

THE JĀTAKA, OR STORIES OF THE BUDDHA'S FORMER BIRTHS. Vol. VI. Translated by E. B. COWELL and W. H. D. ROUSE, M.A., Litt.D. Cambridge, 1907.

It was while engaged in himself completing the noble English version of the great Jātaka collection, of which he was editor, that Professor Cowell passed away. Dr. Rouse, who, at his request, had begun the revision of the veteran scholar's translation of this volume, carried on and finished his work, Cowell's MS. breaking off at p. 165 of the English. Full twelve years have elapsed since the "guild of Jātaka translators, *çreshthi-pūrvā vayan çrenih*"—as the editor picturesquely dubbed them—launched their first volume; and it is hard on a quarter of a century since Professor Rhys Davids, drawn from his studies in Jātaka history and translation by the greater problems indicated in his Hibbert Lecture, approached Professor Cowell as to the desirability of such a guild of co-operating scholars carrying out the long task of translating the 547 numbers. A long period in all as human lifetimes go, if but a flash when compared with the age of these most venerable tales. The work is not even now completed according to the announcement made in the first volume. We were led to hope that a complete index would be given at the end of this volume vi. Wisely, as I venture to think, the translator has only added, in symmetry with the rest of the work, an index to these last ten lengthy tales. To such a wonderful mine of folklore and so much else as is the Jātaka Book there should now be compiled a full index, equal in bulk, or nearly so, to any one of the six volumes. I have had more than once to plough a path with mixed feelings through the total contents, and can testify how great a desideratum is such an index which shall, as to the matter of the collection, be all to us that Professor Dines Andersen's index volume to the text is in respect of proper names

and verses. The several indices appended to each volume are only adequate where Dr. Rouse has been the compiler; and of course a great deal of time is lost in consulting six instead of one. I earnestly hope, in the interests of historical investigation and of lexicographical advance, that the edition may not be judged complete till this very important additional task has been carried out.

There is certainly, in wealth of archæological and philological interest, no falling off in this concluding book. We read on and on, as much absorbed in all the play of folklore as in the insight with which the translators cope with the difficulties of the text, or the unfailing wealth of resource—*appaṭivānīyaṃ asecanakam ojavam*—with which Dr. Rouse renders the condensed Pali gāthās into excellent jingle of English ballad flavour. If we turn, for instance, to any one of the ten tales, or clusters of tales—the first—we at once come upon the moon deity being invoked by sterile wives, the chief queen being named after the moon, on some quaint lore of the nursery, and a variety of other superstitions; then on a public announcement being written on a gold plate, which is another instance in the evidence given in Bühler's "Alter der indischen Schrift" (p. 5); and finally on the almost unique appendix, paralleled only in vol. iv, naming ancient Theras of Ceylon, the historical interest of which has been discussed by Professor Rhys Davids in this Journal (J.R.A.S., October, 1901).

Continuing, and confining ourselves to only a few of the more salient points of interest, we note the god Sakka, or Indra, and *not* the moon goddess, terminating the queen's sterility, and intervening in the rebirths of the Bodhisat, as he was aspiring, after a spell in Sakka's heaven, to higher heavens, by advising him to be reborn on earth. A little later we see Sakka not devising, but merely discovering a rebirth of the Bodhisat in progress (pp. 2, 20). On p. 22 we come on a god's daughter as

guardian of the sea, carrying the drowning brine-soaked Bodhisat to land.

The Nimi-Jātaka tells of a king being shown both Hell and Heaven in the celestial chariot of Sakka, the charioteer acting the part of Dante's Vergil. It is highly interesting to compare the Dantesque Inferno with that of the Jātaka, noting to what extent the convictions of crime and the allotted punishments differ. And it is much to be regretted that such pertinent material was not accessible to M. E. Blochet, when he was writing his valuable essay on "Les Sources Orientales de la Divine Comédie" (1901). King Nimi we know from the Makhādeva-Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya, in which the ride through the Inferno is asked for by the king, but is not described.

In the Khaṇḍahāla-Jātaka is an interesting *aperçu* of the growing influence of the 'dhammikā samaṇabrahmaṇā,' as opposed to the brahmanic ritual, somewhat analogous to the position of prophet *versus* priest in Hebrew history. A brahmin, in constructing a proper place for a special sacrifice, surrounds it with a fence, "lest some righteous ascetic or brahmin might come and stop the rite."<sup>1</sup> Now cruelty to and violence done on animals is among the crimes most sharply punished in the description of hell mentioned above; Dante, I believe, does not include any such deeds as having incurred damnation. On p. 252 the account of a famine opens up the long perspective of these still chronic visitations, and comes in grim contrast to the quaint miniature of an old Indian announcement, three pages back, of "Dinner is served"—

"The menial calls aloud,

'God bless King Sivi! come to meat!'"

The evil omen of a throbbing right eye (p. 287) is good food for the folklorist, as is the libation poured on the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rhys Davids, "Buddhist India," p. 241. It was to the interest of the priests, who were paid for building the altars, each time anew, that there should be no permanent structure.

right hand as sealing a donation (p. 293). The unfortunate mother, Maddi, who was, by this agreement, given away, is a *varia lectio* of that depressing staple dish of old literature, patient Griselda. Old-world gambling is nowhere more interestingly illustrated than in the detailed account of the dice game between Puṇṇaka and the king (p. 137), as Professor Lüders has found in his monograph on "Das Würfelspiel im alten Indien." The similes alone, in this one volume, are a veritable thesaurus, and reveal many omissions in the Simile Index in last year's Pali Text Society's Journal. That of the moth flying into the lighted candle, applied, not as is usual in the West, but to "the idiot who has adopted a naked mendicant's life," is possibly unique. It was conceivably suggested by the usual word for asceticism—*tapo*—although that word does not occur, '*naggabhāvaṃ*' embracing the last three words of the English.

No time or space remains to discuss such renderings as 'I will live the life of a Buddhist priest' for *samaṇadhammaṃ karissāmi* (29), 'the goal of mystic insight' for the (very unusual) expression *vipassanadhuraṃ pūretuṃ* (38), 'nirvana' for *paraṃ* (54), 'Fate' for *Maccu* (17), nor were it worth while, where the work as a whole is so admirable. The difficulties of translating these last lengthy Jātakas, so teeming with verses and obscure verse-idiom, must have far exceeded those encountered in the previous volumes, and the translation has worthily met these more exacting demands. Quaintly new are the phrases of courteous inquiry after the health of a great sage on the part of a layman in one of these latest tales:—"Are your vital airs not wasted? Are your movements unimpeded? Is your sight unimpaired?" May the distinguished translator of nearly one-half of the whole Jātaka collection be able to respond no less confidently than that sage in the affirmative!

C. A. F. RHYS DAVIDS.