhikkhus, will the Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of times to come.

37. "Capable and judicious is Ananda, bhikkhus, for he knows the proper time for bhikkhus to have audience with the Tathagata, and the time for bhikkhunis, the time for laymen and for laywomen; the time for kings and for ministers of state; the time for teachers of other sects and for their followers.

38. "In Ananda, bhikkhus, are to be found four rare and superlative qualities. What are the four? If, bhikkhus, a company of bhikkhus should go to see Ananda, they become joyful on

seeing him; and if he then speaks to them of the Dhamma, they are made joyful by his discourse; and when he becomes silent, they are disappointed. So it is also when bhikkhunis, laymen, or laywomen go to see Ananda: they become joyful on seeing him; and if he then speaks to them of the Dhamma, they are made joyful by his discourse; and when he becomes silent, they are disappointed.

39. "In a universal monarch, bhikkhus, are to be found four rare and superlative qualities. What are those four? If, bhikkhus, a company of nobles should go to see the universal monarch, they become joyful on seeing him; and if he then speaks, they are made joyful by his talk; and when he becomes silent, they are disappointed. So it is also when a company of brahmans, of householders, or of ascetics goes to see a universal monarch.

40. "And in just the same way, bhikkhus, in Ananda are to be found these four rare and superlative qualities."

The Past Glory of Kusinara

41. When this had been said, the Venerable Ananda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Let it not be, Lord, that the Blessed One should pass away in this mean place, this uncivilized township in the midst of the jungle, a mere outpost of the province. There are great cities, Lord, such as Campa, Rajagaha, Savatthi, Saketa, Kosambi, and Benares — let the Blessed One have his final passing away in one of those. For in those cities dwell many wealthy nobles and brahmans and householders who are devotees of the Tathagata, and they will render due honor to the remains of the Tathagata."

42. "Do not say that, Ananda! Do not say: 'This mean place, this uncivilized township in the midst of the jungle, a mere outpost of the province.' In times long past, Ananda, there was a king by the name of Maha Sudassana, who was a universal monarch, a king of righteousness, a conqueror of the four quarters of the earth, whose realm was established in security, and who was endowed with the seven jewels.[53] And that King Maha Sudassana, Ananda, had his royal residence here at Kusinara, which was then called Kusavati, and it extended twelve yojanas from east to west, and seven from north to south.

43. "And mighty, Ananda, was Kusavati, the capital, prosperous and well populated, much frequented by people, and abundantly provided with food. Just as the royal residence of the deities, Alakamanda, is mighty, prosperous, and well populated, much frequented by deities and abundantly provided with food, so was the royal capital of Kusavati.

44. "Kusavati, Ananda, resounded unceasingly day and night with ten sounds — the trumpeting of elephants, the neighing of horses, the rattling of chariots, the beating of drums and tabours, music and song, cheers, the clapping of hands, and cries of 'Eat, drink, and be merry!'

Lamentation of the Mallas

45. "Go now, Ananda, to Kusinara and announce to the Mallas: 'Today, Vasetthas, in the last watch of the night, the Tathagata's Parinibbana will take place. Approach, O Vasetthas, draw near! Do not be remorseful later at the thought: "In our township it was that the Tathagata's Parinibbana took place, but we failed to see him at the end!"'"

"So be it, Lord." And the Venerable Ananda prepared himself, and taking bowl and robe, went with a companion to Kusinara.

46. Now at that time the Mallas had gathered in the council hall for some public business. And the Venerable Ananda approached them and announced: "Today, Vasetthas, in the last watch of the night, the Tathagata's Parinibbana will take place. Approach, Vasetthas, draw near! Do not be remorseful later at the thought: 'In our township it was that the Tathagata's Parinibbana took place, but we failed to see him at the end.'"

47. When they heard the Venerable Ananda speak these words, the Mallas with their sons, their wives, and the wives of their sons, were sorely grieved, grieved at heart and afflicted; and some, with their hair all dishevelled, with arms uplifted in despair, wept; flinging themselves on the ground, they rolled from side to side, lamenting: "Too soon has the Blessed One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon will the Eye of the World vanish from sight!"

48. And thus afflicted and filled with grief, the Mallas, with their sons, their wives, and the wives of their sons, went to the Sala Grove, the recreation park of the Mallas, to the place where the Venerable Ananda was.

49. And the thought arose in the Venerable Ananda: "If I were to allow the Mallas of Kusinara to pay reverence to the Blessed One one by one, the night will have given place to dawn before they are all presented to him. Therefore let me divide them up according to clan, each family in a group, and so present them to the Blessed One thus: 'The Malla of such and such a name, Lord, with his wives and children, his attendants and his friends, pays homage at the feet of the Blessed One.'"

50. And the Venerable Ananda divided the Mallas up according to clan, each family in a group, and presented them to the Blessed One. So it was that the Venerable Ananda caused the Mallas of Kusinara to be presented to the Blessed One by clans, each family in a group, even in the first watch of the night.

The Last Convert

51. Now at that time a wandering ascetic named Subhadda was dwelling at Kusinara. And Subhadda the wandering ascetic heard it said: "Today in the third watch of the night, the Parinibbana of the ascetic Gotama will take place."

52. And the thought arose in him: "I have heard it said by old and venerable wandering ascetics, teachers of teachers, that the arising of Tathagatas, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones, is rare in the world. Yet this very day, in the last watch of the night, the Parinibbana

of the ascetic Gotama will take place. Now there is in me a doubt; but to this extent I have faith in the ascetic Gotama, that he could so teach me the Dhamma as to remove that doubt."

53. Then the wandering ascetic Subhadda went to the Sala Grove, the recreation park of the Mallas, and drew near to the Venerable Ananda, and told the Venerable Ananda his thought. And he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Friend Ananda, it would be good if I could be allowed into the presence of the ascetic Gotama."

54. But the Venerable Ananda answered him, saying: "Enough, friend Subhadda! Do not trouble the Tathagata. The Blessed One is weary."

55-56. Yet a second and a third time the wandering ascetic Subhadda made his request, and a second and a third time the Venerable Ananda refused him.

57. And the Blessed One heard the talk between them, and he called the Venerable Ananda and said: "Stop, Ananda! Do not refuse Subhadda. Subhadda, Ananda, may be allowed into the presence of the Tathagata. For whatever he will ask me, he will ask for the sake of knowledge, and not as an offence. And the answer I give him, that he will readily understand."

58. Thereupon the Venerable Ananda said to the wandering ascetic Subhadda: "Go then, friend Subhadda, the Blessed One gives you leave."

59. Then the wandering ascetic Subhadda approached the Blessed One and saluted him courteously. And having exchanged with him pleasant and civil greetings, the wandering ascetic Subhadda seated himself at one side and addressed the Blessed One, saying: "There are, Venerable Gotama, ascetics and brahmans who are heads of great companies of disciples, who have large retinues, who are leaders of schools, well known and renowned, and held in high esteem by the multitude, such teachers as Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambali, Pakudha Kaccayana, Sañjaya Belatthaputta, Nigantha Nataputta. Have all of these attained realization, as each of them would have it believed, or has none of them, or is it that some have attained realization and others not?"

60. "Enough, Subhadda! Let it be as it may, whether all of them have attained realization, as each of them would have it believed, or whether none of them has, or whether some have attained realization and others not. I will teach you the Dhamma, Subhadda; listen and heed it well, and I will speak."

"So be it, Lord."

The Lion's Roar

61. And the Blessed One spoke, saying: "In whatsoever Dhamma and Discipline, Subhadda, there is not found the Noble Eightfold Path, neither is there found a true ascetic of the first, second, third, or fourth degree of saintliness. But in whatsoever Dhamma and

Discipline there is found the Noble Eightfold Path, there is found a true ascetic of the first, second, third, and fourth degrees of saintliness.[54] Now in this Dhamma and Discipline, Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold Path; and in it alone are also found true ascetics of the first, second, third, and fourth degrees of saintliness. Devoid of true ascetics are the systems of other teachers. But if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of arahats.

62. "In age but twenty-nine was I, Subhadda,

When I renounced the world to seek the Good;

Fifty-one years have passed since then, Subhadda,

And in all that time a wanderer have I been

In the domain of virtue and of truth,

And except therein, there is no saint

(of the first degree).

"And there is none of the second degree, nor of the third degree, nor of the fourth degree of saintliness. Devoid of true ascetics are the systems of other teachers. But if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of arahats."

63. When this was said, the wandering ascetic Subhadda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Excellent, O Lord, most excellent, O Lord! It is as if, Lord, one were to set upright what had been overthrown, or to reveal what had been hidden, or to show the path to one who had gone astray, or to light a lamp in the darkness so that those with eyes might see — even so has the Blessed One set forth the Dhamma in many ways. And so, O Lord, I take my refuge in the Blessed One, the Dhamma, and the Community of Bhikkhus. May I receive from the Blessed One admission to the Order and also the higher ordination."

64. "Whoever, Subhadda, having been formerly a follower of another creed, wishes to receive admission and higher ordination in this Dhamma and Discipline, remains on probation for a period of four months. At the end of those four months, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with him, they grant him admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu. Yet in this matter I recognize differences of personalities."

65. "If, O Lord, whoever, having been formerly a follower of another creed, wishes to receive admission and higher ordination in this Dhamma and Discipline, remains on probation for a period of four months, and at the end of those four months, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with him, they grant him admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu — then I will remain on probation for a period of four years. And at the end of those four years, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with me, let them grant me admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu."

66. But the Blessed One called the Venerable Ananda and said to him: "Ananda, let Subhadda be given admission into the Order." And the Venerable Ananda replied: "So be it, Lord."

67. Then the wandering ascetic Subhadda said to the Venerable Ananda: "It is a gain to you, friend Ananda, a blessing, that in the presence of the Master himself you have received the sprinkling of ordination as a disciple."

68. So it came about that the wandering ascetic Subhadda, in the presence of the Blessed One, received admission and higher ordination. And from the time of his ordination the Venerable Subhadda remained alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, and resolute. And before long he attained to the goal for which a worthy man goes forth rightly from home to homelessness, the supreme goal of the holy life; and having by himself realized it with higher knowledge, he dwelt therein. He knew: "Destroyed is birth; the higher life is fulfilled; nothing more is to be done, and beyond this life nothing more remains." And the Venerable Subhadda became yet another among the arahats, and he was the last disciple converted by the Blessed One himself.

Part Six: The Passing Away

The Blessed One's Final Exhortation

1. Now the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "It may be, Ananda, that to some among you the thought will come: 'Ended is the word of the Master; we have a Master no longer.' But it should not, Ananda, be so considered. For that which I have proclaimed and made known as the Dhamma and the Discipline, that shall be your Master when I am gone.

2. "And, Ananda, whereas now the bhikkhus address one another as 'friend,' let it not be so when I am gone. The senior bhikkhus, Ananda, may address the junior ones by their name, their family name, or as 'friend'; but the junior bhikkhus should address the senior ones as 'venerable sir' or 'your reverence.'[55]

3. "If it is desired, Ananda, the Sangha may, when I am gone, abolish the lesser and minor rules.[56]

4. "Ananda, when I am gone, let the higher penalty be imposed upon the bhikkhu Channa."[57]

"But what, Lord, is the higher penalty?"

"The bhikkhu Channa, Ananda, may say what he will, but the bhikkhus should neither converse with him, nor exhort him, nor admonish him."

5. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "It may be, bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the

practice. Then question, bhikkhus! Do not be given to remorse later on with the thought: 'The Master was with us face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him.'"

6. But when this was said, the bhikkhus were silent. And yet a second and a third time the Blessed One said to them: "It may be, bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice. Then question, bhikkhus! Do not be given to remorse later on with the thought: 'The Master was with us face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him.'"

And for a second and a third time the bhikkhus were silent. Then the Blessed One said to them: "It may be, bhikkhus, out of respect for the Master that you ask no questions. Then, bhikkhus, let friend communicate it to friend." Yet still the bhikkhus were silent.

7. And the Venerable Ananda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Marvellous it is, O Lord, most wonderful it is! This faith I have in the community of bhikkhus, that not even one bhikkhu is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice."

"Out of faith, Ananda, you speak thus. But here, Ananda, the Tathagata knows for certain that among this community of bhikkhus there is not even one bhikkhu who is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice. For, Ananda, among these five hundred bhikkhus even the lowest is a stream-enterer, secure from downfall, assured, and bound for enlightenment."

8. And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Behold now, bhikkhus, I exhort you: All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness!"[58]

This was the last word of the Tathagata.

How the Blessed One Passed into Nibbana

9. And the Blessed One entered the first jhana. Rising from the first jhana, he entered the second jhana. Rising from the second jhana, he entered the third jhana. Rising from the third jhana, he entered the fourth jhana. And rising out of the fourth jhana, he entered the sphere of infinite space. Rising from the attainment of the sphere of infinite space, he entered the sphere of infinite consciousness. Rising from the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness, he entered the sphere of nothingness. Rising from the attainment of the sphere of nothingness, he entered the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. And rising out of the attainment of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he attained to the cessation of perception and feeling.

10. And the Venerable Ananda spoke to the Venerable Anuruddha, saying: "Venerable Anuruddha, the Blessed One has passed away."

"No, friend Ananda, the Blessed One has not passed away. He has entered the state of the cessation of perception and feeling."[59]

11. Then the Blessed One, rising from the cessation of perception and feeling, entered the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Rising from the attainment of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he entered the sphere of nothingness. Rising from the attainment of the sphere of nothingness, he entered the sphere of infinite consciousness. Rising from the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness, he entered the sphere of infinite space. Rising from the attainment of the sphere of infinite space, he entered the fourth jhana. Rising from the fourth jhana, he entered the third jhana. Rising from the third jhana, he entered the second jhana. Rising from the second jhana, he entered the first jhana.

Rising from the first jhana, he entered the second jhana. Rising from the second jhana, he entered the third jhana. Rising from the third jhana, he entered the fourth jhana. And, rising from the fourth jhana, the Blessed One immediately passed away.

The World's Echo

12. And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneously with his Parinibbana there came a tremendous earthquake, dreadful and astounding, and the thunders rolled across the heavens.

13. And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneously with his Parinibbana, Brahma Sahampati[60] spoke this stanza:

All must depart — all beings that have life Must shed their compound forms. Yea, even one, A Master such as he, a peerless being, Powerful in wisdom, the Enlightened One, has passed away.

14. And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneously with his Parinibbana, Sakka, king of the gods,[61] spoke this stanza:

Transient are all compounded things, Subject to arise and vanish; Having come into existence they pass away; Good is the peace when they forever cease.

15. And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneously with his Parinibbana, the Venerable Anuruddha spoke this stanza:

No movement of the breath, but with steadfast heart, Free from desires and tranquil — so the sage Comes to his end. By mortal pangs unshaken, His mind, like a flame extinguished, finds release.

16. And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneously with his Parinibbana, the Venerable Ananda spoke this stanza:

Then there was terror, and the hair stood up, when he, The All-accomplished One, the Buddha, passed away.

17. Then, when the Blessed One had passed away, some bhikkhus, not yet freed from passion, lifted up their arms and wept; and some, flinging themselves on the ground, rolled from side to side and wept, lamenting: "Too soon has the Blessed One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!"

But the bhikkhus who were freed from passion, mindful and clearly comprehending, reflected in this way: "Impermanent are all compounded things. How could this be otherwise?"

18. And the Venerable Anuruddha addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Enough, friends! Do not grieve, do not lament! For has not the Blessed One declared that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation, and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, compounded and subject to decay, how can one say: 'May it not come to dissolution!'? The deities, friends, are aggrieved."

"But, venerable sir, of what deities is the Venerable Anuruddha aware?"

"There are deities, friend Ananda, in space and on the earth who are earthly-minded; with dishevelled hair they weep, with uplifted arms they weep; flinging themselves on the ground, they roll from side to side, lamenting: 'Too soon has the Blessed One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!' But those deities who are freed from passion, mindful and clearly comprehending, reflect in this way: 'Impermanent are all compounded things. How could this be otherwise?'"

19. Now the Venerable Anuruddha and the Venerable Ananda spent the rest of the night in talking on the Dhamma. Then the Venerable Anuruddha spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Go now, friend Ananda, to Kusinara, and announce to the Mallas: 'The Blessed One, Vasetthas, has passed away. Do now as seems fitting to you.'"

"So be it, venerable sir." And the Venerable Ananda prepared himself in the forenoon, and taking bowl and robe, went with a companion into Kusinara.

20. At that time the Mallas of Kusinara had gathered in the council hall to consider that very matter. And the Venerable Ananda approached them and announced: "The Blessed One, Vasetthas, has passed away. Do now as seems fitting to you."

And when they heard the Venerable Ananda speak these words, the Mallas with their sons, their wives, and the wives of their sons, were sorely grieved, grieved at heart and afflicted; and some, with their hair all dishevelled, with arms upraised in despair, wept; flinging themselves on the ground, they rolled from side to side, lamenting: "Too soon has the Blessed One come to his Parinibbana! "Too soon has the Happy One come to his

Parinibbana! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!"

Homage to the Remains

21. Then the Mallas of Kusinara gave orders to their men, saying: "Gather now all the perfumes, flower-garlands, and musicians, even all that are in Kusinara." And the Mallas, with the perfumes, the flower-garlands, and the musicians, and with five hundred sets of clothing, went to the Sala Grove, the recreation park of the Mallas, and approached the body of the Blessed One. And having approached, they paid homage to the body of the Blessed One with dance, song, music, flower-garlands, and perfume, and erecting canopies and pavilions, they spent the day showing respect, honor, and veneration to the body of the Blessed One. And then the thought came to them: "Now the day is too far spent for us to cremate the body of the Blessed One. Tomorrow we will do it."

And for the second day, and a third, fourth, fifth, and sixth day, they paid homage to the body of the Blessed One with dance, song, music, flower-garlands, and perfume, and erecting canopies and pavilions, they spent the day showing respect, honor, and veneration to the body of the Blessed One.

But on the seventh day the thought came to them: "We have paid homage to the body of the Blessed One with dance, song, music, flower-garlands, and perfume, and have shown respect, honor, and veneration; let us now carry the body of the Blessed One southward to the southern part of the town and beyond, and let us there cremate the body of the Blessed One south of the town."

And eight Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and wearing new clothes, with the thought: "We will lift up the body of the Blessed One," tried to do so but they could not.

22. Then the Mallas spoke to the Venerable Anuruddha, saying: "What is the cause, Venerable Anuruddha, what is the reason that these eight Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and wearing new clothes, with the thought: 'We will lift up the body of the Blessed One,' try to do so but cannot?"

"You, Vasetthas, have one purpose, the deities have another."

"Then what, venerable sir, is the purpose of the deities?"

"Your purpose, Vasetthas, is this: 'We have paid homage to the body of the Blessed One with dance, song, music, flower-garlands, and perfume, and have shown respect, honor, and veneration; let us now carry the body of the Blessed One southward to the southern part of the town and beyond, and let us there cremate the body of the Blessed One south of the town.' But the purpose of the deities, Vasetthas, is this: 'We have paid homage to the body of the Blessed One with heavenly dance, song, music, flower-garlands, and perfume, and have shown respect, honor, and veneration; let us now carry the body of the Blessed One northward to the northern part of the town; and having carried it through the

northern gate, let us go through the center of the town, and then eastward to the east of the town; and having passed through the east gate, let us carry it to the cetiya of the Mallas, Makuta-bandhana, and there let us cremate the body of the Blessed One.'"

"As the deities wish, venerable sir, so let it be."

23. Thereupon the whole of Kusinara, even to the dust heaps and rubbish heaps, became covered knee-deep in mandarava flowers.[62] And homage was paid to the body of the Blessed One by the deities as well as the Mallas of Kusinara. With dance, song, music, flower-garlands, and perfume, both divine and human, respect, honor, and veneration were shown. And they carried the body of the Blessed One northward to the northern part of the town; and having carried it through the northern gate, they went through the center of the town, and then eastward to the east of the town; and having passed through the east gate, they carried the body of the Blessed One to the cetiya of the Mallas, Makuta-bandhana, and there laid it down.

24. Then the Mallas of Kusinara spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "How should we act, Venerable Ananda, respecting the body of the Tathagata?"

"After the same manner, Vasetthas, as towards the body of a universal monarch."

"But how, venerable Ananda, do they act respecting the body of a universal monarch?"

"The body of a universal monarch, Vasetthas, is first wrapped round with new linen, and then with teased cotton wool. And again it is wrapped round with new linen, and again with teased cotton wool, and so it is done up to five hundred layers of linen and five hundred of cotton wool. When that is done, the body of the universal monarch is placed in an iron oil-vessel, which is enclosed in another iron vessel and a funeral pyre is built of all kinds of perfumed woods, and so the body of the universal monarch is burned. And at a crossroads a stupa is raised for the universal monarch. So it is done, Vasetthas, with the body of a universal monarch.

"And even, Vasetthas, as with the body of a universal monarch, so should it be done with the body of the Tathagata; and at a crossroads also a stupa should be raised for the Tathagata. And whoever shall bring to that place garlands or incense or sandalwood paste, or pay reverence, and whose mind becomes calm there — it will be to his well being and happiness for a long time."

25. Then the Mallas gave orders to their men, saying: "Gather now all the teased cotton wool of the Mallas!" And the Mallas of Kusinara wrapped the body of the Blessed One round with new linen, and then with teased cotton wool. And again they wrapped it round with new linen, and again with teased cotton wool, and so it was done up to five hundred layers of linen and five hundred of cotton wool. When that was done, they placed the body of the Blessed One in an iron oil-vessel, which was enclosed in another iron vessel, and they built a funeral pyre of all kinds of perfumed woods, and upon it they laid the body of the Blessed One.

26. Now at that time the Venerable Maha Kassapa[63] was journeying from Pava to Kusinara together with a large company of five hundred bhikkhus. And on the way, the Venerable Maha Kassapa went aside from the highway and sat down at the foot of a tree.

And a certain Ajivaka came by, on his way to Pava, and he had taken a mandarava flower from Kusinara. And the Venerable Maha Kassapa saw the Ajivaka coming from a distance, and as he drew close he spoke to him, saying: "Do you know, friend, anything of our Master?"

"Yes, friend, I know. It is now seven days since the ascetic Gotama passed away. From there I have brought this mandarava flower."

27. Thereupon some bhikkhus, not yet freed from passion, lifted up their arms and wept; and some, flinging themselves on the ground, rolled from side to side and wept, lamenting: "Too soon has the Blessed One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbana! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!"

28. Now at that time, one Subhadda, who had renounced only in his old age, was seated in the assembly.[64] And he addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Enough, friends! Do not grieve, do not lament! We are well rid of that great ascetic. Too long, friends, have we been oppressed by his saying: 'This is fitting for you; that is not fitting for you.' Now we shall be able to do as we wish, and what we do not wish, that we shall not do."

But the Venerable Maha Kassapa addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Enough friends! Do not grieve, do not lament! For has not the Blessed One declared that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation, and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, compounded, and subject to decay, how can one say: 'May it not come to dissolution!'?"

29. Now at that time four Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and wearing new clothes, with the thought: "We will set alight the Blessed One's pyre," tried to do so but they could not. And the Mallas spoke to the Venerable Anuruddha, saying: "What is the cause, Venerable Anuruddha, what is the reason that these four Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and wearing new clothes, with the thought: "We will set alight the Blessed One's pyre,' try to do so but cannot?"

"You, Vasetthas, have one purpose, the deities have another."

"Then what, venerable sir, is the purpose of the deities?"

"The purpose of the deities, Vasetthas, is this: 'The Venerable Maha Kassapa is on his way from Pava to Kusinara together with a large company of five hundred bhikkhus. Let not the Blessed One's pyre be set alight until the Venerable Maha Kassapa has paid homage at the feet of the Blessed One.'"

"As the deities wish, venerable sir, so let it be."

30. And the Venerable Maha Kassapa approached the pyre of the Blessed One, at the cetiya of the Mallas, Makuta-bandhana, in Kusinara. And he arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, and with his clasped hands raised in salutation, he walked three times round the pyre, keeping his right side towards the Blessed One's body, and he paid homage at the feet of the Blessed One. And even so did the five hundred bhikkhus.

And when homage had been paid by the Venerable Maha Kassapa and the five hundred bhikkhus, the pyre of the Blessed One burst into flame by itself.

31. And it came about that when the body of the Blessed One had been burned, no ashes or particles were to be seen of what had been skin, tissue, flesh, sinews, and fluid; only bones remained. Just as when ghee or oil is burned, it leaves no particles or ashes behind, even so when the body of the Blessed One had been burned, no ashes or particles were to be seen of what had been skin, tissue, flesh, sinews, and fluid; only bones remained. And of the five hundred linen wrappings, only two were not consumed, the innermost and the outermost.

32. And when the body of the Blessed One had been burned, water rained down from heaven and extinguished the pyre of the Blessed One, and from the sala trees water came forth, and the Mallas of Kusinara brought water scented with many kinds of perfumes, and they too extinguished the pyre of the Blessed One.

And the Mallas of Kusinara laid the relics of the Blessed One in their council hall, and surrounded them with a lattice-work of spears and encircled them with a fence of bows; and there for seven days they paid homage to the relics of the Blessed One with dance, song, music, flower-garlands, and perfume, and showed respect, honor, and veneration to the relics of the Blessed One.

Partition of the Relics

33. Then the king of Magadha, Ajatasattu, son of the Videhi queen, came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And he sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and I am too. I am worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. I will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

34. And the Licchavis of Vesali came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and we are too. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. We will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

35. And the Sakyas of Kapilavatthu came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One

was the greatest of our clan. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. We will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

36. And the Bulis of Allakappa came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and we are too. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. We will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

37. And the Kolis of Ramagama came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and we are too. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. We will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

38. And the Vethadipa brahman came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And he sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and I am a brahman. I am worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. I will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

39. And the Mallas of Pava came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and we are too. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. We will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

40. But when they heard these words, the Mallas of Kusinara addressed the assembly, saying: "The Blessed One has passed away in our township. We shall not part with any portion of the relics of the Blessed One." Then the brahman Dona spoke to the assembly, saying:

One word from me, I beg you, sirs, to hear! Our Buddha taught us ever to forbear; Unseemly would it be should strife arise And war and bloodshed, over the custody Of his remains, who was the best of men! Let us all, sirs, in friendliness agree To share eight portions — so that far and wide Stupas may rise, and seeing them, mankind Faith in the All-Enlightened One will find!

"So be it, brahman! Divide the relics into eight equal portions yourself."

And the brahman Dona said to the assembly: "So be it, sirs." And he divided justly into eight equal portions the relics of the Blessed One, and having done so, he addressed the assembly, saying: "Let this urn, sirs, be given to me. Over this urn I will erect a stupa, and in its honor I will hold a festival." And the urn was given to the brahman Dona.

41. Then the Moriyas of Pipphalivana came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and we are too. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. We will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor."

"There is no portion of the relics of the Blessed One remaining; the relics of the Blessed One have been divided. But take from here the ashes." And they took from there the ashes.

42. And the king of Magadha, Ajatasattu, son of the Videhi queen, erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Rajagaha, and in their honor held a festival. The Licchavis of Vesali erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Vesali, and in their honor held a festival. The Sakyas of Kapilavatthu erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Kapilavatthu, and in their honor held a festival. The Bulis of Allakappa erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Allakappa, and in their honor held a festival. The Kolis of Ramagama erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Ramagama, and in their honor held a festival. The Vethadipa brahman erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Vethadipa, and in their honor held a festival. The Mallas of Pava erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Pava, and in their honor held a festival. The Mallas of Kusinara erected a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One at Kusinara, and in their honor held a festival. The brahman Dona erected a stupa over the urn, and in its honor held a festival. And the Moriyas of Pipphalivana erected a stupa over the ashes at Pipphalivana, and in their honor held a festival.

So it came about that there were eight stupas for the relics, a ninth for the urn, and a tenth for the ashes.

And thus it was in the days of old.

43. Eight portions there were of the relics of him, The All-Seeing One, the greatest of men. Seven in Jambudipa are honored, and one In Ramagama, by kings of the Naga race. One tooth is honored in the Tavatimsa heaven, One in the realm of Kalinga, and one by the Naga kings. Through their brightness this bountiful earth With its most excellent gifts is endowed; For thus the relics of the All-Seeing One are best honored By those who are worthy of honor — by gods and Nagas And lords of men, yea, by the highest of mankind. Pay homage with clasped hands! For hard indeed it is Through hundreds of ages to meet with an All-Enlightened One![65]

Notes

[References to Anguttara Nikaya (= AN) are to collection followed by sutta number; those to Digha Nikaya (= DN) and to Majjhima Nikaya (= MN) are to sutta number.]

1.

Bhagava: also rendered "the Auspicious One" or "the Exalted One"; the most frequent appellation of the Buddha, though not restricted to Buddhist usage.

2.

Ajatasattu Vedehiputta. Comy. says that Ajatasattu's mother was a Kosala princess and not the daughter of the Vedehi king. Hence Comy. explains vedehiputta as "son of a wise mother." Ajatasattu became king of the powerful state of Magadha after murdering his father, King Bimbisara (see DN 2).

3.

Tathagata: lit. "Thus-gone" or "Thus-come"; likewise an appellation of the Buddha, which he generally used when speaking of himself.

4.

Ananda was a cousin of the Buddha and his personal attendant for twenty-four years. He attained arahatship after the passing away of the Buddha, just before the commencement of the First Council, at which he was the reciter of the Digha Nikaya and the authority for the Sutta Pitaka.

5.

The discourse referred to here is AN 7.19.

6.

The group-names, which are not in the original, are supplied from other references to the qualities concerned; here satta saddhamma, about which see AN 7.63; MN 53. In the Comy. to MN 8 they are called "the complete equipment required for insight" (BPS Wheel No. 61/62, p.48).

7.

Satta bojjhanga. See Piyadassi Thera, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (BPS Wheel No. 1).

8.

Saraniya dhamma: also at MN 48, AN 6.11, 12.

9.

Virtue (sila), concentration (samadhi), and wisdom (paññña) are the three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path. Our text stresses again and again the importance of a full development of all three for final liberation.

10.

Asava: those defiling factors — sensual desire, craving for existence, and ignorance — primarily responsible for maintaining bondage to the cycle of rebirths. Also translated as "cankers" or "corruptions." Later texts add a fourth, the taint of wrong views.

11.

Sariputta was the chief disciple of the Buddha and the one who excelled in wisdom. For a full account of the life and works or this illustrious individual, see Nyanaponika Thera, The Life of Sariputta (BPS Wheel No. 90/92).

12.

Evam-dhamma. Comy. & Sub. Comy.: This refers to concentration and to the mental qualities belonging to concentration (samadhipakkhiya dhamma) such as energy, mindfulness, etc. Comy. explains "abiding" (vihara) as abiding in the attainment of cessation (nirodha-samapatti).

13.

Evam-vimutta: their deliverance from defilements and from future rebirths.

14.

On the five hindrances, see Nyanaponika Thera, The Five Mental Hindrances (BPS Wheel No. 26).

15.

On the four foundations of mindfulness, see below, II:14. The seven factors of enlightenment are enumerated in I:9.

16.

Puta-bhedanam. Comy. explains as the breaking open, the unpacking, of boxes (puta) of merchandise for the purpose of distribution. But probably it refers to the bursting open of the seed-box of the patali flower.

17.

The stage of arahatship, the last of the four stages of deliverance. The next three paragraphs refer to disciples on the three lower stages, respectively, the non-returner, once-returner, and stream-enterer (anagami, sakadagami, sotapanna).

18.

Or: "not delayed (in its results)."

19.

Animitta cetosamadhi. Comy. explains this term here as referring to the fruition-attainment of arahatship (phalasamapatti), in which the Buddha becomes absorbed in the direct experience of Nibbana and no longer attends to external objects or feels mundane feelings. In another context it can mean the concentration developed by intensive insight.

20.

Tamatagge: a difficult word. Comy. takes it to stand for the superlative form, aggatama, "highest," but alludes also to the Pali word tama, "darkness." It is rather difficult to accept that a superlative suffix should be made to precede the word it qualifies. Tibetan and Chinese parallels (Waldschmidt, Das Mahaparinirvana-sutra Berlin, 1950-51) pp. 200 ff.) point to a meaning as "the highest." In the fragments of the Turfan Sanskrit version, these words are not preserved. Comy. says: "Tamatagge = tama-agge; the 't' in the middle is inserted for euphonic reasons. The meaning is: these are the very highest, the most eminent (ime aggatama tamatagga). Having cut every bondage of darkness (tama-yoga), those bhikkhus of mine will be on the very top, in the highest rank (ativiya agge uttamabhave). Among them those will be on the very summit (ati-agge) who are desirous of training; and those whose resort is the four foundations of mindfulness will be at the very top of them."

21.

Kappam va tittheyya kappavasesam va. Comy. takes kappa not as "world-period" or "aeon," but as ayu-kappa, "life span," and explains avasesa (usually "remainder") by "in excess."

Comy.: "He may stay alive completing the life span pertaining to men at the given time. (Sub. Comy.: the maximum life span.) Kappavasesa: 'in excess' (atireka), i.e., more or less above the hundred years said to be the normally highest life expectation."

Among the numerous meanings of the word kappa, there is, in fact, that of time in general (kala) and not only the duration of an aeon; but the meaning "life span" seems to have been ascribed to it only in this passage. Also, the meaning "in excess" for avasesa (usually "remainder") is unusual.

The four constituents of psychic power (iddhipada) are concentration due to zeal, energy, purity of mind, and investigation.

22.

According to Comy., Ananda's mind had been influenced (pariyutthitacitto) by Mara's exhibiting a frightful sight which distracted his attention, preventing him from grasping the Buddha's suggestion.

23.

"Convincing and liberating." This stands for the one Pali word sappatihariya, an attempt to render the two connotations which the word has according to the commentaries and in the context of other occurrences in the Canon. The commentaries derive it from the verb patiharati, "to remove," and explain it as (1) the removal of what is adverse, e.g., opposition and objections (covered by "convincing"), and (2) the removal of inner obstructions, i.e., defilements such as greed, etc., effected by arahatship. It is probably to point to that latter meaning that the commentary to our present text paraphrases our passage as follows: "until they are able to preach the Teaching in its liberating (niyyanika) capacity."

24.

Tulam atulañca sambhavam: lit. "the measurable and immeasurable productive cause (of life)," i.e., the volitional action causing rebirth in the confined, or limited sense-sphere, or in the unbounded fine-material and immaterial spheres.

25.

Bhavasankhara: the formative force of becoming, in the sense of what forms existence.

26.

Kavacam iv'attasambhavam. Comy.: "He breaks through the entire net of defilements that envelops individual existence like a coat of mail; he breaks the defilements as a great warrior breaks his armor after a battle." The Sanskrit version has "like an egg shell" (kosam iv' anda-sambhavam).

27.

Comy.: "Even by this much the Venerable Ananda was aware of the fact: 'Surely, today the Blessed One has renounced his will to live on.' Though the Blessed One knew that the Venerable Ananda was aware of it, he did not give him another opportunity to ask him to stay on for the remainder of his life span, but he spoke to him about other eight-term groups beginning with the eight assemblies." Sub. Comy.: "Some say that the Buddha did so in order to divert the Venerable Ananda and to prevent grief from arising in him."

28.

See also the Maha-sihanada Sutta (MN 12).

29.

Abhibhayatana.

30.

That is: "perceiving forms on his own body." This refers to preliminary concentration.

31.

This refers to the kasina-nimitta, the after-image arising with full concentration.

32.

He derives the "sign" from objects external to his body.

33.

Attha vimokkha.

34.

Rupi. This refers to form-sphere absorption (rupajjhana) obtained with form objects of one's own body.

35.

Subhan tveva adhimutto hoti. Comy.: "Hereby, meditative absorption (jhana), obtained through blue-kasinas, etc., of very pure color is indicated."

36.

The Comy. says that the Buddhas, when looking back, turn the whole body round as an elephant does.

37.

In the earlier edition of this work, mahapadesa was rendered as "great authorities." It is now known that the proper meaning of apadesa is not "authority," but "reference" or "source." Besides, from the passage it is clear that there are only two real "authorities" — the Discourses (Suttas) and the Discipline (Vinaya).

38.

Sukara-maddava: a controversial term which has therefore been left untranslated. Sukara = pig; maddava = soft, tender, delicate. Hence two alternative renderings of the compound are possible: (1) the tender parts of a pig or boar; (2) what is enjoyed by pigs and boars. In the latter meaning, the term has been thought to refer to a mushroom or truffle, or a yam or tuber. K.E. Neumann, in the preface to his German translation of the Majjhima Nikaya,

quotes from an Indian compendium of medicinal plants, the Rajanigantu, several plants beginning with sukara.

The commentary to our text gives three alternative explanations: (1) the flesh from a single first-born (wild) pig, neither too young nor too old, which had come to hand naturally, i.e., without intentional killing; (2) a preparation of soft boiled rice cooked with the five cow-products; (3) a kind of alchemistic elixir (rasayanavidhi). Dhammapala, in his commentary to Udana VIII.5, gives, in addition, young bamboo shoots trampled by pigs (sukarehi maddita-vamsakaliro).

39.

Comy.: "These verses, and several to follow, were inserted by the elders who collected the Dhamma (texts at the First Council)."

40.

Alara Kalama was one of the Buddha's teachers before his Enlightenment. He taught the Bodhisatta how to attain the sphere of nothingness, but could not show him the path to Nibbana.

41.

Comy.: "From the town of Pava it is three gavutas (approx. five miles) to Kusinara. Walking that distance with great effort and sitting down at twenty-five places on the way, the Blessed One reached the Sala Grove at dusk when the sun had already set. Thus comes illness to man, crushing all his health. As if he wanted to point to this fact, the Blessed One spoke those words which deeply moved the whole world: 'I am weary, Ananda, and want to lie down.'"

42.

See The Four Sacred Shrines, by Piyadassi Thera (BPS Bodhi Leaves No. 8).

43.

At Lumbini near Kapilavatthu, the ancestral seat of the Sakyans in the foothills of the Himalayas. An Asokan pillar marks the spot.

44.

At Buddha-Gaya, in Bihar.

45.

At Isipatana near Benares (modern Sarnath).

46.

Sadatthe. Comy.: "for the highest purpose, the goal of arahatship." There is a different reading, saratthe, "for an essential purpose."

47.

Cakkavatti-raja: the ideal king of righteousness according to Buddhist tradition.

48.

Ayasa: generally "made of iron," has here according to Comy. the meaning "made of gold," for which there is also support in the Sanskrit usage of the word.

49.

Paccekabuddha is one awakened or enlightened for himself alone. Such Paccekabuddhas arise at times when there is no Fully Enlightened One (samma-sambuddha). Like the latter, they attain to Enlightenment by their own effort, but unlike them are not able to lead others to deliverance. See Ria Kloppenberg, The Paccekabuddha: A Buddhist Ascetic (BPS Wheel No. 305/307).

50.

The word vihara, given in the text, cannot refer here to a monastery or monks' living quarters. Comy. explains it as a pavilion (mandala-mala). If the locality was used as a meeting place for the clan, as Comy. states, there may well have been a kind of shelter there. The couch in the open, which Ananda was asked to prepare for the Master, was probably a seat for the chiefs of the Malla clan put up at that place.

51.

Sekha. This signifies those at the three lower stages of emancipation, before reaching arahatship. Ananda, at that time, had reached the first of these stages, stream-entry.

52.

Anasavo: that is, an arahant.

53.

The "seven jewels" of a universal monarch are: the magical wheel, emblem of his sovereignty, by which he conquers the earth without the use of force; his wonderful elephant; his horse; his beautiful wife; his precious gem; his treasurer; and his advisor. All are endowed with wondrous properties. For more on Maha Sudassana, see the sutta which bears his name, DN 17.

54.

The four degrees of saintliness are the stream-enterer, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arahant.

55.

"Friend," in Pali is avuso, "venerable sir" = bhante, "your reverence" = ayasma.

56.

Since Ananda, at this point, did not ask what the minor rules were, the Sangha decided not to abolish any of the rules of the Vinaya.

57.

Channa had been the Buddha's charioteer while the latter was still a prince living in the palace. Because of his prior connection with the Buddha, he was obdurate and refused to submit to discipline. This imposition of the "higher penalty" (brahmadanda) changed him into an obedient monk.

58.

Handa dani bhikkhave amantayami vo: Vayadhamma sankhara appamadena sampadetha. Earnestness (appamada) is explained as "presence of mindfulness." Comy.: "'You should accomplish all your duties without allowing mindfulness to lapse!' Thus did the Blessed One, while on the bed of his Parinibbana, summarize in that one word on earnestness the advice he had given through forty-five years."

59.

Anuruddha, the elder brother of Ananda, would have known this through the super-normal power of reading the minds of others, which he possessed.

60.

Brahma Sahampati was a high divinity of the Brahma-world. It was he who originally requested the newly enlightened Buddha to teach the Dhamma to the world. See MN 26.

61.

Sakka is the king of the gods in the Tavatimsa heaven, and thus a lower figure in the cosmological hierarchy than Brahma Sahampati.

62.

A celestial flower which appears on earth only on special occasions, particularly in connection with the chief events in the life of the Buddha. Its appearance in the hands of the Ajivaka ascetic signaled to the Venerable Maha Kassapa that the Buddha's Parinibbana had already taken place. (See below, Section 26.)

63.

He was one of the foremost disciples of the Buddha and became the president of the First Great Council held shortly after the Buddha's Parinibbana. See Helmuth Hecker, Maha Kassapa: Father of the Sangha (BPS Wheel No. 345).

64.

This Subhadda is a different person from the wanderer Subhadda who became the Buddha's last personal disciple.

65.

Comy. ascribes these verses to the "Elders of Tambapanni Island (Sri Lanka)."