

THE VIMALAKĪRTI SUTRA

(Translated by HOKEI IDUMI)

CHAPTER XI

THE LIFE OF A BODHISATTVA

At that time the Buddha was preaching the law in the grove of Āmrāpāli. Then suddenly the earth was seen broad and magnificent and the whole assembly became tinted with golden colour. Ānanda asked the Buddha, "O Blessed One, for what reason is such an auspicious omen that this earth is seen broad and magnificent, and why has the whole assembly become tinted with golden colour?" The Buddha spoke to Ānanda and said: "It is for this reason that Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī, revered and surrounded by the whole assembly, intend to come here, by first producing this auspicious omen."

Then Vimalakīrti spoke to Mañjuśrī: "Let us go and see the Blessed One and revere and honour him together with those Bodhisattvas." Mañjuśrī said; "Well said! let us go; now it is the due time." Then Vimalakīrti through his supernatural power, holding in the palm of his right hand the whole assembly together with the lion-thrones, went to the place where the Buddha was; having arrived there, he got down on the earth; he saluted him touching his feet with bowed head; and walking round him seven times keeping him to his right side, stretching his folded hands towards him with intent mind, he stood on one side; then all those Bodhisattvas leaving their seats greeted the Buddhas, each touching his feet with bowed head and walking round him seven times and stood on one side; and all the great disciples, Śakra, Brahman, and the four guardian gods also, leaving their seats, saluted the Buddha touching his feet with bowed heads and stood on one side.

Then the Blessed One duly returned his salutation to those

Bodhisattvas and commanded them to resume their seats. The whole [assembly] obeying his command resumed the seats. Then the Buddha spoke to Śāriputra: "Hast thou seen that which was wrought by the mighty supernatural power of those Bodhisattvas and those excellent men?" [He replied]: "Yes, I have seen." "What dost thou think of it?" "O Blessed One, I see it; but it is inconceivable to me and beyond my mind and beyond my power of measurement."

Then Ānanda asked the Buddha: "O Blessed One, the perfume which we now inhale has never been inhaled before; what perfume may it be?" The Buddha spoke to Ānanda and said: "This [perfume] issues from the pores of the skin of those Bodhisattvas." Then Śāriputra spoke to Ānanda and said: "Even from the pores of our skin this perfume is issuing." Ānanda asked: "Whence comes this perfume?" [He] said: "Vimalakīrti, the wealthy householder, had received the portion of food from the Buddha of Sarvagandhasugandha and those who partook of the food in his house produce such a perfume from every pore of [the skins of their bodies]."

Ānanda asked Vimalakīrti: "How long does this perfume last?" Vimalakīrti replied: "It will last until the food is exhausted." "When is this food exhausted?" "Seven days will pass before the energy of this food will be exhausted; again Ānanda, if a Śrāvaka who has not yet entered into the ranks of steadfastness partake of this food, he can attain to the ranks of steadfastness before it is exhausted; if [a Śrāvaka who] has entered into the ranks of steadfastness partake of this food, he can obtain liberation of mind before it is exhausted; if one who has not yet cherished the thought towards the Mahāyāna partake of this food he can cherish the thought before it is exhausted; if one who has cherished the thought [towards the Mahāyāna] partake of this food, he can attain to the acquiescence in the eternal law before it is exhausted; if one who has attained to the acquiescence partake of this food, he can attain to the state in which he is bound by one birth only before it is exhausted; just as a medicine called 'the excellent flavour' which has such a peculiarity that one who has taken it can exterminate all

poison of passions before it is exhausted, even so this food exterminates all poison of passions before it is exhausted."

Ānanda spoke to the Buddha and said: "O Blessed One, I have never heard that the food of perfume performs such religious work." The Buddha said: "Indeed it is so, indeed it is so! O Ānanda there is a Buddha country which performs religious work by means of the light of Buddha; there is another which performs religious work by means of the Bodhisattvas who are therein; there is another which performs religious work by means of the beings whom the Buddha teaches; there is another which performs religious work by means of a Bodhi tree; there is another which performs religious work by means of clothes and beds; there is another which performs religious work by means of food; there is another which performs religious work by means of gardens, forests and terraces; there is another which performs religious work by means of the thirty-two signs of perfection and the eighty minor marks of excellence; there is another which performs religious work by the body of Buddha; there is another which performs religious work by means of the sky; by these means all beings are persuaded to the practice of discipline; there is another which performs religious work by means of parables, such as dreams, phantoms, shadows, echoes, reflections in a mirror, moon in water; there is another which performs religious work by means of sounds, words or letters; there is another pure land of Buddha which performs religious work by means of silence, wordlessness and uncreatedness. Thus O Ānanda, conduct, movement and all that which has been done by all the Buddhas are nothing but religious works; O Ānanda there are the four evils, the eighty-four thousand ways of passion which all beings suffer from; yet Buddhas perform religious works even with these. This is said to enter the doctrine of all the Buddhas.

"A Bodhisattva who has entered this doctrine seeing all the pure and excellent lands of the Buddhas neither attaches himself to it nor covets nor is arrogant and seeing all the impure lands of the Buddhas he neither grieves nor cares for nor avoids them. He raises the pure mind towards all the

Buddhas rejoicing in and revering them as those whom he has never seen before. All Buddha-Tathāgatas are equal in virtues, but only in order to teach all beings they manifest the Buddha-lands in different ways.

“O Ānanda, behold all those Buddha-lands; there is variety on the earth, but there is none in the sky, even so there is variety in the physical bodies of the Buddhas, but there is none in their unobstructed wisdom. O Ānanda, all the Buddhas are equal in their physical bodies, in their dignity and births, in their discipline, meditation, wisdom, liberation, and wisdom of liberation, in their ten powers, the [fourfold] fearlessness, and the attributes of their extraordinary qualities, in their greatness of mercy and compassion, in their attitudes, conduct, and longevity of life, in their discourses, teachings, in the perfection of beings, in the purification of the Buddha-lands, and in the equipment of Buddha quality. Therefore the Buddhas are called Samyak-saṃbuddhas, Tathāgatas, and Buddhas. O Ānanda, if I should explain fully the meaning of these three words, it would be impossible for thee to comprehend even though thou shouldst live for a kalpa; it would be impossible to comprehend it even for all beings in the three great Chiliocosms, who may obtain the excellent memory like Ānanda himself, and who may be endowed with the life of a kalpa. Thus, O Ānanda, the Anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi of Buddha is infinite and his wisdom and eloquence are inconceivable.”

Ānanda spoke to Buddha and said: “From this time forth I will never call myself as one who has learned much.” Buddha spoke to Ānanda: “Nay, thou shouldst not be discouraged. And why? Among Śrāvakas I speak of thee as one who has learned much, but not among Bodhisattvas. Stay a while, O Ānanda, as intelligent ones are not to measure Bodhisattvas. Even though all the oceans could be measured, yet meditation, wisdom, memory, eloquence, and all the virtues of Bodhisattvas could never be measured. O Ānanda, ye [Śrāvakas] ought to leave alone the deeds of Bodhisattvas. The supernatural power which this Vimalakīrti manifested for a moment could not be manifested by all the Śrāvakas and Pratyeka-Buddhas even with

their utmost effort counting through hundreds of thousands of Kalpas.”

Then those Bodhisattvas who have come from Sarvagandha-sugandha spoke to Buddha with folded hands and said: “O blessed One, when we saw this land we cherished the thought that it was inferior to ours; but now we repent and renounce this thought. And why? The necessary means of all the Buddhas are so inconceivable that they manifest in order to save all beings different lands of their own according to the needs of all beings. O Blessed One, we pray that thou shouldst give some few words on the law that we may think of [thee] Tathagata when we return to our land.”

Buddha then spoke to those Bodhisattvas: “There is a doctrine which is hindered neither by things limited and things unlimited; and this ye ought to know. What is meant by things limited? They are things created. What is meant by things unlimited? They are things uncreated. A Bodhisattva ought neither to abandon the created nor to attach himself to the uncreated. What is it not to abandon the created? It is this; not to abandon great mercy and compassion; to cherish the thought of omniscience and never to be negligent; even to teach all beings without weariness; ever to remember and practise the law of the fourfold acceptance; not to spare body and life for the protection of the true law; to accumulate a stock of merit without weariness; ever to have the mind abiding in peace with the necessary means and the transference of one’s merit to others; to seek the law diligently; to preach the law without sparing; not to fear entering a life of birth and death as he strives to honour all the Buddhas; to be far above either sorrow in poverty or joy in prosperity; not to despise novices; to revere sages like the Buddhas; to make those who fall into passion return to the right thought; not to deem the pleasure of renunciation the best; not to get attached to one’s own pleasures but to rejoice at other’s pleasures; to regard meditation as the hell; to regard a life of birth and death as a pleasure garden; to regard those who come to seek [the law] as good teachers; to abandon all possessions with the thought for the acquirement

of omniscience; to cherish the thought of rescue and protection when seeing those who break the precepts; to regard the Pāramitās as parents; to regard the laws of requisities for attaining the supreme knowledge as kinsfolk; to do good without limit; to perfect one's own land of Buddha with all adornments of the pure land; to be endowed with perfect signs by practising infinite charity; to purify the body, speech and mind by removing all wickedness; to undergo bravely the countless kalpas of birth and death; never to be weary in hearing of the infinite virtue of Buddha; to slay the enemy of passion with the sword of wisdom; to be far above the Skandhas, the Āyatanas and the Dhātus; to care for all beings for their eternal liberation; to vanquish the army of evil with great diligence; ever to seek the wisdom of unconscious reality; not to abandon things of the world abiding in self-contentment with the fewest possible desires; to follow the world without injuring one's dignity; to lead beings by means of the supernatural wisdom; not to forget what has been learned being in possession of a retentive memory; to exterminate doubts as entertained by all according to their capacities; to preach [the law] without impediments with the perfect eloquence that fulfills every desire; to enjoy the happiness, belonging to gods and men by practising the tenfold goodness with a pure heart; to open the way of the Brahman god by practising the fourfold infinite [mind]; to pray [to Buddha] to preach the law that he may rejoice at it and praise goodness; to obtain the voice of Buddha whereby the body, speech and mind are improved; to obtain the dignity of Buddha whereby good virtues are intensely practised, ever in enhancement of his behaviour; to found an order of Bodhisattvas by teaching the Mahāyāna; not to lose the stock of merit with a mind free from dissipation;—when these things are practised by a Bodhisattva, he is said not to have abandoned the created.

“What is it not to abide in the uncreated? It is not to regard emptiness as something attained even though one practises emptiness; not to regard formlessness and aimlessness as something attained even though one practises them; not to regard causelessness as something attained even though one practises it; not

to shun the accumulating merits though realising transiency [of things]; not to abhor birth and death though meditating on pains of this world; never to become weary of teaching others though realising selflessness [of things]; not to pass to annihilation forever though meditating on annihilation; to practise goodness both in the body and mind though meditating on abandonment; to take refuge in the law though there is no refuge; to care for all beings with the laws of the world though seeing that life has no existence; not to exterminate passions though seeing passionlessness [of things]; to teach beings with the laws of practice though seeing that there is no practice; not to abandon great compassion though seeing emptiness; not to follow the Hinayana though seeing the ranks of certainty; not to neglect merit, meditation and wisdom so long as the original vow is not fulfilled, though seeing that all things are false, having neither substance nor personality nor master nor form; to practise such things is said of a Bodhisattva not to be abiding in the uncreated.

“Again he abides not in the uncreated as he is endowed with a stock of merit; he abandons not the created as he is endowed with wisdom; he abides not in the uncreated as he possesses the great mercy and compassion; he abandons not the create as he fulfils the original vow; he abides not in the uncreated as he accumulates the medicine [of the law]; he abandons not the created as he distributes the medicine [of the law]; he abides not in the uncreated as he knows the maladies of beings; he abandons not the created as he extirpates the maladies of beings; All the Bodhisattvas, excellent men practising such things, neither abandon the created, nor abide in the uncreated; this is the way of the law called the liberation from the extinguishable as well as from the inextinguishable—ye ought to know.”

Then those Bodhisattvas, having heard this law preached [by Buddha], were filled with great joy, strewed beautiful flowers of many colours and many perfumes all over the three great Chilocosms, and having honoured Buddha, his doctrine, and the Bodhisattvas, worshipped the Buddha by touching his feet with their bowed heads, praised him saying they had never

heard the like before, and spoke thus; “Śākyamuni Buddha has here well exhibited his necessary means.” Having spoken thus, they suddenly disappeared and returned to their country.

CHAPTER XII

BUDDHA AKSHOBHYA

Then the Blessed One asked Vimalakīrti: “Thou wishest to see the Tathāgata; in what manner dost thou regard the Tathāgata?” Vimalakīrti said: “Just as I regard the reality of my body even so do I regard the Tathāgata. I regard the Tathāgata in this manner: he came not in the past, will not go in the future, and stays not in the present; I regard him neither as form nor as thatness of form, nor as the nature of form; neither as sensation nor as conception nor as confirmation; neither as consciousness nor as thatness of consciousness nor as the nature of consciousness; he is not caused by the four elements; he is even as the void; he is not an aggregate of the six Āyatanas as he is far above eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; he is beyond the three worlds of existence; he is separated from the three dirt; he is in accordance with the three ways of liberation; he is endowed with intelligence yet he is as if not intelligent; he is neither of oneness nor of duality; he is neither of selfhood nor of otherness; he is neither formless nor attached to form; he is neither on this shore nor on that nor in midstream; yet he teaches all beings; he is never annihilated even though realising complete annihilation, he is neither this nor that; he is depending neither on this nor on that; he is known neither by intelligence nor by consciousness; he is neither darkness nor light; he is neither name nor form; he is neither strong nor weak; he is neither pure nor impure; he is not in a definite place yet he is not separated from place; he is neither created nor uncreated; he neither manifests himself, nor is he explainable; he neither gives nor grudges; he neither observes nor violates the precepts; he is neither patient nor not impatient; he is neither diligent nor slothful; he is neither collected nor confused; he is neither intelligent nor ignorant;

he is neither true nor false; he neither comes nor goes; he neither goes out nor returns; he is beyond all modes of speech; he is neither a stock of merit nor not a stock of merit; he is neither deservng of homage nor undeserving of homage; he neither possesses; nor abandons; he is neither endowed with form nor formlessness; he is identical with truth and equal to the nature of the law; he can neither be measured nor be weighed, being far above all degrees and measures; he is neither great nor small; he is neither to be seen nor to be heard; neither to be felt nor to be known; he is liberated from all bondage; he is equal both to the intelligent and to the ignorant; he does not discriminate in anything; in all things he has no attainment, no loss, no corruption, no suffering; in him there is no acting, no doing, no birth, no death; no fear, no sorrow; no joy, no dislike; he knows no past, no future, no present; he is not to be discriminated nor manifested by any words; O Blessed One, such is the personality of the Tathāgata; thus should one regard him; those who regard him thus are said to have right understanding, those who regard him otherwise are said to have false understanding."

Then Śāriputra asked Vimalakīrti: "Whence hast thou come to be born here? Vimalakīrti said: "Is there either going or coming in the law which thou hast obtained?" Śāriputra said, "There is neither going nor coming." [Vimalakīrti said]: "When there is neither going nor coming, why dost thou ask me saying 'whence hast thou come to be born here?' what dost thou think when a conjurer produces either a man or a woman, is there any going or coming?" Śāriputra said: "There is neither going nor coming; hast thou not heard that Buddha taught that the form of all things was like a phantom?" He replied: "Even so it is; when the form of all things is like a phantom, why dost thou ask me saying 'whence hast thou come to be born here?' O Śāriputra, to leave is a form of destruction shown in unreal objects; to be born is also a form of continuation shown in unreal objects. A Bodhisattva never exterminates his stock of merit even when he goes out, he never lets evils grow even when he is born."

Then Buddha spoke to Śāriputra and said; "There is a land called Abhirati; the Buddha there is called Akshobhya. This Vimalakīrti comes from that land and is born here." Śāriputra said: "I have never heard the like before, O Blessed One, why should this man wish to leave his pure land and come here into a world full of anger and danger?" Vimalakīrti spoke to Śāriputra: "What dost thou think when the sun rises? does it unite with darkness?" He replied: "Nay, when the sun rises there is no longer darkness." Vimalakīrti again asked: "Why does the sun go round the Jambūdvīpa?" He replied: "In order to remove darkness by its brightness." Vimalakīrti said: "Even so is with a Bodhisattva; though he is born in the land of impurity in order to teach all beings, he is never united with the darkness of ignorance, and he only exterminates the darkness of the passions of all beings."

At that time all the assembly earnestly longed to see the Tathāgata Akshobhya and his assembly of Bodhisattvas and Śrāvakas in the land of Abhirati. Buddha knowing the thought of all the assembly spoke to Vimalakīrti and said: "O noble youth, for the sake of all this assembly, let the Tathāgata Akshobhya and his assembly of Bodhisattvas and Śrāvakas in the land of Abhirati be manifested here, all are earnestly longing to see them."

Then Vimalakīrti thought to himself: "I will without rising from my seat, manifest all the land of Abhirati including the Cakravāḍa mountains, the sun, moon, and stars, palaces of deities, serpent-gods, goblins, Brahman deities, the assembly of Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas, towns, villages, men and women, young and old, even the Tathāgata Akshobhya himself in the Bodhi tree and excellent lotus flowers which perform religious works in all the ten quarters; and the three jewelled stairs which connect this Jambūdvīpa with the Trayastriṃśa heaven, and by which all the deities descend to honour the Tathāgata Akshobhya and hear him preach, and by which all beings of this Jambūdvīpa ascend to Trayastriṃśa heaven and see the deities of that heaven and the world Abhirati endowed with these infinite virtues; I will snatch that world with my right hand as the turner of

porcelain snatches his clay and bring it here including its highest heaven Akanishtha as well as its lowest sea level, and show them to all the assembly as one shows a garland in his hand." Having thought thus he entered a contemplation and exercising his supernatural power, he transferred the land Abhirati into this world. The Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas, deities and men in that world who possessed the supernatural power, cried out together and said: "O lord, we are being carried away!" Buddha Akshobhya said: "It is not I that is doing this; it is due to the supernatural power of Vimalakīrti." The other beings who did not possess the supernatural power did not recognise it and knew nothing about their being carried away; there was neither increase nor decrease in the land of Abhirati though it was transferred into this world; there was also no squeezing or compression in this world; it remained as before.

Then Buddha Śākyamuni spoke to the assembly and said: "Have you seen the Tathāgata Akshobhya and his magnificent land Abhirati and his Bodhisattvas pure in life, and disciples who are pure and stainless?" They replied: "O verily we see." Buddha then said: "If a Bodhisattva wishes to obtain such a pure land of Buddha, he should know the path on which the Tathāgata Akshobhya walks."

When the world Abhirati was manifested, fourteen Nayutas of men in this Sahā world cherished the thought of supreme enlightenment. They all wished to be born in the land of Abhirati, and Buddha Śākyamuni gave them his assurance and said: "Ye shall all be born in that land." Then [Akshobhya of] the world Abhirati having finished what he had to do in this world returned to his abode. [This] was witnessed by all the assembly.

Buddha spoke to Śāriputra and said: "Hast thou seen the Abhirati world and the Buddha Akshobhya?" He replied: "O Blessed One, verily I have seen them; may all beings obtain the pure land even as the land of the Buddha Akshobhya, and obtain the supernatural power even as that of Vimalakīrti. O Blessed One, we have received so great a privilege that we could see this man and make ourselves acquainted with him and honour him; but all beings who even hear this scripture in the present

age or after passing of Buddha will also obtain excellent profit. How much more meritorious would it be for them who having heard it, would comprehend, hold, recite, preach, and practise it according to the law. If there be one who has held this scripture in his hand he is said to obtain the mine of the law-treasure. When he recites or explains the meaning of it and practises it according to the doctrine, he will be protected by all the Buddhas. If there be one who honours such a man, he is said to honour the Buddha. If there be one who copies and holds this scripture, his room will be inhabited by the Tathāgata. If there be one who rejoices in hearing this scripture, he will attain omniscience. If he comprehends even one Gāthā of four lines of this scripture and preach it to others, he will receive from Buddha the assurance of attaining supreme enlightenment."

CHAPTER XIII

ON PAYING HOMAGE TO THE LAW

Then Śakra, the king of deities, who was among the assembly spoke to Buddha and said: "Though I have heard several hundred thousands of scriptures while I was waiting on Buddha and Mañjuśrī, yet have I never heard such a scripture as this—the Sūtra of ultimate reality ascertained by the supernatural faculty of Inconceivable Self-Existence. If I understand the meaning proclaimed by Buddha rightly, he who hears, comprehends, holds, and recites this scripture will obtain the law without fail; how much more would it be to practise according to the doctrine! He can close [the gate of] the unhappy existences; he is protected by all the Buddhas; he can repress all the heresies, conquer the enmity of evil, realise the Bodhi, abide in the Bodhi-maṇḍala, and walk in the path along which Tathāgata has walked. O Blessed One, if there be one who holds, recites, and practises this Sūtra, according to the doctrine, I will honour and serve him together with my kinsfolk; whenever this scripture may be found, either in the village, town, forest, or wilderness, I will go thither in order to hear the law together with my kinsfolk and will

cause him to believe who has not believed before, and will protect him who already believes."

Buddha spoke to him and said: "Rightly said! Rightly said! O king of deities, I share thy joy; here in this scripture the inconceivable and supreme enlightenment of all the Buddhas of the past, the present, and the future is fully set forth. Therefore, O king of deities, he who holds, recites, and reveres the scripture is said to honour all the Buddhas of the past, the present, and the future.

"O king of deities, if there be many Tathāgatas so many in number even as the bushes, whether of sugar-cane, bamboo, reed, paddy, or hemp, and the three great Chilocosms may be full of them, and a son or daughter of a noble family will honour, revere, praise, and pay homage to them and dedicate their dwellings to them for the space of one kalpa or thereabout, and after the passing of those Buddhas, he or she will elect a Stūpa of seven jewels containing the perfect body of each of the Tathāgatas as wide as the four worlds and as high as the heaven of Brahman, erecting a pole adorned with all magnificence and do homage to them with all the rarest flowers, all kinds of incense, garlands, banners and music, for the space of one kalpa or thereabout; what dost thou think, O king of deities, is the merit planted by this man much or little?" Śakra, the king of deities, said: "Much indeed, O Blessed One, it is impossible to enumerate his merits even in one hundred thousand millions of kalpas." Buddha spoke to the king of deities: "It should be known that the merits of a son or daughter of a noble family who hearing this scripture of Inconceivable Emancipation comprehends, holds, recites and practises it would obtain greater merits than those. And why? The Bodhi of all the Buddhas springs forth from it; and the essence of the Bodhi is infinite. For this reason the merits are immeasurable."

Buddha again spoke to the king of deities: "Once in the past immeasurable Asamkhyeya kalpas ago, there was a Buddha called Bhaishajyarāja, a Tathāgata, an arhat, one who is perfect in knowledge, and a Sugata, knower of the world, an incomparable one, the tamer of men, teacher of gods and men, Buddha

and Bhagavat. The world was called Mahāvvyūha. The length of life of that Buddha was twenty shorter kalpas. There were thirty-six million nayutas of disciples and twelve millions of Bodhisattvas. O Indra, king of deities, at that time there was a Cakravartin king named Ratnacchatra endowed with the seven treasures, who was the lord of four worlds. There were born of him a thousand princes who were all comely, courageous, and able to repress their enemies. Then Ratnacchatra [the king] with his kinsfolk, honoured the Tathāgata Bhaishajyarāja dedicating a dwelling to him during five kalpas; when those five kalpas had elapsed, he spoke to his thousand princes and said: 'Ye should also honour the Buddha with profound mind even as I do.' Then those thousand princes according to their father's command honoured the Tathāgata Bhaishajyarāja during five kalpas dedicating a dwelling to him and other things. There was one among those princes named Candracchatra who [one day] sat alone and thought to himself: 'Can any homage be superior to this [homage]?' Then through the supernatural power of that Buddha there appeared in the sky a deity who declared: 'No homage is superior to homage to the law.' He asked: 'What is the homage of the law?' The deity replied: 'Thou hadst better go to the Tathāgata Bhaishajyarāja to inquire concerning this matter; he would fully tell thee what is meant by the homage to the law.' Then Candracchatra the prince having gone to the Tathāgata Bhaishajyarāja, greeted him touching his feet with bowed head, seated on one side and asked the Buddha: 'O Blessed One, of all homages homage to the law is most excellent; what is meant by the homage to the law?'

"Buddha replied: 'O noble youth, homage of the law is this: the profound scriptures preached by Buddha are so subtle and so difficult to understand that all the world is unwilling to accept and believe them; so they are pure without blemish; they are unobtainable by mere discrimination or thought; they are enclosed in the treasury of virtues of a Bodhisattva; they are sealed with the seal of Dhāraṇī; they lead to the state from which one never retreats; they perfect the six Pāramitās; they rightly discriminate the meaning [of all things]; they are in accordance

with the law of Bodhi; they are superior to all other scriptures; they lead to great mercy and compassion; they are far above all the temptation of evils and heresies; they are in harmony with the law of causation; they transcend self, individuality, personality and durability; they are empty, formless, aimless and causeless; they are capable of elevating beings to a seat in the Bodhimandala and roll the wheel of the law; praised by all deities, serpent gods, and Gandharvas; they are capable of leading beings to the mine of virtues of Buddha; they comprehend all wisdom of the wise and the holy; they preach the paths walked by Bodhisattvas; they are based on the doctrine that all things are real; they unmistakably proclaim the doctrine of transiency, sorrow, emptiness, selflessness, and annihilation; they are capable of saving all who are guilty of trespassing the precepts; they are capable of causing fear to evil ones; heretics and those who are greedy; they are praised by all the Buddhas and saints; they turn against the sorrows of birth and death, and show the happiness of Nirvāṇa; they are preached by all the Buddhas of the three worlds in the ten quarters—if a man hear such scriptures as these, comprehend, hold, recite, and through the power of the necessary means, discriminate, explain, and make them manifest clearly to all beings, and thereby preserve the law, he for these reasons is said to pay homage to the law.

“‘Again, to practise according to the teaching of all the law, to be in accordance with the twelve chains of causation, to be far above all heresies, to attain to the acquiescence in the eternal law, to be absolutely selfless, to be without personality, yet to be free from dissension, free from discord concerning the law of cause and effect, to be free from ideas of possession, not to depend on words but to depend on meaning, not to depend on knowledge but to depend on wisdom, not to depend on incomplete scriptures but to depend on complete scripture, not to depend on man but to depend on the law, to be in accordance with the nature of things, not to cherish any heretical views, to have no abode, and no refuge, to regard the twelve chains of causation as working in an endless circle thus as follows:—as ignorance is completely annihilated, all component things are

completely annihilated, until we come to, as birth is completely annihilated, old age and death are also completely annihilated. This is paying homage to the law, which is superior to all other homages.' ”

Buddha again spoke to Indra, the king of deities, and said: “Candracchatra the prince, having heard such doctrines as these from the Buddha Bhaishajyarāja, attained to acquiescence in meekness; then he having removed the jewelled raiment and ornaments from his body, effered them to Buddha and spoke to him saying: ‘O Blessed One, after the complete passing of Tathāgata I will pay homage to the law and protect the true law; I pray that thou through thy power, wouldst show me thy compassion and raise me that I may be able to repress the enmity of evil and realise the life of a Bodhisattva.’ Knowing his profound thought Buddha prophesied for him and said: ‘Thou wilt guard the fortress of the law in the latter days. O Indra, king of deities, then Candracchatra the prince, seeing the purity of the law and hearing the prophecy from Buddha, became a mendicant because of his faith; diligently practised the true law, and in due course obtained the five supernatural powers, and walking in the path of Bodhisattva, attained the unimpeded eloquence of Dhāraṇī, after the passing of the Buddha, through his supernatural power and the power of eloquence of Dhāraṇī, during ten shorter kalpas, propagated the wheel of the law which the Tathāgata Bhaishajyarāja caused to roll.

“Having protected the law and having been diligent in practice, Candracchatra the Bhikshu taught millions of millions of men enabling them to raise their minds which never retreat from supreme enlightenment, and enabled fourteen nayutas of men to cherish deeply the thought of Śrāvaka and Pratyeka-Buddha, and caused countless beings to be born in the heavens.

“O Indra king of deities, thou shouldst not think that Ratnacchatra the [Cakravartin] king, is the other than the Tathāgata Ratnatejas who has attained to the Buddhahood; the thousand princes are but the thousand Buddhas in the Bhadrakalpa, beginning with Krakucchanda down to the last Tathāgata Ruci. The Bhikshu Candracchatra is no other than myself.

“Thus, O Indra king of deities, thou shouldst know the essence of this [doctrine] that paying homage to the law is superior to all other homages, and unique and incomparable. Therefore, O Indra king of deities, by paying homage to the law thou shouldst honour the Buddha.”

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMMISSION OF THE LAW

At that time Buddha spoke to Maitreya and said: “O Maitreya I now give over to thee the Sūtra leading to supreme enlightenment, which I have gathered during countless millions of Asamkyeya kalpas of the past. In the generations that follow after the passing of Buddha, ye should all widely proclaim and propagate this scripture through your supernatural powers in this Jambūdvīpa and never permit it to become extinct. And why? If there be in the later generations, either sons or daughters of a noble family, or deities or serpent-gods, or goblins, or Gandharvas, or Rakshasas, who cherishing the thought of supreme enlightenment, find pleasure in the great law, but fail to hear such scripture as this, great benefits would be lost to them. Such men as these, hearing such scriptures, will surely entertain great faith in them, cherish the rare thought [or enlightenment], and reverently preach them in detail to all beings so that they will derive benefits therefrom.

“O Maitreya, it should be known that there are two kinds of Bodhisattvas. Who are they? The one is those who are fond of phrase and rhetoric, the other is those who can really and unflinchingly attain to the truth with all its deep meaning. Those who delight in phrase and rhetoric should be known as but novices among Bodhisattvas. Those who can understand [the knowledge of] such a profound scripture as this, stainless and free from attachment, and who are ever fearless, able to enter it, by hearing become pure in mind, hold it, recite it, and practise it according to its teaching, should be regarded as having been long in discipline in the ways of Bodhisattvahood.

“O Maitreya, there are two ways by which novices among Bodhisattvas may fail to attain to the conviction in this profound doctrine. What are they? First, when they hear this scripture which has never been heard before, they may fear and doubt that they may not be able to follow it, and not believing it they may slander it saying: I have never heard the like before; whence comes it? Secondly, although they may hold and explain this profound scripture, yet they are not intimate with it, nor do they honour it, nor do they revere it, but often do they find fault with it. Those who behave either in one way or in the other should be known as novices among Bodhisattvas; they harm themselves and can never conquer their minds in the profound doctrine.

“Again, O Maitreya, there are two ways by which Bodhisattvas though comprehending the profound doctrine yet harm themselves and can never attain to the acquiescence in the eternal law. What are they? To despise novices among Bodhisattvas and not to teach them is the one, and although they comprehend the profound doctrine, yet to explain it according to their own ideas is the other; these are the two ways.”

Maitreya Bodhisattva having heard these words spoke to Buddha and said: “O Blessed One, I have never heard the like before. It is indeed as Buddha has spoken. I will remove with my utmost effort such false conceptions as these and hold fast on the works of supreme enlightenment, which were accumulated by Tathāgata during these countless Asaṃkhyeya kalpas of the past. If there be in the future a son or daughter of a noble family who shall seek the Mahāyāna I will enable them to put even in their own hands this scripture, so that they can hold it, recite it, and fully explain it for the sake of others. O Blessed One, if there be in the future any one who can hold it, recite it, and fully explain it for the sake of others, it should be known that he is established by the supernatural power of Maitreya.”

Buddha said: “Rightly said! Rightly said! O Maitreya, it is indeed as thou sayest. I rejoice in it sharing thy joy.” Then all the Bodhisattvas stretching forth their folded hands

said to Buddha: "We, after the passing of Tathāgata, will widely proclaim and propagate the law of supreme enlightenment in the lands of all the ten quarters, and enable those who preach the law to obtain this scripture."

Then the four guardian gods spoke to Buddha. "O Blessed One, if there be any who recite and explain this scripture anywhere, either in the town or village or forest or wilderness, I will go thither together with all of my retinue and kinsfolk, in order to hear the law and to protect him, so that as far as a hundred yojanas of his presence no [evil] may have opportunity to tempt him."

Then Buddha spoke to Ānanda: "Thou shouldst widely proclaim and propagate this scripture." Ānanda said: "Well [O Lord], I have already grasped the essence of this scripture; but, O Blessed One, what should this scripture be called?" Buddha spoke to Ānanda: "This scripture should be called 'That Which is preached by Vimalakīrti (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*)' and also 'The Doctrine of Inconceivable Emancipation.' Thou shouldst remember thus."

When Buddha preached this scripture Vimalakīrti, the wealthy householder, Mañjuśrī, Śāriputra, Ānanda, and all the deities, Asuras, and all of the great assembly, having heard that which was preached by Buddha, greatly rejoiced in it, believed in it, and practised it.

THE END.