CATALOGUE

Collection of Modern Japanese Water-Color Paintings

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ILLUSTRATIVE SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF BUDDHA,
AFTER "THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA,"
BY PAUL CARUS

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SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF BUDDHA.

MOST of the original Buddhist Scriptures are lengthy, and full of repetitions, because the religious minds of their authors loved to dwell on the main doctrines, and repeat them over and over again, which makes its reading difficult, and even tedious.

The Gospel of Buddha, by Dr. Paul Carus, is a compilation from the Buddhist canonical Scriptures, and contains in a condensed form the main doctrines of Buddhism in the shape of an account of Buddha’s life.

As The Gospel of Buddha is comprehensive and yet concise, uniting in one volume the essence of a great number of Buddhist Scriptures in a convenient form, it was at once welcomed by the Buddhists in Buddhist countries, and appeared soon after its publication in Japanese and Chinese translations. On account of its systematic brevity, it has been introduced as a text book in various Buddhist seminaries of Japan, and Professor Keichyu Yamada, of the Imperial Art Institute, Tokyo, has executed a series of paintings on silk, illustrating the book. While Japanese artists, with few exceptions, show a neglect of linear perspective, they excel in delicacy of tint, and expressiveness of characteristic features.

It should be borne in mind that the illustrations represent Indian scenes, costumes and persons, and in this respect, they are according to the intention of the artist not typically Japanese.
The subjects which Professor Yamada selected for illustration are as follows:

1. BRAHMA WORSHIPING THE BUDDHA CHILD.
   —When Prince Siddhārtha was born, the deities descended from their thrones in heaven and worshiped the babe, thus recognizing the superiority of the Buddha child, the Boddhisattva, to themselves. (P. 8)

2. QUESTIONED BY THE SAGES.—As Christ questioned the sages in the temple, and surprised them by his comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures, so Boddhisattva, in an examination to which he was submitted, proved to the teachers of his father's kingdom his superhuman wisdom. We read:
   "Prince Siddhārtha replied to all the questions of the sages; but when he questioned them, even the wisest among them were silenced." (P. 11)

3. THE BETROTHAL.—At the request of the people and also of King Shuddhodana, the Boddhisattva was urged to take a wife, and he was betrothed to his cousin, the beautiful and virtuous princess, Yashodharā. (P. 11)
   Since celibacy is considered among Buddhists as the holy estate, and since (with the exception of some sects of Japan, who in many respects resemble our Protestant Christianity) Buddhist priests are not allowed to marry, there is little probability that the marriage of Buddha has been invented, and this incident as well as the reported meat eating of Buddha are regarded by scholars as a sure evidence that the Buddha-charitas (that is, the Buddha-Gospels) are ultimately based on history, and contain actual facts.

4. THE THREE WOES OF LIFE.—King Shuddhodana, the father of Buddha, took care that Boddhisattva should know nothing of death and the other evils of life. Thus the prince lived in a palace where misery and disease were not known. But once, when driving out into the country, Boddhisattva was confronted by the three woes of life, disease, old age, and death; whereupon he decided to renounce the world, and devote his life to the salvation of mankind. (P. 11)
   According to tradition the prince is confronted successively by the three woes; the artist however combines three scenes into one.

* Boddhisattva means one who will acquire the bōdhi; or, in other words, one who is to become a Buddha.
† Page references relate to The Gospel of Buddha.
5. RENOUNCING THE WORLD.—Prince Siddhārtha left in the night on his horse, Kanthaka, accompanied by his faithful charioteer, Channa. Bent on the salvation of mankind "He severed all ties, and went into homelessness." (P. 18.)

6. KING BIMBISĀRA.—In Buddhist days, there were many recluses who renounced the world for the sake of leading a religious life, but we may assume that none of them was of so noble parentage and so good an education as Prince Siddhārtha who descended from the royal race of the Shakhiyas. The legends tell us that in his beggar's garb he excited the curiosity of the people, in Rājagriha, the capital of Magadha, the residence of King Bimbisāra, who, with his ministers of state, came out to greet him, saying: "O, shramana, your hands are fit to grasp the reins of an empire, and should not hold a beggar's bowl." (P. 20.)

7. ENLIGHTENMENT.—"Behold, the great muni!" (P. 19.) After having studied with philosophers, Bodhisattva lived in the wilderness, practicing austerities in company with five other recluses. At last he saw the uselessness of fasting, self-mortification, and other penances, and gave himself up to thought about the cause of evil which he discovered in sinful clinging. He discovered that evil is not a matter of bodily existence, but results from the desires of the heart, and that it can be cured only by acquiring the right disposition of soul through a surrender of all egotism with its lust, sloth, greed, and all other selfish indulgences. Having acquired enlightenment, he uttered a stanza of blessings in praise of the state of Buddhahood, reminding one of the seven blessings of Christ.

The picture represents Buddha under the Bodhi-tree. The artist apparently has in mind an ancient bas-relief* in black stone which was found in the temple of Buddha Gayā, near the spot of Buddha's enlightenment. The Committee of Restoration delivered it to representative Buddhists, and they gave it to the Anagarika, H. Dharmapāla, who exhibited it in 1893 at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and carried it, in spite of its weight, on his trip around the world.

* A photograph of this interesting piece of sculpture was published in The Open Court, Vol. XII, No. 8, 1893.
8. THE FIRST DISCIPLES.—Bodhisattva, having acquired enlightenment, returned as Buddha to the five recluses, teaching them the middle path which lies between both extremes, self-mortification and yielding to pleasure. (P. 39.)

9. YASHAS, THE RICH YOUTH.—Having taught the doctrine of salvation and sent out disciples throughout the country, Yashas, a rich youth of Benares, came to him in the night, full of anxiety about the distress of the world, but Buddha soon taught him that there was no misery for him who accepted the doctrine and led a life of purity and righteousness. Said Buddha to Yashas: "Here is no distress; here are no tribulations." (P. 45.)

10. CONQUERING THE DRAGON.—The legend tells us that Kasyapa, one of the greatest religious teachers of the age, belonging to the sect of fire worshipers, kept in his shrine a huge dragon. Buddha stayed in the sanctuary over night, and the dragon, unable to bear the divinity of Buddha's superior light, expired through the venom of his own anger. Said Buddha, "His fire has been conquered by my fire." Kasyapa became converted to the religion of Buddha and has become one of the pillars of the Buddhist church. (P. 50.)

11. FOUNDING A PLACE OF RELIGIOUS DEVOTION.—Buddhism no doubt owes its greatest popularity to the breadth of its religious doctrine. It was not limited as were many other religious orders of those days to the brotherhood of monks alone, for Buddha taught that salvation could be obtained by laymen as well as monks, if they only renounced all selfish clinging, and would lead a life of purity and righteousness. The great representative layman is Anathapindika, a wealthy man, who founded the first vihara, or Buddhist monastery, for the purpose of supporting and spreading the Buddhist religion. (P. 63.)

12. YASHODHARĀ.—When the Prince having attained Buddhahood, was recognized by kings as well as by the multitudes of India as the Enlightened One, King Shuddhodana sent for his son and begged him to visit his aged father (P. 68.) Buddha returned home, where he met once more his devoted wife, Yasodharā, who, later on, joins him in his work, and becomes the matron of an order of Buddhist nuns.
The artist (probably for artistic reasons) does not follow tradition, for the sacred texts tell us that Yashodharā cut her hair, abstained from cosmetics, ornaments and all the luxuries of life, and lived in the same style as her husband had chosen to live.

13. RĀHULA.—Yashodharā’s son, now seven years old, heard that his father was in possession of great treasures, which were treasures of spiritual enlightenment, and he followed him and asked him to give him his inheritance. Thereupon, Buddha asked him, “Are you strong enough to carry them, and do you desire to be admitted to the brotherhood?” Rāhula replied with firmness, “I do.” Thus, Rāhula joined the brotherhood, and became one of the most renowned disciples of Buddha. (P. 70.)

14. MĀYĀDEVĪ.—Buddha’s mother, who had died soon after giving birth to the Buddha child, presided in the Brahma heaven. The legend tells us that Buddha went up to heaven to preach to her the new doctrine of enlightenment, and to communicate to her the peace of Nirvāṇa, Nirvāṇa being higher than all the heavens of Brahma and the other gods. (P. 77.)

15. QUARRELS IN THE SANGHA.—The Buddhist Church (the Sangha) being established, parties soon began to form, and the monks came with their complaints to Buddha; he, instead of deciding their differences, which were of a personal nature, left the place. The people, loathing the quarrelsome monks, who had driven away by their contentions the Blessed One, discontinued their contributions; and now the monks followed their master, asking his return, and promising to drop their quarrels. Buddha, however, insisted that first their quarrels should be fully discussed and settled to the satisfaction of both parties, which being done, he taught them that hatred is not appeased by hatred, but by love alone. (P. 86.)

16. THE WILD ELEPHANT.—Even so gentle a man as Buddha had enemies among the more rigorous fanatics, who wanted to enforce a more severe discipline. The head of this party was Dēvadatta; they conspired against the life of Buddha,
and let a wild elephant loose in the street when he passed by, but Buddha's deportment was so dignified and self-composed that the furious animal became gentle in his presence. (P. 97.)

17. A LESSON IN TRUTH.—We are informed that Râhula, before he acquired perfect enlightenment, had to overcome a disposition of concealing the truth, and Buddha banished him for a time from his presence to a distant vihâra. After some time, Buddha visited the place, in order to establish the old harmony of communion between himself and Râhula, and Buddha taught him a lesson by a washing of the feet. Having finished the bath, Buddha asked his son whether the water was now fit for drinking, and Râhula replied, "No;" whereupon Buddha taught him that as water is soiled by dirt so a man's soul is soiled by lies, and even the vessel ceases to be fit to drink from as soon as it is employed for menial purposes. (P. 145.)

18. THE SLANDERER.—A slanderer abused Buddha, who bore the insult with dignity and taught him by a parable that he who slanders the virtuous is like a man who would spit at the heavens, or throw dust at others against the wind. (P. 146.)

19. THE DÉVA ASKING QUESTIONS.—One of the gods, a déva, is said to have descended to Buddha and asked questions which the Blessed One answered, such as, "What is it fire can neither burn nor moisture corrode?" And the Blessed One answered, "Blessing; neither fire, nor moisture, nor wind can destroy the blessing of a good deed, and it will reform the whole world." (P. 148.)

20. AMITÂBHA.—There was a disciple who clung to the superstitions of the day, believing in the possibility of acquiring supernatural powers by penances, and Buddha taught him the ideal of supreme wisdom, the eternal, everlasting Amitâba, the infinite light which is the source of all wisdom, virtue and enlightenment. This ideal becomes an object of religious worship in the Mahayana, the Northern Church of Buddhism; it corresponds to the Christian conception of the
Word (the Logos), who was at the beginning, with and in God. It is the Tao of the Taoists, which is preached by Lao-Tse." (P. 130.)

21. RULES OF PREACHING.—In giving instructions to his disciples, Buddha advises them to adapt themselves to their audiences, saying: "Whenever I entered an assembly I always became in color like unto the color of my audience, and in voice like unto their voices." (P. 156.)

22. THE CONVERSION OF THE SELF-INDULGENT RICH MAN.—As the Gospel has the story of the rich fool, so the Buddhist legends speak of a rich man, but while the rich fool of the Gospel dies a sudden death, the rich fool of the Buddhist story is cured of his foolishness and becomes a convert to Buddhism. The rich man who misused his wealth and suffered from various bodily ailments, followed Buddha's advice to lead a more active life and to adopt an abstemious diet. He now comes back to Buddha, saying, "Master, you have cured my bodily ailments; I come now to seek enlightenment of my soul." (P. 167.)

23. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.—Ananda, the favorite disciple of Buddha, who in many respects resembles the Christian St. John, asked a Måñåga girl, a woman of low caste, for water to drink, and she was delighted with the idea that a man of Brahman caste should speak to her and ask a favor of her. The story illustrates the breadth of Buddhism, which opposes the Indian caste system, and recognizes the brotherhood of all men. (P. 174.)

24. THE MARRIAGE AT JĀMBŪNĀDA. (P. 180.)—As Christ attended the marriage in Cana, so Buddha was invited to honor a wedding feast by his presence. The legend tells that although there were more guests than expected, the food supply proved unlimited and was more than sufficient for the occasion.

* See for details Lao-Tse's "Tao-Teh King," published by the Open Court Publishing Company.
25. IN THE REALM OF DEATH.—A man lost his only child, and was permitted to visit him in the realm of death. There seeing his son among other children happily at play, he asked him to come back to life on earth, but the boy refused to go, and even objected to recognizing the relationship of father and son, for he said, “Here these relationships have passed away, for here we are free from delusion.” The artist represents the father surrounded by the halo of flames, which indicates that he is still subject to passion; the halo of light indicates enlightenment. (P. 184.)

26. CROSSING THE STREAM.—Worldliness is represented in Buddhism as a turbulent ocean, or as a stream, while the Nirvāṇa, or peace of soul, is compared to the other shore; thus, the allegory of crossing the stream is a common simile in Buddhist literature, to signify the attainment of salvation. Under these circumstances, legends naturally formed themselves that disciples crossed the stream to follow their Master to the other shore. One of these legends is represented by the artist, and the disciple of Buddha says that he did not sink into the waters because he had faith in the Enlightened One. (P. 189.)

27. MINISTERING UNTO THE SICK MONK.—There was a sick monk of a surly disposition whose sores were so disagreeable that his brethren refused to administer unto him. When Buddha heard of it, he went himself to the sick room, and while the others turned away from the patient with disgust, the Blessed One himself washed and dressed his wounds. In the story told on this occasion, Buddha explained that the patient had been deserted by his brethren on account of his surly disposition, while it was a special reward reserved to the Buddha for former good deeds in one of his prior lives as Bōdhisattva, to be now allowed to alleviate the pain of the sufferer. (P. 190.)

28. AMRAPÅLI, THE COURTESAN.—As Mary Magdalene sought the presence of Christ, and was graciously received, so Ambapāli, the courtesan, went to Buddha to seek enlightenment and salvation. As she listened to the law, her face brightened with delight. (P. 201.)
20. BUDDHA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.—When Buddha felt his end draw near, he had all his disciples gathered around him, and delivered a farewell address, in which he urged them not to rely on any authority, not even on the authority of his own words, but upon truth alone: "Hold fast to the truth as a lamp, and you will reach the very topmost height," were his significant words. (P. 204.)

30. MĀRA, THE EVIL ONE, TRIUMPHING OVER BUDDHA'S SICKNESS.—According to the Buddhist tradition, Buddha received his last meal from the hands of Chunda, the smith, and the meal is called sukaramuddram, which, literally translated, means "boar's delight." Some scholars interpret it to mean a kind of hash of boar's meat, while others regard it as an edible fungus, which, like the truffle, is so called because it was a favorite food of swine. At present, the interpretation accepted by orthodox Buddhists is the latter, viz., that the word means an edible fungus, and might be translated, perhaps, as "boar's root." But the very fact that the Chinese translators have rendered the word "dried boar's meat," interpreting it to mean dried pork, proves that the ancient Buddhists saw no disgrace in the idea that Buddha's last meal consisted of flesh diet. In the face of the present vegetarian tendencies among Buddhists, it is one of the evidences of the faithfulness of Buddhist tradition, and at the same time is a sure sign that Buddhism as taught by Buddha is by no means vegetarianism—a fact which is corroborated in the Jataka Tales, now being translated by Cowell, where repeatedly Buddha is represented to have eaten meat, and one of the finest Buddhist suttas declares that not meat-eating, but impure words and impure deeds alone will defile a man.

The artist represents Māra, the Evil One, as rejoicing that Chunda's meal causes the death of the Buddha; he triumphantly holds up the bowl containing the fungi, while Dévas, that is deities analogous to Christian angels, administer to the Buddha. (P. 211.)

31. THE FIRST BUDDHIST COUNCIL.—After Buddha's death, his disciples are reported to have convened a council in which they laid down the pure doctrines, fixing the canon of Buddhist Scriptures.
32. PREACHING THE DOCTRINE WHICH IS GLORIOUS.—When Buddha had attained enlightenment, he sent out his disciples, telling them to preach the doctrine which is glorious. The Greek word *evangel* and the English term *gospel*, sound like translations of the Pāli expression *balyano dhammo*, “the glorious doctrine,” or “happy tidings.”

33. BUDDHA WORSHIP.—After the establishment of Buddhism, shrines and altars were erected in worship of Buddha, and the concluding picture of the series represents the interior of a temple, with a priest worshiping before the altar of all the Buddhas.
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