

Lives of the Buddha

Buddhist missionary theater from medieval China

Scriptures transmitted by
Kang Senghui, Dharmarakṣa, Zhi Qian, Yijing and others

Translations from classical Chinese,
adaptation and original texts by

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FOREWORD

This play brings to life popular medieval Buddhist scriptures, originally from India, which were transmitted to China and translated into Chinese more than 1700 years ago. It seeks to recreate and make accessible to audiences today what the experience of receiving these teachings through oral preaching or performance might have been like in centuries past, even before they were first committed to writing. In so doing we are (finally) taking the approach that Édouard Chavannes proposed when he published his French translations of these texts in 1911:

“Buddhist tales... existed before written literature, and were not composed with an educated audience in view. In order to resituate them in their natural context, they must therefore be put into the mouths of those mendicant monks who spread them while going from door to door, looking for their food.”

Excluding the prologue and epilogue, which are entirely invented, over 2/3 of the play’s content consists of direct, extended excerpts from the original Buddhist scriptures, in my own translation; in the ten passages which portray memories of previous lives the proportion is around 5/6. With one exception, this is the first time that any of these Chinese materials have been translated into English. I am treating them as the written traces of a preexisting oral performance literature, with alternating passages of narration, dialogue, and stage direction; by presenting them in this form I am also placing them among the oldest theatrical texts in existence. (For information on the sources used and the process of adaptation, please see the Author’s Notes that are adjoined.)

The play requires a minimum of five actors, but it could easily accommodate more, especially since most of them they perform multiple roles, sometimes even within the same scene. Whenever they are onstage and not speaking, they should be acting out the accompanying narration. This approach, inspired by a long tradition of non-verbal stage performance in France from Marcel Marceau to Pierre Guillois and Mathilda May, transforms the passages of narration into a kind of voice-over which carries us through the primary, visual action. The staging notes and the prologue / epilogue invite the company to explore the idea of an itinerant, medieval troupe, who must put on their show using only what they can carry onstage with them. Costumes might consist of elements such as masks, hats, robes, and jackets, which are easy to transport and can be changed quickly, and the performance can be enriched with music, dancing, acrobatics, etc. If live musicians are participating, they may also play non-speaking roles in some scenes.

CHARACTERS

DHARMA, a Buddhist Master / **SIDDHARTHA**, the prince who becomes the Buddha.

BODHI, a monk. He plays primarily Siddhartha in the past lives.

KARMA, a nun. She plays, among others, Ciñcā in the past lives.

NANDA, a monk. He plays, among others, Devadatta in the past lives.

SURI, a nun. She plays, among others, Gopā in the past lives.

Musicians, who may also play in the past lives (non-speaking roles).

PROLOGUE - Arrival in the Village

The stage is empty except for a few platforms and columns to suggest a landscape of rocks and trees.

Dharma enters, carrying an enormous backpack. Karma and Bodhi, similarly loaded, follow a few steps behind him.

DHARMA

Hello! Is anyone there? Hello... We're not asking for money!

KARMA

Hello, anyone?

BODHI

We're not asking for money.

DHARMA

Oh, there you are. (*The three bow in unison.*) It's true, we don't even touch money, ever. We avoid it.

BODHI

Like a poison.

KARMA

It's of no use to us.

DHARMA

Please, just relax. We're not here asking for anything. We're offering something — our teachings, and wisdom. We come from far away, across the mountains, and have already walked a long road today. If you would allow us, we would be grateful just to stop and rest here for a moment.

The travelers put their packs on the ground.

*Karma and Bodhi collect them together on one side
and open them, while Dharma advances downstage.*

DHARMA

My name is Dharma. I left my monastery several years ago and started traveling toward the east, together with my few disciples, always following the sun and stopping along the way in every village where we are welcome. But never asking for anything — please, just relax!

*While Dharma speaks, Karma and Bodhi stretch a
cord between two trees on their side. The will hang
drapes on it to create a “backstage” area.*

DHARMA

It's true that people sometimes give us their kitchen scraps or their old worn-out clothes, when they truly appreciate what we have revealed to them. But many of those we encounter do not even have enough for themselves, so with them we always share what little we may have upon us.

And to all who we meet, we offer our teaching: A most wondrous secret, one that has been passed down for centuries, from generation to generation. I learned it myself after years of searching, through the wisdom of my own Master, just before he passed away. Ever since then I have vowed to travel across the entire world and share the secret with others, to spread it as far and wide as I possibly can.

What I teach is the knowledge that destroys all afflictions and relieves all suffering. It is the most fundamental truth: beyond the gods and the universes, beyond time and space, or creation... It is the truth of existence itself — the truth of your own existence.

This secret has a name: it is called Dharma. Yes, that's my own name as well, Dharma! I chose it to keep constantly in mind the mission that gives life to every step that I take, every breath. And if you would allow us to stay here and spend a little bit of time with you, we can show you some of this wonderful secret called Dharma.

I really do mean show you, now! The Dharma has ten thousand different ways to enter, so we do not offer pious sermons or theoretical lectures — instead, we put on a play. That's right! A play! We transport you off to distant lands; you'll meet kings, murderers, great sages, even gods! All while opening a door to the ultimate truth, the one that relieves all suffering. Can you believe it? Do you want to see, at least? Yes? Thank you. Thank you so much.

Dharma bows deeply. Then he turns toward the rear and whistles loudly.

DHARMA

Hey! It's okay, we're on! Let's go, let's go!

Dharma's other disciples enter the stage: Nanda, Suri and the musicians, all carrying their packs of equipment.

The musicians set up on one side. Nanda and Suri cross the stage and enter the "backstage" area to prepare themselves.

DHARMA

Our story begins under a tree, a bit like this one... Very far away, in the north of India, fifteen generations before us...

Dharma circles one of the trees several times, and then sits in front of it. He has become Siddhartha, and will keep this role for as long as he remains there.

SCENE 1 - The Story of Prince Siddhartha

Siddhartha

Bodhi: Young Siddhartha

Karma: Driver

(Nanda: Devadatta, Indra, Corpse bearer)

(Suri: Gopā, Corpse bearer)

(Musicians: Courtesans, Corpse bearers)

While Siddhartha speaks, Karma and Suri stretch a cord between two other trees.

They will hang drapes upon it as scenery to create the “onstage” area.

SIDDHARTHA

Peace to all, and welcome. I am Siddhartha: one who has abandoned the world, seeking only spiritual perfection and the key to unlocking ultimate truth. I first stood under this tree seven years ago; on that day I took a vow not to leave here until I become a Buddha. If I do not succeed, my days will end under these branches. A devoted widow from the village nearby comes once a day to bring me a bowl of food, fill the water jar, and clean out the pot of waste. For seven years I have lived this way, immersed day and night in deep meditation.

But who in the world would take such a vow? What could have brought him to this? Do you wish to know? It is a long story... But if you care to hear it, I will tell you.

The account traces all the way back to my childhood, which I spent closed inside a bubble, completely cut off from the rest of the world. I was born a prince, you see, the son of an extremely wealthy and powerful sovereign. Prince Siddhartha, of the great Shākya clan.

Young Siddhartha / Bodhi enters.

SIDDHARTHA

My parents loved me so much, that they wanted to offer me a life of perfect happiness. So they built three luxurious palaces, one for each season.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

Their gardens were filled with fruit trees, and their rooms with flowers whose fragrance sweetened the air.

SIDDHARTHA

As soon as a single petal dropped or a leaf withered, the plants would be replaced by new ones, always fresh and blossoming.

The musicians join young Siddhartha / Bodhi and dance around him.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

In each palace my parents placed five hundred courtesans. None of them were too fat or too thin; their splendid faces were fine and bright; they were all like peaches and plums, and each one possessed multiple talents.

Devadatta / Nanda enters. He joins young Siddhartha / Bodhi and the musicians.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

They were there for my pleasure, so I spent every day, together with my cousin Devadatta and our friends, amusing ourselves and enjoying their performances.

The musicians play and dance around the two boys, then return to their places.

Young Siddhartha / Bodhi and Devadatta / Nanda sit together.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

For my education, my parents brought together the greatest sages from across the kingdom. Devadatta and I learned of gods and men, heavens and hells, the great cycles of universal creation and destruction, continuing on to infinity. I studied how the law of karma operates to direct these cosmic cycles, keeping the entire universe in perfect equilibrium. The edicts of karma are inescapable: they assure that every action, sooner or later, will come back to the one who performed it, over the course of their passage from one life to another.

*Gopā / Suri enters, comes and kisses young
Siddhartha / Bodhi.*

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

When I reached the age of seventeen, the king chose a wife for me. Her name was Gopā, and the beauty of her face was like that of a celestial maiden. At that time I had the strength to push back sixty huge elephants. I had understood all of the scriptures, and now it was my teachers who bowed before me and received my teaching.

*Gopā / Suri and Devadatta / Nanda exit, leaving young
Siddhartha / Bodhi alone.*

SIDDHARTHA

But in reality, I knew nothing. My learning was only of theories; it didn't touch what actually exists at all. Up until that point in my life I had never seen a person cry, or get angry, or feel afraid, or ashamed; I had never experienced hunger, pain, regret... I had no idea what any of these words really mean. What could I have possibly understood of true religion and the supreme Law?

*Indra / Nanda enters. He circles around young
Siddhartha / Bodhi, who does not see him.
Then he waits stage right.*

SIDDHARTHA

But I would not remain in this bubble for much longer. The great god Indra, Lord of the Heavens, was observing me from his celestial throne, and he could see that I had ripened, like a fruit that is about to fall. Actually, he had already been watching over me for countless cosmic eons, directing my progress and saving me repeatedly from many perils and enemies. But I knew nothing about all of that yet.

The driver Karma enters stage left and conducts young Siddhartha / Bodhi toward the center.

SIDDHARTHA

Whenever I left my palace to go for a tour of the realm, in order that my constant perception of happiness should not be disrupted, my father would send a command throughout the kingdom, that nothing impure should be allowed near the route of the royal procession.

But one day, when I went out, the great Indra left his heaven, descended to earth and transformed himself into an old man. His hair was white; his back was bent; he leaned on a stick and walked with tiny steps. I watched as he passed in front of my chariot.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

What is that?

DRIVER / KARMA

It's an old man.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

Old?! That's what it means?

DRIVER / KARMA

Yes, when the interactions of the four elements have come to fruition, and there isn't much life remaining, it means you are old.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

In the future, will I also become old?

DRIVER / KARMA

People have been getting old since the beginning of time! Not even sages can avoid it.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

I thought that having honor and glory meant that I was different from common people. But if no one can avoid getting old, what advantage is there in majesty?

Indra / Nanda exits stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

When I returned to my palace, I remembered what I had seen. I concentrated my mind and spent several days in a state of contemplation.

When I finally went out again for a tour, my father gave strict orders that no decrepit elderly people should be allowed on the side of the road.

Indra / Nanda re-enters stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

Indra left his heaven as he had done before, and transformed himself this time into an invalid. His body was limp, his breath was weak, he had nothing but skin on his bones, and was covered with oozing boils. I watched as he leaned against the city gates.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

What's that, now?

DRIVER / KARMA

It's someone who's sick.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

Sick?! That's what it means?

DRIVER / KARMA

Yes, when a person eats and drinks immoderately, when he sleeps and rises without regularity, he catches an illness, like this.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

I also eat and drink immoderately; I sleep and rise without regularity. So will I too become sick?

DRIVER / KARMA

If you have a body, you become sick. It is a misfortune which cannot be avoided.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

If I cannot avoid such a misfortune, then in the future that's how I will be!

Indra / Nanda exits stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

When I returned to my palace, I remembered what I had seen. I concentrated my mind and spent several weeks in a state of contemplation.

When I went out again, Indra came down one more time, and transformed himself into a corpse. People carried him on their shoulders, wailing and lamenting. I watched as they passed before my chariot.

*Nanda and Suri (or the musicians) enter stage right,
carrying a banner painted to show a corpse.*

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

What is that, now?

DRIVER / KARMA

It's a dead body.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

Dead?! That's what it means?

DRIVER / KARMA

Yes, at the end of life the soul departs, the body disintegrates, and a person leaves his loved ones forever.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

Will that happen to me too?

DRIVER / KARMA

Even the greatest sages, with perfect virtue, cannot avoid this misfortune.

*The corpse bearers (Nanda and Suri or the musicians)
exit stage right.*

*Young Siddhartha / Bodhi and the driver Karma return
stage left. The driver Karma exits.*

SIDDHARTHA

I spun my chariot around and returned to the palace. Remembering what I had seen, I concentrated my mind and spent several months in a state of contemplation.

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

When I emerged this time, I had made the decision to renounce my royal birth and devote myself to pursuing the ultimate truth, to seek the Dharma, and thereby to save all beings from their sufferings. I waited patiently for an opportunity to escape my guards and flee from the palace.

*Devadatta / Nanda, Gopā / Suri and the driver Karma
enter stage left.*

*They and the musicians all join young Siddhartha /
Bodhi to dance together.*

YOUNG SIDDHARTHA / BODHI

Not long afterwards, when I reached my nineteenth birthday, the occasion presented itself. I brought all fifteen hundred courtesans together in one hall, and had them display their talents to the fullest. They sang and played from morning until night; the music could be heard from a distance of ten miles.

When night fell, everyone in the palace lost consciousness and drifted off to sleep. I looked at my wife, Gopā, for one last time. I understood that she was like an illusion that cannot be preserved for long; that life in this world is temporary, and it was necessary to return to the origin.

Devadatta / Nanda, Gopā / Suri, the driver Karma and the musicians all exit, while young Siddhartha / Bodhi walks about.

SIDDHARTHA

I left my palace when the night was at its darkest, and set out on my way. Over the course of the following years I traveled through all the kingdoms of the region, seeking instruction from the greatest Brahmin sages, from solitary yogis, even sorcerers. But none of them knew the authentic, true Dharma, the one which erases all doubts and relieves the sufferings of all beings. I wound up leaving each of these masters, one after the other, and finally decided to seek my own way, alone.

Young Siddhartha / Bodhi exits.

SIDDHARTHA

One day I found myself — here, beneath this great tree. I took some dried grass from the ground, spread it at the foot of the tree, joined my palms together and sat in the correct posture. I rejected all defiled thoughts, purified my mind, and unified my will. Then I made the vow:

“From today henceforth, though my flesh and sinews may wither and decay, until I succeed in becoming a Buddha, I will not leave this place.”

That was seven years ago. Today my will remains just as resolute; there’s nothing that could cause me to abandon my quest. And yet, there has been a change recently. The widow from the nearby village hasn’t been here for ten days, and no one else has come in her place. I fear that she may have suddenly fallen sick, or that she might even be dead. Without food the body weakens; mine has come to the point where I can barely stand. If things go on this way, I will surely pass away from hunger within a few days — here, beneath these branches. Scavenger birds will come and peck at my corpse, but I’m afraid I won’t have much left on my bones to offer them.

When the night falls, I enter deeply into contemplation. The stars shimmer in the sky; the moon rises over the horizon. And something happens in me, something that’s never happened before. It’s as though a door has opened, at the edge of my mind, and when I go through it I suddenly find myself in a space billions of times larger than where I was before. This space is filled with memories, as numerous as the grains of sand in a hundred million Ganges.

Not exactly memories — I don’t recognize anything I’ve ever lived through here. I see people I know, but their faces and bodies are all different. It’s like a dream, or like the memory of a dream, which has been forgotten during the night and then comes back, unexpectedly in the day.

SCENE 2 - The Wife and the Concubine

Siddhartha

Suri: Wife [Gopā]

Bodhi: Monk

(Karma: Concubine [Ciñcā])

(Nanda: Husband [Devadatta])

The husband Nanda and his wife Suri enter.

SIDDHARTHA

I enter one of these memories. I see my wife Gopā and my cousin Devadatta, both of them completely different from how they look now. They were married together, but they did not have any children.

The concubine Karma enters, carrying a baby in her arms.

SIDDHARTHA

So the man brought a concubine into his household, a girl named Ciñcā. When she gave birth to a son, a sweet and handsome boy, the man was overjoyed. His wife became jealous; however, she pretended to love the child even more than if he had been her own son.

The concubine Karma passes her child to the wife Suri.

SIDDHARTHA

By the time the infant was about a year old, everyone thought that the wife loved him dearly. So knowing that nobody would suspect her, she plunged a needle into a soft spot in the boy's skull, pushing it completely under the skin, into the flesh. The child became sick; he cried constantly and stopped nursing. No one in the family could tell why. Seven days later, the boy died.

The husband Nanda exits, carrying his dead child with him.

SIDDHARTHA

The concubine was consumed with grief; she cried and wailed relentlessly, day and night. She stopped eating and drinking, to the point that her own life was in danger. Then she saw in a dream how the wife had hurt her baby, and she wished for revenge. Seven days later, the concubine died.

The concubine Karma dies, then exits.

SIDDHARTHA

Her body transmuted and was reborn, back into the same family, when the wife had a daughter. The little girl was beautiful and her mother loved her dearly. She cared tenderly for her child, and when the girl finally reached fourteen years of age, she was engaged to be married. But on the eve of her wedding, she died suddenly in the night.

The wife sat immobilized and was unable to sleep. Her wails of anguish showed her even more devastated than the concubine had been. She could no longer speak; she stopped drinking and eating. When the girl's body had been placed in the coffin, she would not allow it to be closed. Every day, she came and contemplated her daughter's corpse.

The monk Bodhi enters and waits, stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

When twenty days had passed, a monk came to see the woman, wishing to save and to liberate her. He stood before her door to beg for alms. The woman was disturbed in her mind and could not tolerate the monk just standing there waiting, so she ordered that he be called in to her.

MONK / BODHI

Why are you in such a state?

WIFE / SURI

I gave birth to a daughter who was sweet and intelligent, and I lost her. She was about to be married when she died! Now I am overcome with grief.

MONK / BODHI

Wipe your face and comb your hair. I must speak with you.

The wife Suri bursts again into tears.

MONK / BODHI

The concubine of your house: where is she now, and how did she die, at the time?

The wife Suri is stunned and stops crying.

WIFE / SURI (*to herself*)

How could this monk know anything about that?

MONK / BODHI

Tidy yourself up, and I will explain.

The wife Suri arranges her hair and wipes her face.

MONK / BODHI

How did the concubine's son die?

The wife Suri remains silent.

MONK / BODHI

You killed the boy, and caused his mother to die as well, from grief and anguish. That is why she came back and became your child. She is your enemy, and wishes to kill you now with the poison of sorrow. So the choice comes before you: to succumb to hatred, and avenge yourself in turn, or else to cut off this sprout of noxious karma, and devote yourself henceforth to facing the punishments that await you for your crimes.

The monk Bodhi and wife Suri exit.

SCENE 3 - The Poisoner's Daughter-in-law*Siddhartha**Nanda: Poisoner [Devadatta]**Karma: Poisoner's wife [Ciñcā]**Suri: Daughter-in-law [Gopā]**Bodhi: God of Poison*

SIDDHARTHA

Then, in an instant, the scene disappears. But what have I just witnessed? It's a nightmare! Why would I see my own wife in such a horrific way? What are all of these apparitions?

I select another one of these countless, dream-like memories, and enter it. Again I see my cousin Devadatta, in the body of still a different person. He was the head of a household, and now the concubine Ciñcā was his wife, having come to be reborn once more.

The poisoner Nanda and his wife Karma enter and walk about together.

SIDDHARTHA

Everyone in the country despised him and no one wanted to have anything to do with him, for this time my cousin was a man who enjoyed poisoning people.

The poisoner Nanda crosses the stage and exits stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

When he tried to find a wife for his son, nobody would offer him their daughter. So he went all the way to another kingdom, more than five hundred miles distant, where no one knew that he was a poisoner.

The poisoner Nanda reenters stage right with the daughter-in-law Suri. They join his wife Karma center stage.

SIDDHARTHA

When I see the girl he found there, I can tell that it's Gopā. She's going to meet the concubine once again — their karmic chains keep twisting tighter and tighter!

After some time, the family suffered financial losses that they could not cover, so they had to start poisoning more people in order to make money. The two in-laws came to speak with the young wife.

POISONER / NANDA

We order you to assassinate this person, with poison. It is something our family has always practiced, and now you must do so as well.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW / SURI

My family practices compassion and has never done harm to others. I will not take up poisoning. I would rather die, over and over again, than commit such a crime.

The poisoner Nanda and his wife Karma move away stage right. They invoke the God of Poison / Bodhi, who enters on that side.

SIDDHARTHA

The girl's in-laws cursed and berated her for refusing to accept their orders. Then they went off and performed the rite to call upon the God of Poison. The deity appeared before his faithful servants and asked them the intent of their prayer.

POISONER'S WIFE / KARMA

Our new daughter-in-law says that she will not use poisons to harm anyone. She refuses to obey us. What should we do?

GOD OF POISON / BODHI

I know how to change her, so that she will no longer resist your instructions.

SIDDHARTHA

The God of Poison took the form of a serpent and started pursuing the young wife. The girl was terrified but didn't know where to go. Sometimes he appeared upon her head. When she ate, he appeared in front of her. When she drank, he popped out of her cup. When she lay down, he was there on the bed. When she walked, he chased after her. The girl was stricken with fear; she had nowhere to run, and could neither drink nor eat. Soon she became nearly a skeleton.

GOD OF POISON / BODHI

Give yourself over to the use of poisons, and I vow to leave you in peace.

The daughter-in-law Suri hesitates, then gives her hand to the God of Poison / Bodhi. They exit together stage right.

The poisoner Nanda and his wife Karma exit stage left.

SCENE 4 - The Tortures of Hell

Siddhartha

(Nanda: Devadatta)

(Suri: Gopā)

(Karma: Ciñcā)

(Bodhi: Demon)

SIDDHARTHA

The scene spins away and I find myself transported before the Great Peak, which covers the ten levels of hell. I enter, and there I see mountains made of daggers and trees of swords, flaming wagons bringing coal to the furnaces, paths of knives and paths of fire. People are drowning in rivers of boiling shit; everywhere they are being burned, slashed, crushed and cooked; they endure tortures without limit or measure. I hear their cries on all sides, begging for death, but in vain.

*The demon Bodhi enters stage right, dragging
Devadatta / Nanda with him.*

*Gopā / Suri and Ciñcā / Karma enter stage left. They
take their places together and start menacing one
another.*

SIDDHARTHA

I see Devadatta, in the hands of a demon. He rips out my cousin's tongue, throws him onto a patch of burning sand, and nails down his limbs with sharp spikes. Then bulls trample his body, while a flaming wheel crushes his head. I also see the two women, Gopā and Ciñcā, boiling together in a cauldron. They are all suffering the punishments for the crimes they committed during their previous lives...

*Gopā / Suri, Ciñcā / Karma, Devadatta / Nanda and
the demon Bodhi exit.*

SIDDHARTHA

That's what these memories are — their passages from one life to another, which are now present in my mind. During the course of the night I discover who my father, mother, brothers, wife, son, and nine generations of ancestors were, across innumerable cosmic eons. When the sun rises, I finally understand how the law of karma truly operates, affording no one any escape.

The entire day I remain immobile, reflecting on what I have seen. Still no one comes to bring me any sustenance, but I no longer feel either hunger or thirst. As night falls, I enter a state of contemplation extraordinarily profound.

SCENE 5 - The Master Thief*Siddhartha**Bodhi: Thief [Siddhartha]**Nanda: Uncle [Devadatta]**Suri: Householder, King's daughter [Gopā]**Karma: King**(Musicians: Ministers, Guards)**The thief Bodhi and his uncle Nanda enter stage right and take their places together.*

SIDDHARTHA

I see myself this time. I was a young weaver, who worked together with his uncle to earn a living. The money I made was never enough for my family's needs, while my uncle always had plenty for whatever he wanted. I recognize him now: it's Devadatta who's with me! One day I spoke with him about the difference in our revenues.

THIEF / BODHI

My dear uncle, I do the same work here that you do — why is it that you live in abundance, while in our house we can't even make ends meet?

UNCLE / NANDA

It's because I have two professions, but you only have one.

THIEF / BODHI

What is your other profession?

UNCLE / NANDA

At night, I go stealing.

THIEF / BODHI

I'll come steal things with you.

UNCLE / NANDA

But you don't know how to steal.

THIEF / BODHI

Oh yes I do. I know how to steal very well.

UNCLE / NANDA *(to himself)*

It's true that my nephew is clever and skillful; I have often thought that he would make an excellent thief. Why don't I put him to the test?

The uncle Nanda takes out a rabbit and hands it to the thief Bodhi.

UNCLE / NANDA

Cook this rabbit for me. I'm going to bathe for a while, and when I come back I'll eat.

The uncle Nanda exits stage right. The thief Bodhi prepares the rabbit.

SIDDHARTHA

When the rabbit was ready, my uncle still hadn't come back. I grew tired of waiting for him, and started feeling very hungry myself, so I cut off a leg and ate it.

The uncle Nanda reenters stage right.

UNCLE / NANDA

Is the rabbit cooked? Bring it here so I can see.

The thief Bodhi shows his uncle Nanda the rabbit.

UNCLE / NANDA

Hold on! There's a leg missing. Where's the fourth leg? What did you do with it?

THIEF / BODHI

What? This rabbit only had three legs to begin with! Why are you talking about a fourth leg?

UNCLE / NANDA

Are you crazy? Of course this rabbit had four legs!

THIEF / BODHI

No, it didn't.

UNCLE / NANDA *(to himself)*

I've been a thief for a long time, but this nephew of mine is a much better thief than I am.

SIDDHARTHA

So my uncle took me out with him in the middle of the night. We made a hole in the wall of someone's house, intending to go in and steal their riches.

The householder Suri is hidden behind the scenic drapes representing the house.

The uncle Nanda gets ready to enter the hole, head first.

THIEF / BODHI

My dear uncle, you are not very experienced in the ways of thieves. Why are you going through the hole head first? It's not a good idea; you should go feet first instead. If you go in head first, and the people inside cut off your head, they'll know who you are and our entire family will be punished.

UNCLE / NANDA

You're right about that.

The uncle Nanda enters the hole, feet first.

HOUSEHOLDER / SURI

Look, there's a thief! Stop him, stop him!

UNCLE / NANDA

I'm caught! Pull me out!

The thief Bodhi grabs his uncle Nanda but is unable to pull him out.

THIEF / BODHI

They're too strong! I can't do it. My uncle, I beg you to forgive me.

UNCLE / NANDA

Don't let go! Don't let go of me!

THIEF / BODHI

I must cut off your head.

UNCLE / NANDA

What?!

THIEF / BODHI

If they find out who you are, our entire family will be punished!

UNCLE / NANDA

Let go! Let me go!

The thief Bodhi pulls out his blade and cuts off his uncle Nanda's head. He runs off stage right, carrying it with him.

SIDDHARTHA

The king's ministers reported to him what had happened.

The king Karma enters stage left, followed by his ministers, the musicians.

KING / KARMA

The one who cut off the head and escaped must be the greatest of thieves. You should take the first thief's body and leave it at the crossroads. Hide yourselves and keep watch. If someone comes lamenting and tries to take the body away, that will be the other thief, and you can capture him easily.

The ministers / musicians set up the banner representing a corpse center stage, with the head folded back to hide it.

The thief Bodhi enters stage right.

The other actors may participate freely in the scene.

THIEF / BODHI *(to himself)*

My uncle is dead, and my duty now is to perform his funeral services. If I fail in this obligation his soul will find no rest, and neither will my own after I die. But I cannot simply go and take his corpse in my arms, for fear that people would recognize me. I should feign madness — go to all the crossroads, hugging and kissing everyone: men, women, trees, rocks, cows, horses, pigs, dogs, everyone.

The thief Bodhi approaches the corpse while feigning madness. He throws himself upon the body and cries while the people watch him. Then suddenly he takes it in his arms and escapes offstage!

The ministers / musicians return to see the king Karma, stage left.

KING / KARMA

It was that sneaky thief! Why didn't you arrest him? You have not done well at all. Just stop trying to catch him now, and let me handle this.

The king's daughter Suri enters stage left and joins the king Karma. Together they go center stage; the guards / musicians take their places stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

So the king got in a boat and, together with his entourage, went for a cruise along the Ganges. Guards were set out on both sides of the river to catch the thief. The king had a beautiful daughter, whose face gave all men pleasure to see; she also came boating on the river with them. The king told her to move away some distance from the others.

KING / KARMA

(to his daughter) If a man tries to seize you, cry out loudly.

(to the guards) If you hear my daughter cry out, go to her immediately, and if you see a man there, arrest him.

The thief Bodhi enters stage right.

THIEF / BODHI *(to himself)*

So now the king and his daughter are going pleasure boating on the river. He's taunting me, this king... I should go have a romp with that girl of his.

SIDDHARTHA

I went to a spot upstream and put an earthen jar in the water, which floated down along with the current. When the guards on the banks saw it, they thought it was the thief, so they grabbed their sticks and beat it until it broke, and they could see that it wasn't the thief at all.

I did the same a second time, then a third time, and after about ten times the guards on the banks had seen so many jars go by that they stopped hitting them.

At that point, I placed a jar over my head and started following the current downstream. When I got to where the king's daughter was I slipped onto her boat, holding a sharp knife in my hand.

THIEF / BODHI

Don't make a sound. If you make a sound, I'll cut you open.

The king's daughter Suri remains silent. The thief Bodhi thus couples with her, then escapes offstage.

As soon as the thief Bodhi leaves, the king's daughter Suri starts shouting.

KING'S DAUGHTER / SURI

The thief took me by force — now he's gone!

The guards / musicians and the king Karma rush over to the king's daughter Suri. They all exit together.

SIDDHARTHA

What have I done? How is this possible? It's heinous! I can still see my uncle's head, deformed, covered in blood; and the girl's eyes — it was Gopā again! Oh the horror... I'm a thief, a murderer, and a rapist; I must have spent eons in the worst of hells for having committed such crimes.

My own cousin and my dear wife... How did we ever come to be reconciled, in this life, after the terrible things I did to them? What else must have happened between us, over the course of our past existences? The knots of karma are so dense and tangled... There are still so many things I don't understand.

SCENE 6 - The Adulterous Wife

Siddhartha

Bodhi: Prince / King [Siddhartha]

Karma: Wife [Ciñcā]

Nanda: Criminal [Devadatta]

Suri: (River spirit); Inhabitant

(Musicians: Inhabitants)

SIDDHARTHA

I return to my seat and enter again into contemplation. But instead of seeing myself being tortured in hell, suffering the punishments for all of my crimes, I find myself instead the son of a king.

The prince Bodhi and his wife Karma enter and walk about together.

SIDDHARTHA

I had a wife — and it's Ciñcā! She passes from my cousin to me... I also had a younger brother, someone who I don't recognize. When our father died, neither one of us wished to assume the throne; each insisted that the other should become king. In the end I took my wife with me and left the country, to hide in the mountains and study the teachings of wisdom. We made ourselves a home on the side of a river.

The prince Bodhi and his wife Karma settle in stage left.

The criminal Nanda enters stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

One day, a man came floating by with the current. He was a criminal who had been punished by having his hands and feet cut off, and his nose and ears severed. He lay bleeding in a leaking boat that was slowly filling up with water.

CRIMINAL / NANDA

Help! Help me, anyone! Please, gods in heaven, hear me!

SIDDHARTHA

I heard his cries and was filled with pity. I jumped into the river, caught the boat and hauled it to shore. Then I took the criminal on my back and carried him up to the house. I did all that I could, for four years without rest, to nourish and protect him, until his wounds were healed and his life was saved.

I did not understand, at the time, why this wicked man inspired such tender devotion in me, why my heart ached so, whenever I looked upon him. But now I can see: the criminal was no other than my cousin Devadatta! It's as though I was trying instinctively to repair the harm I had caused him, when I cut off his head...

The prince Bodhi moves away, leaving his wife Karma and the criminal Nanda together.

SIDDHARTHA

Just as though, in the same instinctive way, his former spouse continued seeking to be reunited with him. That's right: during this time, my lecherous wife started having relations with that criminal. She didn't care what he looked like — Ciñcā fell in love with him, her poisoner of old. And then, the idea came to her that she ought to get rid of me.

WIFE / KARMA

I want you to kill my husband, so that I can live alone with you.

CRIMINAL / NANDA

But he is a sage! How could I kill him?

WIFE / KARMA

What kind of a man are you?

CRIMINAL / NANDA

One who doesn't have any hands or feet! What do you expect me to do?

WIFE / KARMA

Stay there then. I'll take care of him myself.

SIDDHARTHA

My wife came to see me, pretending that she was suffering from a terrible headache.

WIFE / KARMA

My head feels like it's being crushed! It must be a god of the mountains who is causing this pain. Let me come with you tomorrow for your morning prayers, so that I can perform a sacrifice and make it stop.

PRINCE / BODHI

Very well. Prepare yourself to leave at dawn and I will take you with me.

The prince Bodhi and his wife Karma go together to the mountain, stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

The next morning, we climbed together to the top of a high peak, following a narrow path up its sheer face, which rose to the sky like a thousand-foot wall.

WIFE / KARMA

The ritual requires that you stand here and face the sun, while I perform the sacrifice.

The prince Bodhi turns and faces the sun. His wife Karma walks in circles around him while chanting.

WIFE / KARMA

Bodhisattva, Mahāsattva

Avalokiteśvara

Mahāsattva, Bodhisattva

Vajrapāṇi, Maitreya!

On the final syllable the wife Karma pushes the prince Bodhi, who falls from the top of the mountain.

While he falls, the river spirit Suri rushes on stage right to save him.

SIDDHARTHA

I fell down the cliff at a terrifying speed. But as luck would have it, at the bottom there was a river — and the spirit who lived there caught me, and saved me from harm!

The river spirit Suri exits.

The wife Karma returns to the criminal Nanda stage left. The prince Bodhi goes to center stage, where he becomes the king.

SIDDHARTHA

I returned back to my former kingdom, where my younger brother immediately offered me the throne.

A year later, thinking that I was dead and that no one would recognize her, my wife entered the country, carrying her mangled lover on her back.

The wife Karma puts the criminal Nanda on her back.

The inhabitants of the country, Suri and the musicians, enter and meet them stage left.

WIFE / KARMA

My husband was captured by a band of thugs, who tortured and mutilated him. We have heard of your sovereign's great kindness, and have come here to beg for his assistance.

SIDDHARTHA

The people of the country praised her unwavering devotion; throughout the kingdom, all were astonished, old and young alike. The following day, they brought her to the royal palace.

*When the wife Karma sees the king Bodhi, she lets go
of the criminal Nanda, who falls to the ground.*

WIFE / KARMA

Master! How can it be? You survived?!

INHABITANT / SURI

What did she say? Ô wise king, please tell us — what is the meaning of this?

SIDDHARTHA

I told everyone there in the palace the whole story of what this woman had done.

INHABITANT / SURI

We should burn her alive!

KING / BODHI

Such barbarism is no longer practiced in this kingdom.

INHABITANT / SURI

Then let's cut off her head!

KING / BODHI

All Buddhas consider benevolence to be the most precious thing in the three worlds. I would prefer to lose my own life, than to abandon the path of benevolence.

Put the criminal back onto this wicked woman's shoulders, and attach them together with shackles around their necks, so that she has to carry him that way forever. Give people what they themselves have chosen, and so will you adhere to wisdom.

*The wife Karma, the criminal Nanda, the king Bodhi
and the inhabitants, Suri and the musicians, all exit.*

SCENE 7 - The Land of Naked People*Siddhartha**Bodhi: Younger brother [Siddhartha]**Nanda: Elder brother [Devadatta]**(Karma: King of the land)**(Suri: Inhabitant)**(Musicians: Inhabitants)***SIDDHARTHA**

As I continue to explore my memories of past lives, I see that Devadatta never did forgive me for the harm that I had caused him. From one birth to the next he continued relentlessly to attack me, or to betray me like he just did.

I remember one time when he was my elder brother. We had both stocked up on goods from our country, and headed off together to the Land of Naked People to see if we could make a profit.

Younger brother Bodhi and elder brother Nanda enter stage left.

YOUNGER BROTHER / BODHI

This land of naked people does not know the doctrines of the true Law; it's a country where you couldn't really say there are men. So when we go there, will it not be difficult for us to win their affection? (*He thinks.*) When we enter this country let us adopt its ways, observe its customs in all that we do, hide our intelligence and appear ignorant. That is what a superior person would say.

ELDER BROTHER / NANDA

The proper forms cannot be altered; true virtue cannot yield. If we were to go about naked, would we not stain our ancestral dignity?

YOUNGER BROTHER / BODHI

The sages of old debased their bodies but did not debase their conduct; such is the example they have always set for us. To be gold on the inside but copper on the outside, to discard etiquette and adapt to circumstances — this is what makes their flexible approach superior.

Younger brother Bodhi disrobes and enters the Land of Naked People, exiting stage right.

ELDER BROTHER / NANDA (to himself)

Renouncing one's humanity to act like a beast — how could that be the conduct of a sage? Even if my brother does it, I certainly will not!

Younger brother Bodhi enters stage right with the king of the land Karma and the inhabitants, Suri and the musicians.

SIDDHARTHA

According to the customs of this kingdom, on the first and fifteenth nights of each month the people held a public celebration. They anointed their heads with hemp oil, painted their bodies with white powder, hung strings of assorted bones around their necks, and clacked pairs of stones together. Men and women took each other by the hand, to sing and dance with abandon.

I imitated them, and the people of the country were overjoyed. The king loved me, the commoners respected me, my hosts made me one of their own. The king bought all of my merchandise, for ten times its value.

Elder brother Nanda comes to the others, stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

Ten days later my elder brother finally entered the kingdom, riding in his chariot. He spoke of a stern Law, which immediately turned the people against him. The king became angry while the commoners were indignant; they seized all of his merchandise and started beating him with sticks. Only after I pleaded with them did they agree to let him go.

*Younger brother Bodhi and elder brother Nanda leave
the Land of Naked People and return stage left.*

*The king of the land Karma and the inhabitants, Suri
and the musicians, exit stage right.*

ELDER BROTHER / NANDA

Why do these people cherish you as a friend, but treat me as an enemy? Why did they shower you with favors, and strip me of everything I had? You must have spread lies about me, before I entered their country, didn't you?

From now on henceforth, for generations upon generations to come, never shall I forgive you.

Younger brother Bodhi and elder brother Nanda exit.

SCENE 8 - The Cat and the Cock

Siddhartha

Karma: Cat [Ciñcā]

Bodhi: Cock [Siddhartha]

SIDDHARTHA

Devadatta certainly kept his word. In the course of the night I recall countless lives where he tried to destroy me, or to turn me away from the correct path. And not only him, but Ciñcā as well. She never stopped pursuing me, birth after birth, always with the same cruel intentions.

The cat Karma and the cock Bodhi enter.

SIDDHARTHA

One time, she took the form of a wild cat, who lived among the trees of a great forest. She had not eaten for the entire day, and was experiencing a strong desire for food, when she spied a cock up at the top of a splendid tree — it was me, once again. The cat slowly crept forward until she came to the foot of the tree...

CAT / KARMA

You and I are far apart, alone with our thoughts. I eat fish, and you are finely dressed. Leave that tree, come down to the ground, and I shall become your wife.

COCK / BODHI

You have four paws, while I have two feet. So for a bird and a cat to be husband and wife — it doesn't add up!

CAT / KARMA

Oh, my parents will adore you! All of us will bow down before you, like Brahmins worshipping Fire. And we will be rich! As though it had just rained jewels down upon us. There's even a grove of willows outside. You'll feel like you're living in a palace.

COCK / BODHI

When actually I'd be living in a prison, if I were stupid enough to come with you.

CAT / KARMA

You have no sympathy for me; your words prick me like thorns. Under these circumstances, how could I entice you? Filled with melancholy, I must pause to reflect. My body does not smell foul; no, it exhales the perfume of chaste virtue. Why would you wish to abandon me, and go elsewhere far away?

COCK / BODHI

You want me to go far astray! Lethal and wicked, like a snake. Don't I know who you are? Why do you think you crave eating birds?

CAT / KARMA

I will no longer consume flesh; I'll be a model of stainless conduct, worshipping and serving all the celestial divinities. I'll keep myself clean all the time, and put on fancy clothes, to dance and sing songs for you. Also I will wash your feet, comb and braid your hair, tell you amusing stories — and that way, you will love and honor me.

COCK / BODHI

If I let an enemy like you comb and braid my hair, pretty soon I wouldn't have a head! If we became friends, I'd never make it to old age. Never!

SIDDHARTHA

All day long we continued, back and forth, until the hunger grew unbearable, and the cat finally had to give up and go look for a dead rat to chew on.

The cat Karma and the cock Bodhi exit.

SIDDHARTHA

But I knew that this nefarious woman would return, countless times, to put the force of my will and the clarity of my mind once again to the test.

SCENE 9 - Buddha Dīpamkara's Prediction

Siddhartha

Bodhi : Mānava [Siddhartha]

Suri : Girl [Gopā]

Karma : Brahmin; Sweeper

Nanda : King; Buddha Dīpamkara

(Musicians : Brahmins; Sweepers)

SIDDHARTHA

Life after life, I continued my progress, strictly observing the dictates of the Law and following the teachings of the true Dharma. And then one time, I suddenly took an immense step forward.

Mānava / Bodhi enters, stage left.

SIDDHARTHA

I was a Brahmin, a novice named Mānava, in the kingdom of Dīpavatī. Studying under my teacher, I observed the constellations in the heavens, and had mastered all of the treatises on esoteric diagrams and divination. Scholars throughout the kingdom honored my name.

But one day, my mother fell terribly ill. I was obligated to leave my teacher in order to go begging, or to try to hire myself out to someone, to get money to pay for her medicine.

As I traveled through the neighboring kingdoms, I happened upon something quite strange.

The Brahmins, Karma and the musicians, enter stage right with the girl Suri.

Mānava / Bodhi comes toward them.

MĀNAVA / BODHI

I see five hundred Brahmins gathered together here in this great hall. At the front of it they have placed a high seat, a beautiful girl, and a pile of gold. What is going on?

BRAHMIN / KARMA

It has been agreed that whoever takes his place upon the high seat, must respond to all of the others' most difficult questions. He who demonstrates the deepest and most universal wisdom shall receive the girl and the money as a prize.

SIDDHARTHA

I listened for a while, and soon realized that their learning was slight; these scholars were unable to refute even the simplest objections.

MĀNAVA / BODHI

I also am the son of a Brahmin. May I participate in the debate as well?

BRAHMIN / KARMA

Please, be our guest.

Mānava / Bodhi takes his place on the high seat.

SIDDHARTHA

As I expected, their questions were narrow and my responses were comprehensive; their problems were superficial while my answers were profound.

BRAHMIN / KARMA

Ô great master, your wisdom shines like the light of the sun and the moon. You have instructed us all, and amply merit the prize we are offering. However, our customs do not allow us to give a woman of our country to a foreigner. Might you accept to receive double the quantity of gold in her place?

Mānava / Bodhi descends from the seat, takes their gold and departs. He exits stage left.

SIDDHARTHA

I agreed to their proposition, and set off to return home, having realized my objective and carrying all that I needed to offer my mother the finest of care until the end of her days. But I was unaware that behind me, the young girl had also left her country, and was following after me. It was Gopā, once more! She had been reborn close to me yet again, as though she was still trying constantly to reach me, despite the wrong I had done her in the past.

The girl Suri heads toward center stage.

The Brahmins, Karma and the musicians, exit stage right.

GIRL / SURI

That wise man is my prince!

SIDDHARTHA

The girl hitched up her robes and set out upon my trail. She passed through numerous kingdoms, until her strength was spent, her feet started bleeding, and finally she collapsed, exhausted, on the side of the road.

The king Nanda enters stage left and approaches the girl Suri.

SIDDHARTHA

Even though she didn't know it, the girl had in fact reached my country, Dīpavatī. On that day, the king was out on a tour to inspect his realm, and he came upon her, lying by the road, caked in mud. Taking pity on her, he brought the girl back to his palace, where he put her to work as a servant.

KING / NANDA

You will pick beautiful flowers for me, which I will have made into splendid decorations.

The girls Suri exits together with the king Nanda.

The sweepers, Karma and the musicians, enter stage left.

SIDDHARTHA

When I finally arrived back in Dīpavatī myself, I encountered many people on the road, working together to make sure it was perfectly flat and to sweep away even the tiniest specks of dust.

Mānava / Bodhi enters stage right and approaches the sweepers, Karma and the musicians.

MĀNAVA / BODHI

Why is everyone so happy? Is there going to be some kind of public celebration?

SWEEPER / KARMA

The Buddha Dīpamkara, the Venerable One, the supreme sage, teacher of gods and men, is coming here to preach and to anoint new followers; that is why we are all so joyful.

SIDDHARTHA

Upon hearing this, my heart became ecstatic; I stood transfixed, and entered into a trance. Because my mind was pure and without defilements, I was able to see the Honored One, coming from afar. I set off to welcome him and to celebrate his arrival.

Along the way I met a young girl, who was carrying a basket of flowers.

The girl Suri enters stage right and heads toward the center, where she encounters Mānava / Bodhi.

The sweepers, Karma and the musicians, exit stage left.

MĀNAVA / BODHI

Sister, I am going to pay homage to the Buddha Dīpamkara, the Venerable One, teacher of all beings. Might I ask you for a single blossom, that I could use to make an offering in his honor?

GIRL / SURI

Ô master, to encounter a Buddha is exceedingly rare, for over the course of hundreds of millions of generations, such a being does not appear more than once. This occasion is for all of us a blessing most extraordinary; how could I not furnish you with offerings?

The girl Suri gives five flowers to Mānava / Bodhi.

MĀNAVA / BODHI

Five magnificent blossoms! Oh, thank you, sister — I assure you, your generosity will not be forgotten.

The girl Suri bows before Mānava / Bodhi and then continues on her way, exiting stage left.

The Buddha Dīpamkara / Nanda enters stage right. Mānava / Bodhi comes before him.

SIDDHARTHA

When I arrived in front of the Buddha Dīpamkara, the Venerable One, teacher of all beings, I arranged the flowers in the air above his head, like a crown, and with my magical powers I held them there in place, as though their roots were planted in the void.

Mānava / Bodhi prostrates himself before the Buddha Dīpamkara / Nanda.

BUDDHA DĪPAMKARA / NANDA

Mānava, my faithful disciple, arise! During countless existences you have steadily cultivated your virtue, you have respected the supreme Law without fail, and now the very last traces of your ancient crimes are beginning to fade away.

When your transformation is perfectly complete — ninety-one cosmic eons in the future — you will become a Buddha. Your name will be Shākyā Tathāgata, the Venerable One, the sage without equal, teacher of gods and men.

At that time, the entire world will be in chaos. Fathers and sons will be enemies, and monarchs will massacre their own people, with torrents of knives coming down like rain. You will then be the one who comes to save all beings, and the number of those liberated by you will be incalculable.

Mānava / Bodhi leaps into the air and shouts with joy. He crosses the stage and exits stage left.

The Buddha Dīpamkara / Nanda exits stage right.

SIDDHARTHA

Astonished, I emerge from contemplation. The nature of a Buddha is truth itself; no falsehood can pass his lips. I am pervaded by feeling of absolute serenity; for I know that one day I will penetrate fully into the great secret of Dharma, and that I will use this wisdom to liberate all beings from their suffering. I do not know if it will happen here, under this great tree, or only after many more cosmic eons, in some unknown kingdom. But that is of no importance. My resolve becomes more firm than ever and my strength multiplies, as I plunge myself back into a contemplation without fathom.

SCENE 10 - The Unshakable Kṣāntivādin

Siddhartha

Bodhi: Kṣāntivādin [Siddhartha]

Nanda: King Kalābu [Devadatta]

Karma: Celestial king

Suri: Inhabitant

(Musicians: Inhabitants)

SIDDHARTHA

When that existence was over, Gopā was reborn in a celestial paradise, five times in succession, once for each of the flowers she had given in offering to the Buddha. That we had offered him, together — and by so doing finally healed the karmic wounds we had between us as well, from so many lifetimes before.

For my own part, I continued to pursue the long journey of preparation that still lay before me, facing trials that only grew more and more difficult.

Kṣāntivādin / Bodhi enters and sits in a posture of meditation.

SIDDHARTHA

I recall one time when I was a Brahmin named Kṣāntivādin, the Master of Patience and Forbearance. I lived alone among the mountains, where I sat under a tree, deep in meditation.

My reputation for wisdom had spread like a fragrance, above and below. Indra, Brahma, the four celestial kings, the dragons of the sea and the gods of the earth came from morning until night to receive my teachings; they thronged around me to protect the kingdom where I lived. The winds and rains arrived at the proper time; the five grains matured in abundance; scourges vanished and calamities were suppressed.

King Kalābu / Nanda enters stage left.

SIDDHARTHA

The king of this country was named Kalābu. It was my cousin Devadatta, who had found me once more, still seeking to destroy me. He had entered the mountains to go hunting, and was chasing after a stag, following its tracks — which led him right in front of me.

KING KALĀBU / NANDA

The animal's tracks pass by here — which way did it go?

KṢĀNTIVĀDIN / BODHI *(to himself)*

If I tell the king where the stag went, he will kill it viciously, and the fault will be mine as much as his. But if I pretend not to have seen it, then I will be telling a lie.

Kṣāntivādin / Bodhi lowers his head and remains silent.

KING KALĀBU / NANDA

Beggar, you deserve to die. I here before you am your sovereign, lord of this entire country. Yet when I address you a question, you lower your head and refuse to answer!

KṢĀNTIVĀDIN / BODHI

I heed you, ô king.

KING KALĀBU / NANDA

Who are you?

KṢĀNTIVĀDIN / BODHI

I am one who endures afflictions.

*King Kalābu / Nanda draws his sword and cuts off
Kṣāntivādin / Bodhi's right arm.*

KING KALĀBU / NANDA

My royal authority is absolute! What reason do I have not to kill you?

KṢĀNTIVĀDIN / BODHI *(to himself)*

My goal is to attain supreme wisdom... I vow that when I become a Buddha, the first thing I do will be to save and liberate this evil king.

KING KALĀBU / NANDA

Who are you?

KṢĀNTIVĀDIN / BODHI

I am one who endures afflictions.

*King Kalābu / Nanda cuts off Kṣāntivādin / Bodhi's
left arm.*

SIDDHARTHA

With each question the king sliced me again. He cut off my feet. He cut off my ears. He cut off my nose. My blood flowed like a stream; my sufferings were immeasurable. The sky and the earth shook; the sun grew dark. The four celestial kings all rushed to me, and the people of the land came running from all sides.

*Celestial king Karma enters stage right; the
inhabitants, Suri and the musicians, enter stage left.*

CELESTIAL KING / KARMA

This king's brutality is difficult to match! Without you needing to defile your own mind, we shall destroy this king, as well as his wife and sons, and at the same time exterminate his entire kingdom, to show the world how wicked he is.

KṢĀNTIVĀDIN / BODHI

What are you saying? This affliction was caused by me, in a previous life, when I didn't know the Buddha's teachings and did harm the one who is now the king. For when you do evil it follows you like a shadow, and you reap what you sow, many times over. If I listened to you, we would suffer calamities forever!

INHABITANT / SURI

By living here, this Master is a source of blessings and prosperity for the whole country; he averts disasters and prevents epidemics. But now our extremely stupid king has maliciously attacked this great sage.

KṢĀNTIVĀDIN / BODHI

The king has made my body suffer, because of a wickedness for which he is not responsible. My heart has pity for him, as a loving mother has compassion for her infant. If you have any doubts about this, go get my severed arms and bring them here.

SIDDHARTHA

The people went and retrieved my arms — and milk flowed from them. It was proof that my compassion was like that of a loving mother. Having seen this great miracle, the people all became followers of my teaching, and went away joyously.

Celestial king Karma exits stage right; Ksāntivādin / Bodhi, king Kalābu / Nanda, and the inhabitants, Suri and the musicians, exit stage left.

SCENE 11 - King Mirror-Face*Siddhartha**Bodhi: King Mirror-Face [Siddhartha]**Nanda: Blind person(s)**Karma: Blind person(s)**Suri: Blind person(s)**(Musicians: Ministers)***SIDDHARTHA**

By performing acts such as this, life after life, innumerable times over, I gradually came to perfect my wisdom and my compassion for all beings. No matter what my state or station of birth, I worked tirelessly to save others by showing them the way toward ultimate truth, to the secret that relieves all suffering.

One time, I was born a prince, in a palace in Varanasi. I did not have eyes or a nose. When eventually I succeeded to the throne, I was given the title “King Mirror-Face”.

King Mirror-Face / Bodhi and his ministers, the musicians, enter.

SIDDHARTHA

The sage ministers of my court did not know of the Buddha’s teaching, so they argued constantly, and traded insults: “What we teach is the true Law; how could your teachings ever be the Law? You state your premises where your conclusion should be, and your conclusion where your premises should be. Our doctrines are easy to practice; no one could ever take your doctrines to heart. Your learning is worthless; you don’t understand anything!”

One day, I decided to teach all of them a lesson.

King Mirror-Face / Bodhi gives orders to his ministers, the musicians.

KING MIRROR-FACE / BODHI

Go throughout the kingdom, find everyone you can who has been blind from birth, and bring them to the palace gates.

The ministers / musicians leave and return with Nanda, Karma, and Suri, the blind people.

KING MIRROR-FACE / BODHI

Show them an elephant.

A minister / musician leads the three blind people (Nanda, Karma, Suri) to a hanging drapery which depicts an elephant. After passing in front of it, they can then come back around behind it and reappear, so that each of them plays multiple characters.

Nanda goes first; he touches the elephant's leg.

KING MIRROR-FACE / BODHI

What is an elephant like?

NANDA

Ô wise king, an elephant is like a pillar.

KING MIRROR-FACE / BODHI

And you, what do you say?

KARMA (*touches its tail*)

Great king, an elephant is like a broom.

KING MIRROR-FACE / BODHI

What is it like?

SURI (*touches its belly*)

An elephant is like a drum, your Highness.

NANDA (*touches its flank*)

No, an elephant is like a wall!

KARMA (*touches its ear*)

You're crazy! An elephant is like a flag.

SURI (*touches its head*)

It's like a barrel!

NANDA (*touches its tusk*)

Like a horn, I say!

KARMA (*touches its trunk*)

Ô wise king, an elephant is like a thick rope. That is the truth.

The three blind people (Nanda, Karma, Suri) start arguing and fighting.

King Mirror-Face / Bodhi bursts into laughter.

SURI

You don't know anything about elephants!

KARMA

I know more than anyone does!

NANDA

You're lying, that's what I know!

KING MIRROR-FACE / BODHI

All right, that's enough!

The fighting stops.

KING MIRROR-FACE / BODHI *(to his ministers)*

Now, here's a verse for all of you, to help you remember this lesson:

You're like these blind fools, quarreling!
 What each of them says, is true.
 But until you can say you've seen everything,
 Don't imagine there's no one but you!

*King Mirror-Face / Bodhi, the blind people Nanda,
 Karma and Suri, and the ministers / musicians exit.*

SCENE 12 - The Buddha's Awakening

*Siddhartha
 (Karma: Old woman)*

SIDDHARTHA

The scene disappears, and at the same moment the sun breaks the horizon, casting brilliant rays. Suddenly I feel another door opening, deep within my mind. I step through it — and now I know, without exception, every thought that every living being has ever had, and beyond that, all the thoughts that they did not have. My compassion has become universal; I can see everything. All that has been done, by countless beings, across innumerable existences — comes from no other than myself.

My mind grows vast and empty, like space; for hours I do not move, while the sun climbs steadily in the sky. When it reaches its peak, the heat starts to become unbearable. Still no one comes to take care of me. I haven't swallowed a thing for thirteen days now: my throat is like dry wood, my limbs are fragile sticks.

I try to lift myself, to take a few steps around the tree, keep my blood moving — but I can't stay up. My breath becomes heavy, my head spins, my eyes go dark. I can't hold on, any longer. In another life, I will —

Siddhartha falls and remains still.

A long moment passes in silence; nothing moves.

Then an old woman, Karma, enters. She advances slowly, and as she passes by the tree she sees Siddhartha on the ground.

The old woman Karma comes to Siddhartha and revives him. She urges him to come with her but he refuses. Siddhartha bows his head before the old woman Karma, then returns to a sitting position while she continues on her way and exits.

SIDDHARTHA

The old woman who rescued me will never know the full meaning of her act. But she saved my life, and in so doing she has helped to save all beings, by allowing me to complete my journey, and ultimately to penetrate the great secret of Dharma.

When night falls my consciousness becomes a brilliant light which fills all of the universes in the ten directions. The very last traces of greed, ignorance, and hatred — the three poisons that I have carried within me for so many eons — have finally been erased. There is nothing left.

“Now am I become Buddha; this is extremely profound, extremely profound. I have grasped that which is incomprehensible, inconceivable, subtle among all that is subtle, wondrous among all that is wondrous. The Buddha's way is now attained: There is nothing I do not know.”

Siddhartha gets up and gazes in amazement at the spot where he was seated.

Then he circles the tree several times, and leaves it. The show is finished and he becomes Dharma once again.

EPILOGUE - Then What Happened

The other players join Dharma onstage.

DHARMA

The Buddha devoted the rest of his life to traveling throughout the world, to share the teachings of the true Dharma with gods and men. His community of disciples grew to the tens of thousands, and the living beings he saved were more numerous than the grains of sand in the Ganges. Gopā became one of the very first to follow him, and under the Buddha's instruction she attained the status of a Venerable One. Surely the day will come when she succeeds in breaking the final links of her ancient karmic chains.

Ciñcā and Devadatta, on the other hand, never were able to sever the roots of hatred which still grow within them, on to this day. Even while the Buddha was propagating his teachings and establishing his monastic order, those two continued trying to attack and to undermine him. They will no doubt suffer horrifying punishments for many eons to come for the sins that they have committed.

But all of those are tales for another day. We have already offered you as much as we can for now, and must rest a bit. But of course, if you have questions on what you've just seen, or would like to know more about our teachings, we would be very happy to talk with you about anything you want, while we are here.

And there are still so many stories! Not only what Devadatta, Ciñcā, and other evil ones did to the Buddha and his disciples, in this world, but all the other incredible things that happened, during his previous lives: violent combats, sudden twists, deceptions, sacrifices... Believe me, it never ends.

Well, I mean we could always... That is, if you really do appreciate our stories, and are interested to know what happens next... It could be possible... That we might stay here with you for a little while? Just until tomorrow, and we'll show you the next part of it? Would you like that? Yes? Oh, thank you. Thank you so very much.

NANDA

Hey, look!

Nanda and Suri rush off stage.

They return with the donations that are being offered to them.

SURI

Look at all this they've given us!

DHARMA

All of that? For us? You are too generous, truly you are. We thank you, from the very depths of our hearts. Let us stay here with you, for as long as you desire, and we will share with you all of the wisdom that we possess.

Today is an extremely auspicious day for all beings; for the true Dharma has appeared and taken root in a place that did not know of it before. Together we affirm our vow never to abandon our mission, we devote ourselves to saving all living beings from their sufferings, and we offer you our everlasting hope that some day, every one of you will become a Buddha.

Curtain.

LIVES OF THE BUDDHA

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This play was written simultaneously in two parallel versions, in French and English, as *Les Vies du Buddha / Lives of the Buddha*. One could not call either text a translation of the other; rather, they are the two products of a single creative process involving three languages and, ultimately, many different authors and translators. The process took as its starting point the collection of *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripitaka chinois [Five Hundred Tales and Fables Extracted From the Chinese Tripitaka]* translated by Édouard Chavannes (1865-1918) and published in three parts in 1910-11, with a posthumous volume of summaries and notes added in 1934. This extraordinary treasury of popular Buddhist literature is what made this project possible, in three ways. First, it allowed me easily to survey a large number of early Chinese Buddhist texts and select those which I thought were the best suited to my purposes. Then, I was able to create a first draft of the play in French quite rapidly, using Chavannes' translations directly for the bulk of the work, in order to test my ideas in front of a live audience. Finally, once the French text had reached its nearly final form after two live readings, it then served me as a guide and greatly facilitated my own translation of the original classical Chinese sources in order to produce the English version of the play. While doing this work I came upon passages where my interpretation differs from Chavannes', and further modified several scenes after a Zoom reading of selections from the English work in progress. The last stage of the creative process involved transposing these changes back over to the French text, so that the two versions wind up being very nearly parallel in the end.

The primary objective of this project is to recreate and make accessible to audiences today what the experience of receiving these teachings through oral preaching or performance might

have been like in the past, even before they were first committed to writing, more than 1700 years ago. My translations therefore strive to achieve a delicate balance between textual accuracy, oral fluidity, and dramatic impact, occasionally modifying the sentence structure or vocabulary, while still presenting the texts in a form as close to the original as possible. Chavannes' translations, by contrast, methodically follow the Chinese sources nearly word for word, and treat them as literary rather than as dramatic texts. They are in an elegant, refined French which is clearly sensitive to the oral nature of these materials and is a pleasure to hear spoken, while also evoking for contemporary listeners a bygone mode of expression that coheres well with the archaic character of the scriptures themselves. The primary modification I have made to Chavannes' words in the French version is to render all of the narration in the first person rather than in the third person, an innovation which respects the meaning of the Chinese text while creating a much more immediate and personal effect ("I fell down the cliff... He cut off my feet..."), and which is likewise employed in the English translation.

The process of adapting these medieval scriptures to the contemporary stage involved three types of decision-making. To start with, I decided at the outset to treat these sources as the written traces of a preexisting oral performance literature, with alternating passages of narration, dialogue, and stage direction, rather than as literary texts. This choice bears significantly upon how we define the "poetics" of these materials: that is, which words were actually articulated and which were not, when they were presented orally? For example, were indications like "The king says / said" (*wang yue* 王曰) spoken aloud, or were they (sometimes? ever?) understood as labels instructing an actor to start speaking, or a single storyteller to change voices, as I have rendered them here? The same question applies to all of the passages that I have treated as unspoken stage direction, which could equally be voiced by a narrator (indeed, the distinction between what is stage direction and what is narration in these texts is rather fluid, especially if the action described by the narrator is being performed non-verbally by others at the same time.)

Beyond this, I have chosen to alter the poetics (and in some cases the action) of many of these texts by shortening them considerably, editing out ponderous plot complications and repetitions, passages of moral commentary, unessential speeches, etc., to create a work that can engage and sustain the interest of a general audience today. For example, the Chinese source for “The Master Thief” contains four additional ruses, where the nephew further demonstrates his skills for his uncle, and then later cremates his uncle’s body and scatters his ashes in the Ganges, outwitting the guards each time. None of these episodes advance the plot significantly, so I have removed them and instead simplified the action by having the nephew take his uncle’s body straightaway. In a similar fashion, “The Cat and the Cock” as presented here is only about a third of the original Chinese text, which simply piles on more and more variants of the same back-and-forth between the cat’s seductive entreaties and the bird’s clever refusals. Most of the changes are smaller in scope, such as that in “The Land of Naked People,” where originally the younger brother sends a messenger back to the older one to assure him that it is safe, before he enters the country. Another notable modification occurs in “The Wife and the Concubine,” where in the Chinese source Ciñcā is reborn eight times as Gopā’s daughter. The first child dies after one year, the second after two years, etc., up on through the seventh, and then the eighth daughter survives to age fourteen, only to die on her wedding night. Here I have cut out the first seven of these births, and only presented the final one.

While doing this editing work I have sought throughout to preserve extended, unbroken excerpts of the source texts as much as possible, to bring to light their original wording, pacing, and narrative choices with minimal alteration. At the the same time, there are cases where the passage I have selected to present ends just at a point where the longer story suddenly turns in a new direction, in ways that could change our interpretation of the tale or the moral we would draw from it. For example, in “The Unshakable Kṣāntivādin” the original Chinese text continues with the performance of a second miracle: the sage’s younger brother appears and puts his

severed body parts back in place, where they instantly heal. Similarly, “The Poisoner’s Daughter-in-law” goes on with the girl running into a traveler who happens to have been her neighbor in her old country. After she tells him what has occurred, he returns home and informs her parents, who come and spirit her away, prompting the in-laws themselves to renounce the use of poisons in the end. Most significantly, right after the the rape of the princess in “The Master Thief,” where I have ended the scene, the guards converge and accuse her of actually having been a willing “victim,” because she didn’t cry out until it was over. Then, ten months later she gives birth to a son, leading to another series of episodes which finally conclude with the thief being identified as the father, marrying the princess, and becoming a prince himself.

The most complex aspect of the adaptation process was to create a framing for these scriptures that would offer the audience sufficient information about Buddhist doctrines, the characters’ biographies, and the sources’ own cultural and textual history to allow them to appreciate fully what they are seeing, while also tying these independent scenes together into a coherent, unifying dramatic structure. Most of the scenes featured here do not come with any framing material in the original Chinese scriptural collections; these chapters just open with a formulaic declaration: “Once in the distant past, there was a man who enjoyed poisoning people...” (or “there were two brothers...,” or “the Buddha-to-be was a Brahmin novice named Mānava...,” etc.) I decided to structure the framing for these texts on two levels. To start with, the prologue and epilogue establish the historical and social circumstances for the presentation of these teachings, “putting [them back] into the mouths of those mendicant monks who spread them while going from door to door, looking for their food,” as Chavannes suggested we must do. In addition, the prologue introduces the Buddhist concept of Dharma, which serves as the foundation both for Siddhartha’s quest and for the monks’ missionary activity.

The medieval play properly speaking (scenes 1-12), whose content does not depend upon or refer to the prologue and epilogue, is framed around an early Chinese version of the Buddha’s

biography found in chapters 77-79 of the *Compendium on the Six Perfections* (六度集經), a collection of popular Indian Buddhist texts translated by the layman Kang Senghui in the 3rd century. It draws in particular upon a short passage near the end, as Siddhartha approaches liberation:

“During the first night, I attained the first superknowledge, and came to know who my father, mother, brothers, wife, son, and nine generations of ancestors were, across innumerable cosmic eons. During the second night, I attained the second superknowledge, and came to know who I myself was, across innumerable cosmic eons: poor or rich, noble or humble, tall or short, white or black. I also knew without exception every thought that every living being has ever had, and beyond that, all the thoughts that they did not have. During the third night, I attained the third superknowledge, and the three poisons [of greed, ignorance, and hatred] were completely eliminated. When the night was on the verge of turning to day, I realized the way of the Buddha.” (T 152 (79) : 3.42a16-21)

The narrative sequence of the whole play follows this single passage, as Siddhartha shares his experiences during these three days and nights in real time with the audience, including some of the memories of the countless past lives that he is discovering. About half of the new material that I have added to these scenes is in the narration which joins them together: in other words, nearly all of Siddhartha’s account of what is happening under the tree, from the moment he takes his vow until he declares his Buddhahood at the very end, which is not in the above passage. Here Siddhartha reflects upon and interprets these experiences (for himself and for us) in both doctrinal and personal terms, and weaves these various episodes together into a single narrative by tracing his ongoing interactions with three other characters: his cousin Devadatta, his wife

Gopā, and the enemy Ciñcā. With a few exceptions, the association of these figures with their past identities is that which is specified in the Chinese scriptures.

The opening scene, “The Story of Prince Siddhartha,” is based upon other selections from the three biographical chapters in the *Compendium on the Six Perfections*, with a bit more than half of the text being my own invention, again found principally within Siddhartha’s narration. These insertions serve to fill in details of his biography, lead the audience through his spiritual evolution, and introduce additional doctrinal concepts such as the law of karma. I have made one important change to this part of the story, in order to streamline it, by introducing the idea that Siddhartha’s parents “loved him so much that they wanted to offer him a life of perfect happiness” and kept him in a bubble “in order that his constant perception of happiness not be disrupted.” In the Chinese text, the reason is rather that Siddhartha’s horoscope suggests that he might choose to abandon his royal heritage and become a wandering ascetic, so his father offers endless worldly pleasures to try to distract him from such thoughts (we find this prediction in most traditional accounts of the Buddha’s life.)

The biography in the *Compendium on the Six Perfections* itself differs in important ways from the majority of those found elsewhere. For example, in the passage quoted above Siddhartha’s final approach to Buddhahood takes place over the course of three nights, whereas in most accounts this happens over the first, second, and third watches of a single night. More significantly, this version does not tell us anything about what happens after Siddhartha abandons the palace until he arrives at the tree and makes his vow. Again I have streamlined the story found most commonly elsewhere, which describes him practicing six years of severe asceticism but finally abandoning that approach; being so weak from it that he nearly drowns while bathing, only to be rescued; then making his vow and sitting continuously for seven weeks under the Bodhi Tree until reaching liberation. I have instead put him under the same tree for seven years, and accordingly have modified his vow, changing “unless I become a Buddha, I will

not arise” in the Chinese (於此不得佛者，吾終不起) into “I will not leave this place.” The great confrontation with the demon Mara that is found in most traditional accounts is likewise absent from this Chinese version, so I have created a different ultimate trial for Siddhartha before he can complete his quest, in the first part of the final scene. Here the strength of his vow is tested, even to the point of starving to death, a condition of extreme asceticism from which he must be rescued by an old woman passing by, much as in the drowning episode described above.

Six of the ten scenes of the Buddha’s past lives are drawn from elsewhere among the ninety-one chapters in the *Compendium on the Six Perfections*: “The Tortures of Hell,” “The Adulterous Wife,” “The Land of Naked People,” “Buddha Dīpamkara’s Prediction,” “The Unshakable Kṣāntivādin,” and “King Mirror-Face.” “The Adulterous Wife” is comprised of passages from two different versions of the story that are found within this one collection (chapters 31 and 12), while “The Tortures of Hell” takes snippets from multiple chapters and weaves them together with a passage from the *Treasury of Assorted Jewels* (雜寶藏經, 5th c.). “King Mirror-Face” is notable as well because the text in the *Compendium on the Six Perfections* (chapter 89) is largely copied over from an even earlier source, the *Arthapada Sūtra* (義足經, 3rd c., chapter 5), translated by the layman Zhi Qian. That work was translated into English by P.V. Bapat in 1951, making this scene the only one in the play whose source text has been available previously in this language.

Three of the remaining scenes, as well as the play’s title, are drawn from another early collection, *Lives of the Buddha* (生經, ca. 284-308), whose fifty-five chapters were translated into Chinese by the monk Dharmarakṣa: “The Poisoner’s Daughter-in-law,” “The Master Thief,” and “The Cat and the Cock.” The text for the “The Master Thief” here (chapter 12) had already been translated into French by Édouard Huber in 1904, so Chavannes presents instead a later version of the story, drawn from the *Essentials on Disruptions of the Religious Community in the*

Mūlasarvāstivādin Monastic Code (根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事, trans. Yijing, ca. 710). This later version is the one that has been used primarily in the play, with a few lines that do directly parallel ones in the earlier text as well, so the whole scene could be considered to be rooted in both sources. Finally, the source for scene 2, “The Wife and the Concubine,” is a passage taken from the *Anthology of Parables and Allegories from the Canon* (眾經撰雜譬喻, 5th c.), attributed to the monk Kumārajīva.

Overall, about 2/3 of the medieval play’s text is excerpted directly from these scriptures. Much of the new material I have added is in Siddhartha’s real-time narration, “under the tree,” as described above; thus in the ten passages which portray memories of previous lives the proportion of original material is around 5/6, with three of them in particular (those in “The Land of Naked People,” “The Cat and the Cock,” and “The Unshakable Kṣāntivādin”) containing at least 95% translated Chinese text. Moreover, in parts that I myself have added or modified, both in Siddhartha’s biography and in his previous lives, I have deliberately sought to make changes that are similar in nature, scope, and intention to those which previous generations of Buddhists have themselves made to these stories as they transmitted them orally across Asia, in a variety of languages, over the course of centuries.

It is important for this project’s objectives that the theatrical pleasures the audience may experience when seeing it performed (delight, surprise, shock, laughter...) come as much as possible from an authentic encounter with these Buddhist scriptures, rather than with something of my own creation, a contemporary reimagining or reworking of this material. If this is the case, then from a historical point of view, I think we have good reason to place these writings among the oldest theatrical texts in existence. Admittedly, we do not know exactly how old they are, for we cannot be sure when these oral performances were first written down, or even in what language (for most of them, it was probably in a Prakrit dialect called Gāndhārī); the least we can

say is that it must have been at some point before they arrived in China in the mid-to-late 3rd century.

Furthermore, this approach gives us a new purchase upon difficult historical questions regarding the early transmission of Buddhist teachings: Might these scenes have been presented orally in a similar way, some 2000 years ago, and might the audiences have reacted much as they do now? If not, then why? In my view, the possibility that people in the distant past could have responded as we do to these very same texts suggests that they may speak to deeply shared elements in our humanity, even across enormous gaps of time and culture. Finally, if the experience of watching this play is indeed an authentic encounter with the original medieval scriptures, then from a Buddhist religious perspective it is also a new episode in the ongoing transmission of the Dharma. In this sense the Buddhist Master's concluding words in the epilogue are addressed at once to the villagers, in narrative time, and to the audience members present in the theater: "Today is an extremely auspicious day for all beings; for the true Dharma has appeared and taken root in a place that did not know of it before."

Dr. Alan G. Wagner
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