

## CHAPTER 8

### The Five Hundred Disciples Receive the Prediction of Their Destiny

[*Pañca, bhikṣu, śata, vyākaraṇa, parivartaḥ*]

Piya Tan  
Poh Ming Tse, Singapore  
14 March 2015

#### Puṇṇa praises the Buddha

1 At that time Purna, son of Maitrayani,<sup>1</sup> having heard the Buddha preach in such wise, tactful, and opportune fashion, and having heard the prediction of the great disciples' Perfect Enlightenment; having, moreover, heard the stories of their former destinies, and also having heard of the sovereign, transcendent powers of the buddhas; having [thus] received such unexampled [teaching], his heart was purified and in ecstasy.

2 Immediately he rose from his seat, went before the Buddha, prostrated himself at his feet, then withdrew to one side, gazing upon his honored countenance without for a moment turning away his eyes, and reflected thus:

3 "Wonderful is the World-honored One. Rare are his doings according to the many kinds of earthly dispositions. By tactful wisdom, he preaches the Law to and lifts all beings out of every condition to let them get rid of selfish attachment.

4 No words of ours can declare the Buddha's merits. Only the Buddha, the World-honored One is able to know the natural inclinations of our inmost hearts."

[ ]<sup>2</sup>

#### The Buddha praises Puṇṇa

5 Thereupon the Buddha addressed the bhikshus, [saying]:

"Do you see this Purna, son of Maitrayani? I have always styled him the very first among all the preachers of the Law and constantly praised his varied merits.

6 He has been zealous in guarding and helping to proclaim my Law.

7 Among the four groups he has been able to display and teach it with profit and delight [to them].

8 Perfectly interpreting the Righteous Law of the Buddha, he has greatly benefited his fellow followers of brahma-conduct. Aside from the Tathagata, no one is able to equal the lucidity of his discourse.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Mahāyāna:] One of the ten disciples of the Buddha, noted for his eloquence. Purna means "full"; Maitrayani means "benevolence" and is said to be his mother's name, but Kern suggests that it means the fifteenth day of the moon and that the whole title indicates the full moo[n] (see SBE vol. 21, p. 194 n). [Kato]. See endnote.

<sup>2</sup> After this paragraph Dharmaraksha's translation has a parable in prose and verse that is not found in the extant Sanskrit text. [Kato]

**9** Do not think that it is only my Law which Purna is able to guard and help to proclaim. He also under ninety kotis [9,000,000,000]<sup>3</sup> of buddhas in the past guarded and helped to proclaim the Righteous Law of the buddhas.

**10** Among those preachers of the Law he was also the foremost.

And in regard to the Law of the Void preached by the buddhas, he was clear-minded and penetrating; he attained the four degrees of unhindered wisdom;<sup>4</sup>

**11** he has ever been able to preach the Law with judgment and in purity, without doubt and perplexity. Perfect in transcendent bodhisattva-powers [*bodhisattvābhijñāna*], he maintained brahma-conduct<sup>5</sup> to the end of his life.

**12** All the people of those buddha-periods spoke of him as “the true disciple” [shravaka].

**13** Thus Purna, by such tactfulness, has benefited innumerable hundreds and thousands of living beings

**14** and converted innumerable asamkhyeyas of people to achieve Perfect Enlightenment.

**15** For the sake of purifying [his] buddha-land, he has constantly done a buddha's work and instructed the living.

**16** Bhikshus! Purna also was the foremost among the preachers of the Law under the Seven Buddhas<sup>6</sup> and now is again the foremost among the preachers of the Law under me. **[Kato 107]**

**17** “Among the preachers of the Law under future buddhas<sup>7</sup> in this Virtuous kalpa,<sup>8</sup> he will also be the foremost and will guard and help to proclaim the Buddha-law.

**18** Also in the future he will guard and help to proclaim the Law of incalculable, infinite buddhas, instructing and benefiting innumerable living beings to cause them to achieve Perfect Enlightenment.

**19** For the sake of purifying [his] buddha-land he will ever diligently and zealously instruct the living.

**20** Gradually fulfilling the bodhisattva-course, after infinite asamkhyeya kalpas, in that land he will attain Perfect Enlightenment

---

<sup>3</sup> Or, 9 billion.

<sup>4</sup> “Unhindered wisdom,” *pratisamvid* (Pali *paṭisambhidā*). These are the 4 analytic skills, ie, those (1) in meaning (*attha, paṭisambhidā*), (2) in Dharma or teaching (*dhamma, paṭisambhidā*), (3) in language (*nirutti, paṭisambhidā*), and in ready wit (*paṭibhāna, paṭisambhidā*). See SD 28.4 (4) (dharmafarer.org).

<sup>5</sup> “Brahma-conduct” (*brahma, carya*), here meaning a celibate life. More broadly, this generally refers to the “holy life” of a renunciant, or when a lay practitioner keeps the celibacy precept.

<sup>6</sup> [Sanskrit: *vipaśyi, pramukhānām saptānām tathāgatānaṃ yeṣāmaharṃ śaptamaḥ.*] [Mahāyāna:] The Seven Buddhas are Vipashyin, Shikhin, Vishvabhu, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kashyapa, and Shakyamuni. The first three are the last three of a thousand buddhas who appeared during the Glorious in the past; the last four are the first four of a thousand buddhas who appear during the present kalpa of the sages. Kern writes: “The seven so-called Manushi-Buddhas; a rather transparent disguise of the fact that in cosmological mythology there are seven Manus, rulers of certain periods” (see SBE vol. 21, p. 193 n). [Kato]. See endnote.

<sup>7</sup> [Mahāyāna:] The coming 996 buddhas (after Shakyamuni). [Kato]

<sup>8</sup> [Mahāyāna:] Or the kalpa of the sages. This is the present kalpa, during which a thousand buddhas appear [Kato]. In our present world-cycle, it is traditionally said that we have 5 buddhas, ie, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, Kassapa, and our Buddha, Gotama, and the future Buddha, Metteyya. See SD 36.2 (5.9.2) (dharmafarer.org).

**21** and his title will be Radiance of the Law Tathagata [*Dharma,prabhāsa Tathāgata*], Worshipful, All Wise, Perfectly Enlightened in Conduct, Well Departed, Understander of the World, Peerless Leader, Controller, Teacher of Gods and Men, Buddha, World-honored One.

### Dharma,prabhāsa's Buddha-land

**22** That buddha will make [his] **buddha-land** of a three-thousand-great-thousand universe<sup>9</sup> [of worlds as many] as the sands of the Ganges, with the precious seven for its earth,

**23** its ground level as the palm of the hand,<sup>10</sup> free from hills and valleys, runnels and ditches,<sup>11</sup> and its midst filled with terraces of the precious seven [jewels].<sup>12</sup>

**24** The palaces of its gods will be situated nearby in the sky, where men and gods will meet and behold each other.

**25** There will be no evil ways and no womankind,<sup>13</sup> [for] all living beings will be born transformed<sup>14</sup> and have no carnal passion.

**26** They will attain to the great transcendent [powers]: their bodies will emit rays of light; they will fly anywhere at will; their will and memory will be firm; they will be zealous and wise, all golden-hued, and adorned with the thirty-two signs.<sup>15</sup>

**27** All the beings in his domain will always have two [articles of] food—one the food of joy in the Law, the other the food of gladness in meditation.

**28** There will be a host of infinite asamkhyeyas and thousands of myriads of kotis<sup>16</sup> of nayutas<sup>17</sup> of bodhisattvas who have attained the great transcendent [faculties] and the four [degrees] of unhindered wisdom,<sup>18</sup> and who have excellent ability in instructing all kinds of beings.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Tri,sāhasra,mahā,sāhasra loka,dhātu*, typically translated “trichilocosm.” This is the largest possible universe, composed (according to some interpretation of the figure) one billion world systems, each of which have a similar geography, including a central axis at Mt Sumeru, 4 surrounding continents, etc. These worlds follow similar cosmic cycle of expanding, stability, imploding, stability. See *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*: trichiolocosm.

<sup>10</sup> On the earth's flatness, see the parable of the bull's hide stretched with a 100 stakes: **Cūḷa Siññata Sutta** (M 121,5/3:105), SD 11.3, & its Chinese parallel **MĀ 190 @ T1.736c28**. These suttas speak of a **perception of earth**. But the idea was probably unknown to the Lotus Sutra writers or forgotten by them.

<sup>11</sup> This suggests that the writers of Lotus Sutra probably lived in mountainous country (such as Gāndhāra, in today's Afghanistan). The people then believed that the world was like a flat disc.

<sup>12</sup> Missing from translation.

<sup>13</sup> On women gaining Buddhahood, see ch 12: **Devadatta**.

<sup>14</sup> That is, “mind-made” (*mano,maya*).

<sup>15</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> mark is “a sheathed male organ,” meaning that they are all male! On the 32 marks of the great man, see **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30,1.31), SD 36.9 (dharmafarer.org).

<sup>16</sup> A *koṭi* is 10 million = 10,000,000.

<sup>17</sup> A *nayuta* (or *niyuta*) is 10,000 (Pali-English Dictionary), or “a very high number, generally a million” (Sanskrit-English Dictionary).

<sup>18</sup> “Unhindered wisdom,” *pratisaṃvid* (Pali *paṭisambhidā*), see [10] above.

**29** His shravakas cannot be told by counting and calculation, and all will attain perfection in the six transcendent [faculties], the three clear [views], and the eight emancipations.<sup>19</sup>

**30** The domain of that buddha will be adorned and perfected with such boundless excellencies as these.

**31** His kalpa will be named **Jewel Radiance** [*Ratnavabhāsa*] and his domain named **Excellent Purity** [*Suvisuddha*].

**32** The lifetime of that buddha will be infinite asamkhyeya kalpas,<sup>20</sup> and the Law will remain for long.

**33** After the extinction of that buddha, stupas<sup>21</sup> of the precious seven [jewels]<sup>22</sup> will be [erected] throughout all that domain."

### The Buddha's verses of prophecy on Pūrṇa

**34** At that time the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim this teaching over again, spoke thus in verse:

- [1] "Bhikshus! Listen to me attentively!  
The Way [my] Buddha-son has walked,
- [2] Through well studying tactfulness,  
Is beyond conception.  
Knowing how all enjoy mere trifles  
And are afraid of the greater wisdom,  
The bodhisattvas therefore become  
Shravakas or pratyekabuddhas.
- [3] By numberless tactful methods  
They convert the various kinds of beings,  
Saying: 'We are but shravakas,  
Far removed from the Buddha-way.'
- [4] They release innumerable beings,  
All completing [their course];  
Even the lowly disposed and the neglectful  
Gradually become buddhas.
- [5] Inwardly hiding their bodhisattva-deeds, **[Kato 108]**  
Outwardly they appear as shravakas.  
With few desires and disliking mortal life,  
They truly purify their buddha-land.
- [6] They show themselves possessed of human passions<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> *Gaṇanāsamatikrāntāścāsya śrāvakā bhaviṣyanti maharddhikā mahānubhāvā aṣṭavimokṣadhyāyinaḥ*. There is no mention of "the six transcendent [faculties], the three clear [views]."

<sup>20</sup> See end-note.

<sup>21</sup> These are ancient forms of the Chinese pagoda. They were in the form of earth-mounds, or large hemispherical structures, often with relics of the Buddha, or saints interred.

<sup>22</sup> Missing from translation.

<sup>23</sup> Or "They show to all they [too] have the three poisons" [Kato]. Sanskrit *sa,rāgatām...sa,doṣatām...sa,mohatām ca*, "he shows himself as having lust,...having hate...and having delusion."

- And seem to hold heretical views.<sup>24</sup>  
Thus do my disciples  
Tactfully save all beings.<sup>25</sup>
- [7] If I fully explained  
The varied [future] transformations,  
Beings who heard of them  
Would be perplexed and puzzled.
- [8] Now this Purna  
Under thousands of kotis of former buddhas  
Has diligently maintained his course,  
And proclaimed and protected the Buddha-law.  
has sought supreme wisdom
- [9] And under the buddhas  
Has shown himself the superior disciple  
In learning and wisdom.  
In preaching he has been fearless,  
Able to cause all beings to rejoice;  
He has ever been tireless  
In aiding Buddha-tasks.
- [10] Having achieved the great transcendent [faculties],  
Acquired the four unhindered [powers of] wisdom,  
And known the faculties [of others], keen or dull,  
He has always preached the pure Law.
- [11] Expounding such principles as these,  
He has taught thousands of kotis of beings,  
Leading them to rest in the Great-vehicle Law,  
himself purified his buddha-land.
- [12] In future he shall also worship  
Infinite, numberless buddhas,  
Protect and aid in proclaiming the Righteous Law,  
And himself purify his buddha-land.
- [13] Constantly with tactful methods  
He shall fearlessly preach the Law  
And lead incalculable beings  
To attain perfect knowledge;
- [14] And worshiping the tathagatas,

---

<sup>24</sup> The sentiment of this whole sentence is very problematic: Are we to condone immoral acts of others (even monastics)? How are we to know such acts are real or apparent? This should be discussed.

<sup>25</sup> **“Save all beings,”** Sanskrit *sattvānupāyena vimocayanti*, “they help all beings be liberated through skillful means.” ***Vimocayanti*** (causative), “cause to be freed.” In other words, they create the conditions for freedom or liberation. This emphasis on “other-power” is rare in early Buddhism. We need to ask: Is it possible to save, or even help save, “all beings,” that is, those of the past, present and future? Such points should be wisely discussed.

- And guarding the treasury of the Law,  
He shall afterward become a buddha  
Whose title will be Law Radiance.
- [15] His domain, named Excellent Purity,  
Will be formed of the precious seven,  
And his kalpa be called Jewel Radiance.
- [16] His bodhisattvas, a great host,  
Infinite kotis in number,  
All accomplished in great transcendent [faculties]  
And perfect in dread powers,  
Will fill that domain to the full.
- [17] Numberless also will be his shravakas  
With the three clear [views] and eight emancipations, **[Kato 109]**  
Who have attained the four unhindered wisdoms.  
Such will be his monks.
- [18] All the living in that domain  
Will be free from carnal passions,  
Pure and born by transformation,  
Adorned with all the signs.
- [19] Joy in the Law and pleasure in meditation  
Shall be their food, with no thought of other;  
No womankind will be there,  
Nor any evil ways.
- [20] The Bhikshu Purna,  
Complete in all his merits,  
Shall gain this pure land  
Where the wise and sages abound.  
Such are the boundless things of which  
I have now but briefly spoken."

### The 1,200 arhats

**35** Then the twelve hundred arhats of self-reliant mind reflected thus:

"Delighted are we to gain this unprecedented [experience]. If the World-honored One would predict for each of us [our future destiny] as for the other great disciples, how glad we should be!"

**36** The Buddha, knowing the thoughts in their minds, addressed **Maha-Kashyapa**, [saying]:

"These twelve hundred arhats: let me now in their presence and in order predict [for them] Perfect Enlightenment.

**37** Amongst this assembly, my great disciple **Kaundinya Bhikshu**, after paying homage to sixty-two thousand kotis [62,000,000,000]<sup>26</sup> of buddhas, will become a buddha whose title will be Universal Light Tathagata, Worshipful, All Wise, Perfectly Enlightened in Conduct, Well

---

<sup>26</sup> Or, 62 billion.

Departed, Understander of the World, Peerless Leader, Controller, Teacher of Gods and Men, Buddha, World-honored One.

**38** Of [the rest of] those arhats, five hundred—Uruvilva-Kashyapa, Gaya-Kashyapa, Nadi-Kashyapa, Kalodayin, Udayin, Aniruddha, Revata, Kapphina, Vakkula, Cunda, Svagata, and others—

**39** all will attain to Perfect Enlightenment, all with the same title, namely, **Universal Light** [*Samanta,prabha*]."

### The Buddha's verse of prophecy on the 500 monks

**40** At that time the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim this teaching over again, spoke thus in verse:

[21] "Kaundinya Bhikshu  
Will see innumerable buddhas,  
And after asamkhyeya kalpas have passed,  
Accomplish Perfect Enlightenment.

[22] Ever emitting great light,  
Perfect in the transcendent [powers],  
His fame spread over the universe,  
Revered by all [beings],  
Ever preaching the supreme Way,

[23] His title will be Universal Light.  
Pure will be his domain;  
His bodhisattvas all will be brave;  
All mounted on wonderful buildings,  
They will travel through all lands  
With unsurpassed offerings,

[24] To present them to the buddhas.  
Having made these offerings,  
Their hearts will greatly rejoice  
And soon return to their own domain;

[25] Such will be their supernatural powers.  
That buddha's life will be six myriad kalpas;

[Kato 110]

[26] His Righteous Law will remain twice his lifetime,  
The Counterfeit Law double that.  
His Law ended, gods and men will sorrow.

[27] Five hundred other bhikshus  
One by one shall become buddhas  
With the same title, Universal Light;

[28] In turn [each] shall predict, [saying]:  
'After my extinction  
So and so shall become buddha;  
The world which he instructs

[29] Shall be as mine of today.'

- The splendid purity of their domain  
And its transcendent powers,  
Its bodhisattvas and shravakas,  
[30] Its Righteous Law and its Counterfeit,  
The length of its kalpa period,  
All will be as that above stated.  
[31] Kashyapa!<sup>27</sup> You now know  
Of these five hundred self-reliant ones.  
The other band of shravakas  
Will also be like them.  
[32] Do you proclaim my words."

### The arhats' jubilation

**41** Thereupon the five hundred arhats present before the Buddha, having received [this] prediction, ecstatic with joy, instantly rose from their seats, went before the Buddha, made obeisance at his feet, repented their errors, and rebuked themselves, [saying]:

**42** "World-honored One! We have constantly been thinking that we had attained final nirvana.

**43** Now we know that we were just like the foolish ones.

**44** Wherefore? Because we ought to have obtained the Tathagata-wisdom, and yet were content with the inferior knowledge.

### Parable of the man with the jewel

**45** "World-honored One! It is as if some man goes to an intimate friend's house, gets drunk, and falls asleep.

**46** Meanwhile his friend, having to go forth on official duty, ties a priceless jewel within his garment as a present, and departs.

**47** The man, being drunk and asleep, knows nothing of it.

**48** On arising he travels onward till he reaches some other country, where for food and clothing he expends much labor and effort, and undergoes exceedingly great hardship, and is content even if he can obtain but little.

**49** Later, his friend happens to meet him and speaks thus:

**50** 'Tut! Sir, how is it you have come to this for the sake of food and clothing? Wishing you to be in comfort and able to satisfy all your five senses,<sup>28</sup> I formerly in such a year and month and on such a day tied a priceless jewel within your garment.

**51** Now as of old it is present there and you in ignorance are slaving and worrying to keep yourself alive.

---

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting that no Buddhahood prediction is made for **Mahā Kāśyapa** (in Mahāyāna, the Buddha's "Dharma successor"), although Kaundinya (the eldest of all the saints and monastics) is given a Buddhahood prediction. Reason?

<sup>28</sup> Literally, "5 desires." See Glossary [(1) The desires of the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch; (2) the desires for wealth, sex, food, fame and sleep.] [Kato]. These are the *pañca, kāma, guṇa* or "5 cords of sensual desires," ie, bodily pleasures arising from the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. [P]

**52** How very stupid! Go you now and exchange that jewel for what you need and do whatever you will, free from all poverty and shortage.'

### The Buddha's great compassion

**53** "The Buddha also is like this. When he was a bodhisattva, he taught us to conceive the idea of perfect wisdom, but we soon forgot, neither knowing nor perceiving.

**54** Having obtained the arhat-way, we said we had reached nirvana;<sup>29</sup>

**55** in the hardship of [gaining] a living we had contented ourselves with a mere trifle.

**56** [But] our aspirations after perfect wisdom still remain and were never lost,

**57** and now the World-honored One arouses us and speaks thus:

'Bhikshus! That which you have obtained is not final nirvana.

**58** For long I have caused you to cultivate the roots of buddha-goodness, and for tactful reasons have displayed a form of nirvana. But you have **[Kato 111]** considered it to be the real nirvana you had obtained.'

**59** World-honored One! Now we know we are really bodhisattvas predicted to attain Perfect Enlightenment. For this cause we greatly rejoice in our unprecedented gain."

### Ajñāta Kaundinya's verse refrain

**60** Thereupon Ajnata-Kaundinya and the others, desiring to announce this meaning over again, spoke thus in verse:

[33] "We, hearing his voice  
Predicting [for us] unsurpassed comfort,<sup>30</sup>  
Rejoice in our unexpected [lot]  
And salute the all-wise Buddha.

[34] Now before the World-honored One  
We repent our errors;  
[Though] countless Buddha-treasures [awaited],  
With but a trifle of nirvana  
We, like ignorant and foolish people,

[35] Were ready to be content.  
It is like [the case of] a poor man  
Who goes to the house of a friend.  
That friend, being very rich,  
Sets much fine food before him.

[36] A priceless precious pearl  
He ties in his inner garment,  
Secretly giving it and departing  
While he sleeps on unaware.

[37] The man when he arises  
Travels on to another country

---

<sup>29</sup> Literally, "extinction." [Kato]

<sup>30</sup> Perfect Enlightenment.

- In search of food and clothes to keep alive,  
Suffering great hardships for his living,  
[38] Contented with ever so little,  
Wishing for nothing better,  
Never perceiving that in his inner garment  
There is a priceless jewel.  
[39] The friend who gave him the jewel  
Afterward sees this poor man  
And, bitterly rebuking him,  
where the jewel is bound.  
[40] The poor man, seeing this jewel,  
Is filled with a great joy;  
Rich, in possession of wealth,  
He can satisfy his five senses.  
[41] Such were also we.  
For long has the Wonderful-honored One  
Always pitied and taught us  
To cultivate the highest aspiration;  
[42] But because of our ignorance,  
We neither perceived nor knew it;  
Gaining but a little of nirvana,  
Contented, we sought no more.  
[43] Now the Buddha has awakened us,  
Saying this is not real nirvana;  
[Only] on attaining the highest Buddha-wisdom  
Is there real nirvana.  
[44] Now, having heard from the Buddha [Kato 112]  
The prediction and its glory,<sup>31</sup>  
And the command<sup>32</sup> we receive in turn,  
Body and soul<sup>33</sup> are full of joy.”

— — —

For sutta translations, see [dharmafarer.org](http://dharmafarer.org).

---

<sup>31</sup> Some read: "The prediction and the splendid adornment [of the land]." [Kato]

<sup>32</sup> Literally, "decision; to determine [to become a buddha]." It is also translated as "prediction." [Kato]

<sup>33</sup> Note translator's usage of "body and soul," which is not to be taken literally: Sanskrit text: *prītā udagrā vipulā sma jātaḥ*, "abundant uplifting ecstasy arose."

## END-NOTES

[Numbers in square brackets] refer Paragraph Number in the translation/

### [1] Pūrṇa Maitrayani

In Pali, his name is **Puṇṇa Mantānī,putta**, who comes from a brahmin family living near Kapila,-vatthu, the Sakya capital and the Buddha’s hometown. He is a nephew of Añña Koṇḍañña (son of his sister), the eldest of the 5 monks and all monastics (A 1.188/1:23). Koṇḍañña is Puṇṇa’s preceptor. After attaining arhathood, he goes to Sāvattḥī to pay his respects to the Buddha. His discussion with Sāriputta is recorded in **the Ratha Vināta Sutta** (M 24): see SD 28.3. **The (Puṇṇa) Ānanda Sutta** (S 22.83) records Ānanda praising Puṇṇa’s skill as a teacher: see SD 71.1. [SD = Sutta Discovery: see dharmafarer.org]

### [16] The 7 buddhas

[Pali names in brackets.] These **7 Buddhas** are Vipasyī (Vipassī), Śikhī (Sikhī), Viśvabhū (Vessabhū), Krakucchanda (Kakusandha), Kanakamuni (Konāgamana), Kāśyapa (Kassapa), and our own Śākyamuni (Gotama): SD 1.10 (2.1). Reeves errs, saying that “Śākyamuni is the eighth” (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2008:427).

### [32] asaṁkhyeya kalpas

Here meaning “incalculable world-cycles.” A kalpa (Pali *kappa*) here means an aeon (*kappa*), a “great aeon” (*mahā,kappa*), a (full) world-cycle, cycle of the universe, comprising 4 phases: evolution or expansion (*vivaṭṭa kappa*), stability or fully evolved universe (*vivaṭṭa-ṭ,thāyī kappa*), devolution or contraction (*saṁvatta kappa*), and dissolution or stasis or the “big crunch” (*saṁvatta-ṭ,thāyī kappa*) (A 2:142). It is unimaginably long (S 2:178, 182; MA 2:125). Each of these 4 aeons, known as “asaṁkhyeya kalpa” or “incalculable aeon” (***asaṁkhyeya*** or *asaṁkhyeya kappa*), are in turn subdivided into 20 intermediate aeons (*antara kappa*). The full cycle of 4 incalculables is called a “great aeon” (*mahā kappa*). Our current age is one of the 20 intermediate stable aeons. (These stable aeons are the only time when life can exist). The most common values given for an *asaṁkhyeya,kappa* is  $10^{51}$ ,  $10^{59}$  or  $10^{63}$  years (Oxford Dict of Bsm: kalpa). See SD 9(9c): The meaning of *kappa* (dharmafarer.org).

Piya Tan’s website: [dharmafarer.org](http://dharmafarer.org)

For meditation courses & sutta classes: [themindingcentre.org](http://themindingcentre.org)

150117

Sujato Bhikkhu:

<http://sujato.wordpress.com/2011/10/18/is-the-lotus-sutra-authentic/>

## KEY IDEAS & Reading List

SD = Sutta Discovery (volume & page): go to [dharmafarer.org](http://dharmafarer.org)

1. ● Buddha = historical being ● Buddhahood = the Dharma. (SD 1.11)  
The Buddha *dies* (he does not pretend to die). Dharma does not. (SD 9)
2. Being a Buddhist is to transform ourselves into a better person. (SD 21.6)
3. 2 kinds of teaching: (1) direct meaning, (2) indirect (draw out the meaning). (SD 2.6b)
4. The one and only way is the “middle way”: the noble eightfold path. (SD 13.1 (3.2))
5. Dharma (true teaching) has no prefix – like fresh air. (SD 40a.1)
  
6. The 4 analytic skills in: (1) meanings, (2) teachings, (3) language, (4) wit. (SD 28.4 (4))
7. The Buddha-land is a single thought-moment. (SD 17.2b)
8. Arhats are not Buddhas, but have attained buddhahood. (SD 3.1)  
Buddhahood is a state, not a person.
9. The “Jewel” is our mind. Our MIND: use it or lose it. (SD 40a.14)
10. The CROWD is always wrong. Only the MIND (the individual) can change the crowd.  
(SD 40a.8)
  
11. Both arhats and Buddha are awakened in the same way. We need to awaken. (SD 3.3)
12. Who am I to praise you? (SD 38.6)
13. Buddha: “Please do not misrepresent me.” **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (SD 7.10)
14. I know I will awaken in this life. There are no Buddhas in nirvana. (SD 16.7)
15. The teaching is above the teacher; the teaching makes the teacher. (SD 12.3)
  
16. Only when we have given up all views, we awaken, become Buddha. (SD 40a.1)
17. Do not trust anyone, especially the self. Look through everything. (SD 40a.8 (3))
18. Buddhas may be as many as the Ganges. We need only ONE: he’s our Diamond. (SD 29.1a)
19. If you are confused by the Lotus Sutra, you’re *getting* it.  
If you understand that confusion, you’ve *got* it! (Dharma-ending age, SD 1.10)
20. The early Buddhist texts (EBT) are short, direct and complete; nothing less nothing more.  
(SD 40a.6)
  
21. Voltaire: **Those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities.**  
(SD 27.5a)
22. **What we BELIEVE will hold us. What we UNDERSTAND will free us.** (SD 35.4a)