

and brother are no more, to reject the heritage of the crown, that can bring no benefit to the people. I must attend to the opinion of the world and forget my own insufficiency. Now, therefore, on the banks of the Ganges there is a statue of Avalôkitésvara Bôdhisattva which has evidenced many spiritual wonders. I will go to it and ask advice (*request a response*).” Forthwith, coming to the spot where the figure of the Bôdhisattva was, he remained before it fasting and praying. The Bôdhisattva recognising his sincere intention (*heart*), appeared in a bodily form and inquired, “What do you seek that you are so earnest in your supplications?” The prince answered, “I have suffered under a load of affliction. My dear father, indeed, is dead, who was full of kindness; and my brother, humane and gentle as he was, has been odiously murdered. In the presence of these calamities I humble myself as one of little virtue; nevertheless, the people would exalt me to the royal dignity, to fill the high place of my illustrious father. Yet I am, indeed, but ignorant and foolish. In my trouble I ask the holy direction (*of the Bôdhisattva*).”

The Bôdhisattva replied, “In your former existence you lived in this forest as a hermit (*a forest mendicant*),<sup>19</sup> and by your earnest diligence and unremitting attention you inherited a power of religious merit which resulted in your birth as a king’s son. The king of the country, Karṇasavarna, has overturned the law of Buddha. Now when you succeed to the royal estate, you should in the same proportion exercise towards it the utmost love and pity.<sup>20</sup> If you give your mind to compassionate the condition of the distressed and to cherish them, then before long you shall rule over the Five Indies. If you would establish your authority, attend to my instruction, and by my

<sup>19</sup> “A forest mendicant” is the translation of Aranya Bhikshu (*tan-yo-pi-ts’u*). It would appear from the text that the place where this statue of Avalôkitésvara stood was a

wild or desert spot near the Ganges.

<sup>20</sup> So I understand the passage as relating to a corresponding favour to the law of Buddha, in return for the persecution of Saśāngka.