

India, and the kindest of helpmates. From my photographs and description, he very soon recognized in the scene a portion of the legend of King Vessantara, one of the hundreds of Buddhist 'Jatakas' or 'Stories of the Buddha's former births.'

As related at great length in the canonical Pali version, it tells how Prince Vessantara, in whom the Lord Buddha had incarnated himself during a previous existence, being exceedingly devoted to making pious gifts, had fallen into disrepute in his father's kingdom through giving away to Brahmans a magical white elephant which could produce rain. He was thereupon banished with his family into the forest. On leaving his royal city with his wife Maddi and his two young children mounted on a chariot, he gave away many loads of precious things. When he was subsequently met by Brahman beggars who had come too late for the distribution, he parted in succession with horses, chariot, and all the rest of his personal property. Finally, in the retirement of a hermitage he was made by the gods to give away in pious gifts even his wife and children. After having thus tried his inexhaustible charity, the gods ultimately restored to him wife and children, and all ended in earthly happiness.

With the legend once identified it was easy to recognize the prince leaving the palace gate with Maddi and his two children 'in a gorgeous chariot with a team of four Sindh horses,' just as the Jataka describes them. The four figures of mendicants, who in the frieze come to meet them amidst sylvan scenery, represent, no doubt, the four Brahmans to whom the gift of the horses is made in the story. By a kind of anachronism, which is common in all pictorial representations of sacred lore (mediæval saints' pictures included), the gift of the magical elephant by the prince, being one of the most striking incidents of Vessantara's story, is introduced in the centre of the scene, though it really preceded his departure from his royal home and all the incidents which followed during his banishment in the forest.

At the same time close adherence to the legend is shown in minor features, such as the rich adornment of the