

CHAPTER XX.

CONCEPTION OF THE TRANSCENDENT POWER OF THE
TATHÂGATAS.

Thereupon those hundred thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of Bodhisattvas equal to the dust-atoms of a macrocosm, who had issued from the gaps of the earth, all stretched their joined hands towards the Lord, and said unto him : We, O Lord, will, after the complete extinction of the Tathâgata, promulgate this Dharmaparyâya everywhere (or on every occasion) in all Buddha-fields of the Lord, wherever (or whenever) the Lord shall be completely extinct¹. We are anxious to obtain this sublime Dharmaparyâya, O Lord, in order to keep, read, publish, and write it.

Thereupon the hundred thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of Bodhisattvas, headed by *Mañgusri* ; the monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees living in this world ; the gods, *Nâgas*, goblins, *Gandharvas*, demons, *Garudâs*, *Kinnaras*, great serpents, men, and beings not human, and the many Bodhisattvas *Mahâsattvas* equal to the sands of the river *Ganges*, said unto the Lord : We also, O Lord, will promulgate this Dharmaparyâya after the complete extinction of the Tathâgata. While standing with an invisible body in the sky, O Lord, we will send

¹ Hence follows that *Nirvâna* is repeatedly entered into by the Lord.

forth a voice¹, and plant the roots of goodness of such creatures as have not (yet) planted roots of goodness.

Then the Lord addressed the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Visiṣṭakāritra, followed by a troop, a great troop, the master of a troop, who was the very first of those afore-mentioned Bodhisattvas Mahāsattvas followed by a troop, a great troop, masters of a troop: Very well, Visiṣṭakāritra, very well; so you should do; it is for the sake of this Dharmaparyāya that the Tathāgata has brought you to ripeness.

Thereupon the Lord Sākyamuni, the Tathāgata, &c., and the wholly extinct Lord Prabhūtaratna, the Tathāgata, &c., both seated on the throne in the centre of the Stūpa², commenced smiling to one another, and from their opened mouths stretched out their tongues, so that with their tongues they reached the Brahma-world, and from those two tongues issued many hundred thousand myriads of koṭis of rays³. From each of those rays issued many hundred thousand myriads of koṭis of Bodhisattvas, with gold-coloured bodies and possessed of the thirty-two characteristic signs of a great man, and seated on thrones consisting of the interior of lotuses. Those

¹ From this it appears that the abode of the monks &c. in the assembly of the Lord Sākyamuni is in the sky, at least occasionally. Their attribute of 'an invisible body' shows them to be identical with the videhas, the incorporeal ones, i. e. the spirits of the blessed departed, Arhats, Muktas, Pitaras. The Pitaras form the assembly of Dharmarāga.

² Cf. Chapter XI.

³ It is quite true that the moon as well as the sun is sahasra-rāmi, possessed of thousand rays, but it is difficult to understand how the Bhagavat Prabhūtaratna can show his magic power in his state of extinction.

Bodhisattvas spread in all directions in hundred thousands of worlds, and while on every side stationed in the sky preached the law. Just as the Lord Sākyamuni, the Tathāgata, &c., produced a miracle of magic by his tongue, so, too, Prabhūtaratna, the Tathāgata, &c., and the other Tathāgatas, &c., who, having flocked from hundred thousands of myriads of *koṣis* of other worlds, were seated on thrones at the foot of jewel trees, by their tongues produced a miracle of magic.

The Lord Sākyamuni, the Tathāgata, &c., and all those Tathāgatas, &c., produced that magical effect during fully a thousand¹ years. After the lapse of that millennium those Tathāgatas, &c., pulled back their tongue, and all simultaneously, at the same moment, the same instant, made a great noise as of expectoration² and of snapping the fingers, by which sounds all the hundred thousands of myriads of *koṣis* of Buddha-fields in every direction of space were moved, removed, stirred, wholly stirred, tossed, tossed forward, tossed along, and all beings in all those Buddha-fields, gods, Nāgas, goblins, Gandharvas, demons, *Garuḍas*, Kinnaras, great serpents, men, and beings not human beheld, by the power of the Buddha, from the place where they stood, this Saha-world. They beheld the hundred thousands of myriads of *koṣis* of Tathāgatas seated severally on their throne at the foot of a jewel tree, and the Lord Sākyamuni, the Tathāgata, &c., and the Lord Prabhūtaratna, the Tathāgata, &c., wholly extinct, sitting on the throne in the centre of the

¹ Burnouf has 'a hundred thousand.'

² *Utkāsana*, better °sana.

Stûpa of magnificent precious substances, along with the Lord Sâkyamuni, the Tathâgata, &c. ; they beheld, finally, those four classes of the audience. At this sight they felt struck with wonder, amazement, and rapture. And they heard a voice from the sky calling : Worthies, beyond a distance of an immense, incalculable number of hundred thousands of myriads of kośis of worlds there is the world named Saha ; there the Tathâgata called Sâkyamuni, the Arhat, &c., is just now revealing to the Bodhisattvas Mahâsattvas the Dharmaparyâya of the Lotus of the True Law, a Sûtrânta of great extent, serving to instruct Bodhisattvas, and belonging in proper to all Buddhas. Ye accept it joyfully with all your heart, and do homage to the Lord Sâkyamuni, the Tathâgata, &c., and the Lord Prabhûtaratna, the Tathâgata, &c.

On hearing such a voice from the sky all those beings exclaimed from the place where they stood, with joined hands : Homage to the Lord Sâkyamuni, the Tathâgata. Then they threw towards the Saha-world various flowers, incense, fragrant wreaths, ointment, gold, cloth, umbrellas, flags, banners, and triumphal streamers, as well as ornaments, parures, necklaces, gems and jewels of all sorts, in order to worship the Lord Sâkyamuni, the Tathâgata¹, and this Dharmaparyâya of the Lotus of the True Law. Those flowers, incense, &c., and those necklaces, &c., came down upon this Saha-world, where they formed a great canopy of flowers hanging in the sky above the Tathâgatas there sitting, as well as those in the hundred thousands of myriads of kośis of other worlds.

¹ In Burnouf's translation we find added : and the Tathâgata Prabhûtaratna.

Thereupon the Lord addressed the Bodhisattvas Mahāsattvas headed by Visiṣṭa-kārita: Inconceivable, young men of good family, is the power of the Tathāgatas, &c. In order to transmit this Dharmaparyāya, young men of good family, I might go on for hundred thousands of myriads of koṭis of Æons explaining the manifold virtues of this Dharmaparyāya through the different principles of the law, without reaching the end of those virtues. In this Dharmaparyāya I have succinctly taught all Buddha-laws (or Buddha-qualities), all the superiority, all the mystery, all the profound conditions of the Buddhas. Therefore, young men of good family, you should, after the complete extinction of the Tathāgata, with reverence keep, read, promulgate, cherish¹, worship it. And wherever on earth, young men of good family, this Dharmaparyāya shall be made known, read, written, meditated, expounded, studied or collected into a volume, be it in a monastery or at home, in the wilderness or in a town, at the foot of a tree or in a palace, in a building or in a cavern, on that spot one should erect a shrine in dedication to the Tathāgata. For such a spot must be regarded as a terrace of enlightenment; such a spot must be regarded as one where all Tathāgatas &c. have arrived at supreme, perfect enlightenment; on that spot have all Tathāgatas moved forward the wheel of the law; on that spot one may hold that all Tathāgatas have reached complete extinction.

And on that occasion the Lord uttered the following stanzas :

¹ Or develop; or meditate, bhāvayitavya. Burnouf seems to have read bhāshayitavya, for he translates it by 'expliquer.'

1. Inconceivable is the power to promote the weal of the world¹ possessed by those who, firmly established in transcendent knowledge, by means of their unlimited sight display their magic faculty in order to gladden all living beings on earth.

2. They extend their tongue over the whole world², darting thousands of beams to the astonishment of those to whom this effect of magic is displayed and who are making for supreme enlightenment.

3. The Buddhas made a noise of expectoration and of snapping the fingers, (and by it) called the attention of the whole world, of all parts of the world in the ten directions of space.

4. Those and other miraculous qualities they display in their benevolence and compassion (with the view) that the creatures, gladly excited at the time, may (also) keep the Sûtra after the complete extinction of the Sugata.

5. Even if I continued for thousands of koṭis of Æons speaking the praise of those sons of Sugata who shall keep this eminent Sûtra after the extinction of the Leader of the world,

6. I should not have terminated the enumeration of their qualities; inconceivable as the qualities of infinite space are the merits of those who constantly keep this holy Sûtra.

7. They behold me as well as these chiefs, and the Leader of the world now extinct; (they behold) all these numerous Bodhisattvas and the four classes.

8. Such a one now here³ propitiates me and all

¹ Lokahitânudharmatâ.

² Sarvalokam.

³ Ten' ihâdya. The connection between this stanza and the next would have been clearer if the two stanzas had been transposed.

these leaders, as well as the extinct chief of *Ginas* and the others in every quarter.

9. The future and past Buddhas stationed in the ten points of space will all be seen and worshipped by him who keeps this *Sūtra*.

10. He who keeps this *Sūtra*, the veritable law, will fathom the mystery of the highest man; will soon comprehend what truth it was that was arrived at on the terrace of enlightenment.

11. The quickness of his apprehension will be unlimited; like the wind he will nowhere meet impediments; he knows the purport and interpretation of the law, he who keeps this exalted *Sūtra*.

12. He will, after some reflection, always find out the connection of the *Sūtras* spoken by the leaders; even after the complete extinction of the leader he will grasp the real meaning of the *Sūtras*.

13. He resembles the moon and the sun; he illuminates all around him, and while roaming the earth in different directions he rouses many *Bodhisattvas*.

14. The wise *Bodhisattvas* who, after hearing the enumeration of such advantages, shall keep this *Sūtra* after my complete extinction will doubtless reach enlightenment.