The dust of desire, or, In the days of Buddha

Karney Evelyn S
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THE DUST OF DESIRE
OR IN
THE DAYS OF BUDDHA

BY
EVELYN S. KARNEY, C.E.Z.M.S.
Author of "Broken Snares," etc

FOREWORD BY THE REV.
W. ST. CLAIR TISDA LL, D.D

PREFATORY ARTICLE BY THE REV.
W. O. E. OESTERLEY, D.D

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“Most good is the brisk wholesome service of fear,
And the calm wise obedience of conscience is sweet,
And the good are all worships, all loyalties dear,
All promptitudes fitting, all services meet.

“But none honours God like the Thirst of Desire,
Nor possesses the heart so completely with Him,
For it burns the world out with the swift ease of fire,
And fills life with good works till it runs o'er the brim.”

—Faber.
FOREWORD

MISS KARNEY is already well known as the writer of more than one work, in which she has very successfully given the people in England some idea of the way in which the Gospel brings light into darkened hearts and homes in heathen lands. In her present book she takes us back to the days of Gotama Buddha himself, and she represents Buddhism (at its best) in its influence on family life.

The Authorress has evidently studied early Buddhism with much care, and the numerous references she gives to standard works, and especially to the Buddhist scriptures, suffice to prove the accuracy of her sketch.

The reader cannot fail to notice how strikingly even an enlightened Judaism (foreshadowing the further light of the Gospel) contrasts with the gloom and despair inculcated and engendered by Buddha’s cheerless creed.

W. ST. CLAIR TISDALL.

BEDFORD,

November, 1911.
PREFACE

VISĀKHĀ and her husband are fictitious characters. They are not the notable Visākhā and Meṅḍaka who figure so largely in the Sacred Books. But it was convenient to call the leading characters by well-known names.

The wording is taken as much as possible from the ancient Buddhist writings, so it is necessarily fantastic and flowery. Also, for this reason, there are many phrases and sentences taken out of the Sacred Books which are not in inverted commas, as to use them throughout would be awkward and bewildering.

Jotiya’s mother’s funeral is taken from the account of Pasenadi’s grief over the death of his grandmother. Jotiya is a fictitious character.

There are a few slight anachronisms. It was premature to make the mourners at Jotiya’s mother’s funeral sing stanzas from the Dhammapada before the Buddha and his teaching had entered the town. The quotation on page 69, “Being your own Lamp
abide ye as your own Refuge," and the illustration of the chariot to explain the doctrine of the delusion of self, ought not to be in the book, as the former were almost the Buddha’s last words, and the illustration was taught by the Sage Nāgasena probably about 400 years after the Buddha’s death. But the mournful stanzas of the Dhammapada were such as any Indian might have sung. The words, “Being your own Lamp, abide ye as your own Refuge,” may well have been on the Buddha’s lips many times before the last famous occasion when he said them to Ānanda, and the apt illustration of the chariot may have been used by many Buddhist teachers before Nāgasena.

The old woman’s picture of her baby son, on page 44, comes from Tulasi Dāsa’s description of the infant Rāma. Tulasi Dāsa did not live until the days of Shakespeare; but the Eastern beauty of the words makes them fitting to put into the mouth of an Indian woman.

The chronology of the Buddha’s life is so vague that names of persons and places have been avoided as much as possible. The story is supposed to have taken place any time after Devadatta’s treachery. The scene is in the Sacred Land of Buddhism—near Benares.

Bhikkhu should be monk, mendicant or ascetic—not priest. There is no sacrificing priesthood
in Buddhism, and the monk is merely seeking his own release. They are useful to the laity, who can obtain merit through giving them alms and listening to them while they read or preach the Law; but they are in no sense a sacrificing priesthood.

It is curious to notice that with us, dwellers in a cold land, to be warm hearted is the greatest praise, but an Indian’s aim was to gain the cool of Nirvāṇa.

Some may think that Visākhā grasped the Truths taught by the Jew too rapidly, but not those who have seen the hearts of Buddhists of to-day turn to the truths of the Gospel. Bishop Claughton says: “Directly you bring to their minds the great truths of religion they recognize them: the idea seems to come back to them not as a new discovery, but as something they had known before and lost.”

In the *Maha Bodhi Magazine* (Jan. 1910), Dr. Paul Dahlke tells us that Buddhism is “without God, or faith, or prayer, and yet offers the most perfect salvation.” Buddhism is in a sense a perfect salvation. After a battle, humane men seek to relieve suffering men and horses. The horses they save from their suffering by putting a bullet through their heads. The salvation is perfect; they cease to suffer. The men they carry away, groaning and sighing, to endure long days and
nights of sickness and woe, soothed and made as easy as possible by kind loving care. The salvation is temporally imperfect, but the day will come when the sick men will arise strong and joyful to do the work to which God has called them. Buddha saves his followers by a merciful bullet; Christ saves His by nursing them back to health and strength.

I wish to express my grateful thanks to Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, D.D., for reading the MS. and for giving me many valuable suggestions. I am indebted to him for the use of some of the translations from Buddhist works which are to be found in "The Noble Eightfold Path." I am also grateful to The Clarendon Press for permission to quote from the translations from the Sacred Books of the East edited by Professor Max Müller; to Professor C. R. Lanman, of Harvard University, for the quotations from "Buddhism in Translations," by Henry Clark Warren; to Mr. John Murray for permission to use extracts from "Buddhism," by Sir M. Monier Williams; and to the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society for the use of the hymn in Chapter xvii from "Dil Ruba." All the translations are from the Sacred Books of the East, edited by Professor Max Müller, unless some other source is specially mentioned.

E. S. K.