

THE BACKGROUND AND EARLY USE OF THE BUDDHA-KṢETRA CONCEPT

CHAPTER II.

THE FIELD IN THE BODHISATTVA-CAREER

- A. A BUDDHA'S FUNCTION IN HIS FIELD.
- B. HOW HE OBTAINS HIS FIELD—ITS PLACE
IN HIS CAREER.

- i. As the place where he pursues his
career.*
- ii. As the Ideal Goal of his career.*
- iii. Meaning of "Purifying the Field."*

In the preceding chapter we considered the background of the notion of a Buddha's field. We tried to discover what ideas lay behind the development of such a concept, and particularly what ideas about Buddha's relation to the cosmos seem likely to have led up to the three types of Buddha-field which appear in Buddhaghosa.

We saw that these three types¹ really involved but two different conceptions of Buddha's relation to the universe:² the abstract conception of (the) Buddha as knower of the whole cosmos (embodied in the notion of his infinite *visaya-khetta*), and the concrete and personal conception of (a) Buddha as exercising authority and influence over a certain range of world-systems (embodied in the *jāti-* and *āṇā-khettas*.)

We found that the former conception had its roots in the earliest Buddhist thought. We found a good many ideas in earlier Hīnayāna literature dealing in some ways with Buddha's knowledge of the world expressed in such terms

¹ See page 216(18).

² See page 241(43).

as Buddha's *visaya* and *gocara*, and in the early-argued doctrine of his omniscience. But the background of the idea of his specifically and spatially limited magic influence and authority was much more difficult to discover. We did find in the *Jātaka* rather well-developed notions of Buddha's magical beneficent influence (at the time of his birth, especially) : but in the early scriptures only the barest rudiments of this sort of thought could be found—in the ideas of the *parittās*—and even in the *Jātaka* there seemed to be little if any notion of *spatial limitation* of this influence, or any concept of Buddha's *sovereignty* over any *particular* area.

For the history of these ideas of Buddha's *particular local sovereignty* we shall have to go beyond Hīnayāna backgrounds, for the forces at work in the development of such ideas are the forces which produced the Greater Vehicle; they cannot be understood from within Hīnayāna tradition alone. We have already referred to one factor in this development—the extension of the cosmos. There was no need to mark out limits to Buddha's influence when the universe was thought of as comprising only one, or ten-thousand, world-systems, and when there was thought to be only one Buddha at a time. But the growing elaboration and multiplication of the universe must have contributed to the rise of belief in many contemporaneous Buddhas, and consequently to the necessity of limiting the range of influence of each one. This development concerned Buddha's relationship to the physical universe, but the Buddha field as we shall see it in typical Mahāyāna scriptures is far more than a certain unit of worlds. It is a way of expressing the relationship of a Buddha or future-Buddha to the creatures he has undertaken to lead to maturity. Its background can be understood only by going deeper than cosmology as well as beyond the confines of the Lesser Vehicle and investigating the roots of the concept of a Buddha's sovereignty over his particular world in his (ethical) relationship to the *world of creatures*.

In the course of this search we must ask three questions :

A. How is a Buddha's function or position in his field conceived in Mahāyāna thought? What does his authority entail? What is he there for?

B. How does each future Buddha acquire such a position? What part does the field play in his career as a Bodhisattva?

C. How did the notion of such a position and such a duty in relation to creatures, arise in the history of Buddhist thought?

We shall try to deal with the first two of these questions in the present Chapter (II). The third chapter will be devoted to an attempt to answer the third question.

We shall find that a full answer to the first question will grow out of what we discover in trying to answer the second, but we may at the outset try to get at least a preliminary picture of the way in which a Buddha's relation to his field—the *creatures* in his field—was conceived by early Mahāyāna Buddhists. As we go on, this picture will be enlarged and filled in by what we learn about what a Bodhisattva had to do in order to become a Buddha in a field.

A. A BUDDHA'S FUNCTION IN HIS FIELD.

A Buddha's primary function is *teaching the creatures in his Buddha-field*, according to the *Lotus* and *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Sukhāvati-Vyūha* and other representative Mahāyāna scriptures. His characteristic activity is *preaching the Dharma*, helping others to reach enlightenment. One of his most familiar epithets is *lokanāyaka*, guide of the world; he is frequently spoken of as "teacher of gods and men"¹ (*devānāṃ manuṣyāṇāṃ ca nātha, or śāstā*).

When the 18,000 Buddha-fields are illuminated by a ray of light from the Blessed One's *urnākośa*, in one of those cosmic apocalypses so characteristic of the *Lotus, Buddhas*

¹ This phrase is familiar in Pali—e.g. *Aṅguttara*, i. 151. For its Skt use see *Lotus* 65 l. 6—*passim*.

*preaching the Dharma*¹ are seen in all the Buddha-fields. Maitreya, in wonder at the spectacle, observes "how the 18,000 Buddha-fields appear variegated, beautiful, extremely beautiful, having Tathāgatas as their leaders, Tathāgatas as their guides."²

According to the *Lotus*,³ these fields over which the Buddhas preside fill the whole realm of existence "down to the great Hell Avīci and to the limits of being (*bhavāgra*)."⁴ They are inhabited by creatures in all the six *gatis* or states of existence,⁵ but among their inhabitants the *Lotus* men-

¹ *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* 6, l. 11: "And whatever Buddhas, Blessed Ones, in those fields stay, remain, tarry, they all became visible, and the dharma preached by them could be heard in entirety by all beings."

Gāthās p. 9, § 7: "I see also the Buddhas, those king-lions; revealing, they analyse the Dharma, comforting(?) many koṭis of creatures and emitting sweet-sounding voices."

8: "They emit, each in his own field, a deep, sublime wonderful voice while proclaiming this Buddha-dharma by means of myriads of koṭis of illustrations and proofs." Cf. Gāthā 76: "After rousing and stimulating many Bodhisattvas," etc.

² *Ibid.* p. 8, l. 7. Tathāgatapūrvamgamāni, Tathāgatapariṇāyākāni . . . (tr. p. 9).

³ P. 6, line u (tr. p. 7).

⁴ For discussion of *bhavāgra*, see *Abhidharmaakośa*, viii, p. 75.

⁵ *ye ca teṣu buddhaksetreṣu ṣaṭsu gatiṣu sattvāḥ samvidyante sma* (p. 6, line 9). Elsewhere, however, even in this same text, in other descriptions of the Buddha-kṣetra it is as definitely asserted that the "field" is devoid of hells and the lower states of being. See especially Ch. VI, tr. p. 148: "His Buddha-field will be . . . free from beings of the brute creation, hell, and the host of demons."

Ch. VIII, Gāthā 19: "No womankind shall be there, nor fear of the places of punishment or of dismal states." For other expressions of this paradisaical conception of the field see *Sukh.*, esp. § 18, 19, 20, 24.

This contradiction illustrates two diverse ways of conceiving the Buddha-field. According to one, it is a sort of ideal world characterised by marvelous adornments in its physical landscape and by ideal qualities in its inhabitants; according to the other, each Buddha-field is simply one of the myriads of worlds of which this universe is composed. As such it is practically synonymous with *lokadhātu*, or a certain aggregate of *lokadhātus*, and naturally includes all conditions of being. As this *Saha*-world with its hells and animal-rebirth is the Buddha-field of Śākyamuni, so other worlds with their hells and six *gatis* are the fields of other Buddhas. This conception is expressed in *Siks.* (325, tr. 290): "Whatever hells there are in the infinite fields of the Buddhas. . . ."

tions especially "bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, male and female lay-disciples, Yogins, those who have obtained the fruition (of the Brahmācaryā) and those who have not yet obtained the fruition." There seem to be also Buddhas who have entered into Nirvāṇa (perhaps Pratyekabuddhas?) and stūpas containing their relics! The most important inhabitants of the Buddha-fields are the *Bodhisattvas* who pursue their Bodhisattva-career under the guidance of some "Jina."¹

They are called the "jewel-adornments" of his field.² To them he preaches his most profound sermons; for them he produces those miraculous illuminations and shakings of Buddha-fields, with rains of celestial flowers, which are the and also in *Sukhāvātī* § 39, p. 60, line 2 ff. (tr. 60): "Whatever black mountains, Merus, great Merus.....etc.....(which are specifically excluded in most descriptions of the Buddha-kṣetra) exist everywhere in hundred thousand koṭis of Buddha-fields....." For a philosophical answer to the problem raised by this contradiction see end of Chapter VI.

¹ *Lotus* I, gāthā 13: "I see in many fields what Bodhisattvas (many) as the sand of the river Ganges, many thousands of koṭis (of them) are producing enlightenment by various energy."

Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā (German tr. p. 137): The Bodhisattvas say, "We wish to hear this Prajñāpāramitā in detail from the Tathāgata.....Akṣobhya, and from these beings following the Bodhisattva-yāna who in this Buddha-field live the Brahma-caryā."

² Subhūti's vyākaraṇa (*Lotus* VI, gāthā 21) "In (that field) will be many Bodhisattvas to turn the wheel that cannot be turned back; endowed with keen faculties they will under that Gīna, be the ornaments of that Buddha-field." Cf. gāthā 29 of the same chapter Mahākātyāyana's vyākaraṇa.

Cf. Śāriputra's vyākaraṇa (tr. p. 66-67): "The Bodhisattvas of a Buddha-field...are called ratnas, and at that time there will be many Bodhisattvas in that lokadhātu (=Buddha-kṣetra, see p. 65, line 8-9) called 'Viraja'—innumerable, incalculable, inconceivable, unparallelled, immeasurable, indeed surpassing computation except by Tathāgata-computation (66, line 4)...."

"Now further at that time the Bodhisattvas in that Buddha-field shall become stepping upon jewel-lotuses. And not performers of duty for the first time (anādikarmikās) shall those Bodhisattvas be; having roots of merit collected through a long period and having followed the Brahma-caryā under many hundred thousands of Buddhas they are praised by the Tathāgata, intent upon Buddha-knowledge, skilled in all leading to (or by) dharma, gentle, mindful, of Bodhisattvas of such a sort shall that Buddha-field be full." (66, 1. 10).

preludes to a particularly important Dharma-Exposition.¹ For the sake of their enlightenment² he uses his magic power (*anubhāva*)³ to enable them to go from field to field to worship various Buddhas. Even this passive function of the Buddha in his field—*being worshipped* by the Bodhisattvas—has its chief meaning in its fruits⁴ for the Bodhisattvas' enlightenment.

So we see that all of the Buddhas' activities in their fields are phases of their function as *teachers*: teachers of all beings but particularly of the Bodhisattvas. The fields and even the Buddhas themselves seem to exist primarily for the sake of the Bodhisattvas, rather than for the Buddhas! Since most Mahāyāna treatises were written not for perfect Buddhas but for creatures still "on the way" it is

¹ For this use of the Buddha-fields see Ch. IV.

² Often we read of the relation between a Buddha and the Bodhisattvas in his field being quite personal—as in *Lotus XIV*, gāthās 36 ff. "These Bodhisattvas...so innumerable, incomparable, etc., have I roused excited...fully developed to supreme perfect enlightenment after my having arrived at perfect Sambodhi in this world. I have...perfected these kulaputrā in their Bodhisattvaship."

38: "It is I who have brought them to maturity for bodhi, and it is in my field that they have their abodes; by me alone have they been brought to maturity; these Bodhisattva are my sons."

It is in the *Sukhāvātī* that this relation is developed par excellence in the personal relationships between Amitābha and the Bodhisattvas in his field.

³ *Sukh.* § 8, gāthā 21, p. 16; and § 37, p. 57: "What Bodhisattvas are born in that Buddha-field, they all by (?) one morning meal having gone to other world-systems reverence many hundred-thousand nyutas of koṭis of Buddhas as many as they desire by the magic power of the Buddhas." Cf. *Lotus XII*, p. 271, l. 4, where the Bodhisattvas declare their intention of preaching by the *anubhāva* just of the Blessed One having gone in all directions, (when the Tathāgata is *parinirvṛta*).

Even the *adhiṣṭhāna*-magic power of the Buddhas in *Lalita Vistara*, as we shall see, is exerted for the sake of enlightening creatures. Note the protection supposed to be exercised over young preachers by the Blessed One, *Lotus XIII*, 271, l. 4, where they are said to be *anyalokadhātusthitaiśca tathāgatair avalokitāśca adhiṣṭhitāśca*. Cf. X, 231, l. 1: *bhagavāms ca asmākam anyalokadhātusthito rakṣāvāraṇagupṭim kariṣyati*.

⁴ See below, p. 402(72) ff.

not surprising to find the Buddha-kṣetra spoken of mainly from the Bodhisattva's point of view.

B. HOW HE OBTAINS HIS FIELD—ITS PLACE
IN HIS CAREER

i. As the Place Where he Pursues his Career

To the Bodhisattva a Buddha-field is first of all the *place in which* he strives upward on his career toward Buddhahood. We have just seen something of the importance of the Bodhisattvas in the field. Conditions there are ideal for progress toward enlightenment:¹ there is no turning back.² Creatures become enlightened after only one more birth.³ Mara the evil one can get no advantage over people there and his following becomes there no longer recognisable.⁴ People in the field, especially the disciples and Bodhisattvas, manifest all sorts of good qualities that aid in their attainment of enlightenment.⁵

ii. As the Ideal Goal of his Career

More significant even than as the favourable scene of

¹ The description which follows has been put together in brief from several vyākaraṇas, which should be consulted entire for the atmosphere of supernatural powers attributed to the inhabitants of the future fields.

² *Lotus* VI, p. 155 gāthā 27.

³ *Sukh.* § 8, gāthā 20. See also § 24, p. 44; Whatever beings have ever been born there, or are born there now, or ever will be born there are all firmly attached (*niyatā*) to the Supreme (Truth) (*saṃyaktve*) up to Nirvāṇa, because there is in that field no occasion or manifestation of two rāśis, namely of not being firmly attached, or of being attached to falsehood.

⁴ From Kāśyapa's Vyākaraṇa. *Lotus* VI, p. 145 line 2 ff: na ca tatra Māraḥ pāpiyān avatāraṃ lapsyate na ca Māraparṣat prajūāsyate/bhaviṣyati tatra khalu punar Māraś ca Māraparṣadaśca.

⁵ E.g. *Lotus* VIII, gāthas 16–19, (p. 202, line 5 ff.) The Bodhisattvas there are all endowed with great abhijñā and the pratisaṃvids and are skilled in instructing creatures. See also *ibid.* VI, gāthas 7–8; 21–22; 26–37, and description quoted below p. 390. Pūrṇa's vyākaraṇa. "Their two foods are delight in the Dharma and delight in Dhyāna!"

his career, the Buddha-kṣetra is to the Bodhisattva in the second place the *goal* of his strivings—the *ideal realm* which he must purify during his career and which he hopes to possess when he shall have himself reached Buddhahood.

In the *Lotus* this meaning of the field is uppermost. We find the Buddha-kṣetra mentioned most frequently in connection with prophecies (*vyākaraṇa*) made by the Blessed One concerning the destined Buddhahood of certain Bodhisattvas. When they have finished their Bodhisattva course, he tells them,¹ and have worshipped innumerable Buddhas, they shall at length become thoroughly enlightened and be Tathāgatas, *each in a Buddha-field of his own*. Meanwhile, they must, like Pūrṇa,² be constantly active and energetic in *purifying their own Buddha-fields*, as well as in bringing creatures to maturity.

Such references as to *what must be done about the Buddha-field* during the Bodhisattvas' career, coupled with the frequency with which the field is spoken of in the *future* in such a representative Mahāyāna text as the *Lotus*, show that to the aspiring reader of the Greater Vehicle the Buddha-kṣetra meant far more than a static cosmological-

¹ Thus to the 200 bhikṣus, *Lotus* XX (tr. p. 211): "After accomplishing the Bodhisattva-course and after honouring Buddhas as numerous as the dust atoms of fifty worlds and after acquiring the Saddharma, they shall in their last bodily existence attain Samyak Sambodhi at the same instant....in all directions of space in different worlds, each in his own Buddhakṣetra. They shall all become Tathāgatas by name Ratnaketurājas. The arrays and good qualities of their Buddha-fields shall be equal; equal also shall be the number of their audience-assemblies and Bodhisattvas; equal also shall be their complete extinction, and their true Dharma shall last an equal time." Similar vyākaraṇas appear throughout the *Lotus*, e.g. in Kern's tr. III, p. 65 ff; VI 142 ff, 145, 148, 150-151; VII 194 ff; X 206-207, XIII gāthā 66; XVII p. 337. and IX p. 206.

² *Lotus* tr. p. 193: "Constantly and assiduously he shall be instant in *purifying his own Buddha-field* and bringing creatures to maturity....At last after completing such a Bodhisattva-course, at the end of innumerable incalculable aeons, he shall reach supreme, perfect enlightenment; he shall in the world be the Tathāgata called Dharmaprabhāsa...."

geographical unit. It was, rather, a *functional* concept—an ideal to be striven for, to be “purified,” even, as we shall see, to be *produced*.

It played a vital part throughout the Bodhisattva-career. In the very first bhūmi (stage),¹ according to the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra*, the Bodhisattva arouses his determination (*cittotpāda*) to purify all the (or the whole) Buddha-fields.²

Later in the first bhūmi, according to *Daśabhūmika*, he undertakes ten great aspirations (*praṇidhāna*), the seventh of which is concerned with purification of the field (*Bhūmī* I, JJ, p. 15):

“He makes a seventh great praṇidhāna for the purifying of all (or the whole) Buddha-fields, purifying all the fields as one field and one field as the assembly of fields, adorned with the decorations of the array of the splendour of the immeasurable Buddha-fields, provided with the Way thoroughly purified by removal of all kleśas, filled with beings who are mines of wisdom, having association with the lofty Buddha-*viśaya*, for the sake of delighting the sight of all beings according to their dispositions.”

In other texts the whole praṇidhāna (not merely a few sections of it, as in *Daśabhūmika*) is concerned with the Buddha-field—with the Bodhisattva’s determination to purify it, and to be sure that it and its inhabitants shall be possessed of certain qualities. We shall look at some of these in a moment, after we have finished outlining briefly

¹ Many treatises for the Bodhisattva divide the career into stages or bhūmis. The usual number is ten, but see ch. VI of Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Skt. Literature*, (“The Bhūmis”) for evidence of a prior seven-bhūmi scheme.

² *Daś.* I, SS p. 11: This thought arises on the part of the Bodhisattva—unto yearning for the Buddha-knowledge, approaching the ten powers, unto attaining great self-confidence, unto grasping the equality of the Buddha-dharmas, unto saving the whole creation, unto purifying with great pity and compassion, unto going after knowledge without a remnant in the ten direction, unto purifying all the Buddha-fields together with their members and unto confidence in turning the great wheel of the Dharma.

the place of the Buddha-kṣetra in the various stages of the Bodhisattva-career.

Having "made up his mind" and made his resolution, in the first bhūmi, to purify the field, the Bodhisattva is supposed in the later bhūmis to work at actually purifying it. According to *Daśabhūmika*, this duty belongs particularly to the seventh bhūmi;¹ according to *Prajñāpāramitā*, to the eighth;² according to *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṅkāra*, to eighth, ninth and tenth.³

¹ *Daś.* VII, B, p. 56: The Bodhisattva stationed in the seventh *bodhisattva-bhūmi* betakes himself to the immeasurable realm of beings and undertakes (?—*avatarati*—same verb throughout this passage) the duty of the immeasurable Buddhas, Blessed Ones, which consists in maturing and disciplining (or disciplining for maturity) creatures; he betakes himself to the immeasurable world-systems; he undertakes the *purification of the immeasurable field of the immeasurable Buddhas*...."

In VIII, K, p. 67 the Bodhisattva is said to obtain the Bodhisattva-career-power of the Bodhisattva who has climbed unto this (eighth) bhūmi in a manner characterised by immeasurable body-modification and by immeasurable voice-production, knowledge-production, rebirth production, by *immeasurable field-purification*, creature-maturing, Buddha-worship, awaking to the Dharmakāya....by immeasurable audience-assembly-modification-production...." etc.

² See Dayal p. 277. The bhūmis are described in pp. 1454–1473 of *Praj. Pā Śat.*

³ *MSAL.* XVIII. 48 Comm.—Classification of the practice (making to become [bhāvanā]), of the Samyakprahānas (complete abandonments):....for dwelling in the "Signless" (animitta- i.e. free from duality) in 7th bhūmi; for obtaining a vyākaraṇa in the 8th; for the purifying of creatures in the 9th; for consecration in the 10th; for the sake of *purifying the field in all these three (bhūmis)* and for going to the End (or Goal=*niṣṭhā*) in the Buddha-bhūmi.

Cf. XVIII. 68 Comm. (p. 146): and having based (oneself) on that same triad of bhūmis (8, 9, and 10) *the Buddha-kṣetra must be thoroughly purified* and Buddhahood must be attained.

XIX. 62; Summary of the Mahāyāna: Maturing of creatures from entrance into the bhūmis up to the 7th; *thorough purification of the field* and *apratisthita Nirvāna* in the three-fold non-divertible bhūmi; highest enlightenment in the Buddha-bhūmi. [purified.

XX–XXI. 14 Com. In the 8th,....the Buddha-field is thoroughly purified. 16. Com. In the 8th he is non-differentiating (*upaṅśaka*) and purifier of the field because of dwelling in the signless and non-appropriation (*anābhoga-nirmittavihāritvāt*). See below for discussion of *anābhoga*.

Sometime during his career the Bodhisattva obtains a vyākaraṇa (see p. 386) prophesying his future attainment of Buddhahood, and describing his future Buddha-field in all its glory. The vyākaraṇa includes also prediction of the name of his Kalpa and his own name-to-be as Buddha, description of his disciples and of the Bodhisattvas in his field, and mention of the length of his life-span and that of his Saddharma. (kṣetrōdibhir vyākaraṇam: īdrṣe buddha-kṣetre, evaṃnāmā, iyatā kālena buddho bhaviṣyati/evaṃnāmake palpe īdrśaś ca asya parivāro bhaviṣyati/etāvadan-taram kālam asya saddharma-anuvṛttir bhaviṣyatīti/MSAL. XIX 37 Com.)

According to Aśaṅga the Bodhisattva obtains such a prophecy in the *eighth* bhūmi (see note 3, preceding page). After being encouraged by his vyākaraṇa, the Bodhisattva continues to pursue the Bodhisattva career under the leadership of some Tathāgata, worshipping many Buddhas and striving to purify the field, until at last he attains Buddhahood and comes into possession of his own Buddha-field.¹ (Sometimes many Bodhisattvas come to enlightenment at the same time; see foot-note 1, p. 386.)

This field² will be pure, bright, free from stones, sand, gravel, free from holes and steep precipices, free from gutters and sewers, even, lovely, calming and beautiful to be seen, made of lapis lazuli, adorned with jewel-trees,

¹ Thus the sixteen princes of *Lotus* VII, p. 184, line 3 ff: I announce and declare to you, bhikṣus, those sixteen princes, youths, who under the rule of that Blessed One as novices were Dharmarecitors (*bhāṇakā*), they have all become enlightened into unsurpassed supreme enlightenment, and they all now (*etarhi*) stand, tarry, remain, in the ten directions in various Buddha-fields preaching the dharma to many hundreds of thousands of nayutas of koṭis of śrāvakas and Bodhisattvas. To be explicit, in the east, in the loka-dhātu Abhirati, the Tathāgata named Akṣobhya, in the south-east . . . etc. (in the west—Amitāyus!)

So in *Lotus* I, gāthā 88: Varaprabha's pupils after worshipping many Buddhas "having pursued the course, then in due order (*ānulomikīm*) became Buddhas in many world-systems."

² *Lotus* VI, p. 144, l. 9; p. 145, l. 2 ff.

fastened in a checkerboard marked off with gold threads, covered with flowers. . . .

The typical Buddha-kṣetra is usually described in this way, but the descriptions in the various vyākaraṇas in the *Lotus* add certain specifications to those listed above. Śāriputra's field¹ is to be even, lovely, calming, supremely beautiful to see, thoroughly purified; prosperous,² thriving, giving security, having abundant food, filled with many folk and throngs of men and filled with gods, etc. . . . and in those checkerboards there shall jewel-trees ever and always filled with flowers of the seven precious objects. Pūrṇa's field is to be even,³ become like the palm of the hand, made of the seven jewels, free from mountains, filled with high edifices made of the seven jewels. There shall be palaces of the gods stationed in the air; gods on their part will behold men and men will likewise behold gods. At that time this Buddha-field shall be free from places of punishment, free from womankind. And all those beings shall come into existence by "apparitional birth"; they shall be followers of the Brahmācaryā, having their own light by their self-essences made of mind, possessed of magic powers, traversing the sky, energetic, mindful, wise, having gold-coloured forms adorned with the thirty-two marks of a great man.⁴

Now that must the future Buddha do in order to obtain Buddhahood and the possession of a "pure" field of such a sort? We have seen that his activities referent to the Buddha-kṣetra in the course of the Bodhisattva-career were almost entirely concerned with his obligation to "*purify*" it. What does this "*purification of the Buddha-field*" mean?

¹ *Lotus* III, p. 65, l. 9 ff.

² *Sphotam*—so Kern translates. The word does not appear in Böhlingk-Roth.

³ *Lotus* VIII, p. 202, line 2 ff.

⁴ See also XI, p. 231 of tr. for description of an apocalypse in which the Buddha-fields are described almost exactly like stūpas; decked with strings of cloths, covered with canopies, etc.!

iii. *Meaning of Purifying the Field*

We find in the main two interpretations of this “purification” in Mahāyāna scriptures. One is predominantly intellectual and defines purification of the field in terms of *purifying one’s mind*—from selfishness and particularly from false differentiations. This interpretation we shall find represented most completely in Asaṅga’s *Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṅkāra*. The other interpretation defines purification largely in terms of action (though *motive* also is given an important place), making the purity of the future field depend on the *Bodhisattva’s efforts in behalf of the enlightenment of creatures*. We shall find this view represented particularly in the texts assembled by Śāntideva in his *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.¹ Asaṅga interprets purification in intellectual terms because in his system there is nothing to be purified except the mind,—all things being “originally pure.” It is our false distinction-making, our dualisms of subject vs. object, self vs. others, which prevent us from realising the true natural purity of Tathatā.² Purification consists in removing these “obstructions.”³

¹ A combination of the ethical and intellectual interpretations is to be found in Vasubandhu’s *Vijñāptimātratā Siddhi*, where a “pure field” is said to be produced by the maturing of the results of a Bodhisattva’s efforts toward his own Buddhahood or creatures’ welfare, but this development into a “pure field” is set forth in the psychological terms of the vijñānavāda. See quotations from the *Siddhi* on third page of Appendix B—*The Trinity and the Field*.

² Asaṅga’s expression of such view reminds us that he was a Brahmin before he became a Buddhist!

³ Which are usually classified as of two kinds—moral and intellectual: kleśa- and jñeyāvaraṇas.

For the meaning of purification in terms of over-coming duality see *MSAL* VII. 2 where dhyāna is said to arrive at being *suviśuddham* by virtue of taking hold of *niṣkalpanājñāna* (non-discriminating understanding);

XIV. 32 referring to thoroughly purified understanding which has the artha of non-duality (or “non-duality as its object”);

XVI. 16 Com. “non-discriminated knowledge” is listed as a way to receive the immediate presence (*pratyaवेक्षणatā*) of 3-cycle-purification.

“As the clouds are obstructions of the rays of the sun, so the perversity of creatures is an obstruction of the Buddha-knowledges.” (*MSAL IX. 34*)

Buddhatā=Tathatā. It is universally present in the multitude of creatures as space is universal in the multitude of forms (*MSAL IX. 15*). So *attainment of Buddhahood* means realisation of non-duality—purification of the mind from false distinction-making. And *purification of the Buddha-kṣetra* seems generally in Asāṅga to mean exactly the same thing! The process of purifying the field seems to be identified with what the Bodhisattva does towards his own Buddhahood.

Purifying the Buddha-dharma and purifying the Buddha-kṣetra seem to be used almost interchangeably, referring to the intellectual side of the Bodhisattva's efforts as contrasted¹ with his maturing of creatures.² It thus becomes

XV. 5 where purification of *karma* is given this same intellectual meaning: “not discriminating the actor, the performance of the act, etc.”

¹ Not as antitheses, but as two different parts of the same career.

² For “attaining a purified field” set off against maturing creatures see XVII. 13: *satvān ameyān paripācanāya kṣetrasya śuddhasya ca sādhanāya*// Comm.: In this phrase the two-fold kṣetra (is meant)-of devoting oneself to it: immeasurable creatures and a thoroughly purified Buddha-field. Having heard the Dharma, (knowledge derives) from causing it to be established in them (the creatures), and by being (oneself) stationed in it (the field).

iti dvidham kṣetram tatsevāyaḥ/ aprameyāśca satvāḥ pariśuddham ca buddhakṣetram/ dharmam śrutvā yeṣu pratiṣṭhāpanāt/ yatra ca sthitena/

For “purifying the Buddha-dharmas” in a similar pair see XIV. 42-43: On the *bhāvanā-mārga* in the remaining *bhūmis* he practices a two-fold knowledge; one, that *knowledge which is free from discrimination*, is a *purifier of the Buddha-dharmas*; the other according to the circumstances is a *maturer of creatures*.

For his purification of himself by “non-discriminating knowledge” see XIII. 29: *iti satatamudārayuktavīryo dvayaparipācanaśodhane suyuṅktaḥ/ Paramavimalanirvikalpabuddhyā vrajati so siddhim anutamām krameṇa*// With this meaning having eternally lofty applied energy, well-yoked to maturing and purification of the two, by supreme spotless *non-differentiated intelligence* he *proceeds step by step* to the highest perfection.

clear that to Asaṅga *purification of the field*, as indeed everything else in his system, means primarily purifying the *mind* from the obstructions of imagined duality.¹

Vimalakīrtinirdeśa and *Avataṃsaka*, scriptures whose interpretations of field-purification we shall consider next, set forth a similar interpretation of purification of the field, but link it more closely with the maturing of creatures, and the carrying out of the "Perfections" (*dāna*, *śīla*, etc.).

"The Buddha-lands as innumerable as particles of dust
are raised from one thought cherished in the mind
of the Bodhisattva of mercy,
Who, practising meritorious deeds in numberless
kalpas, hath led all beings to the truth;
All the Buddha-Land rise from one's own mind and
have infinite forms,
Sometimes pure, sometimes defiled, they are in various
cycles of enjoyment or suffering. . . ."²

"*The sincere mind is the pure land of the Bodhi-*
sattva when he shall arrive at full enlightenment, beings
who never flatter, will be born in that land."³

iti nirvikalpena dharmanairatmyajñānena pratipattuḥ prati-
pattavyasya pratipatteś ca avikalpanā trimāṇḍalapariśuddhir vedi-
tavyā/ dvayaparipīcānaśodhaneṣu yukta iti satvānām ātmanaś ca/

With this meaning by the non-discriminating knowledge of the non-individuality of dharmas is to be known the non-discriminating three-cycle-purification of producers, of what is produced, and of producing. "Yoked to maturing and purification of the two," it is said, (meaning) of creatures and of himself.

¹ For *purification of the field* interpreted in terms of that "transformation" which transcends the duality of subject vs. object, see IX. 43 and commentary where something of this kind seems to be the meaning: arthaparāvṛttau udgrahaparāvṛttau ca kṣetraviśuddhi-vibhūtvam paramam labhyate yena yathākāmaṃ bhogaśāṃdarsanaṃ karoti// In object-transformation as in receiver (i.e. subject?) transformation he obtains highest mastery of field-purification, by which he manifests bhoga at will. (Cf. IX. 62 Comm. where the "svābhāvīkākāya tena sambhogikena kāyena sambaddha" is described almost identically as "a cause for manifesting bhoga as desired in sambhoga—mastery").

² *Avataṃsaka Sūtra. Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. I, p. 153.

³ *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa. The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. III, p. 61-62.

“*The firm mind is the pure land of the Bodhisattva*; when he shall arrive at full enlightenment, beings who are endowed with virtues shall be born in that land....

“*Charity (Dāna) is the pure land of the Bodhisattva*; when he shall arrive at full enlightenment, beings who are capable of renouncing all will be born in that land.

“*Discipline (śīla) is the pure land of the Bodhisattva*; when...he shall arrive at full enlightenment, beings who are endowed with the thirty-two excellent features, will be born in that land.

“*Patience (kṣānti) is the pure land of the Bodhisattva*; when he shall arrive at full enlightenment, beings who are endowed with the thirty-two excellent features, will be born in that land.

“*Diligence (vīrya)...Meditation...Wisdom...the Four-fold Immeasurable Mind...the Four Ways of Acceptance...the way of Necessary Means...the thirty-seven Requisites for Attaining Supreme Enlightenment (are the pure land of the Bodhisattva)*; there in that land he will find neither the three unhappy regions nor the eight misfortunes.... There in that land he will not find even the breach of precepts....

“Beings who are born in that land will never suffer untimely death, will be abundantly rich, doing good, truthful and sincere, tender in stalk; their families and relatives will never be scattered; they will be skillful in reconciling quarrels, ever benefiting others when speaking; they will never be envious, or angry, but ever maintaining right principles.

“Thus, O Ratnakūṭa, the Bodhisattva with sincere mind begins his work; from this beginning he obtains a firm mind; through the firm mind he becomes a master of his will; with his will mastered he follows the true doctrine; following the true doctrine as he brings himself toward the Mahāyāna; and as a consequence he learns the Necessary Means (upāya); with the Necessary Means he brings all beings to perfection; by *this perfection his Buddha-land is purified*; as his Buddha-land is purified, his preaching is purified; as his preaching is purified, his mind is purified; as his mind is purified all virtues are purified. *Therefore, O Ratnakūṭa, when the Bodhisattva*

wishes to obtain a pure field, he should purify his mind, and as his mind is purified, purified is his Buddha-field.'¹

The other and more general interpretation of "purification" tends to identify the Bodhisattva's efforts to obtain Buddhahood himself² and to attain a "purified" field, with his efforts to mature creatures. His field is not pure unless he works diligently to bring them to maturity. As we read in *Ratnamegha* (*Śiks.* tr. 259):

"If the Bodhisattva learns of people's grasping greed and violence, he must not say, 'Away with these people so grasping and violent!' and on that account be depressed and turn back on the others. He makes a vow to have a very pure field in which the very name of such persons shall be not heard.³ And if the Bodhisattva turn his face away from the good of all creatures, his field is not pure and his work is not accomplished. Then the wise Bodhisattva thinks (284), 'Therefore, whatever beings of animal nature may be insignificant, timid, stupid, deaf, dumb by nature, may I meet in my Buddha-field all who in animal form are not behaving so as to attain Nirvāṇa, not cured, rejected by all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; these all I would seat in the bo-tree circle and bring to the knowledge of supreme enlightenment.'"

Similarly in *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (*Sikṣ.* 153):

*For the obtaining of a thoroughly purified Buddha-field, unto all creatures teacher-affection is decreed.*⁴

Sukhāvātīvyūha sets forth in some detail the ethics of

¹ See end of Chapter IV for conclusion of this quotation.

² Cf. *Bodhisattva Bhūmi* in *Le Muséon* Vol. 7 (1906) p. 218, where kṣetraviśuddhi is included in a section on the ripening of the "fruit of the purity of practice," showing how the eightfold fruit thus ripened leads to the welfare of others, and for oneself to the "principles" (dharmas) that make a Buddha.

³ This sentence illustrates also a further meaning of purity of the field in terms of the purity of the creatures who shall be there. Cf. *Śikṣ.*, tr. 287: People become pure in body, voice, and mind, in that wonderful field." Cf. *Lotus* VIII. gāthā 18.

⁴ pariśuddhakṣetropapattaye sarvasatvesv śāstrīpremktaṃ

the Bodhisattva who is trying to bring about the purity of his Buddha-field.¹ (§ 10, p. 25 line 9 ff.)

“He bringing about (*samudānayan*—Cf. *Sukhāvati* p. 27 line 10) this of such a sort (as described in the *prañidhāna* in §8) thorough purity of the Buddha-field, greatness of the Buddha-field, loftiness of the Buddha-field, performing the Bodhisattva-career, for immeasurable, incalculable, inconceivable, incomparable, measureless, innumerable, unspeakable hundreds of thousands of *niyutas* of *koṭis* of years in no way considered a purpose of lust, malice, hurt; in no way did he conceive the *idea* even of lust, malice, hurt. . . .” He was “gentle, charming indeed, and compassionate; pleasant to live with, agreeable, amiable, content, of few wishes, satisfied, retired, not evil, not foolish, not suspicious, not crooked, not wicked, not deceitful, tender, kindly speaking, always zealous, docile in the searching after the pure Law (*śukladharmaparyeṣṭau sunikṣiptadhuraḥ*). And for the good of all beings he recited the great *prañidhāna*, showing respect to friends (*kalyāṇa-mitra*), teachers, masters, the Buddha-, Dharma, and Sangha, always girded for the performance of the duties of a Bodhisattva, righteous, gentle, not deceitful, not flattering, virtuous, a leader for the sake of rousing others to perform all good laws (*pūrvamgamah sarvakuśaladharmasamādāpanatāyai*), producing by his activity the ideas of emptiness, causelessness, and purposelessness (*śūnyatānimitta*, etc.), and he was well guarded in his speech.”²

(Text p. 26 line 9) “Uninterrupted by himself

¹ Similar ideals are undertaken in association with purification of the field in a *prañidhāna* from *Manjuśrī-Buddhakṣetraguṇavyūhā-lamkāra-Sūtra* (*Śiks.* 14, tr. 15); “No mind of malice and stubbornness, neither envy and grudging, will I cherish from this day until I attain enlightenment. I will practise continence and avoid criminal lusts and imitate the self-restraint and morality of the Buddha.” I will remain until the end of the chain of being for one living being’s sake. I will purify an immeasurable, inconceivable field. . . . and I shall entirely purify the deeds of body and speech. Karma of mind will be purified; I am the performer of karma that is not impure (*aśubham*).

² Max Müller’s tr. S.B.E. XLIX 2nd part, p. 25.

pursuing the Bodhisattva-career, he himself walked in the perfection of *charity* (*dāna*) and caused others to walk in that very same perfection. Similarly for the other perfections—*morality* (*śīla*), *forbearance* (*kṣānti*), *energy* (*vīrya*), *meditation* (*dhyāna*), *wisdom* (*prajñā*). Roots of merit of such a sort he has accumulated, with which he is endowed, that wheresoever he is reborn, there appear from the earth many hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of treasures!”

During his pursuance of the Bodhisattva-career he worshipped innumerable Buddhas and gave them all sorts of presents; he established innumerable beings in supreme enlightenment, or in fortunate rebirths in noble families or positions of sovereignty over Jambudvīpa, in the position of cakravartins, lokapālas, and various other kinds of supernatural beings.

The passage just quoted illustrates clearly the idea that a Bodhisattva is to purify his field-to-be by exerting himself to the utmost on behalf of creatures, particularly trying to help to lead them toward Enlightenment or “maturity.” We are not told just *how* it is that such activity produces a “pure field:” we shall have to turn to other scriptures for light on the workings of this “spiritual causation.”

When we formulate the problem in terms of how *action* can affect or produce a *world*, we are immediately reminded of the early Buddhist dictum that *the world is produced by Karma!* We remember the stress laid upon this doctrine in the *Karuṇā-Puṇḍarīka*;¹ it is especially interesting to find in the *Abhidharma Kośa*² a statement to the effect that *the various hells are produced by the karma* of the creatures who are to be reborn there in punishment for that evil karma! The same doctrine, that the merit of creatures determines the nature of the world they are to live in, is expressed in *Aṣṭasāhasrika Prajñā-Pāramitā* (quoted in

¹ See above p. 228(30).

² Tr. L. de la Vallée Poussin, Vol. III, p. 155. Cf. p. 139 and 185, and Vol. IV p. 227.

Siks. tr. 309) : “Alas, these beings have small merit that in their world such waterless forests are known!”

This doctrine of the basis of a world in the karma of its inhabitants is significant for the Buddha-field from two angles—(a) the effect of the *Bodhisattva's merit* in determining directly the nature of his field-to-be, and (b) the effect, if there be any, of the *merit of the creatures* who are to be the denizens of his field. The former idea is familiar in the form of the accepted Hindu belief that celestial sovereignty over some “bright and blessed” heavenly world¹ is obtained as the result of meritorious action on earth. The basis of the latter idea we have just seen illustrated in the statement that the hells are produced by the karma of the wicked who are to dwell there. Does this apply to the Buddha-field? Is *it* in any sense produced by the merit of its inhabitants other than the Bodhisattva who is to be its ruling Buddha? The interdependence and uniform causality of the whole system of worlds forces us to answer that the conditions of each world must represent a kind of total effect of the karma of its creatures; but it seems out of the question that sinful mortals could ever accumulate sufficient merit to produce the kind of paradises we read about in the *vyākaraṇas*. These super-worlds must be produced by the merit of super-men: How is this logical difficulty to be solved?

The answer is particularly significant for our study. The glories of the field are indeed produced by the merit both of the Bodhisattva and of the other inhabitants, but the way the others get sufficient merit to be reborn in a world like that is because the *Bodhisattva transfers his extra merit to them!* His merit, it seems, is thought of not solely as working by itself upon physical nature, (or, in Buddhist

¹ See e.g. *Dīgha* iii, 1, 145 ff. (Dial. Part III, p. 139, 4-p. 167, quoted in Chapter IV; *Saṃ.* i. 227 (KS I, p. 293–294). For a Mahāyāna version cf. *Lotus* Ch. XVII, gāthā 17, or *Sikṣ.* tr. 287, where it is asserted that by the merit acquired by worshipping the Buddhas, a man becomes Brahmā or Śakra.

terminology, merely purifying the bhājanaloka or "receptacle-world," the karma-produced cosmos which holds the living beings),¹ but as *transferred by the Bodhisattva to the creatures for their well-being*. A Bodhisattva might deliberately "apply" his store of merit to his own enlightenment, if he chose, or to the welfare and development of creatures (or to both).² The Bodhisattva in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* who recognises how the paucity of creatures' merit brings about the waterless world they must live in, resolves as follows ((after first practising the perfections of dāna, tyāga, śīla, and kṣānti):³

"So will I perform and so bring it about; so will I exert myself unto the purity of the Buddha-field.... that when I have been awakened to supreme, unsurpassed enlightenment, in no way, shape or manner could there be any robber caves,...any waterless forests, etc....in that Buddha-field...."

"So will I *endow all beings with merit* that they shall have most excellent water....etc."

The "purifying" effect of roots of merit when applied to the well-being of creatures is set for in *Daśabhūmika* (Bhūmi VI p. 54, line 14 ff.):

"Those roots of merit of the Bodhisattva stationed in

¹ *Abhidharma Kośa* III, 138. (la Vallée Poussin tr.).

² So *Śikṣā* (348, tr. 307) from *Ratnamegha*: He giving at a Tathāgata's shrine or image a flower or incense or perfume, *applies this* (merit accruing from the gift) so as (a) to annul the wickedness of unsavouriness or dirt of all beings, and (b) to obtain the Tathāgata-quality. Cf. *Bodhisattva-bhūmi* (Ch. Vihāra, ed. Rahder with *Daśabhūmika*) p. 10, line 3 ff: "He hears the Dharma from those Tathāgatas, praises, holds it fast, and arrives at perfection in the Dharma through practice according to the Dharma, and applies those roots of merit to great enlightenment and matures creatures by means of the four Saṃgrahavastus. By these *three causes of purification of his*, those roots of merit in greater measure the purified: (1) by taking hold of worship of the Tathāgata, Saṅgha and Dharma, (2) by maturing beings by means of the Saṃgrahavastus, and (3) by applying of roots of merit unto bodhi for many hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of kalpas."

³ *Śikṣā*. 349-350 (Tr. 309).

the sixth, 'Abhimukhi' bhūmi, extinguish the fires of the kleśas of these hundreds of thousands of koṭis of creatures, cool and refresh them, and they become not-to-be-diverted by the four avacaras (realms or spheres) of Māra.'

Particularly significant for the relation of the idea of transfer of merit to the Buddha-kṣetra are the Bodhisattva's application of merit toward the *happier rebirth* of creatures, as preached in *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. He applies his merit so that creatures may avoid rebirth in hells and in animal-wombs (*Śikṣ* 215, tr. 207; 280, tr. 256-257); so that they may be reborn in heaven or "on the other shore" (Ibid. 314. tr. 281); so that they may see and hear the Buddhas (29 ff. tr. 32 ff.) and follow the Dharma when they have heard it.

"How could these roots of good provide life and help for the whole world, ending in the Pure Law, in such a way that through those roots of good there might be for all beings removal of hell and unhappy states; so that by these they could keep away from them the mass of pain which consists in birth as an animal or Yama's world? . . .

"May this very root of good turn out for purifying the ways of all beings, for purifying their achievements, for purifying their merit and magnanimity. . . .

"By this my root of good may all beings please all the Buddhas. . . . and in the presence of these holy Tathāgatas the supreme Buddhas may they hear the preaching of the Law, and hearing may they put away all errors and may they observe it as heard. . . .

"May they be taught by all the Buddhas. . . ."¹

*Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*² explicitly identifies transfer of merit with purification of the fields:

"Purifying the Buddha-field with these roots of merit, he purifies the self-other-heart-field. What is the

¹ *Vajradhvaṅga Parīṇāmanā*, *Śikṣ*. tr. 32-33.

² Quoted in *Daś*. Introduction, p. xi. (Note the relation between this definition and Asaṅga's in the overcoming of duality between self and other!);

"Yaiḥ kuśalamūlair buddhakṣetraṃ pariśodhayan/ ātmaparacitta-kṣetraṃ pariśodhayati/ teṣāṃ kuśalamūlānāṃ yā parīṇāmanā/ iyaṃ ucyate bodhisattvasya buddhakṣetrapariśodhanakuśalamūlāvaropana-parīṇāmanā."

turning over to others of these roots of merit, that is called the cultivation and turning over of roots of merit (which constitutes) the Bodhisattva's purifying of the Buddha-field."

These "roots of merit" whose transference¹ seems to play so important a rôle in the development of the Buddha-kṣetra, how are they accumulated? We have seen already how they were gathered by good actions toward creatures,²

¹ The origin of this belief in the possibility of transferring merit, a belief so contrary to the spirit of salvation through one's own efforts alone as taught in primitive Buddhism, is of considerable interest in connection with our study, since the belief is so closely linked to the Buddha-kṣetra concept. Professor Hopkins has written two excellent articles in *JRAS* (1906) p. 581; 1907 p. 665) on *Modifications of the Karma Doctrine* in Hinduism, suggesting that belief in transfer of merit goes back to ancient ideas much older than Karma, which the Karma-doctrine could not altogether eradicate. Such were the idea of inherited sin in the *Rig Veda*, the idea that a son takes his father's karma (*Kaus. up.* ii-15 (10)), and the belief that a good wife shares the fruit of her husband's acts (*Manu* v. 166; lx. 29; *Rām.* ii. 27. 4-5).

It is significant to find in the *Aṅguttara* (i. 167) a Brahmin's objection to Gotama's practice on the grounds that it calms only the single self, extinguishes only the single self, so that the Buddhist wanderer is proficient in a *practice of merit that affects only one person* and so is less worthy than the sacrifices of the Brahmins which affect many people through the merit produced! Buddha answers by showing how many people are inspired to imitate the Tathāgata's achievement, by his example and invitation. But the story is significant in showing the kind of objection which will have led to the re-adoption into later Buddhism of the theory of transfer of merit.

In the *Mūlinda-Paṇḍita* (p. 294) is admitted that certain kinds of Pretas may derive benefit from the gifts of living relatives. And there is one reference (297 line 10) to the transference to others of (the merit of) goods deeds. The Pali word used is *āvajjeya*.

See Dayal p. 188 ff., especially his suggestions pp. 191-192 that the theory of pariṇāmanā grew out of the common Hindu recognition of the fact of human solidarity—that "no man lives to himself, alone"; and out of the developing tenderness of the "Indian heart" which could not endure the thought of suffering and so mitigated the rigors of hell!

² "Creatures" are actually called the Bodhisattva's Buddha-kṣetra in an interesting quotation from *Dharmasaṅgīti* (*Siks.* p. 153): "*The Field of creatures is the Buddha-field of the Bodhisattva*; and from this Buddha-field comes his attaining unto grasping of the Buddha-

but as the Mahāyāna developed, more and more stress was laid upon *worship of the Buddhas as the way* par excellence to accumulate merit (see for example, note 1, p. 398 above.) Worshipping the Buddhas is one of the chief activities of the Bodhisattvas in the Buddha-fields,¹ and this worshipping is mentioned in vyākaraṇas as if it were a necessary condition of the realisation of Buddhahood.²

There is a most significant development of thought involved here, the full consideration of which would carry us far out of our field. We can deal with it here only as it affects the technique of obtaining a field.

It seems to be the *giving* aspect of worshipping the Buddhas which is the particular source of *merit*. This indicates that the belief must go back to the old *puṇyakṣetra* doctrine, according to which (as we saw in the introduction)

dharmas (qualities of a Buddha which make him what he is):—
‘I should not go astray in reference to it,’ and he has this thought:
‘Every good act or bad act is unfolded depending on creatures, on the basis of bad conduct there are unfolded evils, on the basis of good conduct gods and men!’

satvakṣetraṃ bodhisattvasya Buddhakṣetraṃ yataśca Buddha-
kṣetrād buddhadharmāṇāṃ lābhāgamo bhavati/ Na arhāmi tasmīn
vipratipattum/ evaṃ ca asya bhavati/ sarvaṃ sucaṛitaṃ duṣcaṛitaṃ
satvān nisṛitya pravartate/ duṣcaṛitāśramāt (this must be a misprint
for āśrayāt) ca pāpāḥ pravartante/ sucaṛitāśrayāt devamanuṣyā iti//

¹ *Sukh.* § 37 et passim, (*Lotus* passim, esp. tr. p. 8, I, *gāthā* 87 and 88, VIII *gāthā* 23, tr. p. 145); *Raṣṭrapālaperipyeccā* gives effective and poetic expression to this familiar occupation of the Bodhisattvas (but with no connection with the idea of Merit):

“They praise your virtues, the leaders from the range of koṭis of
kṣetras at once:

Having heard, the Bodhisattvas go delighted to worship the ocean
of (good) qualities,

Having done homage to the beauty of the Sugata, having heard
the golden (dharma) of the Great Muni

They go to their own fields delighted in mind at the proclaiming
of this your garland of virtues.” (p. 5, *gāthās* 9 and 11.)

² e.g. *Lotus* III, *gāthā* 24; *Sukh.* § 44 *gāthā* 3; and see p. 386 ff., above; *Sukh.* p. 71 *gāthā* 3: “It is not possible for low people of lazy views to find delight in the dharmas of the Buddha; those who have performed pūjā in Buddha fields have learned about the careers of the lords of this triple-world!”

certain individuals or groups (especially the Arya Sangha) were "admirable fields of merit" in that gifts to them produced great merit for the donor. This is a thoroughly familiar doctrine in Pali Piṭakas;¹ it is easy to see how, as many influences converged to magnify the person of the Buddha,² he will have been thought of increasingly as the supreme field of merit. Gifts to him (or to *them*, as belief in contemporaneous Buddhas is elaborated:) would be thought of as supremely merit-producing. The *Milinda-Questions*³ reflects discussion of this matter in the query whether gifts made to the extinct Buddha can have any fruit,⁴ and whether *he* may be said in any sense to benefit from them. The decision of Nāgasena is that the Buddha does not benefit, but that the donor does benefit from the gift. This discussion shows that the stūpa-cult must have been well developed at that time, third century B.C., and that the accumulation of merit through giving gifts to the Buddha (perhaps to the Buddhas of past and present) was an established doctrine.

When this doctrine is linked to the Bodhisattva-ideal of applying merit toward one's own enlightenment and toward the happier rebirths and eventual maturity of all creatures, the result is the picture we have been studying in this chapter—Bodhisattvas worshipping Buddhas in many fields, giving them gifts⁵ and so piling up merit, and then applying this merit to their own enlightenment and chiefly

¹ e.g. *Dīgha* iii. 5, 227; *Majjhima* i. 446, iii. 80; *Samyutta* i. 167, 220; v. 343, 382; *Aṅguttara* i. 244; ii. 34, 56, 113; iii. 158, 248, 279 ff., 387; iv. 10 ff., 292. [(*saddhā*).

² See Dayal p. 32 for early importance of *faith* in the Buddha

³ S.B.E Vol. XXXV, p. 144 (text p. 95, § 10).

⁴ La Vallée Poussin refers to Wassilieff 251, 283 for the arguments of the various schools on this point.

⁵ See e.g. *Sukh.* § 10. tr. p. 26: "So many immeasurable and innumerable holy Buddhas were honoured, revered, esteemed, and worshipped, and enabled to touch whatever causes pleasure, such as cloaks, alms-bowls, couches, seats, refreshments, medicines, and other furniture. . . . And he collected such virtue that he obtained the command of all necessities, after performing the duties of a Bodhisattva."

to the benefit of others, who will thereby be born where they can hear the name of the Buddhas and become enlightened in one birth. In many of the "Applications" of merit, as we saw in *Śikṣāsamuccaya*,¹ the Bodhisattva applies his roots of merit to further the enlightenment of all creatures everywhere, apparently with no thought of their further relation to him in the future, but in *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Śikṣ.* tr. 308 ff.) and *Sukhāvativyūha* it seems to be implied that the beneficiaries of his present meritorious acts (worshipping the Buddhas, following the Perfections, etc.) are to be the *creatures in HIS future field!*

This is a transition of the greatest significance for the future of the Buddha-kṣetra concept, especially in the Pure Land sects of the Far East, which are outside the purview of this study. It is most instructive to find already in *Sukhāvati* a confusion between the general Mahāyāna ideal of attaining for oneself a pure field, by means of worshipping the Buddhas, and the special ideal set forth in the *Sukhāvativyūha* scripture—*rebirth in Sukhāvati by worshipping Amitāyus:*

"Amitāyus the Buddha then utters forth: Of old there was this praṇidhi of mine: may creatures hear my name and go to my field just for ever.

"And this praṇidhi of mine has been fulfilled, auspicious; and beings hither from many world-systems having come quickly, in my presence become non-divertible, having only one more birth.

"Therefore, what Bodhisattva here wishes '*May my field also be of this sort:* may I also release many creatures by name, voice and also by manifestation.'

"Let him speedily hurrying go to the world-system Sukhāvati, and having gone before Amitaprabhā let him worship thousands of koṭis of Buddhas.

"Having worshipped many koṭis of Buddhas, having gone to many fields by (their) magic power, having per-

¹ Tr. p. 205 ff.

formed pūjā in the presence of the Sugatas, by bhakti they will go to sukhāvati." (*Sukh.* § 31, gāthās 17-21, pp. 53-54.)

We have considered how a future Buddha attains a pure Buddha-field: how he strives to purify it by freeing his mind from differentiation or by working for the maturity of creatures, and how he applies to their happier rebirths and enlightenment the merits he accumulates by practising the perfections and worshipping the Buddhas.

We are now ready to ask how this ideal of working for others' enlightenment—this twofold picture of the self-sacrificing Bodhisattvas on the one hand, and the Buddhas acting as guides and teachers each to the creatures in his own particular Buddha-field, on the other—developed in the history of Buddhist thought.

CHAPTER III.
THE BUDDHA-DUTY

- A. *Background of the Teaching Ideal.*
B. *Background of the Idea of Each Buddha's
Responsibility for a Particular World.*

We saw in the second chapter that a Buddha's function in his field is primarily to guide to enlightenment the Bodhisattvas and other creatures there, after he has obtained a "purified field" by purifying his own mind and helping to "mature" creatures when he was himself a Bodhisattva. The problem now is to investigate the background of this conception of a Buddha's function and position in his field. The problem is twofold.

First, What is the background of the idea of responsibility for teaching others, implied in what we have seen of a Buddha's function in his field?

Second, what is the background of the notion of different Buddhas' *particular local* sovereignty and teaching responsibility, each for the particular world he presides over?

The first question is of considerable significance for the history of the Buddha-kṣetra because each Buddha's characteristic activity as Lord of his Field seems to be the teaching of the Dharma so that it is scarcely possible to conceive of the Buddha-field (as commonly interpreted in Mahāyāna) apart from the teaching ideal. If each Buddha should go into Nirvāṇa immediately after his enlightenment, there could scarcely be a Buddha-field in the sense in which we have seen it predominantly used.¹ Hence it is particularly

¹ In Hīnayāna there might be a purely cosmological idea of the Buddha-field, as simply the world where a Buddha is born and goes into Nirvāṇa, but the concept as we have it used involves a belief that the Buddha is in the world for some purpose beyond his own enlightenment; his field is the place where he carries out this purpose.

important, in our effort to understand the background of this concept, to investigate the background of the ideal of renouncing Nirvāṇa for the sake of leading others to the truth. How far, we must ask, is the idea of a *Buddha-duty* implied in Pali literature, and what is the history of the development of the "Bodhisattva-ideal" of *sharing the Dharma*? It is important to trace this development, and to see how much of a "missionary ideal" is inherent in the early Buddhist picture of the Blessed One, for when belief arose in the existence of many universes and many Buddhas at a time, naturally each Buddha was, at first, presumably thought of as carrying out in *his* aggregate of world-systems the same functions which the single one-at-a-time Buddha performed in the whole one or ten-thousand lokadhātus.

A. *Background of the Teaching Ideal*

The roots of the "missionary ideal" lie farther back in early Buddhism than is often supposed. It was by no means a new ideal developed by the Greater Vehicle alone; its springs lie back among the very sources of the great current of Buddhism which flowed on into the "Bodhisattvayāna," leaving the monastic emphases of the Lesser Vehicle behind as almost a backwash. In the earliest Pali literature, though the self-help doctrine is stressed and Nibbāna is held up as a supreme ideal, *instructing others* is recognised as an important activity of the best of men (*Sutta Nipāta*; § 85-86, text 86-87); § 176 (177); § 212¹ (213); § 232 (233), et al.)

Later Hīnayāna literature in spite of its apparent Nirvāṇa-centeredness has preserved a strong conviction that a Buddha himself comes into the world for some purpose other than his own enlightenment; one of the most familiar phrases in the Pali Piṭakas is that characterising a Buddha

¹ This verse really illustrates the monastic trend better than the missionary, for though "leading others" is mentioned, the Muni is spoken of as "wandering solitary!"

or Tathāgata as a person “whose birth into the world is for the welfare of many folk, for the happiness of many folk; who is born out of compassion for the world, for the profit, welfare and happiness of devas and mankind.”¹

We should not be far wrong if we said that a Buddha’s compassion is as essential an element in his make-up as his wisdom or understanding. It is this element of compassion which plays a major part in the development of the Bodhisattva ideal and of the whole Mahāyāna. And it must have been an integral part of the original Buddha out of whose teachings both vehicles grow, for even the Hīnayāna Buddha who appears in the Pali Piṭakas is quite definitely motivated by compassion. It was primarily out of compassion for the world thus he is said² to have decided to preach at all just after his enlightenment, when this heart “inclined to rest quiet and not to preach the Dharma.” Considering the difficulty of the Dharma³ and the stupidity and conservatism of people, he hesitated whether it would be worth while to try to preach the Dharma at all. But Brahmā Saḥampati, knowing what was in the Buddha’s mind, thought to himself:

“The world is undone, quite undone, inasmuch as the Tathāgata’s heart inclines to rest quiet and not to preach his Dharma!” so he came beseeching him:

“May it please the Lord, may it please the Blessed

¹ e.g. *Sutra Nipāta* 683; *Āṅguttara*. I. i Ch. XIII—*Gradual Sayings* I, p. 14; I. ii Ch. VI—*Gradual Sayings*, I p. 71.

² *Majjhima* i. 167–168 (*Further Dialogues* I. 119–120).

Vinaya i. Mahāvagga I, 5 (*Vinaya Texts* I. 84–88).

Parallel Version with some variations in *Jātaka—Nidānakathā* tr. p. 111, and *Dīgha* ii. 37–39 (*Dial.* II, 29 ff.)

³ “The Dharma is hard to understand... abstruse, and only to be perceived by the learned, while mankind... takes delight... in what it clings on to, so that for it, being thus minded, it is hard to understand causal relations and the chain of causation—hard to understand the stilling of all saṃskāras, or the renunciation of all worldly ties, and extirpation of craving, passionlessness, peace, and Nirvāna. Were I to preach the Dharma, and were not others to understand it, that would be labour and annoyance to me! *Further Dialogues* I. 118.

One, to preach his Dharma! Beings there are whose vision is but little dimmed, who are perishing because they do not hear the Dharma; these will understand it!"

Thereupon Buddha, heeding Brāhma's entreaties and "moved by compassion for all beings, surveyed the world with the eye of enlightenment" and "saw that there were indeed some who would understand."

In this story is *implied* the compassion-inspired determination—which lies at the basis of the Bodhisattva ideal—to preach to others instead of going into Nirvāṇa. This ideal is made explicit in a Jātaka story¹ which goes far back into the past to explain the background of this decision of Gotama Buddha's. It tells how, in the time of the first Buddha Dīpaṃkara, the Bodhisattva Sumedha (later to become the Buddha Gotama) explicitly determined to *renounce Nirvāṇa for the sake of helping others* to realise the Dharma and cross the stream of existence:

The story goes that ages ago the wise Sumedha practised great charity and renounced all pleasures and left the world, seeking to enter the deathless and birthless "city of Nirvāṇa," and had actually attained the eight samāpattis and the five abhijñās when the Teacher Dīpaṃkara appeared in the world.

As Dīpaṃkara was on his way to the city of Ramma, Sumedha joyfully threw himself in the mire before him to serve as a bridge, with the thought "this deed will long be for my good and my happiness." As he lay in the mire, beholding the Buddha-majesty of Dīpaṃkara Buddha². . . . he thought as follows:

"Were I willing, I could enter the city of Ramma as a novice in the priesthood, after having destroyed all human passions; but why should I disguise myself to attain Nirvāṇa, after the destruction of human passion? Let me rather, like Dīpaṃkara, having risen to the supreme knowledge of the Truth (*Parama-abhisambodhim*) enable mankind to enter the ship of truth (*Dhamma-nāvam*) and so carry them across the Ocean of Existence, and when this is done afterwards

¹ Jātaka Vol. I. *Nidāna Kathā*, p. 10 ff. Rhys Davids' tr. p. 12 ff.

² Who is called lokanāyaka (p. 11)!

attain Nirvāṇa; this indeed it is right that I should do."

Then having enumerated the eight conditions (necessary to the attainment of Buddhahood), and having made the resolution to become a Buddha, he laid himself down. Therefore it is said,

- “64. As I lay upon the ground this was the thought of my heart,
 If I wished it I might this day destroy within me all human passions,
 65. But why should I in disguise arrive at the knowledge of the Truth?
 I will obtain omniscience and become a Buddha, and (save) men and angels.
 66. Why should I cross the ocean resolute but alone?
I will attain omniscience, and enable men and angels to cross.
 67. By this resolution of mine, I a man of resolution
 Will attain omniscience, and save men and angels.
 68. Cutting off the stream of transmigration, annihilating the three forms of existence,
 Embarking in the ship of Truth, I will carry across with me men and angels.”

This *Jātaka* tradition, while quite within the limits of Hīnayāna orthodoxy, illustrates how much of the “Bodhi-sattva ideal” was, probably from quite early times, implicit in Buddhist thought and ready to be developed when the need for it arose.

Indeed, this *sharing* emphasis was probably never absent from the popular religion. The lay gospel never laid much emphasis on Nirvāṇa (stressing, instead, *rebirth in heaven*)¹ as we learn from the Rock Edicts of the Emperor Asoka. These edicts are our chief source of knowledge of the lay Buddhism of the period which preceded crystallisation of the Lesser and Greater Vehicles. And they never even *mention* Nirvāṇa! The religion they inculcate is a simple ethical doctrine of truth and non-injury and justice

¹ See Rock Edict VI, V. A. Smith *Asoka* p. 164.

to relations and friends,¹ with a strong *missionary* urge implied in Asoka's diligent efforts to convert others. *Sharing* the Dharma is one of his chief principles; he takes particular pride in sending missionaries all over the world to spread knowledge of the Dharma.²

Asoka's mention³ of gifts to the Sangha, and the tradition⁴ that he himself took the yellow robes in later life, show that monasticism had an important place in the Buddhism of this period, even though the lay gospel is still far from monastic. And monasticism grew. The monks of the Sangha grew in numbers and in influence. This growth is reflected in the *Questions of King Milinda*,⁵ where Nirvāṇa is frequently discussed as the goal of the religious life, where

¹ For himself the king sets a more universal aim (*ibid*): "For the welfare of all folk is what I must work for—and the root of that, again, is in effort and the dispatch of business. And whatsoever exertions I make are for the end that I may discharge my debt to animate beings, and that while I make some happy here, they may in the next world gain heaven." Cf. Pillar Edict VI.

² Cf. Rock Edict XIII (Smith's *Asoka* p. 173 ff): "Even upon the forest folk in his dominions His Sacred Majesty looks kindly and he seeks their conversion, for (if he did not) repentance would come upon his Sacred Majesty. They are bidden to turn from evil ways that they be not chastised. For His Sacred Majesty desires that all animate beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind, and joyousness.

"And this is the chiefest conquest in the opinion of His... Majesty—the conquest by the Law of Piety—and this... has been won by Him, both in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as 600 leagues—(then follows an enumeration)...."

Cf. Pillar Edict VII (*ibid.* p. 191): "I will cause the precepts of the Law of Piety to be preached, and with instruction in that Law will I instruct, so that men hearkening thereto may conform, lift themselves up, and mightily grow.... [etc. telling how he has carried out his ideal]...."

³ Cf. Rock Edict VIII—"Dharma-Tours" wherein are practised the visitings of ascetics and Brāhmins, with liberality to them, the *visiting of elders with largest of gold*, etc. See also Sārnāth Edict referring to monks and nuns and a place reserved for the clergy.

⁴ Minor Rock Edict I, V. A. Smith's *Asoka*, p. 147.

⁵ A book probably used by many of the schools, even those tending in Mahāyāna directions, but said to have been regarded with respect by the Hīnayānists.

it is asserted that a layman who attains Arhatship must enter the Order at once or die!¹ where laymen are said to be able to attain Nirvāṇa only if they have pursued the monastic vows in some former existence,² etc. In this book the distinction is already made between a complete fully-enlightened Buddha and a Pratyeka-Buddha—one who works for his own enlightenment alone, without thought of leading others “across.”

All these indications of the monks' influence upon the Dharma, emphasizing self-culture and the attainment of Nirvāṇa to the exclusion of any effort to imitate the Buddhas in *preaching* the Dharma, show how one-sided Buddhism was becoming, and make it easy to understand why there had to be a reaction to re-emphasise the missionary spirit. Har Dayal has well pointed out³ that the development of the Bodhisattva doctrine cannot be understood except as a *reaction against excessive monasticism*. We have seen that the implicit Bodhisattva ideal was no new creation of the Greater Vehicle, but a vital part of the original religion. When the monks left it out, other schools in North India corrected the balance by putting it in double measure! There was a special pull for them to re-emphasise Buddha's compassion and desire to help mankind—the attributes which are incarnated in the Bodhisattvas—because contemporary Hindus were developing a similar emphasis in their *bhakti-cults*. There was a great revival of Hinduism in the second century B.C. after the fall of the Mauryas (184 B.C.) in which the worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva was becoming more and more popular. Both of these deities were thought to incarnate themselves in order to save mankind. Thus Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavadgītā* IV, 7 and 8, and X, 11:

“Whenever there is decay of dharma, and ascendancy of adharma, then I create myself.

¹ Vol. II, p. 97 (text 265).

² Vol. II, p. 254 (text 353).

³ *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, p. 3.

“For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of establishing the dharma, I become manifest yuga after yuga.”

“For the sake of compassion just for them (i.e. only those who worship Me), I stationed in their self-essence destroy the ignorance-born darkness with the luminous lamp of understanding.”

It is, however, more in the development of Buddhology than in the development of the Bodhisattva-ethics that we shall find expressions of the *bhakti*-trend. In the growing emphasis upon devoted worship of the Buddha as a God this trend is certainly reflected, but in the Bodhisattva-ideal as an inspiration to *laymen* to work for the enlightenment of others, it seems to me we have a peculiarly Buddhist emphasis. Hinduism never become a *missionary* religion, even though it did worship deities who became incarnate for man's sake.¹ Buddhism on the other hand, had in its original ideal (as we have seen in the earlier part of this chapter) a strong element of compassion and assumption of responsibility for others' enlightenment; and when the need arose it re-emphasised these elements in the form of the concrete model of the Bodhisattva. Lay men and women were supposed to imitate this model, which was much more appealing and practicable for the princes and merchants of North India than the model of a Buddha absorbed in Nirvāṇa. Few of these people who were engaged in the active cosmopolitan life of the Panjab, Kashmir, Bactria, etc.,² had any leaning towards the monastic life, and the

¹ If the Mahāyāna was only a sort of “Hinduised” Buddhism, it is difficult to see whence came the tremendous missionary impulse which carried Buddhism alone of Hindu sects across all Asia as an autonomous religion.

² For this period in Indian history see Rapson, *Ancient India*; Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, and Bactria; Vincent A. Smith, *Early History of India* (3rd ed. Oxford, 1914); *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I (and II as soon as published); de la Vallée Poussin, *L'Inde aux Temps des Mauryas*, (1930).

semi-barbarous invaders from the North certainly were not likely to be converted to a passive religion of leaving the world! The Bodhisattva-ideal, growing naturally out of the lay ethics of Asoka, was admirably suited to meet their needs, just as it later became an inspiring and workable model¹ for the great Japanese prince Shōtoku-Taishi.² And so powerful was this missionary or teaching-ideal which the Mahāyāna re-emphasised (perhaps partly in order to convert various racial groups in North India and beyond)³ that Buddhist missionaries went forth over the mountain passes and carried their faith beyond North India into Turkestan and Tibet and even across Mongolia and the ocean to the Land of the Rising Sun.’⁴

*B. Background of the Idea of Each Buddha's
Responsibility for a Particular World*

We have been considering the background of what we called the “missionary” impulse in Buddhism—the impulse of compassion which led each Bodhisattva in turn to renounce Nirvāṇa in order to preach the Dharma—the impulse which developed into the Bodhisattva-ideal and the Greater Vehicle, and without which there could have been no such idea of a Buddha’s field as we have been studying. But much more than just a general determination on each Buddha’s part to preach the Dharma is pre-supposed in the Buddha-field concept as we have seen it in Mahāyāna scriptures. It involves more especially responsibility for a

¹ As set forth in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*.

² See Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion*, p. 63.

³ Har Dayal (*Bodhisattva Doctrine* p. 32) makes the interesting point that in this milieu the *universality* of Buddhism will have been a great asset, in contrast to the close association of Hinduism with national and social “culture-patterns” to such an extent that it could not adapt itself to new needs, as could Buddhism which was not tied up with any particular “culture-pattern.”

⁴ But the monastic and non-missionary forms of Buddhism, which differed scarcely at all from common Hindu ways of release, were almost entirely absorbed in India.

particular world. We have already seen something of how a Buddha's relation to his particular world, both before and after his attainment of sovereignty over it, was conceived; now we want to know how he comes to be assigned to one particular world. What are the historical factors in this *localising of responsibility*?

The primary historic fact in this connection must be the rise of belief in the simultaneous existence of several Buddhas. Insofar as this belief was a natural corollary of the enlarging cosmology, the basis is laid right here for the idea of each Buddha's local sovereignty. For just as this world has its Buddha Śākyamuni and constitutes his field, so (when the cosmos had expanded to include many sets of world-systems) each of the myriad other universes has its own Buddha and constitutes his field.¹ "Buddha-kṣetra" then becomes a convenient way of designating the aggregate of world-systems included in such a universe. Sometimes the term is used thus in a purely numerical or cosmological way with complete loss of any association with a Buddha's presence in the field, as in the *Mahāvastu* where we read of Buddha-fields "empty of best of men"²

The belief in simultaneous Buddhas probably grew also out of the possibility of many contemporaneous *Bodhisattvas*, and the consequent possibility that more than one might come to enlightenment at the same time. Then, since there cannot be more than one Buddha at a time in any one

¹ This was first made clear to me in a letter from Prof. de la Vallée Poussin.

² *Mahāvastu* i. 121, line 8 ff:

śrūyatāṃ lokānāthānām kṣetram tatvārthanīṣṛitam//
upakṣetram ca vakṣyāmi teṣāṃ paramavādinām/
tāni nīṣāmya vākyāni śāsanam ca naravara//
ekasāṣṭim trisaḥsraṇi buddhakṣetram parīkṣitam/
ato caturgunam jāeyam upakṣetram tathāvidham//

Kāśyapa asks if Sambuddhas arise in all Buddha-fields or only in certain ones, and Kātyāyana replies:

kiṃcid eva bhavaty aparīṣūnyam.
kṣetram apratimarūpadhārehi/ (p. 122, 1. 1.)
kṣetrakoṭīṇayutāni bahūni śūnyakāni puruṣappravarehi//

world-system,¹ they must become Buddhas in different worlds,² and each will have toward his particular world the relationship and responsibility which the one-at-a-time Buddhas had over the whole known cosmos.

We have already seen something of this earlier relationship in the use of such terms as *lokanāyaka* in the Pali literature, “chief of the world” (e.g. *Sutta Nipāta* 995),

¹ *Dīgha* ii. 225 (*Dial.* II. 263): Then answered Sakka, ruler of the gods. . . . : “Nowhere, gentlemen, and at no time is it possible that, in one and the same world-system, two Arahant Buddhas supreme should arise together, neither before nor after the other. This can in no wise be.” Cf. *Āṅguttara*, i, XV. 10 p. 27 *Gradual Sayings* I. 26.

² *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (quoted in *Abhidharmakośa* iii, 201 (note 2)) has preserved an interesting record of this line of reasoning, attributed to the Mahāsāṃghikas. They observed that many people apply themselves at the same time to the prañidhānas and to the *pre-requisites* of supreme enlightenment (*sambhāras*): so it seems logical to suppose that they might reach enlightenment at the same time. It would not be convenient for several Buddhas to appear at the same time in the same place. . . . but on the other hand nothing prevents several Buddhas appearing at the same time; *therefore they appear in different universes.*” This is the argument summed up in *Kośa* iii, p. 200 but the whole discussion as quoted from *Bodhisattvabhūmi* is interesting:

“tatra prabhūtaiḥ eva kalpāiḥ ekatyo 'pi buddhasya prādurbhāvo na bhavati/ ekasminn eva ca kalpā prabhūtanām buddhānām prādurbhāvo bhavati/ teṣu ca teṣu. . . . dikṣv aprameyāsamkhyeṣu lokadhātūsv aprameyānām eva buddhānām utpādo veditavyaḥ/ tat kasya hetoḥ/ santi daśasu dikṣv aprameyāsamkhyeyā bodhisattvā ye tulyakālakṛtaprañidhānās tulyasambhārasamudāgatās ca/ yasminn eva divase pakṣe māse samvatsara ekena bodhisattvena bodhicittam prañihitam tasminn eva divase. . . sarvaiḥ/ yathā caika utsahito ghaṭīto vyāvachitaś ca tathā sarvae/ tathā hi dhriyante 'sminn eva lokadhātāv anekāni bodhisattvaśatāni yāni tulyakālakṛtaprañidhānāni tulyadānāni tulyaśilāni tulyakṣāntīni tulyavīryāni tulyasamādhīni tulyaprajñāni prāg eva daśasu dikṣv anantaparyanteṣu lokadhātuṣu/ *buddhakṣetrāṇy api trisāhasramahāsāhasrāṇy aprameyāsamkhyeyāni daśasu dikṣu samvidyante/* na ca tulyasambhārasamudāgatayor dwayo tāvad bodhisattvayor ekamin lokadhātāu lokadhātāu buddhakṣetre yugapad utpatyavakāso 'sti, prāg evāprameyāsamkhyeyānām/ na ca punas tulyasambhāranām kramenānuparipāṭikayā utpādo yujyate/ tasmād daśasu dikṣv aprameyāsamkhyeṣu yathāpariśodhiteṣu tathāgataśūnyeṣu te tulyasambhārā bodhisattvā *anyonyeṣu buddhakṣetreṣu utpadyanta iti veditavyam/*

“*Lord of the universe*” (*Jātaka*, Nidāna Kathā tr. p. 11, gāthā 5), as well as in the familiar phrase “for the welfare of the many,” etc.

This “chiefness” probably involved *supremacy*¹ rather than sovereignty, but one would easily shade into the other, and it is easy to see how the familiarity of such concepts in the early literature will have builded naturally into the later picture of each Buddha being chief, guide, and ruler of *his* world.

It seems to have been originally the *supremacy* or *pre-eminence* of a Buddha (rather than any ethical qualifications) which was taken to explain the non-appearance of two in a single field or world-system;² but in later explanations we can trace growing explicitness of an idea that a *Buddha has a job to perform in his world*:

Thus *Mahāvastu* i. 121:³

¹ *Gradual Sayings*, I, p. 15 (*Aṅguttara* i, p. 22, XIII § 5): “Monks, there is one person born into the world who is unique, without a peer, without counterpart, incomparable, unequalled, matchless, unrivalled, best of bipeds he. Who is that one person? It is a Tathāgata who is Arahant, a fully Enlightened One.” (This passage is preceded by a paragraph stating that “there is one person in the world whose birth is for the welfare of the many, etc.”)

² Two Buddhas could not arise together in one world-system because (1) the world could not support the virtue of two—it would shake and be dispersed, as an overfilled cart...boat...man; (but it is admitted that this argument is adduced to make the power of the Buddhas known!) (2) disputes would arise between their followers leading to two rival parties; (3) the scripture to the effect that Buddha is chief, best of all, without counterpart or rival, etc. would be proved false; (4) the natural characteristic of the Buddhas is that one Buddha only should appear in the world—because of the greatness of the virtue of the *all-knowing* Buddhas. “Of other things, also, whatever is mighty is singular...as...a Tathāgata, an Arhant, a Buddha supreme, is great; and he is alone in the world. Whenever any one of these spring up, then there is no room for a second.” *Questions of King Milinda* II, 47 (text 237).

³ Mahākāśyapa asked Mahākātyāyana, “For what cause, for what reason is it that two completely enlightened Buddhas do not arise in one field?” Thus addressed, Mahākātyāyana replied in the following verses:

“What has to be performed by the elephant of men, *the Buddha-karma*, is very hard to perform;
 But this Dharmatā of the Buddhas fulfills all that.
 If he were unable (to perform it), wise (or skilled)
 in the Buddha-Dharmas,
 Then two great-souled Tathāgatas would arise;
 But they cast off (deny) that insufficient nature of
 the great rishis—

Therefore, two bulls-of-men do not arise in one field.”

Practically the same reason is adduced among others in *Bodhisattva-bhūmi* (fol. 39, quoted *Kośa* iii. p. 202 ft. note.):

“So in this manner in many Lokadhātus just Buddha-manyness is fitted (or arranged) and there is not simultaneous production of two Tathāgatas in a single Buddha-field. This for what reason?

For a long period, you know, by the Bodhisattvas thus a praṇidhāna is undertaken: “May I alone in a leaderless field be a leader, discipliner of beings, releaser from all sorrows. . . .”

And further, *one Tathāgata* in a triple thousand great chiliocosmic *single Buddha-field* is able to perform all the *Buddha-duty*: Hence the production of a second Tathāgata (would be) just useless.”

This later and somewhat stylised picture of the sovereign Buddha was painted largely after the model of the *Caṅkavartin* or universal righteous monarch. Inspired originally, perhaps, by the imposing sovereignty of Candragupta and his successors,¹ this ideal of righteous monarchy grew deeply into Indian thought-forms and constituted the pattern for much religious imagery. In Buddhist writings this figure is especially familiar in the tradition about the Mahāpuruṣa or Super-Man, who is marked

*yatkāryaṃ naranāgena Buddhakarma suduhkaram/
 tatsarvaṃ paripūreti eṣā buddhāna dharmatā//
 asamartho yadi siyāt buddhadharmeṣu cakṣumām/
 tato duve mahātmānau utpadyete tathāgatau//
 taṃ cāsamarthasadbhāvam (emended n. p. 471 to svabhāvaṃ)
 varjāyanti maharṣabhau//
 tasmād duve na jāyante ekakṣetre naraṣabhau//*

¹ See Beal, *Catena*, p. 129.

by thirty-two characteristic marks, and must become either a Cakravartin or a Buddha. It is extremely significant for the influence of this Cakravartin figure upon the history of the Buddha field concept to find in a description of the Cakravartin's destined realm¹ a passage very suggestive of later descriptions of the Buddha-field:

“He, endowed² with this mark, if he dwell in the House becomes a monarch Cakkavatti (turner of the wheel). Conquering not by the scourge, not by the sword, but by *dhamma*, he doth *preside over this earth* to its ocean bounds, an earth *void of barrenness, pitfalls, or jungle, mighty, prosperous, secure and fortunate, and without blemish (or without mark, animittam!)*.”

“And³ if he leave the world, illustrious going forth,
He exercises superiority over all creatures;
There is found no greater than he;
Over the whole world having lorded it he lives, 'tis said.”

¹ In the famous Suttanta on the Marks of the Superman, tr. in *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part III, p. 139 ff. I have come across no passage in Pali more like the typical Sanskrit descriptions of the Buddha-kṣetra than this. The Cakkavatti-Sihanāda-Sutta (*Dīgha* no. XXVI—Vol. iii, p. 75) contains a description of the ideal state of this world under Metteyya (see Appendix D. *The Field In Relation to the Cosmic Cycle*), but this description is not as close to the familiar Sanskrit Buddha-kṣetra description as that quoted from the Lakkhana Suttānta.

² Text (*Dīgha* iii. 1. 146, 5): So imaṃ paṭhaviṃ sāgara-pariyantam akhilam animittam akāṇṭakam iddham phītam khemaṃ sivam nirābbudam adaṇḍena asatthēna dhammena abhivijīya ajjhāvasati/

³ *Ibid.* p. 156:
pabbajam pi ca anoma-nikkamo
aggatam vajati sabba-pāpinam
tena uttaritaro na vijjati
sabbam lokam abhibhuyya viharatiti/

This whole Suttānta shows how by building up merit one may attain celestial glory and dominion, etc., in a “bright and blessed world” (Rhys Davids)—more literally a “well-gone heaven-world” (*sugatim saggam lokam*).

The ethics demanded in his former lives of one “thus come” (tathāgata—I am not at all sure that this means a Buddha here, for the future-Cakravartin could hardly be referred to as Tathāgata in this sense!) if he wishes to be a Mahāpuruṣa, are very interesting

Further influence of the Cakravartin model upon Buddhist picturing of their founder is shown clearly in the *Milinda Questions*,¹ where the King asks what is the reason why the Tathāgata is called a king. Nāgasena replies as follows:

“A king means, O king, one who rules and guides the world, and the Blessed One rules in righteousness (*dhammena*)² over the ten thousand world-systems, he guides the whole world with its men and gods, its Māras and Brahmās, and its teachers, whether Samaṇas or Brāhmanas. That is the reason why the Tathāgata is called a king.

“A king means, O king, one who, exalted above all ordinary men, making those related to him rejoice, and (tr. pp. 139–152): (1) carrying out common Hindu morality—keeping festivals, filial duties to parents, honours to recluses and brahmins, etc.! (2) living for the weal of great multitudes, protecting them from fear or danger or need; (3) being compassionate and refraining from taking life; (4) giving food (probably to holy men); (5) being popular with the people through giving, kind speech, wise conduct, impartiality; (6) being “one who spoke to the multitude on their good, on dhamma, explaining to the multitudes, a celebrant of righteousness (*dhamma-yāgi*); (7) being a zealous learner; (8) inquiring about the good; (9) being free from anger....; (10) reuniting separated families.

This is continued in the second chapter of the same Suttānta, ending p. 167 of tr.

Cf. Buddha's story (*Saṃ. i. 227 KS I. p. 293*) of how Sakka, ruler of the gods, attained his celestial sovereignty by carrying out seven rules of conduct when he was a man (note the family basis of this ethics!):

“As long as I live, may I maintain my parents,
 As long as I live, may I revere the head of the family,
 As long as I live, may I use gentle language,
 As long as I live, may I utter no slander;
 As long as I live, with a mind rid of stain and selfishness, may I conduct myself in a home with generosity, with clean hands, delighting in renunciation, amenable to petitions, delighting in sharing gifts.
 As long as I live, may I speak the truth, not give way to anger, or repress it if it arises. By undertaking and carrying out these rules when he was a human being, Sakka attained his celestial position!”

¹ *The Questions of King Milinda*, II, p. 28 (text 228–227).

² Note how the Buddha is called Dharmarāja in Mahāyāna works—e.g. *Lotus V*, gāthā 1; XIII, gāthā 51.

those opposed to him mourn, raises aloft the Sunshade of Sovranty, of pure and stainless white, with its handle of firm hard wood, and its many hundred ribs, the symbol of his mighty fame and glory. And the Blessed One, O king, making the army of the Evil One, those given over to false doctrine, mourn; filling the hearts of those, among gods or men, devoted to sound doctrine, with joy; raises aloft over the ten thousand world-systems the Sunshade of his Sovranty pure and stainless in the whiteness of emancipation, with its hundreds of ribs fashioned out of the highest wisdom, with its handle firm and strong through long suffering—the symbol of his mighty fame and glory.¹ That too, is the reason why the Tathāgata is called a king.

“A king is one who is held worthy of homage by the multitudes who approach him, who come into his presence. And the Blessed One, O king, is held worthy of homage by multitudes of beings, whether gods or men, who approach him, who come into his presence. That too, is the reason why the Tathāgata is called a king.

“A king is one who, when pleased with a strenuous servant, gladdens his heart by bestowing upon him, at his own good pleasure, any costly gift the officer may choose. And the Blessed One, O king, when pleased with any one who has been strenuous in word or deed or thought, gladdens his heart by bestowing upon him, as a selected gift, the supreme deliverance from all sorrow—far beyond all material gifts. That too is the reason why the Tathāgata is called a king.

“A king is one who censures, fines, or executes the man who transgresses the royal commands. And so, O king, the man who, in shamelessness or discontent, transgresses the command of the Blessed One, as laid down in the rules of his Order, that man, despised, disgraced, and censured, is expelled from the religion of the Conqueror. That too is the reason why the Tathāgata is called a king.

“A king is one who in his turn proclaiming laws and

¹ For use of similar imagery in later works, belonging to the Mahāyāna, Cf. *Bāṣṭrapālapariṣeṣā* quoted in *Sūks.* tr. 287 (text 321): The Jinās proclaim thy praise and glory far and wide in all regions over hundreds of fields. 285. (318); With thy glory thou dost illuminate a hundred fields.

regulations according to the instructions laid down in succession by the righteous kings of ancient times, and thus carrying on his rule in righteousness, becomes beloved and dear to the people, desired in the world, and by the force of his righteousness establishes his dynasty long in the land. And the Blessed One, O king, proclaiming in his turn laws and regulations according to the instructions laid down in succession by the Buddhas of ancient times, and thus in righteousness being teacher of the world,—he too is beloved and dear to both gods and men, desired by them, and by the force of his righteousness he makes his religion last long in the land. That too, is the reason why the Tathāgata is called a king.’¹

If all this monarchical splendor had gathered itself around the figure of the Buddha even when there was supposed to be but one Buddha in the universe at a time, we can readily imagine how easily, when there were supposed to be many of them existing simultaneously, the many Buddhas would be thought of as ruling, king-like, each over his own field. The Cakravartin must have played a particularly significant part in the history of the Buddha-kṣetra concept, as a model for the Mahāyāna picture of the Buddhas ruling—by *dhamma*, of course—over their respective fields.²

But the Wheel-King was not the only model for this picture. There were other figures, equally familiar in Hindu mythology, to whose likeness the Mahāyāna Buddhas were gradually assimilated. These figures were the *various chief*

¹ Przyluski has shown in his study of “Le Parinirvāṇa et les Funérailles,” JAS. XI (1918) 485 ff. to XV (1920), 5 ff. (especially “*Vêtements de Religieux et Vêtements de Rois*,” XIII (1919), 365–430) how the Cakravartin model exercised a determining influence upon the growth of Buddhist legend. The funeral rites according to the earliest records were those of a similar *Samāṇa*, but under the influence of the Cakravartin model the tradition arose that Buddha had been buried with royal honours! (See also Senart, *La Légende du Bouddha*, esp. Ch. II.)

² See, however, Mus, *Le Buddha Paré* (BEFEO 1928), p. 274, for gap between the ruling Buddha modelled on the Cakravartin or on Hindu presiding gods, and the Saṃbhogakāya in the midst of his Bodhisattvas.

gods of the Hindius pantheon, who were thought of¹ as presiding over various worlds or heavens in the sky, places where virtuous persons were reborn in bliss.

These deva-heavens were taken over bodily by Buddhism and from the beginning given an important place² in Buddhist cosmology, as places of rebirth for the layman³ who could not appreciate Nirvāṇa, or who, even if he could appreciate it, could not hope to attain it in one life-time.⁴

Given this initial importance of the deva-heavens, particularly the heavens of individual gods like Sakka and Brahmā, it was inevitable that Buddhist thought should

¹ Even when the cosmos was made up of only one, or ten thousand, world-systems (each world-system having its several heavens presided over by various gods—see Chapter I, p. 219(21), note 1).

² The orthodox Hinayāna scriptures have so accustomed us to think of Nirvāṇa as the only goal that it is difficult for us to realise the great importance of *rebirth in heaven* as an ideal for the layman. M. Przyluski's researches have shown the popularity of the *Treatise on Rebirth in Heaven* among the proto-Mahāyāna schools of North India. It seems to have been one of the three most popular scriptures. See *Légende de l'Empereur Açoka*, p. 196, 412, and passim, especially the quotations on p. 196 from *Sūtrālamkāra*, pp. 45, 130, 439.

³ As such they played an important part as ethical "sanctions": "It is impossible, monks, . . . that one addicted to ill deeds of body, speech, and thought should, consequent on that . . . when body breaks up, after death be reborn in the Happy Lot (*sugatim*), in the Heaven World (*saggam lokam*). But that it should be otherwise may well be." *Āṅutt.* i. p. 29; *Gradual Sayings* I. p. 26. Note, along this line, the familiar antithesis in *Dhammapada*; "this world . . . the other world."

It is interesting to discover in this connection in the *Samyutta* (iv. 270, *K. S.* IV. 186) the doctrine that *taking refuge in the Buddha* (or *Dhamma* or *Sangha*) *secures one's rebirth in heaven*—a very significant predecessor of the Pure Land Sects that calling upon Amitābha ensures one's rebirth in his Buddha-field *Sukhāvati!*—

"Good indeed, O Lord of the Devas, is the going to take refuge in the Buddha . . . the Dhamma . . . the Sangha. Such going to take refuge in the Buddha is the reason why, when body breaks up, after death, some beings are born here in the Happy State, in the Heaven World!"

⁴ When we read (in the *Āṅuttara*, for instance) how in a certain deva-heaven disciples of Buddha (who are also adepts in *jhāna*) pass away and are not reborn, we are strongly reminded of the praises of *Sukhāvati* as a place where creatures become enlightened in one birth!

"And how is a monk blessed with speed?"

produce similar heavens for the Buddhas. A powerful "psychological lag" would compel this assimilation. For instance, Hindu converts to Buddhism, who were used to thinking of Brahmā as presiding over the highest heaven, when they were now taught that Buddha was superior to all gods could imagine this superiority only in the concrete terms which were familiar to them. They would quite naturally think of Buddha as ruling over a heaven higher than Brahmā's and more glorious than Brahmā's, and, having aspired previously to be reborn in Brahmā's heaven, they would now aspire to be reborn in Buddha's heaven-world! Their picture of Buddha and his heaven would necessarily be modelled to a large extent upon the picture already in their heads of Brahmā and his heaven.

This process of assimilation is of course perfectly familiar whenever one religion appears to supplant another; means may be changed, but the fundamental pictures in the minds of the common people resist change with the tenacity of centuries!

Buddhist teachers did try to show the inferiority of the old gods—(see the references in Dayal's note 13, p. 330)—or else they tried to make the figure of the Buddha supplant¹

"Herein a monk, by destroying the five fetters that bind to the lower world, is reborn spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes), destined there to pass away, *not to return from that world.*" *Āṅgutt.* i. 245, *Gradual Sayings* I, p. 224.

"A certain person, by utterly transcending consciousness of form . . . reaches up to and abides in the sphere of infinite space. . . . When he makes an end he is reborn in the company of the Devas who have reached the sphere of infinite space.

"Now monks, the life of those Devas is 20,000 cycles. Therein the ordinary man stays and spends his lifetime according to the life-span of those devas: then he goes to Purgatory or to the womb of an animal or to the realm of Ghosts. But a disciple of the Exalted One, after staying there and spending his lifetime according to the life-span of those Devas, finally passes away (*parinibbāyati*) in that very state." *Āṅgutt.* i. 267; *Gradual Sayings*, I. p. 245-246.

¹ So *Sutta Nipāta* § 657: Who is endowed with the three-fold knowledge, pacified, free from further existence—thus know, O Vāseṭṭha—is to be recognised as Brahmā and Sakka.

them entirely, (a sort of humanistic propaganda!)¹ but human conservatism was too strong for them, and instead of the gods being humanised the Buddha became deified!

It was not only psychological "lag" which demanded that the Buddhas be made into gods and given each his particular heaven. Other psychological factors played their part in this demand: particularly the worshippers' need for a *concrete realm* which they could visualise when they thought of rebirth, and still more their desire for a *personal relationship with the Buddha*. "Dwelling in the sight of the Buddhas" is expressed as an end in itself in the *Dhammapāda* from the Chinese.² "Being delivered and *seeing the Tathāgata*" along with obtaining great riches and being reborn among the devas, is the goal for the sake of which offerings to Upagupta are recommended, in the *Açokāvādāna* (A-yu Wang King, 32b-33b. *Légende de l'Empereur Açoka*, p. 248).

This emphasis upon personal devotion to the Buddha is the expression in Buddhism of a tendency which was becoming irresistibly strong in contemporary India—a tendency to stress *bhakti* or devoted worship of a personal God. At this time the *Gītā* was teaching the attainment of supreme salvation through devotion to Kṛṣṇa; Śaivites were finding their blessedness in devotion to Śiva, and Buddhists

¹ Cf. the *Deva-dhamma Jātaka*, "On True Divinity." "The pure in heart who fear to sin; the good, kindly in world and deed—these are the beings in the world, whose nature should be called divine." (*Jātaka* I, tr. p. 183).

² Beal, *The Dhammapāda from the Buddhist Canon*, p. 43 ff.—a story of how two disciples going across a desert from Rāgagriha to Śrāvastī to see the Buddha, nearly die of thirst. The only pool is full of insects. One drinks, arguing that the end justifies the means. The other, considering that the Law of Buddha was one of universal love, which forbade the taking of life, refused to drink, died, was reborn in Heaven and came first to where Buddha was. When the other arrived, Buddha said, "You who say you see me, yet have transgressed my Law, are not seen by me, . . . whereas this man who has kept the Law dwells ever in my sight." This refers to Buddha as Dharmakāya, but still it illustrates how being in Buddha's sight was highly prized.

naturally found a similar object of devotion in their founder, for whose person they had always felt deep love and reverence. Har Dayal thinks that the *bhakti* movement arose in Buddhism;¹ it is true that there was a natural basis for it in Buddhism, but the sort of devotion inculcated in the *Lotus* for the supernal Blessed One is clearly an expression of the trend toward devotional theism which was making itself felt in various forms in the India of that time. The growing desire to believe that the Buddha was present and *existing somewhere*² as an object of devotion, was also probably in part a result of the *bhakti* tendency. For *bhakti* pre-supposes that the object of one's devotion is there to receive it: one can hardly be devoted to an extinct person! If the old forbidden question about Buddha's existence after (or in) Nirvāṇa could be answered in the affirmative, (or if the Buddha were thought of as renouncing Nirvāṇa for endless ages), the worshippers might have some hope that Buddha did exist somewhere in space, perhaps in a heaven like Brahmā's³ and could be prayed to and would bring his

¹ See his arguments in *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, p. 31 f.

² See views of the Mahāsāṃghikas quoted on following page.

³ Such a belief may have been fostered by two beliefs: (a) that the Bodhisattva came from the Tuṣita heaven where he had presided previous to his descent; according to some schools he never really left this heaven but merely sent a nirmāṇakāya down; (b) that at his death he ascended to the Brahmā-heaven. Such a belief is expressed, curiously enough, by Ānanda at the Master's death, according to both *Samyuktāgama* and *Avadāna-Ātaka*, whereas Anuruddha speaks of Him as entered into Nirvāṇa! (*J. As.* 1918 Vol. XI, p. 491-501 ff.—*Le Parinirvāṇa et les Funérailles du Bouddha*):

Samyuktāgama XIII, 4. p. 59a from *Tsa-a-han-king* (Nanjio n. 544):

"Le Guide, avec ce joyau de corps,
Est monté vers le dieu Brahmā." (Spoken by Ānanda).
Avadāna-Ātaka (Speyer's ed., Bibl. Bud. III, p. 198):

"Le conducteur excellent, possédant un corps précieux
Ayant de grandes magies, est allé au monde de Brahmā."
(Ānanda.)

Féer translates:

"Le joyau du corps avec lequel le guide
Doué de la puissance surnaturelle est entré dans le monde de

followers to be reborn in his heaven if they called on him.

A Buddha in Nirvāṇa would have been of no use to them, would have had no emotional appeal! In the *Milinda Questions*¹ it is argued that gifts to the sacred relics in stūpas have some point in that they do the *donor* good, even if the Buddha does not receive them, but this very discussion reflects a tendency to think of the Buddhas as existing after Nirvāṇa,² and "receiving" the worship performed to their stūpas. This is corroborated by the doctrine of the Mahāsāṃghikas as stated in the *Kathā Vatthu*,³ "that the Buddhas persist in all directions." The Commentary explains that "the Mahāsāṃghikas hold that a Buddha exists in the four quarters of the firmament, above, below, and around, causing his change of habitat to come to pass in any sphere of being."

The active people of North India were clearly not to be satisfied with Nirvāṇa as goal and Buddha in Nirvāṇa as ideal standard: they wanted to look forward to rebirth in a concrete picturesque realm presided over by a living compassionate personal Buddha—a Buddha at least as splendid as their own kings and generals or their old gods! This demand alone would be enough to explain the genesis of the Buddha-kṣetra idea.

One further development, in quite another direction, is worthy of mention for the influence it may have had upon the growth of the notion of different individuals' *local responsibility for preaching the Dharma in different regions*.

This development is concerned with the cycle of tradition—Brahmā,

A été consumé par un feu intérieur." (J. As. 1879, II. p. 275, quoted by Przymusiński, J. As. XI, p. 491).

¹ Tr. I, p. 144 ff. "On Honours paid to the Buddha."

² Ibid. "If the Buddha accepts gifts, he cannot have passed entirely away!"

³ *Points of Controversy*, p. 355. Cf. Vasumitra's *Treatise on Early Buddhist Schools*, (Tr. Masuda—*Asia Major*, 1925) p. 19, for Doctrine of Mahāsāṃghikas et al. that "the rūpakāya of the Tathāgata is indeed limitless."

tions connected with the sixteen arhats,¹ to whom the Buddha at his Nirvāṇa is supposed to have entrusted the Dharma. They were to protect the Dharma, *each in his particular region of the world*, after the Nirvāṇa of the Blessed One. Their story is particularly significant for the evolution of the idea of *local assignment of responsibility* later connected with the Buddha-kṣetra, because they seem to be the prototypes of the *sixteen princes* whom we met in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*² preaching the Dharma *in the several directions of space, in different Buddha-fields*.

In what seems to be the oldest form of the story the Buddha entrusts the Dharma to Mahā Brahmā and the four Lokapālas,³ who are to protect the Dharma *each in his own region*; in the next stage of the legend he entrusts it also to four great Śrāvakas who are to stay out of Nirvāṇa to guard the Dharma until the coming of Maitreya.⁴ In a later

¹ Lévi et Chavannes, *Les Seize Arhat*, J. As. 1916, Vol. 8, p. 5 ff. and 189 ff.

² Ch. VII. p. 134 line 3 ff. (tr. p. 177): "Those sixteen princes, the youths, who as novices under the mastership of the Lord were interpreters of the Law, have all reached supreme perfect Enlightenment, and all of them are staying, existing, living, even now, *in the several directions of space, in different Buddha-fields*, preaching the Dharma to many hundreds of thousand myriads of koṭis of disciples and Bodhisattvas, to wit:

In the East, monks, in the lokadhātu Abhirati, the Tathāgata, Arhat...Akṣobhya...and Merukūṭa; In the southeast, monks, is the Tathāgata Simhaghoṣa, etc.; In the south,...etc.; In the south-west,...etc.; In the West, monks, the Tathāgata Amitāyus, etc.; In the north-west,...etc.; In the north,...etc.; In the north-east the Tathāgata Sarvalokabhayājitacchambhitatavidhvamsanakara and the sixteenth, myself, Śākyamuni, who have attained supreme perfect enlightenment in the center of this Sahā-world."

³ Parallel in A-yu wang Tehouan Ch. IX, (tr. Przulski *Legende de l'Empereur Aśoka*, p. 399-400): The Buddha says to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, "You must protect the law of Buddha in the East." The Buddha says to Virūḍhaka, "You must protect the law of Buddha in the South." The Buddha says to Virūpakṣa, "You must protect the law of Buddha in the West." The Buddha says to Vaiśramaṇa, "You must protect the law of Buddha in the North."

⁴ J. As. 1916, Vol. 3, p. 192 (*Sūtra of Ekottara Āgama*, Tōk. XII.

version the Dharma in entrusted instead to *sixteen great Arhats*, who, like the four, are to stay out of Nirvāṇa:—until the final extinction of the Dharma! Until then they dwell in *different parts of the world* (one is in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three!), *in the various directions*,¹ maintain-

3. 34b, col. 9; *ibid* IV. 5, 48b col. 5) At that time the Blessed One said to Kāśyapa:

“Now I have the age of decrepitude; I am about to be eighty. Now the Tathāgata has four great Śrāvakas who are capable of taking charge of the apostolate and of conversion. Their wisdom unlimited, their virtues are complete. Who are the four? They are: the bhikṣu Mahā Kāśyapa; the bhikṣu Kuṇḍopadhāniya; the bhikṣu Piṇḍola; the bhikṣu Rāhula. You others, (besides Kāśyapa?) you four great Śrāvakas, must not enter into Parinirvāṇa. It must be only after the extinction of my Law that you should attain Parinirvāṇa. O Mahā-Kāśyapa, you too must not enter into Parinirvāṇa.” (There seems to have been a well-known tradition that Kāśyapa was supposed to wait for the coming of Maitreya before entering Nirvāṇa—Hiuan-tsang, *Mémoires* II, 8; *Dīvyāvadhāna* 61; Mūla Śarvāstivādin *Vinaya*, and *Aḥokāv.*, tr. by Przyluski, J. As. 1914, II, 527–546.)

Another version from *Sāvīputra-paripṛcchā* (Nanj. 1152):

“Śāriputra said to Buddha: “How does it happen, O Tathāgata, that you have said to Śakra Devendra and to the Four Deva Kings: ‘I shall shortly enter into Nirvāṇa. You others, *each in your region*, protect and maintain my Law. After I shall have left the world, the four great bhikṣus Mahākāśyapa, Piṇḍola, Kuṇḍopadhāniya, and Rāhula will remain without entering into Nirvāṇa; they will spread my Law and make it penetrate.... In the time of the counterfeit Law,...you shall be witnesses of the faith; according to the... importance of the occasion, you shall *cause images of Buddha* or of monks to appear (cf. functions of Buddhas in Buddha-field! See Ch. III). When Maitreya shall descend to be born here, you shall be authorised to enter into Nirvāṇa.”

One of these four Arhats, Piṇḍola, had an interesting history of his own. Originally *condemned* (as a punishment—for showing off his magic power) not to enter into Nirvāṇa till Maitreya should appear on earth, he came to represent the Bodhisattva-ideal as the protector of the Dharma, in the period when the Mahāyāna was taking shape, particularly in North India. The *punishment* aspect of his story is pushed farther and farther into the background until it is finally left out altogether in some of the Cashmirian recensions of the story, and Piṇḍola comes to be thought of as a self-sacrificing person, prototype of the Bodhisattva who here renounced Nirvāṇa! (*Les Seize Arhat* pp. 207–208, 213 ff.)

¹ Nandimitra leur dit:...Le Tathāgata auparavant déjà a

ing the Sad-Dharma and making themselves useful to living creatures. The fact that their respective realms are—with one exception²—in *this* world, does not lessen the importance of the cycle of stories for the evolution which we are investigating. The sixteen Arhats as *persons who stayed out of Nirvāṇa*, seem to be significant as predecessors of the Bodhisattvas and their assignment to various geographical

prononcé le texte sacré (sūtra) concernant la durée de la Loi. Maintenant je l'exposerai de nouveau brièvement en votre faveur. Le Buddha Bhagavat au moment de son Pariniryāṇa a confié la Loi sans supérieure à seize grands Arhat et à leur entourage, en leur ordonnant de la protéger de façon à ce qu'elle ne fût pas détruite. Il leur ordonna de faire en personne et avec les bienfaiteurs (dānapati) un véritable champ de bonheur (Piṇḍola was similarly supposed to be a puṇyakṣetra) de façon à ce que ces bienfaitures obtinssent la récompense du grand fruit.

... Ces seize grande Arhat que voilà possèdent au complet les mérites illimités qui sont les trois Sciences, les six Pénétrations, les huit Délivrances, etc.; ils se sont affranchis des trois souillures des trois dhātus; ils récitent et possèdent les trois Receuils; ils ont des connaissances vastes et profondes sur les trois règles étrangères à la religion. Parce qu'ils ont reçu le mandat du Bouddha, grâce à la force de leurs Pénétrations surnaturelles, ils ont prolongé la durée de leur propre longévité. Et aussi longtemps que devait durer la Loi correcte du Bhagavat, constamment après lui ils l'ont protégée et maintenue...

... Les bhikṣus et bhikṣuṇis demandèrent: "Nous ne savons pas en quel endroit demeuraient généralement les seize Vénérables, gardant et maintenant la vraie Loi et se rendant utiles aux êtres vivants."

Naudimitra répondit: "*Le premier Vénérable*, avec son entourage de mille Arhat, le plus souvent a sa résidence particulière dans la continent Kiu-t' o-ni *occidentale* (Aparagodani); Le 2me Vénérable, avec son entourage de 500 Arhat, le plus souvent a sa résidence particulière dans le royaume de Kia-cha-milo (Cashmir-Kōsmira) de la région du Nord; Le 3me Vénérable... 600 Arhat... le continent... *oriental* (Pūrva-Videha); Le 4me Vénérable... 700 Arhat le continent... *septentrional* (Uttarakuru); Le 5me Vénérable... 800 Arhat... le continent... *meridional* (Jambudvīpa); etc., to; Le 10me Vénérable... 1300 Arhat... le ciel des trente-trois (Trayastrīmśa): etc. to; Le 15me Vénérable... 1500 Arhat... le montagne Tsieou-fong ('cime du voutour' ou Ḡḍhrakūṭa)." *Les Seize Arhat*, p. 8 ff.

See the remark of Tao-Siuan (*Seize Arhat*, p. 214) that *there are holy men everywhere in every place who preside over the Buddhist Law!*

² This one exception—the "Heaven of the Thirty-Three"—is particularly interesting.

areas reflects a significant stage in the evolution of *local division of responsibility among those mandated to preach the Dharma*, which points to the later assigning of future Buddhas to various areas of the universe for their Buddha-fields, as we saw in the case of the sixteen princes in *Lotus VII*.

(To be concluded)

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