

THE AVATAMSAKA SUTRA (KEGON-KYO)

(*Epitomised*)

CHAPTER IV

AT that moment all the Bodhisattvas (菩薩) and Devarājas (天王) that were assembled to listen to the various doctrines of the Buddha conceived an idea to ask him questions concerning them, when, through the miraculous power of the Buddha, the following gāthās were heard rising from among the offerings :

By virtue of the discipline practised throughout innumerable kalpas,

The Buddha obtained enlightenment by himself, and appeared on earth,

And in the innumerable kalpas that are to follow,

He will be like unto rain and cloud to the parching world.

He giveth all beings power by putting an end to their doubts,

He giveth them the bliss of perfect enlightenment by brushing off all the sufferings of life.

The Bodhisattvas innumerable,

Folding their hands with singleness of heart look up to the Most Exalted One.

May we be blessed,

By entering truly upon the path of the Dharmarāja (法王),

By abiding immovably in this exalted state,

And by witnessing the Buddha's infinite virtues !

The Buddha-land is as limitless as the ocean ;
 A world of sentient beings is also as boundless as the
 ocean,
 The world of spirituality is absolutely beyond human
 comprehension,
 And the means by which all sentient beings disciplined
 by the Buddha are infinite ;—
 May we be informed of all these !

The Buddha who read all these thoughts entertained by
 the Bodhisattvas emitted from his countenance rays of spiri-
 tuality infinitely majestic. These rays filled all the worlds,
 formed all the worlds, poured out blessings like clouds over
 all worlds, and expounded the holy doctrines of the Buddha
 for the sake of the Bodhisattvas, who through these rays were
 enabled to see into the World of Lotus-Treasure infinite in
 extension. The Bodhisattvas, by virtue of the miraculous
 power of the Buddha and enveloped in these rays, sang as
 follows :

Teaching all sentient beings through innumerable kalpas,
 The Buddha hath now attained perfect enlightenment,
 This inmost heart and pure faith are solemnly guarded,
 Fulfilling all the deeds belonging to the Bodhisattva,
 He resteth in the power indescribably solid.

His exquisite voice resoundeth all through the ten quarters
 of the universe,
 Filling up all the minds with the wisdom of Truth ;
 Therefore, O ye, sons of the Buddha, who are in posses-
 sion of innumerable excellent virtues, come unto Tathā-
 gata (如來),
 Who now preacheth the Vows made by all the Buddhas
 past, present, and future,
 And in whose one sentence are embodied innumerable
 holy Scriptures.

Think of the ocean of wisdom in the Buddha's possession,
 How limitless! how glorious!
 The Law of Absolute Truth is revealed there in its
 perfection,
 Universally illuming all the holy doctrines.

CHAPTER V

At that moment all the Bodhisattvas, limitless in number,
 with all their retainers came from all the quarters to the holy
 assemblage, and bathed by the rays of spirituality they all
 sang out :

The light of the Buddha,
 With a voice most exquisitely melodious,
 Preacheth about the deeds of the Bodhisattva ;
 These merits abounding,
 Have filled every quarter of the world.

In every one of these rays there are innumerable rays,
 The Buddha's mercy and compassion, who can fathom
 its limits?
 To see all things with an eye of wisdom,
 This is where a son of the Buddha abideth.

All the Buddha-lands are revealed at the point of a
 single hair,
 And all the worlds are shaken,
 And yet there are no beings cherishing any sense of fear.

In every particle of dust there are present Buddhas in-
 numerable,
 Revealing innumerable worlds of indescribable sublimity ;
 And they are perceived in one thought,
 And all the kalpas past, present, and future are also
 manifested in one thought :

This the spiritual power of the Buddha, how free and unobstructed!

The deeds of Samantabhadra (普賢) are fulfilled in perfection,

And all sentient beings are thereby thoroughly cleansed,
O ye, sons of the Buddha, through the power of his spiritual freedom,

Every particle, even the smallest roareth like unto a lion.

At that moment the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, through the miraculous power of the Buddha, looked into all the worlds and all the deeds and desires and pleasures of sentient beings, he also looked upon all the Buddhas past, present, and future. Having finished the survey he spoke to the congregation of the great Bodhisattvas gathering like the ocean: "O ye, sons of the Buddha, the rise and fall of all the Buddha-lands, and the wisdom of the Buddhas which is free from defilement,—these are beyond the limits of our understanding. But, by virtue of the miraculous power of the Buddha, I will now preach to you concerning the holy doctrines of the Buddhas to make all sentient beings enter into the Buddha's wisdom as deep as the ocean."

Samantabhadra then rose from his meditation, deep and far-extending, when the world shook in six different ways and the brilliant golden coloured clouds decorated with the precious treasures spread all over the sky, and made all sentient beings feel within themselves a sense of repose and joy. Every hair-hole in the body of the Tathāgata and the variously illuminating rays sang forth in the following gāthās:

The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra manifesting himself in all the Buddha-lands,

Sitteth on a Lion-seat ornamented with sacred lotus-flowers;

And again manifesting himself in infinite forms,

Practising all the meritorious deeds also countless in number,
 He preacheth the Law with a most exquisite voice and in perfect eloquence.

The reason why he enjoyeth such a wonderful power of freedom,
 Is because he hath grasped the very principle of the vows originally made by the Buddha;
 His apparent body, like unto empty space,
 Cometh from the suchness of things and dependeth not upon the Buddha-land :

In order to teach all beings according to their endowments,
 He manifesteth himself in infinite forms.

At that moment the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra wishing to gladden the hearts of the audience, recites the following gāthās :—

While the wisdom of the Buddha is as deep and his merits are as boundless as the ocean,
 Reaching the limits of the Buddha-lands which extend infinitely,
 Each imagines, according to his vision and capacity,
 That the Wheel of the Law is made to revolve just for his own sake.

As all sentient beings are as unfathomable as the ocean,
 So is the spirituality of Buddhahood beyond the understanding.

All beings are ever hankering after evil things, and attached to falsehoods,
 And are unable to understand the truth that knowth no equal.

When your minds are fed in the spring of merits,

And come in contact with the wise,
 You always put yourselves under the protection of all
 the Buddhas,
 Whereby ultimately realising the true wisdom.

Those who are kept away from every flattery are pure
 in heart,
 Whose compassion knows no limits, and whose faith is
 ever progressive,—
 They will listen to the Law and be blessed with infinite
 joy.

All the Buddha-lands and all the Buddhas themselves,
 Are manifested in my own being, freely and without
 hindrance,
 And even at the point of a single hair a Buddha-land is
 perceivable.

At that moment Samantabhadra addressed to the as-
 semblage of the Bodhisattvas, thus: "O ye, sons of the
 Buddha, every one of the world is made up from a combina-
 tion of causes and conditions as innumerable as particles of
 dust. Either through the miraculous power of the Buddha,
 or from the naturalness of things, or from the karma (業) of
 sentient beings, or from the power inherent in the enlightened
 minds of the Bodhisattvas, or as the result of the meritorious
 deeds accumulated by the Buddha, all the worlds countless in
 number, have come into existence."

Then the Bodhisattvas recited more gāthās:

The spiritual state of all beings is beyond comprehension,
 And from their karma arise all kinds of worlds;
 When the minds are polluted the country grows defiled,
 As their karma varies so do their worlds.

When a Bodhisattva practiseth the deeds of mercy (or
Samantabhadra),

His walk will be in a world always pure and immaculate,
 And his merits are like those of the Buddha,
 Giving birth to infinite worlds like those of the Tathāgata.

The Buddha-lands as innumerable as particles of dust,
 Are raised from one thought cherished in the mind of
 the Bodhisattva of mercy (*Samantabhadra*),
 Who, practising meritorious deeds in numberless kalpas,
 hath led all beings to the Truth ;
 A Buddha-land resteth in every particle of dust,
 And the spirit of the Buddha like a cloud covereth and
 protecteth it.

All the Buddha-lands rise from one's own mind,
 And have infinite forms,
 Sometimes pure, sometimes defiled they are in various
 cycles of enjoyment or suffering,
 All things are ever revolving and ever changing.

The ocean of karma defies measurement,
 And even at the end of a single hair,
 Buddha-lands, infinite and boundless, are seen in full
 decoration.

From time out of mind Samantabhadra (普賢) hath come
 in contact with the wise and holy,
 And hath practised all deeds pure and miraculously free,
 Whereby all beings without exception are bathed in a
 spring of mercy,
 And all the Buddha-lands are on that account thoroughly
 cleansed.

With a heart infinitely pure and immaculate,
 He firmly believeth in the Buddha ;

As the power of salvation hidden in Patience (*Kṣānti*
忍) is free from defilement,
So all Buddha-lands expanding like the ocean are most
exquisitely decorated.

The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra further talked about the
appearance of the Buddha on earth in this wise :

With means countless in number,
Creating all the Buddha-lands,
In response to the yearnings of sentient beings,
The Buddha hath come to the world.

The spiritual body of the Tathāgata is incomprehensible,
With no form, with no materiality, nothing is comparable
to it ;

However, he assumeth a form for the sake of sentient
beings,
Whereby making himself visible to those who receive his
instructions.

He preacheth sometimes the vehicle incomprehensible,
Sometimes the One Buddha Vehicle ;
For in response to the yearnings of sentient beings,
He knoweth infinite ways of leading them to the Truth.
He who hath attained perfect enlightenment all by himself,
Saveth sometimes only the chosen few,
But sometimes beings numberless he delivereth in a
period of one thought.

The Buddha's voice reacheth throughout the ten quarters
of the world,

In response to the yearnings of all beings,
And never ceaseth even to the end of eternity.
Rising from the overflowing ocean of mercy,
And exhausting all possible means of deliverance,
The Buddha revealeth himself to the eyes of all beings.

Then the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra proceeded to talk about the Universe of Lotus-treasure. "O ye, sons of Buddha, this universe of Lotus-treasure is the one originally created by Vairocana Buddha (盧遮那) by practising during innumerable kalpas all the deeds of Bodhisattva. During each kalpa he made offerings to the Tathāgatas as numberless as particles of dust, and in each Buddha-land he practised all the meritorious deeds based on his vows which were also as numberless as particles of dust."

This Buddha-land was praised in the following songs.
 This land is ornamented with the precious treasures,
 Each of which emits, like a cloud, rays of light,
 Destroying all the sufferings of life and establishing all
 beings in the Way.

Scented water is overflowing in the lakes,
 Where the holy flowers in bloom are shining and whirling
 about,
 And voices of joy are heard everywhere in the land.
 On the other side of the railings mounted with pearls,
 The holy trees in rows stand on either side of the
 passageway,
 And a music melodiously enlightening,
 Is exquisitely played praising the Three Treasures (三寶),

The network of treasures rubbing against one another
 produces a sound like a Buddha's voice,
 The Law of all the Bodhisattvas and of all the Buddhas
 Together with deeds of Samantabhadra and voices of the
 Buddha's vows,
 Are always heard on that side of the spiritual world.

(To be continued)