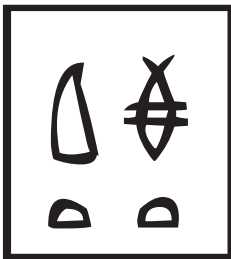
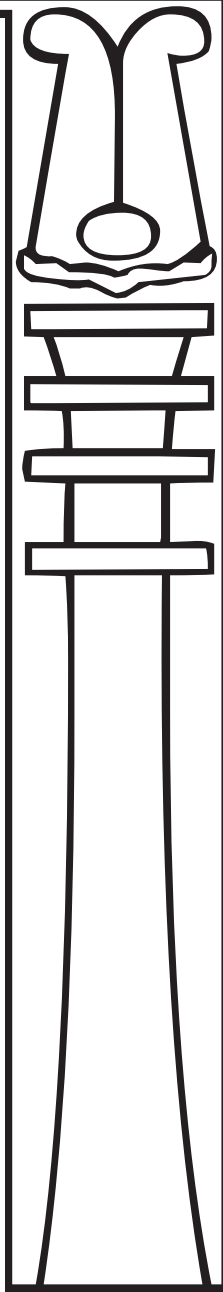
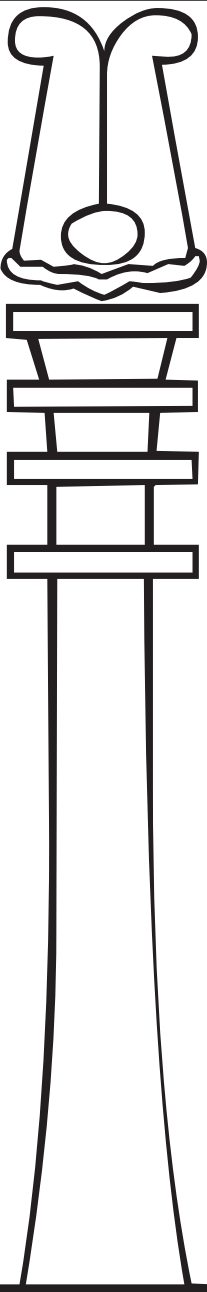


THE RULE
OF THE
INNER
KINGDOM

BY
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In Burma there is one of the lesser lessons which the Master taught us, that still survives, ages of torpor notwithstanding. That lesson is the lesson of Charity, one of the mere minor lessons of our faith, namely, that as compassion, or thought for others is noblest of all human sentiments and ideals, therefore one who would call himself in truth a Buddhist, should give of his worldly goods to the poor or to religion. That is one Buddhist lesson that Burma's race has learned; you know the fruits of it; you know how far your fellow-men live up to it; it is indeed your proudest title to the name of followers of Him who once was called Vessantara the King. You know how large a part of all this nation's wealth is spent for purposes of religion; a vastly larger moiety of the national wealth for religion than any other race on earth can boast of! Now, indeed, for want of comprehension of the real meaning of our motto, "The gift of Truth outweighs all other gifts," most of that wealth goes in what we may term "brick-and-mortar" Charity; but still is the lesser lesson learned, and, what is more to the point, it bears fruit in every Burman's life. Teach your new, higher rendering of that lesson; teach, as The Master taught, that greater than these so quickly ruined clay-gifts is the Truth itself, the Law you seek hereby to follow; teach that indeed the gift of Truth is nobler, greater than all other gifts; and in years to come, what could not this single race achieve-in these days of facile transit and of the printing-press-with two-thirds of humanity that so far has not heard The Master's Law? Turn but a tithe, but the hundredth part, of that so generous tide of Charity to water the fallow fields of a true wakening of Buddhist life, of Buddhist propaganda; turn but a fraction of your bricks to books; a fraction of your Monks again, as in the ancient glorious days, to teachers of the Way in other lands; and you shall see, here in this actual moving world and not in dreams of heavenly future life, the Immediate Fruit *Sandiṭṭhikaphalaṃ* -of The Master's Teaching. You will fulfill the purpose of His Law, and bring His Light to multitudes still waiting in the darkness, and watching still the eastern sky for signs of dawn.

Even so did He behold it, when, making clear His Heavenly Vision, He looked upon the Triple World, and watched the presage of the day to come: The hearts of countless myriads of beings plunged in Samsara's wave, like lotuses unnumbered; and each the symbol of the miracle and mystery of a life, such miracle as men so often live and die uncomprehending; heirs of infinitudes unnumbered, yet wasteful of the swift-winged hours, plunged in the threefold tide of Craving, Hatred, and Illusion, unseen, even to themselves, by reason of Avijja's night; many, alas, still clinging to the

mire they sprang from; yet many another striving upwards through the clearer waters; some even well-nigh to the surface, waiting in the gloom with hearts unopened, in a world wherein as yet Truth's glory had not dawned. Such was His Vision of the world to come, and so did Be, the Wisest, figure what otherwise might not be conceived of; the mystery of universal life, slowly moulded from primeval Chaos, as the lotus by life's alchemy transmutes dead clay to root, to leaf, and final bloom. So, with the Buddha-vision He beheld it, and perceived: "Many there are now, and shall follow in the ages yet to come, hearts well-nigh free from all these three floods, who, if the Truth's great sun should dawn, would open to reflect his rays"; and, so knowing, did He then decide to set on foot the Kingdom of Righteousness, so that in the hearts of men that light of Truth might come.

To take a part in that great work, however humble, to live and strive for that great realisation, how high a task! yet it is within the reach of all of us, howsoever little be his earthly lot; a task indeed ever bearing for the gathering its Immediate Fruit—the harvest of the Dhamma, Inviting, Timeless, Sure!

Such is in fact a part of the possibilities life has for us here in this outer world, the world wherein our fellows live and strive. Yet, for each one of us, there is yet another Kingdom which we may help to enlighten; a Kingdom indeed near, necessary, vital to us, if in the outer realm our work shall prosper and attain. In the outer world our words, our work, our life has influence; wider and wider we may kindle in our comrades hearts the ancient spirit of our Buddhist faith; but here we have the power of influence only. In the inner kingdom, it is we who are at once the ruler and the ruled; as in the face of Yama, Death's Great King, all men and all beings of the Threefold World stand equal, even so stand we all in respect of conquest or failure in this inner empire. Without, our lot, our power for good, is as our bygone actions made it; within, our only present possession is the kingdom of the heart, where none can gainsay us or thwart the hope we have.

Now, then, in this our empire indeed the throne of power may be usurped either by passion or hate or folly, rightly not our ruler but our slave, to whom betimes we foolishly bow. How in this kingdom of the mind should we so rightly order all our ways, that we may become indeed the ruler of that inalienable realm, Lords of Self's the world? It is our great ideal to spread through the kingdoms of the earth the over-lordship of the King of Truth. How should we live and work that for a surety one realm at least may own His sway, as outcome, as visible Immediate Fruit of our ideal—"Live so as to merit the name of Buddhist"—and win thereby the

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inner power which alone can make our words and deeds influence our comrades in the outer world, the world of men?

The answer to this vital question is the simplest in the world, so far as words go; most difficult of all things, when it comes to real achievement. Let us consider the words of it, even as spoken by The Buddha Himself.

Under the great twin Sāla-tree by Mallian Kusināra the Lion of the Sakya Clan lies nigh to death; the life that changed and still throughout the centuries is changing all the history of humanity is now swiftly drawing to its end. About Him kneel a mighty company Sovereignty, and walk therein as did Asoka in of the Brethren, such a company, indeed, as now I fear the visible Sangha of the world could never furnish; for all of them save Ananda have won to Life's Supremest Goal, Arahans, ever beholding, face to face, Nibbana's glory ; the Three Great Floods for them crossed over; their course towards the Eternal finished; passed, gone over to the Further Shore.

Now at that time, the story in the Sutta tells us, Beings innumerable from all the Heavens above gathered to Kusināra's grove to pay what seemed a fitting reverence to Him who was Teacher both of gods and men, even the laws of Nature changing, so that these might have their will. All out of season the Sala-tree brake into blossom, and the flowers scattered and sprinkled themselves over the body of the Tathāgata, out of reverence for the Successor of the Buddhas of Old. And heavenly Mandarava-flowers came falling from the skies, and these also scattered and sprinkled themselves all over the body of the Tathāgata, out of reverence for the Successor of the Buddhas of Old. And heavenly perfumes fell from the skies, and these scattered and sprinkled themselves over the body of the Tathāgata, out of reverence for the Successor of the Buddhas of Old. And the sound of the voices of the gods, singing the Triumph of The Teacher, and heavenly music, came floating on the breeze, out of reverence for the Successor of the Buddhas of Old; till on that moonlit night in Kusināra's grove it seemed as though all Nature and the gods themselves had united to offer fitting reverence and fitting worship to Him who lay there; waiting for Death's last boon. But The Teacher spoke, and all the gods were silent: "*It is not thus, O Ananda, that the Tathāgatas are rightly worshipped, rightly revered, rightly bored in mind But whoso, Ananda, whetey Bikkhu or Bhikkhuni, Upāsaka or Upāsikā, shall walk according to the Teaching I have given, by such an one I am rightly worshipped, rightly revered, rightly bored in mind!*

So is our answer. The true worship of the Buddhas is not even in divinest-seeming outer offering or praise; rightly that one shall be called a follower of The Buddha, rightly will he merit the name of Buddhist, who walks the Way The Buddha found; that is, the Way, that He, the Master of Compassion, walked first Himself, twenty-five centuries ago in India.

To be a Buddhist, then, to rule as Cakkavatti king over this our personal heart's empire means no outer act of worship, no lip testimony of Buddhism; but only walking in such wise as all our powers make possible, in just that Way the Buddhas walked of old . It means to set before us, not sometimes only, but through every hour of our lives, and to the utmost of our powers, the ideals by which the Buddhas shape their lives; to aspire as they aspired; to live and walk in such high hopes as the Bodhisattas, the Buddhas-to-be, have lived. For is this unattainable, remote; impossible; for you must always remember that the Way of the Buddhas is not the Way they walk in that last life on earth wherein the Final Enlightenment is won; the Bodhisattas begin to walk in that Way from the far distant day in which their great resolve is taken. But the Bodhisattas -save only for the special Ideal, ever-growing as they win to height after height of that Path -are men such as ourselves, perchance taking even lower birth according to their deeds. So that, if, as indeed is true, we cannot achieve such a life as that which in this last birth The Buddha led, still, if we shape our lives by the ideal which from the beginning inspires the Bodhisatta, we, to some small extent and in some humble manner, can even now enter, immeasurably distant though the Goal may be, on that one Path whereon to walk is to be truly worthy of the name we claim.

The work we have to do, then, that we may make this our heart's empire Buddhist, is, primarily, to strive after one definite ideal. Whatever else we may do, whatever special virtue we may strive for, whatever discipline we may practise, whatever religious exercises we may use, it must be with that one aim in view; the aim that characterises the Way the Buddhas go, even though five hundred lives may lie between us and the Great Attainment.

What that especial ideal is, all Buddhists know full well; its keyword is Renunciation; its hope is the attainment of the higher Wisdom; its aim is the relief of somewhat of the world's great suffering, the winning of enlightenment and power, not that oneself may profit by it, but that benefit may come to all the living world. This is the special purpose, the sublime ideal, characterising the Way the Buddhas walk; it is to have, and to live up to that ideal, far off and humbly though it be, thus to work and strive and suffer, so that thereby all life may find the Way of Peace.

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Hear how The Master Himself describes, in the *Patisambhida-magga*, the nature of that ideal. We must remember, of course, that here it is no humble follower that is speaking, therefore it is no aspiration such as we might frame, nor language we might use; but the final blossoming of that ideal of the Great Compassion, in the language of One who had attained-finished His work, and won the Goal -and possessed of the power which comes to him who life after life has walked Renunciation's Way.

"On fire are all the habitations of the world, so seeing, the Great compassion for living things descends into the Hearts of the Buddhas, the Exalted Ones! Fallen into an evil way ... without a shelter ... without a refuge ... inflated, unsoothed, so seeing, the Great Compassion for all living things descends into the Hearts of the Buddhas, the Exalted Ones! Pierced is the world with many darts, and there is none to draw them out but I! Flung into a cage of corruption, en wrapped with the gloom of ignorance, and there is none can make it to see light but I! None but Myself is able to put out the fires of lust and misery. I crossed over, I can make them cross; freed, I can make them free; so seeing, the Great Compassion descends into the Hearts of the Buddhas, the Exalted Ones."

Such is The Master's own expression of the Great Ideal. Surely we indeed are very very far from that glad realisation-" Freed, I can make them free" -far indeed from that perfection of Pity, outcome of many a life spent on the Way of all the Buddhas, which in the Text is called the Great Compassion; still, in our lesser way we can fill our Jives and light our hearts with that ideal. That it is, truly, to "rightly worship, rightly reverence, rightly bear in mind" the Greatest of the wide world's Teachers, to follow in the Path He went, to live according to His Law.

Who, indeed, in this our life with all its petty trials, has not, in an immediate and obvious way, countless opportunities to rule his kingdom after that ideal? Chiefly, of course, living after that ideal means an ordering of the inner kingdom of the mind, the constant resumption of the thought: "I will live and work and strive only that the sorrow in the hearts of all may thereby be diminished"; that, and the constant watchful suppression of every thought for self as it may arise. But, apart from the heart's kingdom, in relation to the outer world about us, how much benefit we could confer on those who live about us by ever striving to bring forth fruits of our ideal in the little multitudinous relations with our fellows that make up our lives! Slowly, alas! Even with rigidest constant rule, may we perceive the fruits, in ever-growing love and understanding, of the attempt to win this interior empire to the Way of the Buddhas; quickly, on the other hand, do

we perceive the welcome fruit of this our golden rule put into practice in the outer world! To bear sorrow silently, and present a smiling face to the world without, lest the visible tokens of our grief should bring suffering to the hearts of others; to avoid sharp-spoken words; to abhor as our great enemy each least act fraught with another's pain; to count as gain each helpful word spoken or deed done for those about us -how soon, of all such sowings of our great ideal, may we not see the fruits in our comrades lives! Far we may be, and far indeed we are, from being able even to conceive the nature of the Great Compassion that the Buddhas, the Awakened, fee; like so many a term used in the *Buddhavacanam*, this stands for a state of consciousness not to be attained save as the outcome of many an arduous life. But if the Pity of the Buddhas now lies far beyond our grasp, our very thought, its seed, the Pity of Mankind may still be sown, and its harvest gathered, be ever so small the world wherein we live and move.

One thing essential to the ordering of the inner kingdom is the daily practice of definite mental culture, *Bhavana*, to that end. *Sila* and *Dāna*, practice of Virtue and of Charity, are the common bases of all the great religions; of themselves they are quite unable to bring anything more than happier and freer lives; their fruit is in the future, rarely visible now in this earthly life. But the practice of Bhavana alone can lead us to the Holy Path; its fruits are immediate, visible in our hearts and ways. It is as the Royal Edicts, carved on rock and stone, wherewith, like the emperor Asoka, we may make known the purpose of our rule to every subject of the inner empire.

In Burma there are many works dealing with the details of the various practices of Bhavana; here, in connection with the special ideal which should inspire the would-be Buddhist, I can indicate the barest outline of but one. Choosing some time when we can be alone each day (the times of dawn and sunset are the best, but any time will do so long as it is always the same time), sitting alone after our daily religious exercises, we call to mind the words of The Buddha treating of the meditation on Compassion. "And he lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Compassion, and so the second, so the third, and so the fourth; so that the whole wide world, above, around, below, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with thoughts of Compassion; with Heart of Compassion grown great, mighty and far-reaching and beyond all measure. Just as, Vasettha, a mighty trumpeter, makes himself heard, and that without difficulty, in all the Four Directions, even so of all beings that have form or life there is not one that he passes by, but regards all with mind set free, with deep Compassion." Bearing in mind this or some similar utterance of The Teacher, we endeavor, with the greatest intensity of

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mental effort of which we are capable, to hold our thoughts upon the meaning of the passage; to waken in ourself, as represented therein, the thrill of pity that naturally arises when we see some fellow-life in pain. That thrill of pity once awakened, directed as in our passage to the multitudinous beings caught in the surging whirlpool of Craving, Passion, and Illusion, is to be dwelt on, magnified, purified in our thoughts, always with our ideal as its substratum, with the idea that this definite cultivation of an emotion otherwise only occasion, will open for us the entrance to the Path -the path that leads to power to help relieve the sorrow of the world; and so, each day we meditate, always at the same time, for such a duration as we are able. At first we find the *words* employed important; also we find that our ability to awaken the thrilling feeling of pity (which is in this case the first Nimitta) varies very much on different days; sometimes it will seem to come almost without an effort, and yet on other occasions we may never get as far as its awakening at all. Another of the invariable effects on the beginner is the arising of a definite distaste for the practice we are engaged in; we find that a very strong persuasion arises that the whole thing is useless; we want at the selected time to do anything else but meditate; we find a tendency to leave off the practice altogether, or to leave it alone till it becomes welcome to our minds once more. When these opposing thoughts are uppermost, moreover, our mind will wander, the Nimitta will not easily arise, perhaps not at all; we feel convinced that we have not the right method, or the right sort of mind for meditation practices.

Now it is just at the point when, by the arising of these opposing ideas, our progress seems altogether stopped, that we are despite the difficulty and despite the apparent lack of result-able to do most in the way of overcoming those Five Hindrances which always oppose any attempt to meditate. This is why it is so important *always* to practise at our chosen time, to let no feeling or condition of our affairs interfere; at such times it is better even merely to say the words, were it for a few minutes only, than to give up or to miss the practice of one day.

How long it takes to win to the next stage, the stage in which the Immediate Fruit of our meditation becomes apparent, depends in the first place on the energy and determination with which we go into and sustain the practice; also on our Kamma, health, and many other things. If, winning to nothing, we give it up at the first appearance of obstacles, letting our fickle minds wander whithersoever they will, then, trying to meditate now and again by fits and starts, we shall never accomplish anything in the matter at all. But if, with silent, brave determination we understand that all our difficulties are only questions that time and determined will can overcome; if we persevere against all obstacles and, even if it take us years,

press ever onwards, understanding these obstacles as but the outcome of our bygone lives; if we keep on, then, one day or other, the first real step upon the actual Path will be made. Suddenly, some time when we have awakened and magnified to our utmost that internal overpowering sensation or thrill of pity, suddenly and without- a warning our first Immediate Fruit will come; and for, perhaps an instant only as our minds count time, we shall enter and dwell in the state of the First Jhāna.

Then we shall know, and for the first time understand the truth of what we have read, as words and words only in the sacred books, but never have seen or known. As from the heart of a dark thundercloud at night time when naught or but a little of earth or heaven can be seen, suddenly the lightning flashes, and for an instant the unseen world gleams forth in instantaneous light, light penetrating every darkest corner, flushing the clouded sky with momentary glory -so then, at that great moment, will come the realisation of all our toil. No words, no similes, no highest thought of ours can adequately convey that mighty realisation; but then, at that time, we shall know and see; we shall realise that all our life has changed of a sudden, that what of yore we deemed Compassion -what of old we deemed the utmost attainment that the mind or the life of man can compass -that is ours at last; we have won, achieved, and entered into the Path of which mere words can never ten. As is deep sleep to sudden wakening today's bright consciousness; as sight's coming to the man born blind; as life from death itself -so, in that instant, dawns for us the moment of attainment. As a flash lighting up the darkest corners of our mental kingdom, revealing, clear and luminous, the wide unconquered empire of the mind, so comes for the aspirant the glorious moment of attainment. Living, as we cannot think of life, yet still with the feeling of self-conscious being, of identity with that one who lived and strove; with mind still reasoning, discerning, he who has attained understands: "At last I have attained." With that knowledge, just as all the heavens start forth into momentary glory at the lightning flash, so is his being flushed, illumined with an ecstasy of joy past mortal speech or thought. But for an instant only, yet that instant's light-even if never again he could achieve that instant's light suffices to make new his life, to illumine for him all his future ways. For ever after, he who has so attained sees life with other eyes than heretofore; he knows that, ignorant and uncomprehending as he now still is, once his mind's Vision saw the very meaning and the purpose of existence; for him no more the vain and purposeless wandering here and there, seeking for this or that new object of the sense or thought. He knows there is a meaning and a purpose, vaster than thinking mind can hold, behind, beyond, this petty dream of life; no more can foolish doubt assail

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him; the Path is his, the Way is opened, the Way that leads to that great Goal once seen afar.

You know how once the king Ajātasattu came to the Exalted One, asking for an answer to his question as to the Immediate Fruit. Here in this world, he said, men follow many a different worldly way, in this trade or the Other, earning their livelihood by this or that profession. Now in all these ways of life, the king maintained, there is for the worker an Immediate Fruit -visible, obvious, dear to him; the wealth that makes him able to live, give help, betimes, to others, win what may be of his heart's desires, maintain his family and parents, dwell in happiness amongst his fellowmen. But of this Religious Life, the king declared, no such Immediate Fruit, pleasant and dear to man, fulfilling his purified desires, could be perceived. Where then, he asked The Teacher, where is the Immediate Fruit of this Religious Life, for the sake of which men in the world live according to the precepts of religion, for the sake of which the Samana leaves house and home and devotes himself to the harder Precepts of the Bhikkhu, and to the fulfilment of the duties of the Higher Life?

And The Teacher answered him: "Yes, there truly is many a Fruit, immediate and visible to him who wins it, of this Religious Life "; and some of these He taught the king. First the mere *lokika* advantages; the happiness which comes to him who keeps the Ways of Righteousness, who lives in accordance with the Precepts, the peace and the calm joy which spring within him as he sees: "Formerly I lived, unrestrained in appetite, craving for this and that, yet never satisfied; now do I live, by practising this Sila, calm, rest reined, at peace within; this it is well and noble to have done." But, continued The Buddha, there are other, higher, nobler Fruits of the Holy Life; visible, satisfying, to be realised by him who strives; Immediate Fruits of the Higher Life, dearer and sweeter than any fruit of worldly or of virtue's ways. Of those Higher Fruits the first is the attainment of the First Great Ecstasy; happy is he, in this world and the next, who has attained so far, be it only an instant's seizing on the Fruits of but the First Attainment.

All this so real seeming life we lead, this earth we walk on, men about us, or the containing Heavens above; all this, and whatsoever we may see, feel, hear or know, is but the phantom, the puppet-show, enacted, as a dream is, by the deep mystery that we term the Mind. He who would free himself from this Illusion; who with clear-seeing Wisdom's eye would rule, and understand, and help-he first must rule in his inner kingdom; he must guide and develop it till he no longer is slave of its desires, but emperor of them all. And he indeed who seeks to make his life worthy of the name of

Buddhist; who seeks to follow in the Way The Master walked and taught of old; who seeks to gain the power that comes with Understanding, that he may in his humble way bring joy, not sorrow to the world -that one, like Dhammasoka in the olden days, first has to conquer these usurping enemies, the Five Great Hindrances, the passions, follies, and weaknesses within. Then, that his rule may be established, like as Asoka engraved on pillar and on rock and cave the Royal Edicts, so must he, on his heart of hearts, inscribe in deep-cut characters his great ideals. If we can do but this; if for The Buddha's Law we will subject our own inalienable empire then with the certainty of success we may send forth our Sasana over the whole wide world. Each one of us who weakens in the task is weakening the religion; each one who overcomes the tests brings strength and light to it from far beyond Illusion's Veil. By such sustained, enduring, arduous toil, shall we accomplish this first and greatest of our aims; we shall light, in this sleeping land, the old ideal once more, kindle to new and greater vigor the ancient pitying fervor of our faith. Greater than all other tasks is this, its fruits immediate, timeless, sure; leading not us alone but all -who may thereby hereafter follow the Hidden Way The Buddhas have trodden and have taught from life and death's unending circle, over the trackless wastes of dire Avijja's ocean, safe, safe, safe, on to the Other Shore!