

carrying musicians, who sounded their drums and raised their music. The king, Śilāditya, as he went, scattered on every side pearls and various precious substances, with gold and silver flowers, in honour of the three precious objects of worship. Having first washed the image in scented water at the altar, the king then himself bore it on his shoulder to the western tower, where he offered to it tens, hundreds, and thousands of silken garments, decorated with precious gems. At this time there were but about twenty Śramaṇas following in the procession, the kings of the various countries forming the escort. After the feast they assembled the different men of learning, who discussed in elegant language on the most abstruse subjects. At evening-tide the king retired in state to his palace of travel.

Thus every day he carried the golden statue as before, till at length on the day of separation a great fire suddenly broke out in the tower, and the pavilion over the gate of the *saṅghārāma* was also in flames. Then the king exclaimed, "I have exhausted the wealth of my country in charity, and following the example of former kings, I have built this *saṅghārāma*, and I have aimed to distinguish myself by superior deeds, but my poor attempts (*feeble qualities*) have found no return! In the presence of such calamities as these, what need I of further life?"

Then with incense-burning he prayed, and with this vow (*oath*), "Thanks to my previous merit, I have come to reign over all India; let the force of my religious conduct destroy this fire; or if not, let me die!" Then he rushed headlong towards the threshold of the gate, when suddenly, as if by a single blow, the fire was extinguished and the smoke disappeared.

The kings beholding the strange event, were filled with redoubled reverence; but he (*the king*), with unaltered face and unchanged accents, addressed the princes thus: "The fire has consumed this crowning work of my religious life. What think you of it?"