

THE AVATAMSAKA SUTRA

(Kegon-Kyo, 華嚴經)

(*Epitomised*)

CHAPTER VIII

AT that moment, rays of light emanated from the soles of the World-honoured One, universally illuminating the great triple chiliocosm, and revealing everything in it all at once in his light. Through the miraculous power of the Buddha, all the Bodhisattvas came to this holy gathering, and the Bodhisattva Manjuśri uttered the following gathas :

Even when one attains enlightenment
And deliverance, and is detached from all outflowing
evils,
And knows how not to cling to things worldly,
Yet one may not have acquired a pure eye of wisdom.

If one understands the Tathāgata as free from any idea
of possession
And knows how things dissolve and are finally destroyed,
One may soon attain to Buddhahood.

If the mind follows the path of sameness
And enters upon the truth of non-duality,
He will be one beyond comprehension.

The wise know that innumerable things are in one
thing,
And that one thing is in innumerable things,
And that things are not real because they undergo a
continual transformation,
Therefore, they are free from fear.

Seeing how sentient beings are oppressed in misery and
 beclouded with follies,
 And how they are stung with lusts and passions,
 The Bodhisattva seeketh after the incomparable truth ;
 And this is the teaching of all the Buddhas.

He is neither a nihilist nor a realist
 And seeing things as they are and have been,
 He preacheth the incomparable Wheel of the Law that
 has never been preached before.

Throughout innumerable kalpas
 The Bodhisattva keepeth on wearing the armour of the
 Great Vows ;
 For he desireth to carry all beings across the ocean of
 birth and death ;
 And this is the way of the Great Sages.

To fight courageously and vanquish the evil ones,
 And to make all beings feel at ease with loving words :
 This is the way of mercy unsurpassable.

To hold the deepest wisdom within,
 To destroy all evil passions,
 And to see all things in one thought :
 This is the display of a power free and unfettered.

Beating the drum of the perfect Law,
 The sound of which reverberates throughout the ten
 quarters,
 The Bodhisattva maketh all beings attain to the truth
 incomparable :
 For this is the way of the innerly enlightened.

He disturbs no conditions which are innumerable,
 And goeth about through all the lands also innumerable,

And he is not attached to any particular reality,
He is indeed as free as a Buddha.

When you think of the Tathāgata
As pure and immaculate as space,
The heart will overflow with unparalleled joy,
And all the needs will be fulfilled.

Entering into the lowest Hell
For the sake of all sentient beings,
The Bodhisattva may undergo an everlasting torture,
And yet his heart is as pure as the unsurpassable one.

He whose life and all are always devoted
To the cause of all the Buddhas,
And whose patient heart practiseth all deeds of merit,
Will attain to the virtues of Tathāgatahood.

Forsaking all pleasures worldly and heavenly,
The Bodhisattva harbours a great pitying heart,
In order to save all creatures.

Believe in the Buddha with singleness of heart,
Be immovable in faith,
And never cease thinking of all the Buddhas,
Departing from the ocean of birth and death
Enter into the stream of Buddhism,
And abide in the purity and calmness of Wisdom.

Look into the real nature of thy existence,
And know that all is abiding in the serenity of truth ;
For this will free thee from the thoughts of ego and
non-ego.

Looking into the hearts of all beings,
Detach thyself from falsehoods and unrealities,
In order to attain a world of realities.

Measure all the worlds,
 Drink up all the oceans,
 And be the possessor of the power that is great and
 miraculous.

However exquisite one's physical eye,
 It has no power to perceive the Trainer ;
 The assertion of its power betrays a hallucination,
 And the inability to understand the incomparable Law.

The form of the Tathāgata
 No one of the world is able to see ;
 He may think of him for ages,
 And yet how can he realise his power divine ?

The Tathāgata has no form,
 For he is formless and serene ;
 Yet from his transcendental nature in which everything
 is found,
 He manifesteth himself in response to our needs.

The Perfect Law of all the Buddhas is incomprehensible,
 As it is beyond the power of the understanding ;
 It never combines or dissipates,
 It is eternally serene.

The Tathāgata is not a physical body,
 And if you think truthfully and cling not to form,
 You will obtain an unfettered understanding which will
 permit you to his presence,
 The Tathāgata who is where words fail and thoughts
 vainly struggle.

Transcending the dualism of mind and body,
 The Tathāgata is released from all hindrances, inner and
 outer,

And his thoughts are eternally undivided,
 Unfathomably deep, and have no attachments.

The Tathāgata in his enlightenment
 Illumineth all the worlds ;
 His pure, all-knowing eye
 Penetrateth everywhere, deep and far.

The one is manifested in the immeasurable,
 And the immeasurable in the one ;
 Knowing the nature of all things,
 The Tathāgata revealeth himself everywhere.

The Body has no whence,
 No whither either ;
 It is unreal,
 Yet revealeth itself in many a form.

All the worlds are born of illusion,
 That has no substantial existence ;
 And the true nature of all this
 The Buddha alone knoweth.
 He who thus understands
 Sees the Leader.

The Buddha's wisdom is unfathomable,
 And his deep doctrines have no parallel,
 He hath gone to the other shore, beyond the ocean of
 birth and death ;
 His life is unlimited,
 His light is incomparable ;
 Eternally free from the burning of passions,
 He hath accomplished great merits.

Even the depths of Buddhism are sounded,
 As if they were his own nature ;

Viewing things past, present, and future,
He knoweth no fatigue.

The world of senses he taketh in,
But his mind is free from illusion ;
He seeth all things, yet hath no thoughts of them ;
He revealeth himself in form without attaching himself
thereunto.

Inwardly he is serene in his meditation,
Yet he is unfettered in his thought ;
Viewing things as they are,
He truly understandeth them ;
His mind is concentrated in right thought,
And he always practiseth the truth of Nirvana.

Holding fast to the Dharma which is hard to practise,
The Bodhisattva exerteth himself, day and night, and is
never tired nor loath ;
Crossing the ocean which is hard to cross,
He roareth like a lion,
“I will now help all beings to cross.”

They are drifting helplessly in the sea of birth and
death,
They are sinking under the waves of lusts and passions,
They are being entangled in the meshes of folly and
confusion,
They are trembling with fear in the darkness of
ignorance ;

They are left alone and without a guide,
Long they have wandered in the paths of evil,
The fires of avarice, anger, and infatuation are ever
consuming them,
And they know no means of deliverance.

Thus going astray from the right path,
 They fall into all manners of evils,
 Because they cling to the thought of an ego,
 There is an endless chain of birth and death.

The wise that have destroyed the cause of ignorance
 Lift the torch of intelligence high,
 And build the boat of the Perfect Law,
 Or construct the bridge of the Law,
 Whereby they carry all that is to be carried
 Across the ocean of birth and death.

In the prison of birth and death,
 Untold sufferings are suffered.
 Old age, disease, and death follow one after another,
 And unceasingly, day and night.

Understanding the deepest truth of all things,
 And practising the wisdom of "skilful device,"
 The Bodhisattva hath vowed to save all things from
 these sufferings:
 This is indeed the life of a Bodhisattva.

He listenth to the unfathomably deep teaching of the
 Buddha,
 And believing it he cherisheth not a shadow of doubt in
 the mind;
 Perceiving the truth calm and serene,
 His heart is altogether devoid of fears;
 And revealing himself everywhere, he is identified with
 all form:
 This the great teacher of men and gods.

Eternity is viewed in one thought,
 Where there is no coming, no going, or no abiding;

Of all things that are and are not,
The Bodhisattva knoweth the whole truth.

The peerless name is resounded throughout the countries
in the ten quarters,
And saveth us from the perils of birth and death ;
It reacheth indeed everywhere in the world,
Preaching the doctrine loaded with deep meanings.

Ever since he made the first offerings to the Buddha,
The Bodhisattva hath enjoyed himself in the deeds of
patience deep in meditation,
He revieweth the truth full of signification,
And leadeth all beings joyfully towards the Tathāgata.

Where the Bodhisattva practiseth this teaching,
He will soon realise the truth unsurpassed :
A heart filled with delights pure and immeasurable,
Expandeth all over the ten quarters,
Preaching the truth to inhabitants of all lands,
Who are thereby cleansed of defilements and come to
abide in the truth of sameness.

When the Bodhisattva thus behaveth himself,
He will be a companion of the Tathāgata.

The Tathāgata transcends form and is eternally serene,
But let no one regard him as apparitional ;
If he does he is like a blind man,
He may face the Tathāgata and yet knoweth him not.

Those who cling to illusions
Cannot see the Tathāgata,
But who is free from the idea of possession
Will see the true Buddha.

Sometimes beings countless in number are all undergoing
their manifold karma :

Forms, inside and outside the ten quarters, are beyond
measure,

And so is the Body of the Buddha filling every point of
the compass ;

He who knows this is the Great Leader truly.

It is like those innumerable lands occupying space,
The whence and whither of which are unknowable ;

It is again like the creation and destruction of the world
taking place no one knows how ;

So is the Body of the Buddha filling the vacuity of
space.

(To be continued)