

## **THE LEGENDS OF THE BURNING HOUSE**

As related by Gertrude A. Wolff

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Gautama Buddha, in illustrating the use of the parable, used this one:

A father, returning home, discovered that his house was on fire and his children were still within, unaware of the danger. Not wishing to alarm them, send them into panic or cause delay that might bring disaster, he successfully lured them outside by calling to them: "Children, I have toys for you. Come and get them."

To this parable, our Yogagñani has added more:

The burning is the world in conflagration or impending doom.

A Church-Council Christian, seeing the burning building, rushed in and brought out safely all members of his own family, leaving all the other tenants to perish because they were all doomed anyway.

A Hinayana Buddhist saw the fire, hurried in and presented to those inside a book of instructions for finding their way out, then he himself fled to safety.

A Mahayana Buddhist, after helping all the people to safety, hurried back into the burning building to rescue, even to the last one, all the bedbugs.

Shankara, upon seeing the burning building, entered and told the people not to be alarmed by it, that the whole thing was unreal, and that this was all merely a moving picture.

Sri Aurobindo hurried in and led all the people out to safety, then said: "Now let us go back and put out the fire, then we shall rebuild the structure with non-combustible materials!"