

# **BUDDHA WALKS**

## **CHORUS 3: TOURNAMENT OF SKILL**



According to wedding custom, the girl goes to the manliest of men. Devadatta, the great archer; Ardjuna, the greatest of horsemen; and Nanda, who none can equal with a sword--have all sought fair Yasodhara's hand. They will all compete for her--and only if Prince Siddhartha bests them all will he claim his bride.

Brahmins, gentry, and tradesmen alike flocked to the palace by the thousands to watch the feats of skill. A procession of painted oxen drawing brightly colored carts wheeled onto the field as musicians and acrobats entertained the throng. Devadatta--certain of victory--laughed confidently with the other noble contestants awaiting Prince Siddhartha's arrival.

Contests would be held in mathematics and poetry as well as horsemanship, swordsmanship, and archery. The contestants would be called upon to calculate large sums in their heads, entrance their listeners with rhyming verse, tame a wild stallion then ride it around the ring, and fell a full-grown tree with a single stroke of their sword blades.