

# AMITÂBHA.

A STORY OF BUDDHIST METAPHYSICS.

BY THE EDITOR.

[CONCLUDED.]

THE CONSPIRACY.

ASHVAGHOSHA held daily conversations with Kanishka, in which not only his friends Charaka and the King of Magadha, but also Princess Bhadrasrî, his bride-elect, were now wont to join.

One day Subâhu was detained by important affairs of state, and when he made his appearance in the accustomed circle of his philosophical friends, he was so full of distress as to be almost beyond the power of speech.

“My royal friend,” said Kanishka, “what disturbs your mind? How terrible must the calamity be that so affects a man of your composure! Are you or one of your kin in danger of death, or pray, what else is the cause of your trouble?”

“My dear friend and ally,” replied King Subâhu, “it is your life that is endangered. I come to take counsel with you as to how we may save you from the perilous situation in which the false patriotism of my people has placed you. Some of my southern generals having but lately arrived with subsidies which ought to have been with me at the beginning of the war entered into a conspiracy with my Prime Minister to surround the palace, take you prisoner and put you to the sword; then to attack your unwary soldiers and drive them out of the country. Everything has been planned in the strictest privacy, and your noble confidence in my faith and friendship made it easy for them to replace the guards gradually by their friends until they now have everything their own way, and I am given to understand that unless I join the conspirators they will elect another king.”

“And what is your pleasure in this matter?” asked Kanishka,

who betrayed no more concern than if he were talking about a game of checkers.

“My pleasure?” exclaimed the disconsolate King; “ask not what my pleasure is. I see only my duty, and that is to save you or to die with you !”

Kanishka was a man of deeds, not of words. He bade Charaka at once to hoist on the tower of the palace a blue flag, which was the secret sign to summon the Gandhâra generals that were camping in the vicinity of the town. Having enquired into the situation and learned that all the gates were in possession of the conspirators, he requested the King to call into his presence the treacherous Prime Minister who was at the head of the conspiracy, indicating, as though nothing had happened, that he wanted to speak to him.

The Prime Minister entered, and the King spoke to him graciously about his fidelity to King Subâhu and the kingdom of Magadha, and said that he himself, anxious to honor the people of Magadha, wished to show him some recognition and confer some favor on him, the most faithful servant of King Subâhu.

While King Kanishka thus idled away the time the Prime Minister felt uneasy, for his fellow-conspirators, the generals from the south, were waiting for the signal to overpower the few foreign guards, to close the gates, and take possession of the palace. Kanishka in the meanwhile inquired as to his health, his general prosperity, his children, his brothers and sisters, until the Prime Minister lost patience and said: “Sire, allow me to withdraw; a number of my friends from the southern provinces, men of great prominence in their distant homes, have arrived and are anxious to meet me and my sovereign.”

With a royal courtesy which could not be refused, King Kanishka replied: “Let me accompany you to greet them. Your friends are my friends, and the vassals of my most noble ally King Subâhu are my allies.”

The Prime Minister blushed and looked inquiringly at the King; but King Kanishka's eye was calm and showed not the least sign of suspicion. At the same time there was a firmness and determination in the King's attitude which made the treacherous Minister wince and submit.

“This is the way to the hall where my friends are assembled,” said the Prime Minister, and showed the King the way.

“Wait a moment,” said King Kanishka, “it would be wrong of us if my royal brother, King Subâhu, were not present. Let us

call my counselors and generals so as to indicate our desire to honor your guests."

In the meantime some of the horsemen had arrived and their officers demanded admission at the palace gates to report their presence to the King. They were announced and admitted.

"Welcome, my gallant officers," exclaimed King Kanishka, "join my retinue when I greet the friends of the Prime Minister, and let your men remain under arms at the main gate ready to receive my commands."

Thus the two Kings with a stately retinue both of dignified councilors and warlike officers entered the hall where the conspirators were impatiently waiting. They were dumbfounded when they saw at the side of their most hated enemy their own sovereign accompanied by the Prime Minister with downcast eye, meek as a tame doe and giving no sign for action. Then Kanishka addressed the conspirators with great cordiality as though he had long desired to meet them and show them his good will. He praised the generals for their valor, for their love of their country, their faithfulness to their King, and expressed his great happiness that the old times of national hatred had passed away, that the two nations Magadha and Gandhâra should forthwith be like brothers, and that they would join to set a good example to the world by obeying the maxim of the Tathâgata :

"T is love alone makes hate to cease,  
Such is the ancient rule of peace."<sup>1</sup>

Not yet, however, had the ice of spite and ill will entirely melted from the hostile hearts of his enemies; and not yet was his retinue strong enough to make him feel master of the situation. So Kanishka continued his policy of gaining time by having each one of the hostile officers personally introduced to him and, this done, he began to address the company a second time.

"Allow me to improve this rare opportunity of having so many friends assembled here, to explain to you my policy. I am a disciple of the Buddha, the Blessed One, who taught us to make an end of hatred by ceasing to hate. If there be any just cause for war, let us have war and let us wage war openly and resolutely, but let us ever be ready to offer the hand of brotherly good-will to our enemies without cherishing feelings of revenge for the injuries we may think we have suffered. The policy of long suffering, of loving-kindness, of forgiveness, not only shows goodness of heart

<sup>1</sup>*Dhammapâda* 223, and *Jataka* 271.

but also a rare gift of wisdom, as all those are aware of who know the story of King Long-suffering and his noble son Prince Long-life, which the Tathâgata told to the quarrelsome monks of Kausâmbî.

King Kanishka then told the story of Brahmadata, the powerful king of Benares,—how he had conquered the little kingdom of Kôsala and had the captive King Long-suffering executed in Benares. But Prince Long-life escaped and, unknown to any one, entered the service of King Brahmadata, whose confidence he gained by his talents and reliability. Thus he became King Brahmadata's personal attendant.

King Kanishka was a good story-teller, and the people of India, whether of high or low birth, love to hear a story well told, even if they know it by heart. So the conspirators were as though spell-bound and forgot their evil designs; nor did they notice how the hall began to fill more and more with the officers of the King of Gandhâra. They listened to the adventures of Prince Long-life; how on a hunt he was left alone with King Brahmadata in the forest, how the King laid himself down and slept, how the Prince drew his sword, how the King was frightened when he awoke and learned that he was in the power of his enemy's son; and finally how each granted the other his life and made peace, thus demonstrating the wisdom of the maxim, that hatred cannot be appeased by hatred, but is appeased by love,—and by love only.<sup>1</sup>

When the King finished the story of Prince Long-life, the hall was crowded with armed officers of the Gandhâra army, and seeing his advantage, King Kanishka, feeling the satisfaction of one who had gained a great victory in battle, paused and glanced with a good-natured look over the party of conspirators. He remained as self-possessed as a school-master teaching a class of wayward boys. "I am anxious to be at peace with all the world," he said, "but the question arises, what shall be done with traitors and conspirators who misunderstand my good intentions and would not brook the loving-kindness of our great master?" Then addressing the Prime Minister of Magadha by his full name and title, he added: "Let me hear your advice, my friend. I meant to promote your welfare, while you attempted to take my life. What shall I do with you and your associates?"

The Prime Minister was overwhelmed. He fell on his knees and sobbed: "You are in wisdom like the Enlightened One, the

<sup>1</sup>For full accounts of Prince Long-life see *Mahāvagga*, X, 3-20. (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII.)

Omniscient Tathâgata. Would that you were his equal also in mercy and compassion. Never should you regret having forgiven me my transgression !”

King Kanishka made no answer but looked round and cast conquering glances at the several conspirators, until they, one by one, joined the kneeling Prime Minister. Then espying the venerable head of Ashvaghosha among his audience, he approached the sage respectfully and said: “Now, most reverend sir, it is your turn to speak, for I want you to tell me what a king ought to do unto those men who conspire to take his life. Would it be wise for him to follow the behest of the Tathâgata and to grant them forgiveness?”

Said Ashvaghosha: “Not I, sir, but you are the king. Pronounce judgment according to your own discretion. I cherish the confidence that the seeds of kindness will fall here upon good soil.”

“Thank you, venerable sir. I have learned from the Great Teacher of all beings, that to hate no one is the highest wisdom. But a king is responsible for the welfare of his people and cannot let crime go unpunished. The duty of a judge is justice. In the present case I do not think that I would condone your action if it were unmitigated treason; but I see in it a redeeming feature which is your patriotism, misguided though it may be. Rise, gentlemen, and if you will promise forthwith to banish from your heart all falsehood, spite, and envy, come and shake hands with me in token of your faithful allegiance to both your august sovereign, the King of Magadha, and myself, his ally and brother on the throne.”

#### THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

Protestations of fidelity and admiration greeted King Kanishka from all sides when he retired to his private rooms after having shaken hands with the conspirators. He had conquered his enemies, not by the power of arms, as he had done before in battle, but by the superiority of his mind.

It was at this moment that a messenger arrived who had been sent by the custodian of King Subâhu's summer palace, saying: “Sir King, send your hunters to the summer-palace with elephants and soldiers, for a man-eating tiger has been seen in its garden and parks, and all the people living in the neighborhood are sore afraid of the beast.”

Then the generals of the South shouted: “Great King and Sire, allow us to go out to the summer palace to hunt the tiger;

for we are anxious to distinguish ourselves and prove to the world that we are valiant soldiers and good hunters."

And they received permission to be the foremost in the hunt, and after a hasty preparation they set out the same evening, but the two kings and their retinue with many officers followed them on the following day; Charaka, however, stayed behind at the command of King Kanishka, to observe the courtiers and councilors of King Subâhu and keep an eye upon the populace of the city, the capital of Magadha.

Charaka sat at a window in company with the venerable Ashvaghosha to see the suite of the two kings with their hunters and elephants leaving the city, and Charaka addressed the sage, saying: "My reverend friend, I learned much yesterday from King Kanishka by watching his mode of treating enemies. Truly, I understand the doctrine of the Tathâgata better now than if I had lived for many years in the monastery and studied all the wisdom of the monks. How much evil can be avoided by discretion, and should not mortals blame themselves for all the ills that befall them? But there is this doubt that vexes my mind. If Amitâbha, the omnipresent, the eternal, the omnibeneficent source of all wisdom, fashions the world and determines our destinies, why should not life be possible without suffering? However, the first sentence of the four great truths declares that life itself is suffering. If that be so, no amount of discretion could give us happiness so long as we live. And, on the other hand, how can Amitâbha permit innumerable beings to suffer innocently for conditions which they did not create themselves?"

"My young friend," replied Ashvaghosha, "the first great truth is truly obvious to any one who knows the nature of life. Life consists of separation and combination; it is a constant meeting and parting and has in store both pains and pleasures. Prove to me that life be possible without any change, and I will begin to doubt the first of the four great truths. But if life is suffering, no being has a right to blame Amitâbha for existing. All beings exist by their own Karma; they are the incarnation of the deeds of their former existences; they are such as they are by their own determination, having fashioned themselves under the influence of circumstances.

"By Amitâbha all beings are merely educated in the school of life. Some have gained more insight than others. Some love the light, others hate it. Some rise to the pure heights of Buddhahood, and others grovel in the dust and take delight in badness

and deeds of darkness. Amitâbha is like the rain that falls upon the earth without discrimination. The seeds of herbs assimilate the water that falls from the clouds of heaven in a refreshing spring shower, and grow to be herbs each of its own kind. Fern-spores become ferns, acorns change the water into the leaves and wood and bark of oak trees, and the germs of fruit trees fashion it into fruit, each of its own kind, into mangos, bananas, dates, figs, pomegranates, and other savory fruits. Amitâbha is the same to all, as the water of the refreshing rain is the same: but diverse creatures make a different use of the benefits of truth, and each one is responsible for itself.<sup>1</sup> Each one has originated in ignorance by its own blind impulses, each one, in its own field of experience, has learned the lesson of life in its own way, and each one can blame no one but itself for what it is and has become—except that it ought to be grateful for the light that Amitâbha sheds upon the course of its development.

“Amitâbha is not a god that would assert himself or care for worship and adoration. He does not think and act and do deeds. He is not Ishvara, not Sakra, not Indra, not Brahma: He is the norm of all existence, the good law, the order and intrinsic harmony that shows itself in cause and effect, in the bliss of goodness, in the curse of evil-doing. He is above all the gods, and everything that is has been fashioned by him according to the eternal ordinances of his constitution.

“We are not creatures of Amitâbha, we are creatures of our own making. Life starts in ignorance. It begins with blind impulses, and life’s start is life’s own doing. But as soon as an impulse acts and is reacted upon, it is encompassed by the good law and thus it is educated by Amitâbha and raised by him as children are nourished by their mother and instructed by their father. We are not the creatures of Amitâbha, but his children.<sup>2</sup>

“Ask thy own self, whether thou art because thou wast created by some extraneous power; or contrariwise whether it is not truer to say that thou art because thou wilt thy own existence; and thou wilt it such as it is.

“Thou hast become what thou art of necessity according to the norms that constitute the nature of Amitâbha. But thou grawest to be what thou art because thou wantedst to become such.

<sup>1</sup>The *Saddharma-pundarika*, chapter 7.

<sup>2</sup>Amitâbha (and with him Buddha is never called Creator) but he is frequently addressed by “Father.” See the *Saddharma-pundarika*, III., 97, 104, and the *Fo-sho-king-tsan-king*, III., 15, 1231.

“Now if an Ishvara had created thee, thou wouldst not have the feeling of freedom that thou now hast, but thou wouldst feel like the vessel made by the potter which is what it is in spite of its own like or dislike.”

“But if I am determined to love life,” asked Charaka, “is it wrong to do so and shall I be punished for it by suffering?”

Replied Ashvaghosha : “There is neither punishment nor reward, my son, though we may use the words in adapting our language to the common mode of thought. There is only cause and effect. The Tathâgata gave no commandments, for what authority has any one to command his brother-beings? The Tathâgata revealed to us the evils of life, and what people call the ten commandments are the ten ways pointed out by the Tathâgata how to avoid the ten evils. He who does not take the Tathâgata’s advice must bear the consequences. The tiger will be hunted down, and a murderer will be executed. Their fate is the result of their deeds. As to love of life, there is nothing wrong in it. If you love life, you must not be afraid of suffering. While the Tathâgata lived in the flesh, he was as much subject to pain as I am and as you are. But when the pangs of his last disease came upon him he bore them with fortitude and did not complain. If you love life, bear its ills nobly and do not break down under its burdens. Avail yourself of the light of Amitâbha, for thus you can escape the worst evils of life, the contrition of regret, of remorse, of a bad conscience; and the noblest pleasure of life is that of becoming a lamp unto others. Let your light shine in the world and you will be like unto your father—Amitâbha, the omnibenevolent source of all illumination.”

#### THE PARABLE OF THE ELEPHANT.

While King Kanishka stayed at the summer palace to witness the tiger hunt, a Buddhist Abbot came to the royal palace and requested an interview with the great King Kanishka’s friend; and the Abbot was admitted into the presence of Charaka, who happened to be in the company of some councilors of King Subâhu, among whom was Ashvaghosha, the saintly philosopher. Said the Abbot : “I come from the monastery in the hills situated near a Brahman village south of Benares and have been sent by the brethren, the venerable monks whose abbot I am. We know that King Kanishka and you are followers of the Buddha and are steadfast in the orthodox faith. Therefore we approach you in confidence and hope that you will lend your countenance to us, endeavor

oring to spread and establish the good law, the pure religion of the Tathâgata. We have settled in the hills, but there is a Shiva shrine close by and the villagers continue to offer gifts to the priests while the venerable brethren who profess faith in the glorious doctrine of the Buddha are neglected and sometimes positively suffer from privation."

"What can I do about it," queried Charaka.

"If the Shiva shrine were removed, the villagers would no longer seek religious comfort through Brahman rites and would turn Buddhists. We are told that you are a Buddhist monk; you will have sympathy with your suffering brethren and help them to expel the unbelievers."

"And do you think," objected Ashvaghosha, "that either King Subâhu or King Kanishka would lend you his royal authority to interfere with the religious service of any one? No, my friend. The Shiva worshippers may be mistaken in their religious views, but they seek the truth and so long as they do no injury to their neighbors, their worship cannot be disturbed. And I do not know but the Shiva priests may in their own way do good service to the people."

And there was a Brahman present, one of King Subâhu's councilors, who was pleased with Ashvaghosha's remark and expressed his approval of the principle of toleration which the great Emperor Ashoka had proclaimed in one of his edicts as a maxim of good government, and the Brahman added:

"Do not ye, too, O Buddhists, preach the doctrine of the Brahmans, that there is a supreme Lord Creator over all creatures, a divine ego-consciousness of All-existence? Whether we call God Ishvara, or Shiva, or Amitâbha, he remains the same and has a just claim to worship."

Ashvaghosha shook his head: "No, my Brahman friend! The good law is supreme, and it is a father omnibenevolent as we rightly designate it. It is the norm of existence, the standard of truth, the measure of righteousness; but that norm is not an Ishvara, neither Shiva, nor Brahma. Here is the difference between Ishvara and Amitâbha: Ishvara is deified egoism; he demands worship and praise. Amitâbha is love, he is free from the vanity of egoism and is only anxious for his children that they should avail themselves of the light and shun the darkness, that they should follow his advice and walk in the path of righteousness. Ishvara calls sin what is contrary to his will; he loves to be addressed in prayer and he delights in listening to the praises of his worshippers. Not

so Amitâbha. Amitâbha cares not for prayer, is indifferent to worship, and cannot be flattered by praise, but the good law is thwarted when his children err; and Amitâbha appears to be wrapt in sadness by the evil results of their mistakes; not for his sake—for he is eternal and remains the same forevermore—but for the sake of the sufferings of all sentient creatures, for all creatures are his disciples, he guides them, he teaches them, he encompasses them. He is like unto a father to them. So far as they walk in the light and have become conscious beings by dint of reason, they have become his children.”

Said the Brahman: “I for one do not believe that Ishvara, or Brahma, or whatever you may call God, is a person such as we are. He is a higher kind of personality, which however includes the faculties of perception, judgment, and reason. I believe therefore that the Buddhist faith is lacking in this, that its devotees think of Amitâbha as deficient in self-consciousness. Buddhist ethics are noble, but are human deeds the highest imaginable? Since the godhead is greater than man, the highest bliss will forever remain a union with Brahma, or Ishvara, or Sakra, or whatever you may call the great Unknown and Unknowable, who has revealed himself in the Vedas and is pleased with the prayers and sacrifices of the pious who express their faith in worship.”

“When I was young,” replied Ashvaghosha, “I was a Brahman myself; I believed in Brahma the Supreme Being, the Creator of and Lord over all the worlds that exist. I know there is much that is good in the Brahman faith, and I did not abandon it because I deemed it bad or injurious. I abandoned it, because the doctrine of the Tathâgata was superior, all-comprehensive, and more profound, for it explains the problems of existence, its whence and whither, and is more helpful. The doctrine of the Tathâgata is practical and not in the air as are the theories and speculations of the Brahmans. You seek a union with Brahma and find satisfaction in empty words. Where is Brahma, and what is he? We may dispute his existence and no one can refute us. He is an idea, a metaphysical assumption, and his mansion is everywhere and nowhere. Thus the Tathâgata says that those who believe in Brahma and seek a union with Brahma are like a man who should make a staircase where four roads meet, to mount up high into a mansion which he can neither see nor know how it is, where it is, what it is built of, nor whether it exists at all. The priests claim the authority of the Vedas, and the Vedas are based upon the authority of the authors who wrote them, and these authors rely on the author-

ity of Brahma. They are like a string of blind men clinging to one another and leading the blind, and their method of salvation consists in adoration, worship, and prayer.<sup>1</sup> It is a doctrine for children, and though the words of their theory are high-sounding they are not the truth but a mere shadow of the truth; and in this sense the Tathâgata compared them to the monkey at the lake who tries to catch the moon in the water, mistaking the reflection for the reality."

"But would not all your arguments," replied the Brahman, "if I were to grant them, apply with the same force to Amitâbha? What is the difference whether we say Brahma or Amitâbha? Both are names for the Absolute."

"There would be no difference in the names, if we understood the same by both. Brahma, the Absolute, is generally interpreted to mean Being in general, but Amitâbha is Enlightenment. We do not hanker after existence, but we worship goodness.

"By Amitâbha we understand the eternal, infinite light, i. e., the spiritual light of comprehension, and this light is a reality. No one doubts that there is a norm of truth and a standard of right and wrong. That is Amitâbha. We may not yet know all about Amitâbha; our wisdom is limited; our goodness is not perfect. But we ground ourselves upon that which we do know, while you Brahmans start with speculations, seeking a union with the Absolute, which is a vague idea, something unknown and unknowable. Amitâbha is certainly not a limited self-consciousness, but an infinite principle, an omnipresent law, an eternal norm, higher than any individual, but the depth of this norm is unfathomable, its application universal and infinite; its bountiful use immeasurable.

"We know something but not all about Amitâbha. He is the Dharmakâya, the embodiment of the good law. He is the Nirmanakâya, the aspiration to reach bodhi in the transformations of the evolution of life. He is the Sambhogakâya, the bliss of good deeds.<sup>2</sup> The philosophers, scientists, poets, of the future, the thinkers and dreamers of mankind, will find in Amitâbha a wonderful source of inspiration which can never be exhausted. The Tathâgata's religion is not mere metaphysics, his philosophy is not mere mythology. He allows metaphysics and mythology their spheres, but

<sup>1</sup> The simile of the blind leader of the blind occurs in the same connection in the *Tevijja Sutta*, 15.

<sup>2</sup> For the details of Ashvaghosha's doctrine of the triple aspect of the highest truth (so similar to the Christian trinity) as the Kâya (i. e., body or personality) of (1) the good law (2) transformation, (3) Bliss, see T. Suzuki's translation of Ashvaghosha's *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith*, Chicago, 1900, pp. 99-101.

urges the practical issues of life. Thus his religion comprises all without becoming vague."

Said the Brahman: "How can so many contradictory things be united in one?"

And Ashvaghosha replied: "My venerable teacher, the saintly sage Parsva, once told me the parable of the elephant which, explains the relation of the truth to the sundry doctrines held by the several sects and schools, priests and philosophers, prophets and preachers.

"There was a noble and mighty elephant, an elephant white in color, with a strong trunk and long tusks, trained by a good master, and willing and serviceable in all the work that elephants are put to. And this noble and mighty elephant being led by his guide, the good master who had trained him, came to the land of the blind. And it was noised about in the land of the blind that the noble and mighty elephant, the king of all beasts, the wisest of all animals, the strongest and yet the meekest and kindest of creatures, had made his appearance in their country. So the wise men and teachers of the blind came to the place where the elephant was and every one began to investigate his shape and figure and form. And when the elephant was gone they met and discussed the problem of the noble and mighty beast, and there were some who said, he is like a great thick snake, others said, no! he is like a snake of medium size. The former had felt the trunk, the latter the tail. Further there were some who claimed that his figure was like that of a high column, others declared he was large and bulky like a big barrel, still others maintained he was smooth and hard but tapering. Some of the blind had taken hold of one of the legs, others had reached the main body, and still others had touched the tusks. Every one proposed his view and they disputed and controverted, and wrangled, and litigated, and bickered, and quarreled, and called each other down, and imprecated each one all the others, and they denounced each one all the others, and they execrated each one all the others, and they be-shrewed and scolded, and anathemised, and excommunicated, and finally every one of them swore that every one else was a liar and was cursed on account of his heresies. These blind men, every one of them honest in his contentions, being sure of having the truth and relying upon his own experience, formed schools and sects and factions and behaved in exactly the same way as you see the priests of the different creeds behave. But the master of the noble, mighty elephant knows them all, he knows that every one

of them has a parcel of the truth, that every one is right in his way, but wrong in taking his parcel to be the whole truth.

“The master of the elephant is the Tathâgata, the Enlightened One, the Buddha. He has brought the white elephant representing the truth, the noble and mighty elephant, symbolising strength and wisdom and devotion, into the land of the blind, and he who listens to the Tathâgata will understand all the schools, and all the sects and all the factions that are in possession of parcels of the truth. His doctrine is all-comprehensive, and he who takes refuge in Him will cease to bicker, and to contend, and to quarrel.”<sup>1</sup>

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When Ashvaghosha had finished the parable of the noble and mighty elephant, the two Kings returned from the summer palace, carrying with them in a solemn procession the slain tiger, and close behind on a white charger decked with garlands and gay ribbons, rode the hero of the day, one of the generals from the South, whose dart had struck the tiger with fatal precision and death-dealing power.

“Behold the hero of the day!” said Charaka. “And had the conspiracy not miscarried, the same man might now be an assassin and a miscreant.”

“There is a lesson in it!” replied Ashvaghosha, “existence is not desirable for its own sake. That which gives worth to life is the purpose to which it is devoted.”

#### THE DOUBLE WEDDING.

Charaka found by degrees and not without difficulties his mental equilibrium, which his friend Kanishka seemed to possess naturally. He unburdened his heart to the saintly old man and arrived at the conviction that he was not made for a monk and that his duties of life according to his disposition lay in other fields.

In the meantime King Kanishka had sent a messenger to Matura his chancellor and vicegerent at Gandhâra, to bring Princess Kamalavatî to Benares.

Princess Kamalavatî arrived and when her betrothal to Charaka was announced the happy events of our story reached their climax. Ashvaghosha declared that he himself would solemnise the nuptials of both couples, Kanishka with Bhadrasrî, and Charaka with Kamalavatî.

Kanishka had a great respect for priests, but he did not favor

<sup>1</sup>The *Uddâna*, VI.

the idea that his friend, the physician royal, should resign his calling of wizard (as he was wont to call him) for the sake of becoming a monk.

When the marriage ceremony was over the King of Gandhâra claimed that while there were plenty of good and honest men who could wear the yellow robe, there was scarcely one man among a million who could perform miracles and save human lives, as Charaka had done."

Charaka denied that he was a wizard. His art was no magic but consisted simply in observation and experiment, and it was nature whose forces he had learned to guide; but for all that he accomplished things which astounded the world. They were better than the miracles of magicians, for they were more useful and of enduring benefit to mankind.

When his friends praised him, he replied: "My science is a beginning only and what I accomplish is the work of a tyro. The Tathâgata has preached the religion of enlightenment, he set the wheel to rolling: it is now our duty to follow up his thought, to spread enlightenment, and to increase it. Amitâbha is infinite, and thus the possibilities of invention are inexhaustible. The wondrous things which man is able to do, and which he will do in the ages to come, can at present only be surmised by the wisest sages.

"But greater than the greatest feats of invention will be the application of the Lord Buddha's maxim of loving-kindness in all fields of human intercourse, in family life, in politics, in labor and social affairs, in our dealings with friends and foes, with animals, and even with the degenerate and criminal."