

sculptured image of this form in the Kānheri Caves on the West Coast of India, near Bombay harbour; and these caves are ascribed to a period about 850 A.D. (*loc. cit.* p. 186). This form is also found in the ruins of Nakou Thom in Cambodia (GARNIER, *Atlas*, p. viii.).

Avalokita, as The Defender from the Eight Dreads (see *Journal*, p. 76, No. IV.), is found in *sculptured* form in Ajaṅṭa Cave IV. and outside Cave XXVI., also in the Dherwāra Cave at Elura, Aurangābād Cave VII., and in several caves at Kānheri, from one of which a fine group is figured by Burgess (*loc. cit.* pl. lv. fig. 1).

L. A. WADDELL.

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*The Homestead, Barnes,*  
1st February, 1894.

DEAR SIR,—In connection with the biography of the Buddha, and with the evolution of the Buddhist Canon, it will be of interest to some members of the Royal Asiatic Society to know that there is an unedited Pāli Sutta in the Majjhima Nikāya which destroys certain views generally entertained by scholars. The accepted view is that it is only in the later commentaries, and not in the very earliest canonical texts, that the miraculous incidents attending the conception and birth of Gotama the Buddha are narrated in the imaginative detail familiar to readers (e.g.) of the Sanskrit *Lalita Vistara* and of the introductory portion of the Pāli *Jātakas*, as translated in your *Buddhist Birth Stories*. In conflict with this view is the Acchariyabbhuta-Sutta (No. 123 of the Majjhima Nikāya). This Sutta, which—as its name implies—deals with marvels and mysteries, makes the Buddha himself declare :

- (1) That he passed from the Tusita Heaven to his human mother's womb ;
- (2) That the universe was thereon illumined with brilliant light ;

- (3) That four devas mounted guard over the future Buddha and his mother ;
- (4) That during her pregnancy his mother maintained a life of spotless purity and goodness, and enjoyed perfect health and happiness of heart ;
- (5) That her womb was transparent, showing the future Buddha within ;
- (6) That she was fated to die within seven days of his birth, passing to the Tusita Heaven ;
- (7) That she carried her child exactly ten months, neither more nor less ;
- (8) That she stood during parturition ;
- (9) That the new-born Buddha was received into the hands first of devas and then of human beings ;
- (10) That he was free from all defilements attending birth ;
- (11) That two showers of water fell, one hot and one cold, wherein to bathe the future Buddha ;
- (12) That then the child, standing equally balanced on both feet, took seven paces towards the North beneath a white canopy of Kingship, surveyed every direction, and exclaimed ' In all the world, I am first, foremost, and peerless ; this is my last birth ; I shall never be born again ' ;
- (13) That the universe was again illumined with brilliant light.

This brief summary will show that in the ancient *Majjhima Nikāya* we have the kernel (and a great deal of the husk) of the Jātaka version of the Buddha's birth, and that, if the Sutta be genuine, fiction was embroidering historic truth within (perhaps) a century of his death. I hope to have an early opportunity of presenting to the R.A.S. the text of this Sutta and of Buddhaghosa's Commentary thereon. The latter has an importance of its own as bearing on a question which has been much debated, namely, whether the Jātakathavaṇṇanā was written by Buddhaghosa or not.—Yours truly,

ROBERT CHALMERS.

*To the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.*