

secret cause of the world's woe, and the remedy by which it could be saved.

For seven years Gautama dwelt among the hills alone, living on alms gratefully given by the kind-hearted people. These years were spent in profoundest study.

There are many interesting incidents recorded of him during these years. At one time he is disputing with hermits who held that to mortify the body is helpful to the soul, to which he meditates, that men lust so to live they are afraid to love life, but plague it with fierce penances as if that would please the gods who deny pleasure to man; as if hell could be baulked by self-made hells. He then turned to the flowers of the field and birds of the air as examples of perfect living, for they despoil neither their happiness nor their beauty, yet are contented always.

At another time he followed a flock of goats and sheep which are being taken to a king's palace for sacrifice. One young lamb was bruised and bleeding, so he carried it in his arms. Arriving at the palace, he pleads in pathetic terms to stop the sacrifice. He spoke of life, which all can take but none can give; life which all creatures love and strive to keep, wonderful, dear, and pleasant even to the meanest. He pointed out that man prays for mercy to the gods, but is merciless to animals to whom he is a god; that all life is linked and kin, and what we slay have given meek tribute of milk and wool and have set fast trust upon the hands that murder them. Nor can innocent beasts bear one hair's weight of the answer, all must give for things done amiss or wrongfully. Alone, each for himself, must submit to the fixed arithmetic of the universe and receive good for good and ill for ill. The result was the king passed an edict forbidding sacrifice.