## The Great Renunciation 

In the silence of that moonlit night (it was the full-moon day of July, (Esala) such thoughts as these arose in him:

Youth, the prime of life, ends in old age and man's senses fail him at a time when they are most needed. The hale and hearty lose their vigour and health when disease suddenly creeps in. Finally death comes, sudden perhaps and unexpected, and puts an end to this brief span of life. Surely there must be an escape from this unsatisfactoriness, from ageing and death."
Thus the great intoxication of youth (yobbanamada), of health (âro-gya-mada), and of life (jivita-mada) left him. Having seen the vanity and the danger of the three intoxications, he was overcome by a powerful urge to seek and win the Deathless, to strive for deliverance from old age, illness, misery, and death not only for himself but for all beings (including his wife and child) that suffer.n7 It was his deep compassion that led him to the quest ending in




















enlightenment, in Buddhahood. It was compassion that now moved his heart towards the great renunciation and opened for him the doors of the golden cage of his home life. It was compassion that made his determination unshakeable even by the last parting glance at his beloved wife asleep with the baby in her arms.
Thus at the age of twenty-nine, in the flower of youthful manhood, on the day his beautiful Yasodharâ had given birth to his only son, Râhula, Prince Siddhârtha Gotama, discarding and disdaining the enchantment of the royal life, scorning and spurning joys that most young
men yearn for, tore himself away, renouncing wife and child and a crown that held the promise of power and glory.
He cut off his long locks with his sword, doffed his royal robes, and putting on a hermit's robe retreated into forest solitude to seek a solution to those problems of life that had so deeply stirred his mind. He sought an answer to the riddle of life, seeking not a palliative, but a true way out of suffering,to perfect enlightenment and Nibbâna. His quest for the supreme security from bondage, Nibbâna (Nirvâna), had begun. This was the great renunciation, the greatest adventure known to humanity.







































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