

The Vagrakkhedikâ Or Diamond-Cutter

By Buddha

Translated By F. Max Müller

ADORATION to the blessed Ârya-pragñâ-pâramitâ (perfection of wisdom).

I.

Thus it was heard by me: At one time Bhagavat (the blessed Buddha) dwelt in Srâvastî, in the grove of Geta, in the garden of Anâthapindada, together with a large company of Bhikshus (mendicants), viz. with 1250 Bhikshus, with many noble-minded Bodhisattvas.

Then Bhagavat having in the forenoon put on his undergarment, and having taken his bowl and cloak, entered the great city of Srâvastî to collect alms. Then Bhagavat, after he had gone to the great city of Srâvastî to collect alms, performed the act of eating, and having returned from his round in the afternoon, he put away his bowl and cloak, washed his feet, and sat down on the seat intended for him, crossing his legs, holding his body upright, and turning his reflection upon himself. Then many Bhikshus approached to where Bhagavat was, saluted his feet with their heads, turned three times round hira to the right, and sat down on one side. (1)

II.

At that time again the venerable Subhûti came to that assembly and sat down. Then rising from his seat and putting his robe over one shoulder, kneeling on the earth with his right knee, he stretched out his folded hands towards Bhagavat and said to him: 'It is wonderful, O Bhagavat, it is exceedingly wonderful, O Sugata, how much the noble-minded Bodhisattvas have been favoured with the highest favour by the Tathâgata, the holy and fully enlightened! It is wonderful how much the noble-minded Bodhisattvas have been instructed with the highest instruction by the Tathâgata, the holy and fully enlightened! How then, O Bhagavat, should the son or the daughter of a good family, after having entered on the path of the Bodhisattvas, behave, how should he advance, and how should he restrain his thoughts?'

After the venerable Subhûti had thus spoken, Bhagavat said to him: 'Well said, well said, Subhûti! So it is, Subhûti, so it is, as you say. The noble-minded Bodhisattvas have been favoured with the highest favour by the Tathâgata, the noble-minded Bodhisattvas have been instructed with the highest instruction by the Tathâgata. Therefore, O Subhûti, listen and take it to heart, well and rightly. I shall tell you, how any one who has entered on the path of Bodhisattvas should behave, how he should advance, and how he should restrain his thoughts.' Then the venerable Subhûti answered the Bhagavat and said: 'So be it, O Bhagavat.' (2)

III.

Then the Bhagavat thus spoke to him: 'Any one, O Subhûti, who has entered here on the path of the Bodhisattvas must thus frame his thought: As many beings as there are in this world of beings, comprehended under the term of beings (either born of eggs, or from the womb, or from moisture, or miraculously), with form or without form, with name or without name, or neither with nor without name, as far as any known world of beings is known, all these must be delivered by me in the perfect world of Nirvâna. And yet, after I have thus delivered immeasurable beings, not one single being has been delivered. And why? If, O Subhûti, a Bodhisattva had any idea of (belief in) a being, he could not be called a Bodhisattva (one who is fit to become a Buddha). And why? Because, O Subhûti, no one is to be called a Bodhisattva, for whom there should exist the idea of a being, the idea of a living being, or the idea of a person.'

(3)

IV.

'And again, O Subhûti, a gift should not be given by a Bodhisattva, while he believes in objects; a gift should not be given by him, while he believes in anything; a gift should not be given by him, while he believes in form; a gift should not be given by him, while he believes in the special qualities of sound, smell, taste, and touch. For thus, O Subhûti, should a gift be given by a noble-minded Bodhisattva, that he should not believe even in the idea of cause. And why? Because that Bodhisattva, O Subhûti, who gives a gift, without believing in anything, the measure of his stock of merit is not easy to learn.'--'What do you think, O Subhûti, is it easy to learn the measure of space in the eastern quarter?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat.'--Bhagavat said: 'In like manner, is it easy to learn the measure of space in the southern, western, northern quarters, below and above (nadir and zenith), in quarters and subquarters, in the ten quarters all round?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat.' Bhagavat said: 'In the same manner, O Subhûti, the measure of the stock of merit of a Bodhisattva, who gives a gift without believing in anything, is not easy to learn. And thus indeed, O Subhûti, should one who has entered on the path of Bodhisattvas give a gift, that he should not believe even in the idea of cause.'

(4)

V.

'Now, what do you think, O Subhûti, should a Tathâgata be seen (known) by the possession of signs?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, a Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the possession of signs. And why? Because what has been preached by the Tathâgata as the possession of signs, that is indeed the possession of no-signs.'

After this, Bhagavat spoke thus to the venerable Subhûti: 'Wherever there is, O Subhûti, the possession of signs, there is falsehood; wherever there is no possession of signs, there is no falsehood. Hence the Tathâgata is to be seen (known) from no-signs as signs.'

(5)

VI.

After this, the venerable Subhûti spoke thus to the Bhagavat: 'Forsooth, O Bhagavat, will there be any beings in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the time of the decay of the good Law, who, when these very words of the Sûtras are being preached, will frame a true idea?' The Bhagavat said: 'Do not speak thus, Subhûti. Yes, there will

be some beings in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the decay of the good Law, who will frame a true idea when these very words are being preached.

'And again, O Subhûti, there will be noble-minded Bodhisattvas, in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the decay of the good Law, there will be strong and good and wise beings, who, when these very words of the Sûtras are being preached, will frame a true idea. But those noble-minded Bodhisattvas, O Subhûti, will not have served one Buddha only, and the stock of their merit will not have been accumulated under one Buddha only; on the contrary, O Subhûti, those noble-minded Bodhisattvas will have served many hundred thousands of Buddhas, and the stock of their merit will have been accumulated under many hundred thousands of Buddhas; and they, when these very words of the Sûtras are being preached, will obtain one and the same faith. They are known, O Subhûti, by the Tathâgata through his Buddha-knowledge; they are seen, O Subhûti, by the Tathâgata through his Buddha-eye; they are understood, O Subhûti, by the Tathâgata. All these, O Subhûti, will produce and will hold fast an immeasurable and innumerable stock of merit. And why? Because, O Subhûti, there does not exist in those noble-minded Bodhisattvas the idea of self, there does not exist the idea of a being, the idea of a living being, the idea of a person. Nor does there exist, O Subhûti, for these noble-minded Bodhisattvas the idea of quality (dharma), nor of no-quality. Neither does there exist, O Subhûti, any idea (*samgñâ*) or no-idea. And why? Because, O Subhûti, if there existed for these noble-minded Bodhisattvas the idea of quality, then they would believe in a self, they would believe in a being, they would believe in a living being, they would believe in a person. And if there existed for them the idea of no-quality, even then they would believe in a self, they would believe in a being, they would believe in a living being, they would believe in a person. And why? Because, O Subhûti, neither quality nor no-quality is to be accepted by a noble-minded Bodhisattva. Therefore this hidden saying has been preached by the Tathâgata: "By those who know the teaching of the Law, as like unto a raft, all qualities indeed must be abandoned; much more no-qualities"' (6)

VII.

And again Bhagavat spoke thus to the venerable Subhûti: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, is there anything (dharma) that was known by the Tathâgata under the name of the highest perfect knowledge, or anything that was taught by the Tathâgata?'

After these words, the venerable Subhûti spoke thus to Bhagavat: 'As I, O Bhagavat, understand the meaning of the preaching of the Bhagavat, there is nothing that was known by the Tathâgata under the name of the highest perfect knowledge, nor is there anything that is taught by the Tathâgata. And why? Because that thing which was known or taught by the Tathâgata is incomprehensible and inexpressible. It is neither a thing nor no-thing. And why? Because the holy persons are of imperfect power.' (7)

VIII.

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, if a son or daughter of a good family filled this sphere of a million millions of worlds with the seven gems or treasures, and gave it as a gift to the holy and enlightened Tathâgatas, would that son or daughter of a good family on the strength of this produce a large stock of merit?' Subhûti said: 'Yes, O Bhagavat, yes, O Sugata, that son or daughter of a good family would on the strength of this produce a large stock of merit. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, what was preached by the Tathâgata as the stock of merit, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-stock of merit. Therefore the Tathâgata preaches: "A stock of merit, a stock of merit indeed!"' Bhagavat said: 'And if, O Subhûti, the son or daughter of a good family should fill this sphere of a million millions of worlds with the seven treasures and should give it as a gift to the holy and enlightened Tathâgatas, and if another after taking from this treatise of the Law one Gâthâ of four lines only should fully teach others and explain it, he indeed would on the strength of this produce a larger stock of merit immeasurable and innumerable. And why? Because, O Subhûti, the highest perfect knowledge of the holy and enlightened Tathâgatas is produced from it; the blessed Buddhas are produced from it. And why? Because, O Subhûti, when the Tathâgata preached: "The qualities of Buddha, the qualities of Buddha indeed!" they were preached by him as no-qualities of Buddha. Therefore they are called the qualities of Buddha.' (8)

IX.

Bhagavat said: 'Now, what do you think, O Subhûti, does a Srota-âpanna think in this wise: The fruit of Srota-âpatti has been obtained by me?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, a Srota-âpanna does not think in this wise: The fruit of Srota-âpatti has been obtained by me. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, he has not obtained any particular state (dharma). Therefore he is called a Srota-âpanna. He has not obtained any form, nor sounds, nor smells, nor tastes, nor things that can be touched. Therefore he is called a Srota-âpanna. If, O Bhagavat, a Srota-âpanna were to think in this wise: The fruit of Srota-âpatti has been obtained by me, he would believe in a self, he would believe in a being, he would believe in a living being, he would believe in a person.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, does a Sakridâgâmin think in this wise: The fruit of a Sakridâgâmin has been obtained by me?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, a Sakridâgâmin does not think in this wise: The fruit of a Sakridâgâmin has been obtained by me. And why? Because he is not an individual being (dharma), who has obtained the state of a Sakridâgâmin. Therefore he is called a Sakridâgâmin.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, does an Anâgâmin think in this wise: The fruit of an Anâgâmin has been obtained by me?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, an Anâgâmin does not think in this wise: The fruit of an Anâgâmin has been obtained by me. And why? Because he is not an individual being, who has obtained the state of an Anâgâmin. Therefore he is called an Anâgâmin.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, does an Arhat think in this wise: The fruit of an Arhat has been obtained by me?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, an Arhat does not think in this wise: The fruit of an Arhat has been obtained by me. And why? Because he is not an individual being, who is called an Arhat. Therefore he is called an Arhat. And if, O Bhagavat, an

Arhat were to think in this wise: The state of an Arhat has been obtained by me, he would believe in a self, he would believe in a being, he would believe in a living being, he would believe in a person.

'And why? I have been pointed out, O Bhagavat, by the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata, as the foremost of those who dwell in virtue.

I, O Bhagavat, am an Arhat, freed from passion. And yet, O Bhagavat, I do not think in this wise: I am an Arhat, I am freed from passion. If, O Bhagavat, I should think in this wise, that the state of an Arhat has been obtained by me, then the Tathâgata would not have truly prophesied of me, saying: "Subhûti, the son of a good family, the foremost of those dwelling in virtue, does not dwell anywhere, and therefore he is called a dweller in virtue, a dweller in virtue indeed!" (9)

X.

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, is there anything (dharma) which the Tathâgata has adopted from the Tathâgata Dîpankara, the holy and fully enlightened?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat; there is not anything which the Tathâgata has adopted from the Tathâgata Dîpankara, the holy and fully enlightened.'

Bhagavat said: 'If, O Subhûti, a Bodhisattva should say: "I shall create numbers of worlds," he would say what is untrue. And why? Because, O Subhûti, when the Tathâgata preached: Numbers of worlds, numbers of worlds indeed! they were preached by him as no-numbers. Therefore they are called numbers of worlds.

'Therefore, O Subhûti, a noble-minded Bodhisattva should in this wise frame an independent mind, which is to be framed as a mind not believing in anything, not believing in form, not believing in sound, smell, taste, and anything that can be touched. Now, for instance, O Subhûti, a man might have a body and a large body, so that his size should be as large as the king of mountains, Sumeru. Do you think then, O Subhûti, that his selfhood (he himself) would be large?' Subhûti said: 'Yes, O Bhagavat, yes, O Sugata, his selfhood would be large. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, when the Tathâgata preached: "Selfhood, selfhood indeed!" it was preached by him as no-selfhood. Therefore it is called selfhood.' (10)

XI.

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, if there were as many Gangâ rivers as there are grains of sand in the large river Gangâ, would the grains of sand be many?' Subhûti said: 'Those Gangâ rivers would indeed be many, much more the grains of sand in those Gangâ rivers.' Bhagavat said: 'I tell you, O Subhûti, I announce to you, If a woman or man were to fill with the seven treasures as many worlds as there would be grains of sand in those Gangâ rivers and present them as a gift to the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgatas--What do you think, O Subhûti, would that woman or man on the strength of this produce a large stock of merit?' Subhûti said: 'Yes, O Bhagavat, yes, O Sugata, that woman or man would on the strength of this produce a large stock of merit, immeasurable and innumerable.' Bhagavat said: 'And if, O Subhûti, a woman or man having filled so many worlds with the seven treasures should give them as a gift to the holy and enlightened Tathâgatas, and if another son or daughter of a good family, after taking from this treatise of the Law one Gâthâ of four lines only, should fully teach

others and explain it, he, indeed, would on the strength of this produce a larger stock of merit, immeasurable and innumerable.' (11)

XII.

'Then again, O Subhûti, that part of the world in which, after taking from this treatise of the Law one Gâthâ of four lines only, it should be preached or explained, would be like a *Kaitya* (holy shrine) for the whole world of gods, men, and spirits; what should we say then of those who learn the whole of this treatise of the Law to the end, who repeat it, understand it, and fully explain it to others? They, O Subhûti, will be endowed with the highest wonder. And in that place, O Subhûti, there dwells the teacher, or one after another holding the place of the wise preceptor.' (12)

XIII.

After these words, the venerable Subhûti spoke thus to Bhagavat: 'O Bhagavat, how is this treatise of the Law called, and how can I learn it?' After this, Bhagavat spoke thus to the venerable Subhûti: 'This treatise of the Law, O Subhûti, is called the *Pragñâ-pâramitâ* (Transcendent wisdom), and you should learn it by that name. And why? Because, O Subhûti, what was preached by the Tathâgata as the *Pragñâ-pâramitâ*, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-*Pâramitâ*. Therefore it is called the *Pragñâ-pâramitâ*.

'Then, what do you think, O Subhûti, is there anything (dharma) that was preached by the Tathâgata?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagvat, there is not anything that was preached by the Tathâgata.'

Bhagavat said. 'What do you think then, O Subhûti,--the dust of the earth which is found in this sphere of a million millions of worlds, is that much?' Subhûti said: 'Yes, O Bhagavat, yes, O Sugata, that dust of the earth would be much. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, what was preached by the Tathâgata as the dust of the earth, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-dust. Therefore it is called the dust of the earth. And what was preached by the Tathâgata as the sphere of worlds, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-sphere. Therefore it is called the sphere of worlds.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, is a holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata to be seen (known) by the thirty-two signs of a hero?' Subhûti said: 'No indeed, O Bhagavat; a holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the thirty-two signs of a hero. And why? Because what was preached by the Tathâgata as the thirty-two signs of a hero, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-signs. Therefore they are called the thirty-two signs of a hero.'

Bhagavat said: 'If, O Subhûti, a woman or man should day by day sacrifice his life (selfhood) as many times as there are grains of sand in the river Gangâ, and if he should thus sacrifice his life for as many kalpas as there are grains of sand in the river Gangâ, and if another man, after taking from this treatise of the Law one Gâthâ of four lines only, should fully teach others and explain it, he indeed would on the strength of this produce a larger stock of merit, immeasurable and innumerable.' (13)

XIV.

At that time, the venerable Subhûti was moved by the power of the Law, shed tears, and having wiped his tears, he thus spoke to Bhagavat: 'It is wonderful, O Bhagavat, it is exceedingly wonderful, O Sugata, how fully this teaching of the Law has been preached by the Tathâgata for the benefit of those beings who entered on the foremost path (the path that leads to Nirvâna), and who entered on the best path, from whence, O Bhagavat, knowledge has been produced in me. Never indeed, O Bhagavat, has such a teaching of the Law been heard by me before. Those Bodhisattvas, O Bhagavat, will be endowed with the highest wonder, who when this Sûtra is being preached hear it and will frame to themselves a true idea. And why? Because what is a true idea is not a true idea. Therefore the Tathâgata preaches: "A true idea, a true idea indeed!"

'It is no wonder to me, O Bhagavat, that I accept and believe this treatise of the Law, which has been preached. And those beings also, O Bhagavat, who will exist in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the time of the decay of the good Law, who will learn this treatise of the Law, O Bhagavat, remember it, recite it, understand it, and fully explain it to others, they will indeed be endowed with the highest wonder.

'But, O Bhagavat, there will not arise in them any idea of a self, any idea of a being, of a living being, or a person, nor does there exist for them any idea or no-idea. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, the idea of a self is no-idea, and the idea of a being, or a living being, or a person is no-idea. And why? Because the blessed Buddhas are freed from all ideas.'

After these words, Bhagavat thus spoke to the venerable Subhûti: 'So it is, O Subhûti, so it is. Those beings, O Subhûti, who when this Sûtra was being recited here will not be disturbed or frightened or become alarmed, will be endowed with the highest wonder. And why? Because, O Subhûti, this was preached by the Tathâgata, as the Paramapâramitâ, which is no-Pâramitâ. And, O Subhûti, what the Tathâgata preaches as the Paramapâramitâ, that was preached also by immeasurable blessed Buddhas. Therefore it is called the Paramapâramitâ.

'And, O Subhûti, the Pâramitâ or the highest perfection of endurance (kshânti) belonging to a Tathâgata, that also is no-Pâramitâ. And why? Because, O Subhûti, at the time when the king of Kalinga cut my flesh from every limb, I had no idea of a self, of a being, of a living being, or of a person; I had neither an idea nor no-idea. And why? Because, O Subhûti, if I at that time had had an idea of a self, I should also have had an idea of malevolence. If I had had an idea of a being, or of a living being, or of a person, I should also have had an idea of malevolence. And why? Because, O Subhûti, I remember the past 500 births, when I was the *Rishi* Kshântivâdin (preacher of endurance). At that time also, I had no idea of a self, of a being, of a living being, of a person. Therefore then, O Subhûti, a noble-minded Bodhisattva, after putting aside all ideas, should raise his mind to the highest perfect knowledge. He should frame his mind so as not to believe (depend) in form, sound, smell, taste, or anything that can be touched, in something (dharma), in nothing or anything. And why? Because what is believed is not believed (not to be depended on). Therefore the Tathâgata preaches: "A gift should not be given by a Bodhisattva who believes in anything, it should not be given by one who believes in form, sound, smell, taste, or anything that can be touched."

'And again, O Subhûti, a Bodhisattva should in such wise give his gift for the benefit of all beings. And why? Because, O Subhûti, the idea of a being is no-idea. And those who are thus spoken of by the Tathâgata as all beings are indeed no-beings. And why? Because, O Subhûti, a

Tathâgata says what is real, says what is true, says the things as they are; a Tathâgata does not speak untruth.

'But again, O Subhûti, whatever doctrine has been perceived, taught, and meditated on by a Tathâgata, in it there is neither truth nor falsehood. And as a man who has entered the darkness would not see anything, thus a Bodhisattva is to be considered who is immersed in objects, and who being immersed in objects gives a gift. But as a man who has eyes would, when the night becomes light, and the sun has risen, see many things, thus a Bodhisattva is to be considered who is not immersed in objects, and who not being immersed in objects gives a gift.

'And again, O Subhûti, if any sons or daughters of good families will learn this treatise of the Law, will remember, recite, and understand it, and fully explain it to others, they, O Subhûti, are known by the Tathâgata through his Buddha-knowledge, they are seen, O Subhûti, by the Tathâgata through his Buddha-eye. All these beings, O Subhûti, will produce and hold fast an immeasurable and innumerable stock of merit.' (14)

XV.

'And if, O Subhûti, a woman or man sacrificed in the morning as many lives as there are grains of sand in the river Gangâ and did the same at noon and the same in the evening, and if in this way they sacrificed their lives for a hundred thousands of *niyutas* of *kofis* of ages, and if another, after hearing this treatise of the Law, should not oppose it, then the latter would on the strength of this produce a larger stock of merit, immeasurable and innumerable. What should we say then of him who after having written it, learns it, remembers it, understands it, and fully explains it to others?

'And again, O Subhûti, this treatise of the Law is incomprehensible and incomparable. And this treatise of the Law has been preached by the Tathâgata for the benefit of those beings who entered on the foremost path (the path that leads to *Nirvâna*), and who entered on the best path. And those who will learn this treatise of the Law, who will remember it, recite it, understand it, and fully explain it to others, they are known, O Subhûti, by the Tathâgata through his Buddha-knowledge, they are seen, O Subhûti, by the Tathâgata through his Buddha-eye. All these beings, O Subhûti, will be endowed with an immeasurable stock of merit, they will be endowed with an incomprehensible, incomparable, immeasurable and unmeasured stock of merit. All these beings, O Subhûti, will equally remember the *Bodhi* (the highest Buddha-knowledge), will recite it, and understand it. And why? Because it is not possible, O Subhûti, that this treatise of the Law should be heard by beings of little faith, by those who believe in self, in beings, in living beings, and in persons. It is impossible that this treatise of the Law should be heard by beings who have not acquired the knowledge of *Bodhisattvas*, or that it should be learned, remembered, recited, and understood by them. The thing is impossible.

'And again, O Subhûti, that part of the world in which this *Sûtra* will be propounded, will have to be honoured by the whole world of gods, men, and evil spirits, will have to be worshipped, and will become like a *Kaitya* (a holy sepulchre).' (15)

XVI.

And, O Subhûti, sons or daughters of a good family who will learn these very *Sûtras*, who will remember them, recite them, understand them, thoroughly take them to heart, and fully explain

them to others, they will be overcome, they will be greatly overcome. And why? Because, O Subhûti, whatever evil deeds these beings have done in a former birth, deeds that must lead to suffering, those deeds these beings, owing to their being overcome, after they have seen the Law, will destroy, and they will obtain the knowledge of Buddha.

'I remember, O Subhûti, in the past, before innumerable and more than innumerable kalpas, there were eighty-four hundred thousands of niyutas of koṭis of Buddhas following after the venerable and fully enlightened Tathâgata Dîpankara, who were pleased by me, and after being pleased were not displeased. And if, O Subhûti, these blessed Buddhas were pleased by me, and after being pleased were not displeased, and if on the other hand people at the last time, at the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the time of the decay of the good Law, will learn these very Sûtras, remember them, recite them, understand them, and fully explain them to others, then, O Subhûti, in comparison with their stock of merit that former stock of merit will not come to one hundredth part, nay, not to one thousandth part, not to a hundred thousandth part, not to a ten millionth part, not to a hundred millionth part, not to a hundred thousand ten millionth part, not to a hundred thousands of niyutas ten millionth part. It will not bear number, nor fraction, nor counting, nor comparison, nor approach, nor analogy.

'And if, O Subhûti, I were to tell you the stock of merit of those sons or daughters of good families, and how large a stock of merit those sons or daughters of good families will produce, and hold fast at that time, people would become distracted and their thoughts would become bewildered. And again, O Subhûti, as this treatise of the Law preached by the Tathâgata is incomprehensible and incomparable, its rewards also must be expected (to be) incomprehensible.' (16)

XVII.

At that time the venerable Subhûti thus spoke to the Bhagavat: 'How should a person, after having entered on the path of the Bodhisattvas, behave, how should he advance, and how should he restrain his thoughts?' Bhagavat said: 'He who has entered on the path of the Bodhisattvas should thus frame his thought: All beings must be delivered by me in the perfect world of Nirvâna; and yet after I have thus delivered these beings, no being has been delivered. And why? Because, O Subhûti, if a Bodhisattva had any idea of beings, he could not be called a Bodhisattva, and so on from the idea of a living being to the idea of a person; if he had any such idea, he could not be called a Bodhisattva. And why? Because, O Subhûti, there is no such thing (dharma) as one who has entered on the path of the Bodhisattvas.

'What do you think, O Subhûti, is there anything which the Tathâgata has adopted from the Tathâgata Dîpankara with regard to the highest perfect knowledge?' 'After this, the venerable Subhûti spoke thus to the Bhagavat: 'As far as I, O Bhagavat, understand the meaning of the preaching of the Bhagavat, there is nothing which has been adopted by the Tathâgata from the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata Dîpankara with regard to the highest perfect knowledge.' After this, Bhagavat thus spoke to the venerable Subhûti: 'So it is, Subhûti, so it is. There is not, O Subhûti, anything which has been adopted by the Tathâgata from the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata Dîpankara with regard to the highest perfect knowledge. And if, O Subhûti, anything had been adopted by the Tathâgata, the Tathâgata Dîpankara would not have prophesied of me, saying: "Thou, O boy, wilt be in the future the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata called Sâkyamuni." Because then, O Subhûti, there is nothing that has been adopted by

the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata with regard to the highest perfect knowledge, therefore I was prophesied by the Tathâgata Dîpankara, saying: "Thou, boy, wilt be in the future the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata called Sâkyamuni."

'And why, O Subhûti, the name of Tathâgata? It expresses true suchness. And why Tathâgata, O Subhûti? It expresses that he had no origin. And why Tathâgata, O Subhûti? It expresses the destruction of all qualities. And why Tathâgata, O Subhûti? It expresses one who had no origin whatever. And why this? Because, O Subhûti, no-origin is the highest goal.

'And whosoever, O Subhûti, should say that, by the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata, the highest perfect knowledge has been known, he would speak an untruth, and would slander me, O Subhûti, with some untruth that he has learned. And why? Because there is no such thing, O Subhûti, as has been known by the Tathâgata with regard to the highest perfect knowledge. And in that, O Subhûti, which has been known and taught by the Tathâgata, there is neither truth nor falsehood. Therefore the Tathâgata preaches: "All things are Buddha-things." And why? Because what was preached by the Tathâgata, O Subhûti, as all things, that was preached as no-things; and therefore all things are called Buddha-things.

'Now, O Subhûti, a man might have a body and a large body.' The venerable Subhûti said: That man who was spoken of by the Tathâgata as a man with a body, with a large body, he, O Bhagavat, was spoken of by the Tathâgata as without a body, and therefore he is called a man with a body and with a large body.'

Bhagavat said: 'So it is, O Subhûti; and if a Bodhisattva were to say: "I shall deliver all beings," he ought not to be called a Bodhisattva. And why? Is there anything, O Subhûti, that is called a Bodhisattva?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, Bhagavat, there is nothing which is called a Bodhisattva.' Bhagavat said: 'Those who were spoken of as beings, beings indeed, O Subhûti, they were spoken of as no-beings by the Tathâgata, and therefore they are called beings. Therefore the Tathâgata says: "All beings are without self all beings are without life, without manhood, without a personality."

'If, O Subhûti, a Bodhisattva were to say: "I shall create numbers of worlds," he would say what is untrue. And why? Because, what were spoken of as numbers of worlds, numbers of worlds indeed, O Subhûti, these were spoken of as no-numbers by the Tathâgata, and therefore they are called numbers of worlds.

'A Bodhisattva, O Subhûti, who believes that all things are without self, that all things are without self, he has faith, he is called a noble-minded Bodhisattva by the holy and fully enlightened Tathâgata.' (17)

XVIII.

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, has the Tathâgata the bodily eye?' Subhûti said: 'So it is, O Bhagavat, the Tathâgata has the bodily eye.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, has the Tathâgata the heavenly eye?' Subhûti said: 'So it is, O Bhagavat, the Tathâgata has the heavenly eye.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, has the Tathâgata the eye of knowledge?' Subhûti said: 'So it is, O Bhagavat, the Tathâgata has the eye of knowledge.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, has the Tathâgata the eye of the Law?' Subhûti said: 'So it is, O Bhagavat, the Tathâgata has the eye of the Law.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, has the Tathâgata the eye of Buddha?' Subhûti said: 'So it is, O Bhagavat, the Tathâgata has the eye of Buddha.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, as many grains of sand as there are in the great river Gangâ--were they preached by the Tathâgata as grains of sand?' Subhûti said: 'So it is, O Bhagavat, so it is, O Sugata, they were preached as grains of sand by the Tathâgata.' Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, if there were as many Gangâ rivers as there are grains of sand in the great river Gangâ; and, if there were as many worlds as there are grains of sand in these, would these worlds be many?' Subhûti said: 'So it is, O Bhagavat, so it is, O Sugata, these worlds would be many.' Bhagavat said: 'As many beings as there are in all those worlds, I know the manifold trains of thought of them all. And why? Because what was preached as the train of thoughts, the train of thoughts indeed, O Subhûti, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-train of thoughts, and therefore it is called the train of thoughts. And why? Because, O Subhûti, a past thought is not perceived, a future thought is not perceived, and the present thought is not perceived.' (18)

XIX.

'What do you think, O Subhûti, if a son or a daughter of a good family should fill this sphere of a million millions of worlds with the seven treasures, and give it as a gift to holy and fully enlightened Buddhas, would that son or daughter of a good family produce on the strength of this a large stock of merit?' Subhûti said: 'Yes, a large one.' Bhagavat said: 'So it is, Subhûti, so it is; that son or daughter of a good family would produce on the strength of this a large stock of merit, immeasurable and innumerable. And why? Because what was preached as a stock of merit, a stock of merit indeed, O Subhûti, that was preached as no-stock of merit by the Tathâgata, and therefore it is called a stock of merit. If, O Subhûti, there existed a stock of merit, the Tathâgata would not have preached: "A stock of merit, a stock of merit indeed!"'(19)

XX.

'What do you think then, O Subhûti, is a Tathâgata to be seen (known) by the shape of his visible body?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, a Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the shape of his visible body. And why? Because, what was preached, O Bhagavat, as the shape of the visible body, the shape of the visible body indeed, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-shape of the visible body, and therefore it is called the shape of the visible body.'

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, should a Tathâgata be seen (known) by the possession of signs?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, a Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the possession of signs. And why? Because, what was preached by the Tathâgata as the possession of signs, that was preached as no-possession of signs by the Tathâgata, and therefore it is called the possession of signs.' (20)

XXI.

Bhagavat said: 'What do you think, O Subhûti, does the Tathâgata think in this wise: The Law has been taught by me?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, does the Tathâgata think in this wise: The Law has been taught by me.' Bhagavat said: 'If a man should say that the Law has been taught by the Tathâgata, he would say what is not true; he would slander me with untruth which he has learned. And why? Because, O Subhûti, it is said the teaching of the Law, the teaching of the Law indeed. O Subhûti, there is nothing that can be perceived by the name of the teaching of the Law.'

After this, the venerable Subhûti spoke thus to the Bhagavat: 'Forsooth, O Bhagavat, will there be any beings in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the time of the decay of the good Law, who, when they have heard these very Laws, will believe?' Bhagavat said: 'These, O Subhûti, are neither beings nor no-beings. And why? Because, O Subhûti, those who were preached as beings, beings indeed, they were preached as no-beings by the Tathâgata, and therefore they are called beings.' (21)

XXII.

'What do you think then, O Subhûti, is there anything which has been known by the Tathâgata in the form of the highest perfect knowledge?' The venerable Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat, there is nothing, O Bhagavat, that has been known by the Tathâgata in the form of the highest perfect knowledge.' Bhagavat said: 'So it is, Subhûti, so it is. Even the smallest thing is not known or perceived there, therefore it is called the highest perfect knowledge.' (22)

XXIII.

'Also, Subhûti, all is the same there, there is no difference there, and therefore it is called the highest perfect knowledge. Free from self, free from being, free from life, free from personality, that highest perfect knowledge is always the same, and thus known with all good things. And why? Because, what were preached as good things, good things indeed, O Subhûti, they were preached as no-things by the Tathâgata, and therefore they are called good things.' (23)

XXIV.

'And if, O Subhûti, a woman or man, putting together as many heaps of the seven treasures as there are Sumerus, kings of mountains, in the sphere of a million millions of worlds, should give them as a gift to holy and fully enlightened Tathâgatas; and, if a son or a daughter of a good family, after taking from this treatise of the Law, this Pragñâpâramitâ, one Gâthâ of four lines only, should teach it to others, then, O Subhûti, compared with his stock of merit, the former stock of merit would not come to the one hundredth part,' &c., till 'it will not bear an approach.' (24)

XXV.

'What do you think then, O Subhûti, does a Tathâgatas think in this wise: Beings have been delivered by me? You should not think so, O Subhûti. And why? Because there is no being, O Subhûti, that has been delivered by the Tathâgata. And, if there were a being, O Subhûti, that has been delivered by the Tathâgatas, then the Tathâgata would believe in self, believe in a being, believe in a living being, and believe in a person. And what is called a belief in self, O Subhûti, that is preached as no-belief by the Tathâgata. And this is learned by children and ignorant persons; and they who were preached as children and ignorant persons, O Subhûti, were preached as no-persons by the Tathâgata, and therefore they are called children and ignorant persons.' (25)

XXVI.

'What do you think then, O Subhûti, is the Tathâgata to be seen (known) by the possession of signs?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, O Bhagavat. So far as I know the meaning of the preaching of the Bhagavat, the Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the possession of signs.' Bhagavat said: 'Good, good, Subhûti, so it is, Subhûti; so it is, as you say; a Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the possession of signs. And why? Because, O Subhûti, if the Tathâgata were to be seen (known) by the possession of signs, a wheel-turning king also would be a Tathâgata; therefore a Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the possession of signs.' The venerable Subhûti spoke thus to the Bhagavat: 'As I understand the meaning of the preaching of the Bhagavat, a Tathâgata is not to be seen (known) by the possession of signs.' Then the Bhagavat at that moment preached these two Gâthâs:

They who saw me by form, and they who heard me by sound,
They engaged in false endeavours, will not see me.

A Buddha is to be seen (known) from the Law; for the Lords (Buddhas) have the
Law-body;

And the nature of the Law cannot be understood, nor can it be made to be understood. (26)

XXVII.

'What do you think then, O Subhûti, has the highest perfect knowledge been known by the Tathâgata through the possession of signs? You should not think so, O Subhûti. And why? Because, O Subhûti, the highest perfect knowledge would not be known by the Tathâgata through the possession of signs. Nor should anybody, O Subhûti, say to you that the destruction or annihilation of any thing is proclaimed by those who have entered on the path of the Bodhisattvas.' (27)

XXVIII.

'And if, O Subhûti, a son or a daughter of a good family were to fill worlds equal to the number of grains of sand of the river Gangâ with the seven treasures, and give them as a gift to holy and fully enlightened Tathâgatas; and if a Bodhisattva acquired endurance in selfless and uncreated things, then the latter will on the strength of this produce a larger stock of merit, immeasurable and innumerable.

'But, O Subhûti, a stock of merit should not be appropriated by a noble-minded Bodhisattva.' The venerable Subhûti said: 'Should a stock of merit, O Bhagavat, not be appropriated by a Bodhisattva?' Bhagavat said: 'It should be appropriated, O Subhûti; it should not be appropriated; and therefore it is said: It should be appropriated.' (28)

XXIX.

'And again, O Subhûti, if anybody were to say that the Tathâgata goes, or comes, or stands, or sits, or lies down, he, O Subhûti, does not understand the meaning of my preaching. And why? Because the word Tathâgata means one who does not go to anywhere, and does not come from anywhere; and therefore he is called the Tathâgata (truly come), holy and fully enlightened.' (29)

XXX.

'And again, O Subhûti, if a son or a daughter of a good family were to take as many worlds as there are grains of earth-dust in this sphere of a million millions of worlds, and reduce them to such fine dust as can be made with immeasurable strength, like what is called a mass of the smallest atoms, do you think, O Subhûti, would that be a mass of many atoms?' Subhûti said: 'Yes, Bhagavat, yes, Sugata, that would be a mass of many atoms. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, if it were a mass of many atoms, Bhagavat would not call it a mass of many atoms. And why? Because, what was preached as a mass of many atoms by the Tathâgata, that was preached as no-mass of atoms by the Tathâgata; and therefore it is called a mass of many atoms. And what was preached by the Tathâgata as the sphere of a million millions of worlds, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-sphere of worlds; and therefore it is called the sphere of a million millions of worlds. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, if there were a sphere of worlds, there would exist a belief in matter; and what was preached as a belief in matter by the Tathâgata, that was preached as no-belief by the Tathâgata; and therefore it is called a belief in matter.' Bhagavat said: 'And a belief in matter itself, O Subhûti, is unmentionable and

inexpressible; it is neither a thing nor no-thing, and this is known by children and ignorant persons.' (30)

XXXI.

'And why? Because, O Subhûti, if a man were to say that belief in self, belief in a being, belief in life, belief in personality had been preached by the Tathâgata, would he be speaking truly?' Subhûti said: 'Not indeed, Bhagavat, not indeed, Sugata; he would not be speaking truly. And why? Because, O Bhagavat, what was preached by the Tathâgata as a belief in self, that was preached by the Tathâgata as no-belief; therefore it is called belief in self.'

Bhagavat said: 'Thus then, O Subhûti, are all things to be perceived, to be looked upon, and to be believed by one who has entered on the path of the Bodhisattvas. And in this wise are they to be perceived, to be looked upon, and to be believed, that a man should believe neither in the idea of a thing nor in the idea of a no-thing. And why? Because, by saying: The idea of a thing, the idea of a thing indeed, it has been preached by the Tathâgata as no-idea of a thing.' (31)

XXXII.

'And, O Subhûti, if a noble-minded Bodhisattva were to fill immeasurable and innumerable spheres of worlds with the seven treasures, and give them as a gift to holy and fully enlightened Tathâgatas; and if a son or a daughter of a good family, after taking from this treatise of the Law, this Pragñâpâramitâ, one Gâthâ of four lines only, should learn it, repeat it, understand it, and fully explain it to others, then the latter would on the strength of this produce a larger stock of merit, immeasurable and innumerable. And how should he explain it? As in the sky:

Stars, darkness, a lamp, a phantom, dew, a bubble.

A dream, a flash of lightning, and a cloud--thus we should look upon the world
(all that was made).

Thus he should explain; therefore it is said: He should explain.'

Thus spoke the Bhagavat enraptured. The elder Subhûti, and the friars, nuns, the faithful laymen and women, and the Bodhisattvas also, and the whole world of gods, men, evil spirits and fairies, praised the preaching of the Bhagavat. (32)

Thus is finished the Diamond-cutter, the blessed Pragñâpâramitâ.