

# DIALOGUES OF THE BUDDHA.\*

## VOL. II.

This second volume of the Dialogues, which had been expected for sometime, will be wellcomed by all students of Buddhism. At first sight, the reader is inclined to be somewhat disappointed, for a good portion of the new volume consists of two Suttantas (discourses) which already appeared thirty years ago in the *Sacred Books of the East*, (1) namely, the Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta and the the Mahā-sudassana Suttanta. But the disappointment is only momentary, for the reader soon perceives that those two discourses have been carefully revised by the translator, and this revision more than makes up for the reappearance of these two pieces. Moreover, they could not have very well been omitted, for they form part of the second volume of the Dīgha Nikāya, of which the present work is a complete translation. It contains besides eight other Suttantas very important for the early history of Buddhist thought and the development of its doctrines. The Mahāpādāna Suttanta is

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\* Translated in collaboration by T. W. Rhys Davids and Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids. It forms Vol. III of the "Sacred Books of the Buddhists." The first volume of the Dialogues was published in 1899.

1. "Buddhist Suttas," by T. W. Rhys Davids, 1881, S. B. E. Vol. XI.

important in that it is probably the earliest document in Pāli which contains in germ the doctrine of the Bodhisatta, which has made such a fortune with the Northern Buddhism, but sounded the death, in India, of the Southern and earlier form, of the Buddhist Doctrine. The Mahānidāna, containing as it does, a full exposition of the famous doctrine of the Paticca-samuppāda, or Twelve Nidānas, that is, of the Buddhist theory of the interdependent origination of causes and effects, or Law of causation, is particularly valuable. Very much has been written in many languages on this subject, and it may be said that practically no two writers agree as to its real significance. On the whole it comes very much to the same as the theory now obtaining in the West, that nothing can be but the result of something previously existing and without whose existence it could not possibly have existed. The short introduction to this Suttanta is illuminating and will well repay perusal. One of the most important among the other Discourses, is the Mahāpaṭṭhāna, "the setting up of Mindfulness." The doctrine of ever present mindfulness is one of the principal, nay, rather, the most important doctrine of primitive Buddhism, for without mindfulness the ultimate goal of Buddhism cannot possibly be reached, this doctrine pervades in fact the whole of the Tipiṭakas and is the theme of innumerable passages in the commentaries (1). As in the first volume, the introduction to each Suttanta, is, in several cases, a gem of mature scholarship and deep insight into the Buddhist doctrine. We have nothing to say about the translation, it is as good as a translation of these difficult text can be; the language is limpid and concise, and singularly free from that high flown and formal style peculiar to some of the German translations of Pāli works. The value of the book is enhanced by the two appendixes at the end, the second being particularly valuable.

It is to be hoped that the third volume of the Dialogues, which is in preparation, will soon be in the hand of the readers.

C. D.

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1. On this point may be compared Dhammapada-attha-kathā (J. P. T. Society's edition) Vol. I. p. 228.