

## CHAPTER VIII.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FUTURE DESTINY OF THE  
FIVE HUNDRED MONKS.

On hearing from the Lord that display of skilfulness and the instruction by means of mysterious speech; on hearing the announcement of the future destiny of the great Disciples, as well as the foregoing tale concerning ancient devotion and the leadership<sup>1</sup> of the Lord, the venerable Pûrva, son of Mairâyantî, was filled with wonder and amazement, thrilled<sup>2</sup> with pure-heartedness<sup>3</sup>, a feeling of delight and joy. He rose from his seat, full of delight and joy, full of great respect for the law, and while prostrating himself before the Lord's feet, made within himself the following reflection: Wonderful, O Lord; wonderful, O Sugata; it is an extremely difficult thing that the Tathâgatas, &c., perform, the conforming to this world, composed of so many elements, and preaching the law to all creatures with many proofs of their skilfulness, and skilfully releasing them when attached to this or that. What could we

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<sup>1</sup> *Vrîshabhitva*, a curious and irregular form instead of *vrîshabhatva*.

<sup>2</sup> *Sphuṭa*, in the sense of *vyâpta*; Pâli *phuṭa*.

<sup>3</sup> *Nirâmishakittena*. *Nirâmisha* is both 'free from worldly taint, sensual desire,' and 'without having a lure, not eager for reward,' i.e. disinterested. Both meanings are so intimately connected that it is not always easy to decide which we should prefer, e.g. *Lalita-vistara*, p. 215, and *Manu VI*, 49.

do, O Lord, in such a case? None but the Tathâgata knows our inclination and our ancient course. Then, after saluting with his head the Lord's feet, Pûrna went and stood apart, gazing up to the Lord with unmoved eyes and so showing his veneration.

And the Lord, regarding the mental disposition of the venerable Pûrna, son of Maitrâyanî, addressed the entire assembly of monks in this strain: Ye monks, see<sup>1</sup> this disciple, Pûrna, son of Maitrâyanî, whom I have designated as the foremost of preachers in this assembly, praised for his many virtues, and who has applied himself in various ways to comprehend the true law. He is the man to excite, arouse, and stimulate the four classes of the audience; unwearied in the preaching of the law; as capable to preach the law as to oblige his fellow-followers of the course of duty. The Tathâgata excepted, monks, there is none able to equal Pûrna, son of Maitrâyanî, either essentially or in accessories. Now, monks, do you suppose that he keeps my true law only? No, monks, you must not think so. For I remember, monks, that in the past, in the times of the ninety-nine Buddhas, the same Pûrna kept the true law under the mastership of those Buddhas. Even as he is now with me, so he has, in all periods, been the foremost of the preachers of the law; has in all periods been a consummate knower of Voidness; has in all periods acquired the (four) distinctive qualifications of an Arhat<sup>2</sup>; has in all periods reached mastership in the transcendent

<sup>1</sup> Pasyata, var. lect. pasyadhvam.

<sup>2</sup> Pratisamvid, in meaning answering to Pâli paṭisambhidâ.

wisdom of the Bodhisattvas. He has been a strongly convinced<sup>1</sup> preacher of the law, exempt from doubt, and quite pure. Under the mastership of those Buddhas he has during his whole existence observed a spiritual life, and everywhere they termed him 'the Disciple.' By this means he has promoted the interest of innumerable, incalculable hundred thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of beings, and brought innumerable and incalculable beings to full ripeness for supreme and perfect enlightenment. In all periods he has assisted the creatures in the function of a Buddha, and in all periods he has purified his own Buddha-field, always striving to bring creatures to ripeness. He was also, monks, the foremost among the preachers of the law under the seven Tathâgatas, the first of whom is Vipasyin and the seventh myself<sup>2</sup>.

And as to the Buddhas, monks, who have in future to appear in this Bhadra-kalpa, to the number of a thousand less four, under the mastership of them also shall this same Pârna, son of Maitrâyanî, be the foremost among the preachers of the law and the keeper of the true law. Thus he shall keep the true law of innumerable and incalculable Lords and Buddhas in future, promote the interest of innumerable and incalculable beings, and bring innumerable and incalculable beings to full ripeness for supreme and perfect enlightenment. Constantly and assiduously he shall be instant in purifying his own Buddha-field and bringing creatures to ripeness.

<sup>1</sup> *Suviniṣkṛita*.

<sup>2</sup> The seven so-called Mânushi-Buddhas; a rather transparent disguise of the fact that in cosmological mythology there are seven Manus, rulers of certain periods.

After completing such a Bodhisattva-course, at the end of innumerable, incalculable Æons, he shall reach supreme and perfect enlightenment; he shall in the world be the Tathâgata called Dharmaprabhâsa, an Arhat, &c., endowed with science and conduct, a Sugata, &c. He shall appear in this very Buddha-field.

Further, monks, at that time the Buddha-field spoken of will look as if formed by thousands of spheres similar to the sands of the river Ganges. It will be even, like the palm of the hand, consist of seven precious substances, be without hills, and filled with high edifices of seven precious substances<sup>1</sup>. There will be cars of the gods stationed in the sky; the gods will behold men, and men will behold the gods. Moreover, monks, at that time that Buddha-field shall be exempt from places of punishment and from womankind, as all beings shall be born by apparitional birth. They shall lead a spiritual life, have ideal<sup>2</sup> bodies, be self-lighting, magical, moving in the firmament, strenuous, of good memory, wise, possessed of gold-coloured bodies, and adorned with the thirty-two characteristics of a great man. And at that time, monks, the beings in that Buddha-field will have two things to feed upon, viz. the delight in the law and the delight in meditation. There will

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<sup>1</sup> The Buddha-field of Pûrva, i.e. full, is so extremely pure, because he is, I suppose, the full moon. He is called the son of Mairâyani, because the full moon is born on the 15th day of the month. Mairâyani is a slightly disguised Mairî, otherwise called Anurâdhâ, the 15th asterism, in the ancient series. Hence we may infer that the story of Pûrva is comparatively old. No wonder that Pûrva is surpassed by none, the Buddha excepted.

<sup>2</sup> Manomaya.

be an immense, incalculable number of hundred thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of Bodhisattvas; all endowed with great transcendent wisdom, accomplished in the (four) distinctive qualifications of an Arhat, able in instructing creatures. He (that Buddha) will have a number of disciples, beyond all calculation, mighty in magic, powerful, masters in the meditation of the eight emancipations. So immense are the good qualities that Buddha-field will be possessed of. And that Æon shall be called Ratnāvabhāsa (i. e. radiant with gems), and that world Suvisuddha (i. e. very pure). His lifetime shall last immense, incalculable Æons; and after the complete extinction of that Lord Dharmaprabhāsa, the Tathāgata, &c., his true law shall last long, and his world shall be full of Stūpas made of precious substances. Such inconceivable good qualities, monks, shall the Buddha-field of that Lord be possessed of.

So spoke the Lord, and thereafter he, the Sugata, the Master, added the following stanzas :

1. Listen to me, monks, and hear how my son has achieved his course of duty, and how he, well-trained and skilful, has observed the course of enlightenment.

2. Viewing these beings to be lowly-disposed and to be startled at the lofty vehicle, the Bodhisattvas become disciples and exercise Pratyekabuddhaship.

3. By many hundreds of able devices they bring numerous Bodhisattvas to full ripeness and declare : We are but disciples, indeed, and we are far away from the highest and supreme enlightenment.

4. It is by learning from them this course (of duty) that *koṭis* of beings arrive at full ripeness,

who (at first), lowly-disposed and somewhat lazy, in course of time all become Buddhas.

5. They follow a course in ignorance (thinking): We, disciples, are of little use, indeed! In dependency they descend into all places of existence (successively), and (so) clear their own field.

6. They show in their own persons that they are not free from affection, hatred, and infatuation; and on perceiving (other) beings clinging to (heretical) views<sup>1</sup>, they go so far as to accommodate themselves to those views.

7. By following such a course my numerous disciples skilfully save creatures; simple people would go mad, if they were taught the whole course of life (or story).

8. Pūrva here, monks, my disciple, has formerly fulfilled his course (of duty) under thousands of koṭis of Buddhas, he has got possession of this true law by seeking after Buddha-knowledge.

9. And at all periods has he been the foremost of the disciples, learned, a brilliant orator, free from hesitation; he has, indeed, always been able to excite to gladness and at all times ready to perform the Buddha-task.

10. He has always been accomplished in the sublime transcendent faculties and endowed with the distinctive qualifications of an Arhat; he knew the faculties and range of (other) beings, and has always preached the perfectly pure law.

11. By exposing the most eminent of true laws he has brought thousands of koṭis of beings to full ripeness for this supreme, foremost vehicle, whilst purifying his own excellent field.

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<sup>1</sup> *Drīshṭīvilagna*.

12. In future also he shall likewise honour thousands of kośis of Buddhas, acquire knowledge of the most eminent of good laws, and clean his own field.

13. Always free from timidity he shall preach the law with thousands of kośis of able devices, and bring many beings to full ripeness for the knowledge of the all-knowing that is free from imperfections.

14. After having paid homage to the Chiefs of men and always kept the most eminent of laws, he shall in the world be a Buddha self-born, widely renowned everywhere by the name of Dharma-prabhâsa.

15. And his field shall always be very pure and always set off with seven precious substances; his Æon shall be (called) Ratnâvabhâsa, and his world Suvisuddha.

16. That world shall be pervaded with many thousand kośis of Bodhisattvas, accomplished masters in the great transcendent sciences, pure in every respect, and endowed with magical power.

17. At that period the Chief shall also have an assemblage of thousands of kośis of disciples, endowed with magical power, adepts at the meditation of the (eight) emancipations, and accomplished in the (four) distinctive qualifications of an Arhat.

18. And all beings in that Buddha-field shall be pure and lead a spiritual life. Springing into existence by apparitional birth, they shall all be gold-coloured and display the thirty-two characteristic signs.

19. They shall know no other food but pleasure in the law and delight in knowledge. No woman-kind shall be there, nor fear of the places of punishments or of dismal states.

20. Such shall be the excellent field of Pârna, who is possessed of all good qualities; it shall abound with all goodly things<sup>1</sup>, a small part (only) of which has here been mentioned.

Then this thought arose in the mind of those twelve hundred self-controlled (Arhats): We are struck with wonder and amazement. (How) if the Tathâgata would predict to us severally our future destiny as the Lord has done to those other great disciples? And the Lord apprehending in his own mind what was going on in the minds of these great disciples addressed the venerable Mahâ-Kâsyapa: Those twelve hundred self-controlled hearers whom I am now beholding from face to face, to all those twelve hundred self-controlled hearers, Kâsyapa, I will presently foretell their destiny. Amongst them, Kâsyapa, the monk Kaundînya, a great disciple, shall, after sixty-two hundred thousand myriads of koṭis of Buddhas, become a Tathâgata, an Arhat, &c., under the name of Samantaprabhâsa, endowed with science and conduct, a Sugata, &c. &c.; but of those (twelve hundred), Kâsyapa, five hundred shall become Tathâgatas of the same name. Thereafter shall all those five hundred great disciples reach supreme and perfect enlightenment, all bearing the name of Samantaprabhâsa; viz. Gayâ-Kâsyapa, Nadi-Kâsyapa, Uruvilvâ-Kâsyapa, Kâla, Kâlodâyin, Aniruddha, Kapphina, Vakkula<sup>2</sup>, Kunda<sup>3</sup>, Svâgata<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> *Âkîrṇa sarvehi subhadrakehi*; Burnouf takes it as a masculine, rendering it by 'créatures fortunées.'

<sup>2</sup> Also spelt Vakula; see p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Probably the same with Mahâ-Kunda in Mahâvagga I, 6, 36; Kullavagga I, 18, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Pâli Sâgata, Mahâvagga V, 1, 3.



and the rest of the five hundred self-controlled (Arhats).

And on that occasion the Lord uttered the following stanzas :

21. The scion of the *Kundina* family, my disciple here, shall in future be a Tathâgata, a Lord of the world, after the lapse of an endless period ; he shall educate hundreds of kotis of living beings.

22. After seeing many endless Buddhas, he shall in future, after the lapse of an endless period, become the *Gina Samantaprabhâsa*, whose field shall be thoroughly pure.

23. Brilliant, gifted with the powers of a Buddha, with a voice far resounding in all quarters, waited upon by thousands of kotis of beings, he shall preach supreme and eminent enlightenment.

24. There shall be most zealous Bodhisattvas, mounted on lofty aerial cars, and moving, meditative, pure in morals, and assiduous in doing good.

25. After hearing the law from the highest of men, they shall invariably go to other fields, to salute thousands of Buddhas and show them great honour.

26. But ere long they shall return to the field of the Leader called *Prabhâsa*, the Tathâgata<sup>1</sup>. So great shall be the power of their course (of duty).

27. The measure of the lifetime of that Sugata shall be sixty thousand Æons, and, after the complete extinction of that mighty one<sup>2</sup>, his true law shall remain twice as long in the world.

28. And the counterfeit of it shall continue three

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<sup>1</sup> Var. lect. 'the most high (or best) of men.'

<sup>2</sup> Tâyin.

times as long. When the true law of that holy one shall he exhausted, men and gods shall be vexed.

29. There shall appear a complete number of five hundred Chiefs, supreme amongst men, who shall bear the same name with that Gina, Samantaprabha, and follow one another in regular succession.

30. All shall have like divisions, magical powers, Buddha-fields, and hosts (of followers). Their true law also shall be the same and stand equally long.

31. All shall have in this world, including the gods, the same voice as Samantaprabhâsa, the highest of men, such as I have mentioned before.

32. Moved by benevolence and compassion they shall in succession foretell each other's destiny, with the words: This is to be my immediate successor, and he is to command the world as I do at present.

33. Thus, Kâsyapa, keep now in view<sup>1</sup> here these self-controlled (Arhats), no less than five hundred (in number), as well as my other disciples, and speak of this matter to the other disciples.

On hearing from the Lord the announcement of their own future destiny, the five hundred Arhats, contented, satisfied, in high spirits and ecstasy, filled with cheerfulness, joy, and delight, went up to the place where the Lord was sitting, reverentially saluted with their heads his feet, and spoke thus: We confess our fault, O Lord, in having continually and constantly persuaded ourselves that we had arrived

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<sup>1</sup> Dhârehi. I am not sure of the correctness of this translation; the word usually means 'to keep,' but this seems out of place, unless it be assumed that the injunction is given in anticipation, because Kâsyapa succeeded to the Lord after the latter's Nirvâna. Burnouf has: 'Voilà-comme tu dois considérer ici en ce jour ces Auditeurs,' &c.

at final Nirvâna, as (persons who are) dull, inept, ignorant of the rules. For, O Lord, whereas we should have thoroughly penetrated the knowledge of the Tathâgatas, we were content with such a trifling degree of knowledge.

It is, O Lord, as if some man having come to a friend's house got drunk or fell asleep, and that friend bound a priceless gem within<sup>1</sup> his garment, with the thought: Let this gem be his. After a while, O Lord, that man rises from his seat and travels further; he goes to some other country, where he is befallen by incessant difficulties, and has great trouble to find food and clothing. By dint of great exertion he is hardly able to obtain a bit of food, with which (however) he is contented and satisfied. The old friend of that man, O Lord, who bound within the man's garment that priceless gem, happens to see him again and says: How is it, good friend, that thou hast such difficulty in seeking food and clothing, while I, in order that thou shouldst live in ease, good friend, have bound within thy garment a priceless gem, quite sufficient to fulfil all thy wishes? I have given thee that gem, my good friend, the very gem I have bound within thy garment. Still thou art deliberating: What has been bound? by whom? for what reason and purpose? It is something foolish<sup>2</sup>, my good friend, to be contented, when thou hast with (so much) difficulty to procure food and clothing. Go, my good friend, betake thyself, with this gem, to some great city,

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<sup>1</sup> Vastrânte, vasanânte; below in stanza 40 we find vasa-nântarasmi.

<sup>2</sup> Etad bâlagâttyam.

exchange the gem for money, and with that money do all that can be done with money.

In the same manner, O Lord, has the Tathâgata formerly, when he still followed the course of duty of a Bodhisattva, raised in us also ideas of omniscience, but we, O Lord, did not perceive, nor know it. We fancied, O Lord, that on the stage of Arhat we had reached Nirvâna. We live in difficulty, O Lord, because we content ourselves with such a trifling degree of knowledge. But as our strong aspiration after the knowledge of the all-knowing has never ceased, the Tathâgata teaches us the right: 'Have no such idea of Nirvâna, monks; there are in your intelligence<sup>1</sup> roots of goodness which of yore I have fully developed. In this you have to see an able device of mine that from the expressions used by me, in preaching the law, you fancy Nirvâna to take place at this moment<sup>2</sup>.' And after having taught us the right in such a way, the Lord now predicts our future destiny to supreme and perfect knowledge.

And on that occasion the five hundred self-controlled (Arhats), Âgñâta-Kaundînya and the rest, uttered the following stanzas:

34. We are rejoicing and delighted to hear this unsurpassed word of comfort that we are destined to the highest, supreme enlightenment. Homage be to thee, O Lord of unlimited sight!

35. We confess our fault before thee; we were so childish, nescient, ignorant that we were fully contented with a small part of Nirvâna, under the mastership of the Sugata.

<sup>1</sup> Santâne.

<sup>2</sup> Or, at present, etarhi.

36. This is a case like that of a certain man who enters the house of a friend, which friend, being rich and wealthy, gives him much food, both hard and soft.

37. After satiating him with nourishment, he gives him a jewel of great value. He ties it with a knot within the upper robe and feels satisfaction at having given that jewel.

38. The other man, unaware of it, goes forth and from that place travels to another town. There he is befallen with misfortune and, as a miserable beggar, seeks his food in affliction.

39. He is contented with the pittance he gets by begging without caring for dainty food; as to that jewel, he has forgotten it; he has not the slightest remembrance of its having been tied in his upper robe.

40. Under these circumstances he is seen by his old friend who at home gave him that jewel. This friend properly reprimands him and shows him the jewel within his robe.

41. At this sight the man feels extremely happy. The value of the jewel is such that he becomes a very rich man, of great power, and in possession of all that the five senses can enjoy.

42. In the same manner, O Lord, we were unaware of our former aspiration<sup>1</sup>, (the aspiration) laid in us by the Tathâgata himself in previous existences from time immemorial.

43. And we were living in this world, O Lord, with dull understanding and in ignorance, under the

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<sup>1</sup> *Pranidhâna*; from the context one would gather that the real meaning had been 'predestination.'

mastership of the Sugata ; for we were contented with a little of Nirvâna ; we required nothing higher, nor even cared for it.

44. But the Friend of the world has taught us better : ‘ This is no blessed Rest<sup>1</sup> at all ; the full knowledge of the highest men<sup>2</sup>, that is blessed Rest, that is supreme beatitude.’

45. After hearing this sublime, grand, splendid, and matchless prediction, O Lord, we are greatly elated with joy, when thinking of the prediction (we shall have to make to each other) in regular succession.

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<sup>1</sup> Nirvṛiti.

<sup>2</sup> Purushottamânâm.