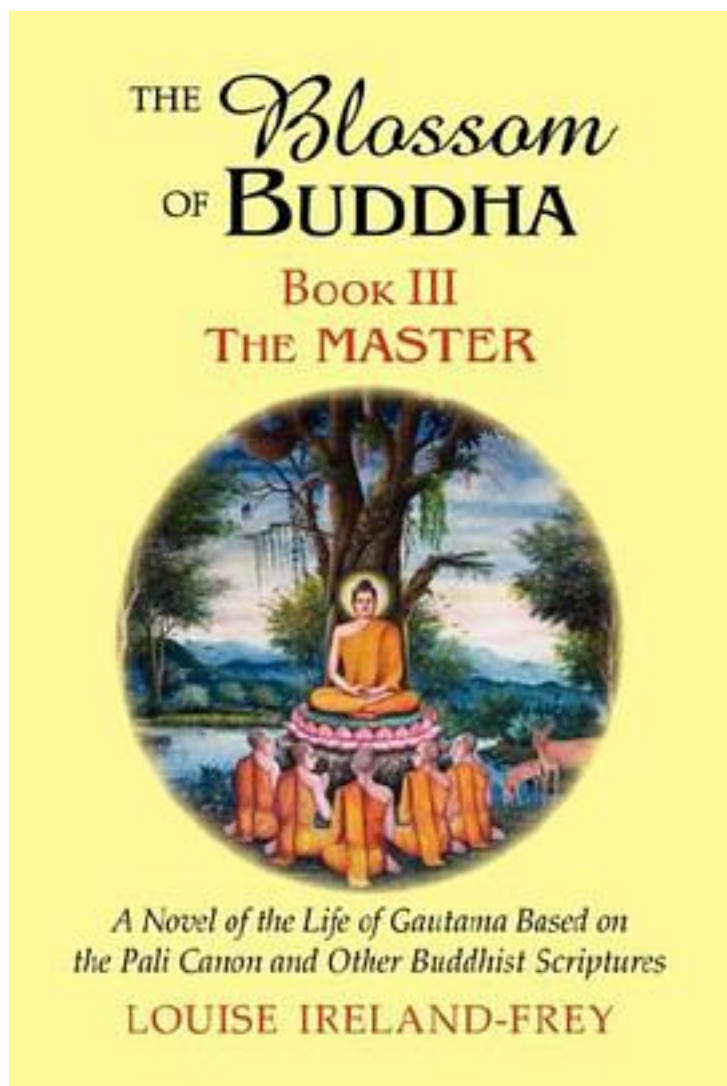


The Blossom of Buddha, Book Three



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著者:Ireland-Frey, Louise

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The Blossom of Buddha A Novel of the Life of Gautama Based on the Pali Canon and Other Buddhist Scriptures Part III: The Master Louise Ireland-Frey The outline of the historical life of the man who became The Enlightened One is well known: his birth to the ruler of the northern Indian tribe of Sakyas, the prophecies at his birth of his future greatness, his over-protection during his first decades by a father who tried to prevent him from seeing the Four Signs which the prophecies said might sway him from choosing to become a Monarch, and his eventual rebellion, after seeing the Four Signs (an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a monk). In despair at what he was told was the inevitability of disease, aging and death, he escaped from the palace, vowing that he would discover how to save mankind from these. This ended the first period of his life. Knowing practically nothing of the outside world, he first sought the company of a famous Brahmin teacher, Arada Kalama, and studied his doctrine for several months, going on from there to a second famous teacher, Rudraka Ramaputra. After this, with five Sakyas who had joined themselves to him as a future Enlightened One, he spent six years attempting, by every means known to him, to achieve understanding of pain, suffering and death and how to overcome them. The only method he did not try was deliberate self-torture. He even came very close to starving himself to death before renouncing ascetic renunciation as another dead end. After slowly recovering his strength, he determined to make one ultimate Endeavor, and set himself to meditate until he either broke through into Knowledge or died trying. That was the night when he finally achieved Enlightenment in its several various aspects-and he knew that he had discovered what he had set out to do: to find a way to end suffering and death. This night of miraculous Illumination was the end of the second stage of his life. Now begins the third stage. He is not a god but is more than man--an Awakened One.

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