

Buddha's Birthday Poem, April 2012

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Siddhartha!
It's not too late!
Don't do it!
Demons wait.
Heavens wait.
Arhats lose weight from anticipation, and
Rats race from their ships
Towards what?
Have you thought
About what comes next?

Go to the fortune-tellers.
Ask them. They
Utter: Prince or Holy Man.
This is what you're in for,
And your father doesn't forget.
Meanwhile your mother,
Away from home, clings to a branch.

Shakyamuni,
Her death comes soon,
Almost as soon as you're born. Nobody owns this
Karma.
You could stop the wheel right now. But
Already you've forgotten the future.
Maya reaches
Upward, the tree supports
No one and somehow
In its shadow you are
Born.
Unleashed ocean of
Dharma! Un Mun would have thrown you to a hungry
Dog. "Only I am
Holy." KATZ! The tree in front of you is already 100%
Awake.



Notes

This is an acrostic. The first letters of each line spell out Buddha's given names followed by his clan name followed by his title: Siddhartha Gautama Shakyamuni Buddha.

References are made to the following:

Before his birth, Siddhartha's father, King Suddhodana, consulted fortune-tellers (aka "wise men") who said that the new baby would grow up to be either a great king or a holy renunciant. (The fortune-tellers were called in because Siddhartha's mother, Queen Maya, dreamed that an elephant pierced her side; this is not in the poem.) Towards the end of her pregnancy, Queen Maya decided to return to her parents' house to give birth, and while on the road she went into labor, giving birth while standing under a sal tree, holding on to a branch. (Supposedly, Siddhartha was born from her right side, another detail not in the poem.) Queen Maya died 10, or maybe 7, days after Buddha's birth.

Upon being born, baby Siddhartha took seven steps in each of the four directions; under each step a lotus flower appeared. He then proclaimed "In heaven above and earth below, only I am holy."

About 1,500 years later, Un Mun referred to Buddha's birth by saying, "If I had been there I would have fed him to a hungry dog." About 750 years after Un Mun, So Sahn spoke of how Ananda "unleashed this ocean of sutra teachings" derived from the Buddha's words.