

ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE
AND EXTREMES

THE SCRIPTURE ON THE
MONK NĀGASENA

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BDK English Tripiṭaka Series

**ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE
AND EXTREMES**

(Taishō Volume 31, Number 1600)

Translated by Jeffrey Kotyk

**THE SCRIPTURE ON
THE MONK NĀGASENA
A CHINESE COUNTERPART
TO THE *MILINDAPAÑHA***

(Taishō Volume 32, Number 1670B)

Translated by Bhikkhu Anālayo

BDK America, Inc.

2021

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A Message on the Publication of the English Tripiṭaka

The Buddhist canon is said to contain eighty-four thousand different teachings. I believe that this is because the Buddha's basic approach was to prescribe a different treatment for every spiritual ailment, much as a doctor prescribes a different medicine for every medical ailment. Thus his teachings were always appropriate for the particular suffering individual and for the time at which the teaching was given, and over the ages not one of his prescriptions has failed to relieve the suffering to which it was addressed.

Ever since the Buddha's Great Demise over twenty-five hundred years ago, his message of wisdom and compassion has spread throughout the world. Yet no one has ever attempted to translate the entire Buddhist canon into English throughout the history of Japan. It is my greatest wish to see this done and to make the translations available to the many English-speaking people who have never had the opportunity to learn about the Buddha's teachings.

Of course, it would be impossible to translate all of the Buddha's eighty-four thousand teachings in a few years. I have, therefore, had one hundred thirty-nine of the scriptural texts in the prodigious Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon selected for inclusion in the First Series of this translation project.

It is in the nature of this undertaking that the results are bound to be criticized. Nonetheless, I am convinced that unless someone takes it upon himself or herself to initiate this project, it will never be done. At the same time, I hope that an improved, revised edition will appear in the future.

It is most gratifying that, thanks to the efforts of more than a hundred Buddhist scholars from the East and the West, this monumental project has finally gotten off the ground. May the rays of the Wisdom of the Compassionate One reach each and every person in the world.

NUMATA Yehan
Founder of the English
Tripiṭaka Project

August 7, 1991

Editorial Foreword

In the long history of Buddhist transmission throughout East Asia, translations of Buddhist texts were often carried out as national projects supported and funded by emperors and political leaders. The BDK English Tripiṭaka project, on the other hand, began as a result of the dream and commitment of one man. In January 1982 Dr. NUMATA Yehan, founder of Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism), initiated the monumental task of translating the complete Taishō shinshū daizōkyō edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka (Buddhist canon) into the English language. Under his leadership, a special preparatory committee was organized in April 1982. By July of the same year the Translation Committee of the English Tripiṭaka was officially convened.

The initial Committee included the following members: (late) HANAYAMA Shōyū (Chairperson), (late) BANDŌ Shōjun, (late) ISHIGAMI Zennō, (late) KAMATA Shigeo, (late) KANAOKA Shūyū, MAYEDA Sengaku, (late) NARA Yasuaki, (late) SAYEKI Shinkō, (late) SHIOIRI Ryōtatsu, (late) TAMARU Noriyoshi, (late) TAMURA Kwansei, (late) URYŪZU Ryūshin, and (late) YUYAMA Akira. Assistant members of the Committee were as follows: KANAZAWA Atsushi, WATANABE Shōgo, Rolf Giebel of New Zealand, and Rudy Smet of Belgium.

After holding planning meetings on a monthly basis, the Committee selected one hundred and thirty-nine texts for the First Series of the project, estimated to be one hundred printed volumes in all. The texts selected were not limited to those originally written in India but also included works composed in China and Japan. While the publication of the First Series proceeds, the texts for the Second Series will be selected from among the remaining works; this process will continue until all the texts, in Japanese as well as in Chinese, have been published. Given the huge scope of this project, accomplishing the English translations of all the Chinese and Japanese texts in the Taishō canon may take as long as one hundred years or more. Nevertheless, as Dr. NUMATA wished, it is the sincere hope of the Committee that this project will continue until completion, even after all the present members have passed away.

Dr. NUMATA passed away on May 5, 1994, at the age of ninety-seven. He entrusted his son, Mr. NUMATA Toshihide with the continuation and completion of the English Tripiṭaka project. Mr. Numata served for twenty-three years, leading the project forward with enormous progress before his sudden passing on February 16, 2017, at the age of eighty-four. The Committee previously lost its able and devoted first Chairperson, Professor HANAYAMA Shōyū, on June 16, 1995, at the age of sixty-three. In October 1995 the Committee elected Professor MAYEDA Sengaku (then Vice President of Musashino Women's College) as Chairperson, and upon the retirement of Professor Mayeda in July 2016, the torch was passed to me to serve as the third Chairperson. Despite these losses and changes we, the Editorial Committee members, have renewed our determination to carry out the noble ideals set by Dr. NUMATA. Present members of the Committee are Kenneth K. Tanaka (Chairperson), MAYEDA Sengaku, ICHISHIMA Shōshin, KATSURA Shōryū, MINOWA Kenryō, SAITŌ Akira, SHIMODA Masahiro, WATANABE Shōgo, and YONEZAWA Yoshiyasu.

The Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research was established in November 1984, in Berkeley, California, U.S.A., to assist in the publication of the translated texts. The Publication Committee was organized at the Numata Center in December 1991. In 2010, the Numata Center's operations were merged with Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai America, Inc. (BDK America), and BDK America continues to oversee the publication side of the English Tripiṭaka project in close cooperation with the Editorial Committee in Tokyo.

At the time of this writing, in July 2017, the project has completed about sixty-five percent of the seven thousand one hundred and eighty-five Taishō pages of texts selected for the First Series. Much work still lies ahead of us but we are committed to the completion of the remaining texts in order to realize the grand vision of Dr. Numata, shared by Mr. Numata and Professor Hanayama, to make the Buddhist canon more readily accessible to the English-speaking world.

Kenneth K. Tanaka
Chairperson
Editorial Committee of
the BDK English Tripiṭaka

Publisher's Foreword

On behalf of the members of the Publication Committee, I am happy to present this volume as the latest contribution to the BDK English Tripiṭaka Series. The Publication Committee members have worked to ensure that this volume, as all other volumes in the series, has gone through a rigorous process of editorial efforts.

The initial translation and editing of the Buddhist scriptures found in this and other BDK English Tripiṭaka volumes are performed under the direction of the Editorial Committee in Tokyo, Japan. Both the Editorial Committee in Tokyo and the Publication Committee, headquartered in Moraga, California, are dedicated to the production of accurate and readable English translations of the Buddhist canon. In doing so, the members of both committees and associated staff work to honor the deep faith, spirit, and concern of the late Reverend Dr. Yehan Numata, who founded the BDK English Tripiṭaka Series in order to disseminate the Buddhist teachings throughout the world.

The long-term goal of our project is the translation and publication of the texts in the one hundred-volume Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon, along with a number of influential extracanonical Japanese Buddhist texts. The list of texts selected for the First Series of this translation project may be found at the end of each volume in the series.

As Chair of the Publication Committee, I am deeply honored to serve as the fifth person in a post previously held by leading figures in the field of Buddhist studies, most recently by my predecessor, John R. McRae.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the members of the Publication Committee for their dedicated and expert work undertaken in the course of preparing this volume for publication: Managing Editor Marianne Dresser, Dr. Hudaya Kandahjaya, Dr. Carl Bielefeldt, Dr. Robert Sharf, and Rev. Brian Kensho Nagata, Director of the BDK America English Tripiṭaka Project.

A. Charles Muller
Chairperson
Publication Committee

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Translator's Introduction

The present English translation, titled for the BDK English Tripiṭaka Series *Analysis of the Middle and the Extremes*, of the Chinese translation of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* from Sanskrit by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) is the first to date. Xuanzang traveled to India around the year 627 and returned in 645, after which time he translated numerous Buddhist works into Chinese under imperial patronage until his death. The chronology of his life and career, however, is not always clear.¹

The *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* has already been translated into English from Sanskrit and Tibetan. An important sub-commentary, the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya-ṭikā* by Sthiramati, was translated by Richard Stanley, “A Study of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya-ṭikā*” (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1988). I have consulted Stanley’s work in addition to English translations by Stefan Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1986) and Mario D’Amato, *Maitreya’s Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes: Madhyāntavibhāga Along with Vasubandhu’s Commentary: Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya, A Study and Annotated Translation* (New York: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2012), as well as the modern Mandarin Chinese translation by Wei Dedong, *Bian zhongbian lun* (Gaoxiong: Foguang, 1997). The Sanskrit text was first typeset and published by Gadjin Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya: A Buddhist Philosophical Treatise Edited for the First Time from a Sanskrit Manuscript* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1964); this volume also includes a helpful list of Chinese-Sanskrit correspondences, which I have consulted.

I have attempted to translate the Chinese as closely as possible while retaining coherent English readability. At the same time, I have frequently referred to the Sanskrit in order to clarify meanings, although it must be noted that the Chinese translation was, it seems, produced using a different manuscript than Nagao’s recension. The structure and meaning of the Chinese differ considerably at times

from the extant Sanskrit version. It is uncertain whether these differences stem from Xuanzang's reorganization of the text or the simple fact that he used a separate recension. The Sanskrit text consulted by Xuanzang in the seventh century, which is not extant, was no doubt different from Nagao's text. Nagao's text was based on a photographed version from Tibet that dates to the thirteenth or fourteenth century.²

The present translation might be of use to readers interested in Indian Yogācāra. The Chinese text and commentary often provide clear and reasonable interpretations of otherwise ambiguous lines in the Sanskrit. In some cases, I favor traditional Chinese explanations over D'Amato's translation of the corresponding Sanskrit, since it is reasonable to think that Xuanzang interpreted the text based upon what he had learned while resident at Nālanda. This is one advantage to consulting Xuanzang's translations. Nevertheless, although the Sanskrit is indeed key to understanding Yogācāra in its Indian context, East Asian Yogācāra, or Faxiang *zong* (Jp. Hossō-shū 法相宗), was based on Chinese translations of Indic texts and the subsequent commentarial literature that followed.

The *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* in Chinese

With respect to the origin of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*, Xuanzang's disciple Ji 基 (632–682, also known as Kuiji 窥基), gives the following explanation in his commentary on this work:

Nine hundred years after the Buddha passed away, the bodhisattva Asaṅga was born into the world. He went to Maitreya to request a teaching on the great *śāstra*, the circumstances of which are as explained elsewhere. Maitreya taught the verses (*kārikā*) of this *śāstra*, called the “Verses Analyzing the Middle and Extremes,” which Asaṅga received and subsequently passed onto Vasubandhu to have them explained in detail. Hence, this prose was produced by Vasubandhu, called *Śāstra Analyzing the Middle and Extremes (Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya)*. (T.1835:1a6–10)

The work is comprised of primary verses (*kārikā*) together with interspersed commentary (*bhāṣya*). This text subsequently became an important component within the corpus of Yogācāra.

According to a Buddhist bibliography compiled by the monk Zhisheng 智昇 (669–740) in 730, Xuanzang spent the fifth lunar month of 661 translating the *Madhyāntavibhāga* (the verses) followed by the *bhāṣya* (the exegetical prose), which was translated over the following weeks at Yuhuasi 玉華寺 with his disciple Ji acting as scribe (T.2154:556c4–7). The verses and prose altogether took one month to translate.

Xuanzang's terse translation of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* was not the first Chinese translation. Paramārtha 真諦 (499–569) had earlier translated this text with the Chinese title *Zhongbian fenbie lun* 中邊分別論 (T. 1599). Xuanzang, having traveled and lived in India, was a capable scholar of Sanskrit texts, although unlike earlier translators in China, such as Kumārajīva (344–413), Xuanzang was inclined toward more literal renderings. The result is a translation style that attempts to remain faithful to the Sanskrit, while at the same time observing conventions of Literary Chinese, such as character counts in verses. In the case of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*, this translation style resulted in a Chinese text that required a subsequent running commentary, since the source text was already highly technical and terse. The commentary, titled *Bian zhongbian lun shuji* 辯中邊論述記 (T. 1835), was produced by Xuanzang's disciple Ji.

The Philosophy and Structure of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*

The *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* is an explanation of Mahayana Buddhist thought. The aim of this work is to explicate the full path to buddhahood via gradual advancement through the bodhisattva stages. The text is organized into seven sections that systematically explain how to gain wisdom, which are frequently connected to accurate comprehension of reality. This leads to liberation from samsara, and beyond that to the attainment of buddhahood. This requires a proper understanding of the nature of perceived phenomena (dharma), as well as personal cultivation of the antidotes and meditative attainments necessary for progress along the path. The text exhaustively lays out all such matters in detail and enumerates them.

The seven sections of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* are:

1. Characteristics.
2. Obstacles.

3. Reality.
4. Cultivation of Antidotes.
5. Stages of the Practices.
6. Attainments.
7. Unexcelled Vehicle (Mahayana).

The ordering here makes it clear that the practitioner must first possess an accurate understanding of the framework to be explained, particularly with regard to how the observer (“grasper”) apprehends perceived phenomena (“the grasped”). The grasper and grasped constitute a false duality, which lead to conceptions of “I” and “mine.” This is a Buddhist way of addressing the generation of a personal identity that leads to fixation on sensory and mental objects. This in turn fuels *samsara* and suffering.

Buddhist philosophy adamantly refutes the notion of an inherently existent self (*ātman*), and so Vasubandhu connects personal identity and perceived objects to the problem of false discrimination (*abhūtaparikalpa*), while at the same time arguing for the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of these categories, although, as the text shows, he does not absolutely deny the nominal existence of phenomena, since we all have such experiences. The problem is fundamentally with our mistaken perception of phenomena that inevitably leads to ill behavior and the perpetuation of unwholesome mental habits that run contrary to the Buddhist project of liberation.

We then read—albeit initially puzzling—statements that say phenomena are neither empty nor existent, and that emptiness is neither existence nor nonexistence. This approach utilizing negating terms is employed to frame an accurate perception of phenomena, which is that although unreal they still nevertheless appear.

This approach is furthermore regarded as the Middle Way, which is to say it steps away from both the reification and absolute denial of perceived phenomena. Reification is a common disorder in sentient beings, but the remedy is not to assert the absolute nonexistence of things, since this would also result in the complete denial of bondage and liberation and thereby undermine the entire Buddhist project. Again, the issue at hand is our mistaken perceptions of phenomena—an epistemological concern—rather than establishing some ontological framework to explain their concrete existence or nonexistence. Buddhist philosophy in this context should be understood as therapeutic in its application. Liberation is understood as the cessation of false discrimination. The *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* intends to outline how to do this.

The path to liberation is explained using a trifold apparatus called the “three natures” (*tri-svabhāva*), which refers to three manners in which beings might perceive the world:

1. Conceptualized (*parikalpita*): the nature of existence generated from falsely discriminated objects. Unreal appearances, which beings perceive, are imputed to possess a real essence. This process leads to harmful behaviors and negative karma.

2. Other-dependent (*paratantra*): the nature of existence generated from a more informed perspective. All perceived phenomena are understood from this perspective to exist dependent upon causes and conditions.

3. Perfectly accomplished (*pariniṣpanna*): the nature of existence that is completely perfected and conforms to the highest reality. All reifying and negating views are terminated from this perspective.

The *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* utilizes the concept of the store consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), a characteristic feature of Yogācāra thought. This consciousness is said to be the condition for the emergence of other consciousnesses, functioning as a sort of explanatory element underlying the continuity of karmic potentials and the afflictions that propel a sentient being through samsara, lifetime after lifetime. This is furthermore connected to the twelve links of dependent origination, the process in which sentient beings perpetuate their conditioned existence over lifetimes. This framework utilizing the three natures and store consciousness was a unique innovation on the part of Yogācāra, and thus we see these concepts prominently deployed throughout the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*.

The second section explains the obstacles faced by the two lineages. These include the bodhisattvas as one group, and *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* as a second group. The latter two groups respectively seek their own liberation and realize the emptiness of the self individually, while bodhisattvas seek to liberate all sentient beings and realize not only emptiness of the self, but also the emptiness of phenomena. The text therefore addresses the obstacles relevant to these respective paths.

Obstacles here generally refer to habits or circumstances that hinder progress toward liberation. For instance, those who are subject to the “fetter” of craving are unable to distance themselves from agreeable objects of cognition, while the “fetter” of hatred renders someone unable to relinquish an object (or person) of contempt. In addition to such emotionally charged states leading to negative karma, these also connect to the earlier discussion concerning misperception of

objects. Accurate cognition of reality requires that the practitioner first be freed from the bondage of the objects to which they are attached, whether those objects are agreeable or disagreeable.

The text also outlines personal circumstances that contribute to stagnation along the path. For instance, a lack of spiritual lineage and virtuous friends or suffering from mental exhaustion hinder the generation of the mind of awakening (*bodhicitta*). The wisdom of a bodhisattva is obstructed due to lack of correct practice and living together with wicked or deluded people. The practitioner is therefore advised to address all such problems.

The following section of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* deals with reality, which is a discussion of factors that must be understood to progress along the path. Again, in this section we observe the three natures utilized to discuss reality—or specifically the perception of reality—using a threefold structure. For instance, accurate perception of reality requires one to discontinue views that reify and negate characteristics, which in this discussion extends to phenomena and persons (the conceptualized nature), grasped and grasper (the other-dependent nature), and existence and nonexistence (the perfectly accomplished nature).

This framework of the three natures is further extended to matters such as impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and not-self, all of which tie in with the soteriological aim of the text. This point is further demonstrated when Vasubandhu brings to the discussion the ancient and characteristically Buddhist concept of the Four Noble Truths (the truths of suffering, arising, cessation, and the path). In this sense, the authority of the text’s framework is strengthened with reference to concepts directly attributed to sermons given by the Buddha himself. Similarly, we see use of the five aggregates, dependent origination, and so on. In other words, while Vasubandhu was an innovator he established his philosophy on an orthodox Buddhist foundation.

The *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* makes a point to clearly differentiate among the three vehicles, i.e., that of the “hearers” (*śrāvaka-yāna*), the “solitary realizers” (*pratyekabuddhayāna*), and the “unexcelled vehicle” (i.e., Mahayana). Followers of the first two paths gain liberation through realization of the faults of samsara and merits of nirvana. The difference between them is that the *pratyekabuddhas* realize these truths by themselves, whereas the *śrāvakas* hear of these from another. The bodhisattva, who is positioned as superior to these two, realizes liberation via nondiscriminating cognition, something which is inaccessible to

the others. In this context, *pratyekabuddhas* and *śrāvakas* are not disparaged but their level of understanding is said to be limited.

Having explained the essential foundation of the path, the following section of the text addresses the antidotes necessary to correct faults. This is the applied and often meditative aspect of Vasubandhu's program of spiritual cultivation. This includes generating the factors of awakening and the bases of mindfulness, as well as correcting within the mind problems such as laxity and excitement. All these measures are required to ensure the mental fitness required for the attainment of liberating wisdom.

The role of faith is emphasized here. Faith in this context is perhaps more precisely understood as conviction in the efficacy of one's practice and its future fruits, rather than constituting a type of religious faith oriented around belief in future salvation. The *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* explains that practice is motivated by conviction in matters such as cause and effect, e.g., that the fruit of liberation can and will be attained through cultivation of its causes (correct view, application of the antidotes, etc.). One's outward presentation as a yogi, and one's morality and detachment, are all conducive to generating in others the same sort of faith or conviction. This is especially important for bodhisattvas, all of whom seek to benefit others.

The following section outlines the states of practice. This is presented in a logical sequence, since first the practitioner must apply antidotes and remove obstacles before moving upward to spiritual achievements. The text outlines eighteen states from the beginning of this section, beginning with the initial causal state and culminating finally in achievement or attainment of the *nirmāṇakāya* ("emanation body"). This whole sequence of stages clearly constitutes the typical career of a bodhisattva from the state of an ordinary aspiring practitioner to the full attainment of buddhahood. The sixth section addresses the results attained through the program of training already outlined. These are the shortest sections of the text.

The seventh and final section of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* is an exposition of the ultimate vehicle, or Mahayana. The Mahayana is said to be unexcelled with respect to its correct practice, basis, and its cultivation of realization. This securely positions the Mahayana above the *śrāvakayāna* and the *pratyekabuddhayāna*, and indeed this section makes clear that these two paths lack many of the features of the Mahayana. This section also introduces the perfections

(*pāramitās*), an essential component within Mahayana, since it is necessary for the bodhisattva to cultivate these in order to benefit others and progress toward buddhahood. The bodhisattva must also realize freedom from all cognitive distortions that obstruct wisdom.

At the same time, the reader is cautioned to avoid taking up extreme views with respect to existence and nonexistence, building on earlier discussions in the first section in particular. One particular concern, for instance, is grasping onto the view of impermanence, which is characteristic of the *śrāvakas*. The Middle Way, it is said, is free from grasping all views, e.g., holding neither the view of permanence nor of impermanence, which is a way of framing the correct perspective according to this system of Buddhist thought. In this way, categories such as afflictions, the three natures, and so forth are recognized for their nominal utility but the practitioner must avoid becoming attached to (i.e., reifying) these concepts, since this leads to erroneous views regarding existence and nonexistence. For example, belief that a being is truly afflicted leads to the view that such a being is truly existent; this view is problematic since no such being can be found after analyzing its components (the five aggregates), and these aggregates themselves break down under analysis. There is merely the appearance of a being comprised of the five aggregates, hence the need to discuss things in terms of ultimate and conventional realities. This approach enables one to avoid asserting absolute ontological categories that prevent understanding the emptiness of phenomena. Again, this is the Middle Way free from extremes, which is reflected in the title of the treatise: *Analysis of the Middle and Extremes*.

To sum up, the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* can be regarded as a kind of detailed manual explaining the career of a successful Buddhist practitioner—specifically a bodhisattva—from the very beginning until their achievement of the ultimate goal, buddhahood itself. This text is essentially a digested exegesis of Buddhist literature known to Vasubandhu. The tone of the work is clearly oriented toward emphasizing the superior qualities of the Mahayana in relation to the inferior vehicles, but this is not done in a hostile manner, since the other paths are considered orthodox and valid, if lacking the supreme aspirations as would be defined within a Mahayana framework.

I wish to thank A. Charles Muller for reviewing the drafts of my translation and offering many critical corrections and suggestions. I was also further assisted

by comments given by an anonymous reviewer. Finally, Kazuho Yamasaki and Christopher Emms of McMaster University assisted me in interpreting some Sanskrit passages.

I hope this translation proves useful and reliable for future readers. Any faults and mistakes are my own.

Analysis of the Middle and Extremes
(*Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*)

Written by Vasubandhu Bodhisattva

Translated by Imperial Decree by Tripiṭaka Dharma Master

Xuanzang of the Great Tang

Part I

Chapter One Definition of Characteristics

464b

Reverence to the author of this treatise, born of the body of the Sugata, and to the master who teaches us, for I shall diligently explicate its meaning.

Here at the beginning I will set forth the structure of the treatise. The verse reads as follows:

(1) Characteristics, (2) Obstacles, (3) Reality, (4) Cultivation of Antidotes, (5) Stages of the Practices, (6) Attainments, and (7) Unexcelled Vehicle (i.e., Mahayana).

Commentary: This treatise addresses these seven topics: (1) characteristics, (2) obstacles, (3) reality, (4) cultivation of antidotes, (5) the stages of practice, (6) the results obtained, (7) the Unexcelled Vehicle. Here we will first analyze the characteristics. The verse reads as follows:

There is false discrimination, yet here these two do not exist. Herein there is but emptiness, and that is also existent in this.³

Commentary: “There is false discrimination” refers to there being discrimination between the grasped and the grasper (i.e., the conceptually apprehending subject and object). “Yet here these two do not exist” means that here false discrimination is never of the duality of grasped and grasper. “Herein there is but emptiness” means that within false discrimination, there is only emptiness that is devoid of grasped and grasper. “And that is also existent in this” means that therein within the emptiness of the two there is also only this false discrimination. If here there are no [grasped and grasper], it is due to those [two] being observed as empty; one understands [phenomena] as they actually are, since what remains is not nonexistent. This being so, the characteristic of emptiness can then be revealed without cognitive distortion. The verse reads as follows:

Thus, it is taught that all phenomena are neither empty nor non-empty.

This is due to existence, nonexistence, and again existence. This then accords with the Middle Way.

464c Commentary: “All phenomena” refers to conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. False discriminations are said to be conditioned. The emptiness of the two forms of grasping is called unconditioned. According to the former line of reasoning, it is said here that all phenomena are neither empty nor non-empty. Due to the existence of false discrimination [in] emptiness, they are said to be non-empty. Due to the nonexistence of grasped and grasper they are said to be not non-empty.⁴ “Due to . . . existence” means “due to the existence of false discrimination [in] emptiness.” “Due to . . . nonexistence” means “due to there being no duality of that which is grasped and the grasper.” “Due to . . . and again existence” means “due to the fact that within false discrimination there is emptiness” and “due to that within emptiness there is false discrimination.” “This accords with the Middle Way” means that all phenomena are not exclusively empty, nor are they exclusively non-empty. This line of reasoning marvelously accords with the Middle Way. It also conforms well to the sutras, such as those of the Prajñāpāramitā, which state that all phenomena are neither empty nor existent.

Having thus explained the characteristic of existence and the characteristic of nonexistence in relation to false discrimination, I will now explain the intrinsic characteristic. The verse reads as follows:

Consciousness produces the appearances of (1) objects, (2) sentient beings, (3) self, and (4) cognitions. These objects are actually nonexistent. Since objects are nonexistent, there is no consciousness.⁵

Commentary: “The appearance of objects” means the appearance of the qualities of objects such as form and so forth. “The appearance of sentient beings” means the appearance of qualities of the five faculties of the body of oneself and others. “The appearance of self” means the afflicted *manas* (mind) because it is always concomitant with delusion in regard to the self and so forth. “The appearance of cognitions” means the other six consciousnesses (visual, auditory, etc.), because the characteristics of the cognitions are coarse.⁶ “These objects are actually nonexistent” means that there is no mode of appearance with respect to objects and faculties in appearance. Since

the appearances of self and cognitions are unreal appearances, all the aforementioned things are not actually existent. “Since objects are nonexistent, there is no consciousness” means that since the four aforementioned grasped objects are not existent, the consciousnesses that grasp them are also not actually existent. The verse reads as follows:

The nature of false discrimination is obtained based upon this meaning: it is neither actually existent nor entirely nonexistent. Liberation is thus considered to be the cessation [of false discrimination].

Commentary: “False discrimination” is thus defined based on this meaning: it is established that it is not actually existent, since it is like something manifested, which is not actually existent. It is also not entirely nonexistent, since herein there is at least the arising of disturbed consciousness. Why is this nature not admitted to be entirely nonexistent? Because we accept that liberation is attained from the cessation of this [false discrimination]. If it were otherwise, then bondage and liberation should not exist, and, in this manner, it would constitute the fault of denying defilements and purification. Having explained the intrinsic characteristic of false discrimination, here the collective characteristic will be explained. It is only this false discrimination that fully comprises three types of intrinsic natures. The verse reads as follows:

The natures of the conceptualized, the other-dependent, and the perfectly accomplished are explained on account of object, discrimination, and the emptiness of the two.

Commentary: The existence of the nature of the conceptualized is explained based on falsely discriminated objects. The existence of the nature of the other-dependent is explained based on the nature of false discrimination. The existence of the nature of the perfectly accomplished is explained based on the emptiness of the grasped and the grasper.

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Having explained the collective characteristic of false discrimination, I will explain the characteristic of the means by which one comprehends the characteristic of nonexistence in relation to false discrimination.⁷ The verse reads as follows:

Due to perception of consciousness, nonperception of objects arises; due to nonperception of objects, nonperception of consciousness arises.

Commentary: On the basis of perception of consciousness only (*viññapti-mātra*), first there arises nonperception of objects. Moreover, due to nonperception of objects, there subsequently arises nonperception of consciousness. It is through these means that one comprehends the characteristic of the nonexistence of grasped and grasper.⁸ Next, the verse reads as follows:

Due to the nature of perception of consciousness, [the nature of] nonperception [of consciousness] is also established. It is thus known that both perception and nonperception are equivalent in nature.

Commentary: Perception is so called because when consciousness only occurs, there appear to exist various types of falsely discriminated objects. Since the perceived objects are unreal, it is also not possible to perceive any reality to them. Having realized nonperception of consciousness, both grasped and grasper, [although] perceptible, are together realized as equally inapprehensible.

Having explained the characteristic of the means by which one comprehends the characteristic of nonexistence in relation to false discrimination, I will now explain the characteristics of the distinctions and synonyms. The verse reads as follows:

The mind and mental factors of the three realms are false discriminations. Mere cognition of objects is called mind, and distinctions are called mental factors.

Commentary: The characteristics of distinction related to false discrimination are the minds and mental factors of the desire realm, the form realms, and the formless realms. As to the characteristics of synonyms [related to false discrimination], the mere cognition of the general characteristic of objects is called mind. Also, cognitions of distinctions are called the mental factors, such as feeling, etc.

From here I will explain the characteristic of the arising [of false discrimination]. The verse reads as follows:

The first is called conditioning consciousness. The second is called the experiencer. Herein are the mental factors of (1) experience, (2) discrimination, and (3) stimulation.

Commentary: The conditioning consciousness is the store consciousness, since this is the condition for the arising of other consciousnesses. The store consciousness functions as the condition for the forthcoming consciousnesses that arise. The subject of experience is called the experiencer. Among these consciousnesses, feeling functions to experience, and perception functions to discriminate. Volition, attention, and so forth are concomitant formations, functioning to stimulate [the other] consciousnesses. These three auxiliary mental states are therefore called mental factors.

Next, I will explain the characteristics of defilements. The verses read as follows:

(1) Concealing and obstruction, (2) establishing, (3) leading, (4) collecting, (5) completing, (6) threefold discrimination, (7) experiencing, (8) inducing, (9) fettering, (10) manifesting, and (11) the fruit of suffering. The world is defiled due to these. The three, two, and seven defilements result from false discrimination. 465b

Commentary: “Due to concealing and obstruction” means that ignorance obscures reality and obstructs accurate vision. “Due to establishing” means that mental formations deposit karmic perfuming in the base consciousness (i.e., the store consciousness). “Due to leading” means that consciousness, having attachment, directs sentient beings into a place of birth. “Due to collecting” means that name and form gather sentient beings into individual existences. “Due to completing” means that the six internal sense bases form sentient beings into a complete body. “Due to threefold discrimination” means contact can discriminate the three agreeable sensations and three feelings [of pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain] of faculty, object, and consciousness. “Due to experience” refers to objects related to sensory experience of what is agreeable, disagreeable, or neither. “Due to inducing” means that the power of craving brings about the arising of a future existence induced by past karma. “Due to fettering” refers to grasping, which causes fetters to arise, in which consciousness is made to conform to desire and so forth. “Due to manifesting” refers to the force of previous existences causing the appearance of various matured karmic fruits in a future existence based upon past activities. “Due to the fruit of suffering” means that the natures of birth,

aging, and death are impelled as retribution from past causes. The twelve links of dependent origination explained here disturb people and make them uncomfortable.

The three defilements: (1) the defilements of afflictions, which refer to ignorance, craving, and grasping; (2) the defilements of karma, which refer to mental formations and becoming; (3) the defilements of birth, which refer to the other links of dependent origination.

The two defilements: (1) defilements as cause, which refer to afflicted karma; (2) defilements as results, which refer to the remaining links of dependent origination.

The seven defilements refer to seven types of causes: (1) the cause of cognitive distortion, which refers to ignorance [among the twelve links of dependent origination]; (2) inducing causes, which refer to mental formations; (3) leading causes, which refer to consciousness; (4) gathering causes, which refer to name, form, and the six sense bases; (5) experiential causes, which refer to contact and feeling; (6) inductive causes, which refer to craving, grasping, and becoming; (7) distressing causes, which refer to birth, aging, and death.

These defilements all grow from false discrimination. Here I summarize the nine characteristics of false discrimination elucidated earlier: (1) the characteristic of existence, (2) the characteristic of nonexistence, (3) the characteristic of intrinsic characteristic, (4) the characteristic of collection, (5) the characteristic of the means by which one comprehends the characteristic of nonexistence [in relation to false discrimination], (6) the characteristic of distinction, (7) the characteristic of synonym, (8) the characteristic of arising, (9) the characteristic of defilement.

Having thus explained false discrimination, I will now explain the emptiness that is known. The verse reads as follows:

The emptiness of the two should be understood via (1) characteristics, (2) synonyms, (3) meanings, (4) distinctions, and (5) their proofs. The brief explanation is derived from these.

465c Commentary: The emptiness of grasped and grasper should be understood. The brief explanation is derived from these five (characteristics, etc.). What are the characteristics of emptiness to be understood? The verse reads as follows:

It is by way of nonduality and existence of nonexistence that [we speak of] not-existence as well as not-nonexistence. They are neither different nor identical. This is explained as the characteristic of emptiness.

Commentary: “Nonduality” refers to the absence of grasped and grasper. “Existence of nonexistence” refers to there being the nonexistence of the two types of grasping. This explains how emptiness has nonexistence (*abhāva*) for its nature. Hence, this characteristic of emptiness is neither existence nor nonexistence. What is meant by “not-existence”? It is the absence of the two types of existence [of grasped and grasper]. What is meant by “not-non-existent”? It is that there are the two kinds of nonexistents, [the lack of self in persons and in phenomena].⁹

This explains the characteristic of emptiness, i.e., neither existence nor nonexistence. This emptiness and that false discrimination are neither different from one another nor identical. If they were different, then it would mean that the nature of a dharma would differ from dharmas, which would be illogical, such as in the case of the nature of suffering and so forth. If identical, then it should stand that it [emptiness] is not an object of pure cognition, nor would it be of common characteristic [with phenomena]. This explains that emptiness and false discrimination are removed from the characteristics of sameness and difference. What are the synonyms of emptiness? The verse reads as follows:

I will briefly explain the synonyms of emptiness: they should be understood as referring to (1) thusness, (2) the apex of reality, (3) the signless (*animitta*), (4) the nature of ultimate reality, and (5) experiential reality (*dharmadhātu*).

Commentary: The brief explanation of emptiness includes these synonyms. What are the meanings of the synonyms? The verse reads as follows:

The meanings of the synonyms are in the following order: (1) immutability, (2) the absence of cognitive distortion, (3) cessation of signs, (4) the sphere of noble wisdom, and (5) the cause of the noble dharmas.

Commentary: Here emptiness, which is to be understood, is explained. The meaning of “immutability” explains thusness, since reality is constant,

not being transitory. The meaning of “the absence of cognitive distortion” explains the apex of reality, since there is no basis for cognitive distortions. The meaning of “the cessation of signs” explains the absence of signs, since here all signs are permanently eliminated. The meaning of “the sphere of noble wisdom” explains the supreme meaning, since this is the meaning of the sphere of supreme wisdom. The meaning of “the cause of the noble dharmas” explains experiential reality (*dharmadhātu*), since all noble dharmas are produced dependent upon this. Here *dhātu* refers to the meaning of cause and meanings of not-self, etc., and should be understood according to reason. How are we to understand the distinctions in emptiness? The verse reads as follows:

These defilements and purity stem from the presence or absence of taint.
Purity is considered pure like the element of water, gold, or space.¹⁰

466a Commentary: The distinctions in emptiness are of two main types: the first is defiled, the second is pure. These constitute defilement and purity. They are distinguished according to the state, which means that the presence of taint is explained as defiled, while it is explained as purity when there is separation from taint. Although it is first defiled and then becomes pure, it is not that [the nature of emptiness] has transformed, since this would constitute an error with respect to impermanence. Just as the elements of water and so forth are [essentially] free from contaminants, so too is the purity of space. It is not the case that it is transformed in nature.

There are furthermore sixteen kinds of emptiness: (1) inner emptiness, (2) outer emptiness, (3) the emptiness of inner and outer, (4) great emptiness, (5) the emptiness of emptiness, (6) the emptiness of the supreme meaning, (7) conditioned emptiness, (8) unconditioned emptiness, (9) ultimate emptiness, (10) boundless emptiness, (11) the emptiness of nondispersal, (12) the emptiness of original nature, (13) the emptiness of characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*), (14) the emptiness of all qualities, (15) the emptiness of nonexistence, and (16) the emptiness of the intrinsic nature of nonexistence. How should these brief meanings be understood? The verses read as follows:

The (1) eater and the (2) eaten (i.e., the experiencing subject and the object of experience), (3) the bodies upon which these are dependent, and (4) the abode. Perceive these according to reason, the emptiness of the two

kinds of purities that are sought for the constant benefit to beings, so as to not abandon samsara, and so as to be skillfully inexhaustible. Thus contemplate these as empty, for the purity of the spiritual lineage, for the attainment of the primary and secondary marks, and for the pure Dharma of the buddhas. Thus the bodhisattva contemplates emptiness.

Commentary: The emptiness of the eater is explained based on the inner sense bases, which refers to (1) inner emptiness. The emptiness of the eaten is explained based on external bases, which refers to (2) outer emptiness. “The body upon which these are dependent” refers to the body upon which the eater and the eaten are dependent. This body is empty, hence it is called (3) the emptiness of inner and outer. The receptacle world is called an abode. It is called great due to its vastness. Since the abode is empty, it is called (4) great emptiness. “Perceive these” refers to perceiving through knowledge the emptiness of the inner sense bases, etc. The wisdom of emptiness is empty, hence it is called (5) the emptiness of emptiness. “According to reason” refers to the supreme meaning, which is the accurate practice of the contemplated reality. This is empty, hence it is called (6) the emptiness of the supreme meaning. The bodhisattva practices to attain the two kinds of purity, which refer to conditioned and unconditioned wholesome phenomena. These two types of emptiness are therefore called (7) conditioned emptiness and (8) unconditioned emptiness. They constantly benefit sentient beings while contemplating emptiness, hence it is called (9) ultimate emptiness. Samsara is eternal with neither beginning nor end. Contemplating this as empty, it is therefore called (10) boundless emptiness.

To not contemplate this as empty would quickly lead to disillusionment. [The bodhisattvas] contemplate this boundless samsara as empty in order to not become disillusioned with samsara. The virtue cultivated while contemplating emptiness is not abandoned up to the state of *parinirvāṇa* without reminder. This is therefore called (11) the emptiness of nondispersal.¹¹ The spiritual lineages of the nobles are inherent, and are not formed through habituation, hence it is said to be their original nature. The bodhisattva quickly attains purity due to this while contemplating emptiness, hence it is called (12) the emptiness of original nature. The bodhisattva attains the primary and secondary characteristics of a great person while contemplating emptiness,

466b hence it is called (13) the emptiness of characteristics. The bodhisattva attains purity in regard to all the qualities of the Buddha, such as powers and fearlessness, etc., while contemplating this emptiness, hence it is called (14) the emptiness of all qualities.

[Up to here] these fourteen types of emptiness have been set forth individually. What is here called emptiness? The verse reads as follows:

Person and phenomena: their real natures are both not-existent. Hence, the emptiness of the two is separately established here in relation to nonexistence and existence.

Commentary: Since the real natures of neither persons (*pudgala*) nor phenomena exist, [this instance] is called (15) the emptiness of nonexistence. This emptiness of nonexistence is not the intrinsic nature of nonexistence. The (16) emptiness of the intrinsic nature of nonexistence is called as such because the intrinsic nature of emptiness is considered to be nonexistence.¹²

As explained earlier, in the case of the emptiness of the eater and so forth, the emptiness of the two is separately established to elucidate the characteristics of emptiness. This serves to restrain attachment to reification of person and phenomena, as well as attachment to negation by emptiness. The emptiness of the two is established according to this order.

Having explained the distinctions in emptiness, how should the meaning proven here be understood? The verse reads as follows:

Here if there were no defilements, all would be naturally liberated. Here if there were no purity, effort would be fruitless.

Commentary: If phenomena were empty, and prior to the production of an antidote there were no adventitious defilements, then all beings would naturally be liberated without effort. If the antidotes had already been produced and yet there was still impurity, then there would be no fruit when striving in pursuit of liberation. The verse reads as follows:

Neither defiled nor undefiled; neither pure nor impure; since the nature of the mind is originally pure, it is defiled by adventitious defilements.

Commentary: Why neither defiled nor undefiled? It is because the nature of the mind is originally pure. Why neither pure nor impure? It is because

[the nature of mind] is defiled as a result of adventitious defilements. This is called proving the meanings of the distinctions of emptiness. This previous meaning of emptiness generally includes two types, which refer to characteristics and establishment. The characteristics further include two types, namely nonexistence and existence. The characteristic of emptiness in relation to existence is being apart from existence, nonexistence, difference, and sameness, which is considered its characteristic. One should understand that the establishment is in terms of synonyms and so forth.

Chapter Two

Discussion of Obstacles

Having analyzed characteristics [the terminology outlined above], I will now explain the obstacles. The verse reads as follows:

The whole and the partial, the excessive and regular, and the grasping and rejection of samsara, are explained as obstacles related to [practitioners of the] two spiritual lineages (*gotra*).

Commentary: The “whole” obstacles refer to afflictive obstacles and cognitive obstacles, since they constitute obstacles within the spiritual lineage of bodhisattvas. The “partial” obstacles refer to afflictive obstacles, since they obstruct the ways of the spiritual lineages of the *śrāvakas*, etc.¹³ The “excessive” obstacle affects those who experience craving, etc. The “regular” obstacle affects those who act in a normal manner (i.e., those with few defilements). “Grasping and rejection of samsara” refer to obstruction of the attainment of the nirvana of nonabiding by the bodhisattva spiritual lineage, called “the obstacle of grasping and rejection of samsara.” The five obstacles are accordingly like this, explaining the obstructions to the two types of spiritual lineages (bodhisattvas and *śrāvakas*, etc.). The verses read as follows: 466c

The nine types of characteristics of afflictions refer to the nine fetters of craving, etc. The first two obstruct disillusionment and dispassion. The other seven obstruct accurate vision, referring to the obstruction of full comprehension of (1) the false view of individuated identity, (2) its things, (3) cessation, (4) the path, (5) the Three Treasures, (6) gain and honor, and (7) detachment.

Commentary: There are, briefly speaking, nine types of characteristics of obstacles in relation to afflictions, referring to the nine types of fetters, which include craving, etc. (1) The fetter of craving obstructs disillusionment because one is unable to distance oneself from favorable objects of cognition. (2) The fetter of hatred obstructs dispassion because one is unable to relinquish unfavorable objects of perception.

The other seven fetters obstruct accurate vision. Full comprehension is obstructed in the following seven ways. (3) The fetter of conceit obstructs full comprehension of the falsity of the view of individuated existence. Due to the momentum of intermittent and continuous arising of self-conceit, this fetter is not severed during cultivation of present contemplation.¹⁴ (4) The fetter of ignorance obstructs full comprehension of the view of individuated existence, because one does not realize that [the sentient being is comprised of] appropriated aggregates. (5) The fetter of views obstructs full comprehension of the noble truth of cessation, because *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* (the view of individuality) and the views of attachments to extremes (i.e., a view that there is or is not postmortem continuity) lead to fear of cessation, and because wrong views repudiate cessation. (6) The fetter of grasping obstructs full comprehension of the noble truth of the path, because one grasps other phenomena as pure. (7) The fetter of doubt obstructs full comprehension of the Three Treasures, because one does not have faith in the merits of the Three Treasures as a result of this. (8) The fetter of envy obstructs full comprehension of gain and honor, and so forth, because one does not perceive their faults. (9) The fetter of avarice obstructs full comprehension of detachment, because one craves the means to sustain life.

Furthermore, there are specific obstacles that obstruct the ten types of pure phenomena, which relate to virtue and so forth. What are their characteristics? The verses read as follows:

- 467a (1) The absence of application, (2) [application in] inappropriate places, (3) erroneous conduct, (4) nonarising [of the virtuous Dharma], (5) not producing correct thought, (6) incomplete preparations, the lack of (7) spiritual lineage and (8) virtuous friends, (9) mental exhaustion, (10) lacking in correct practice, living together with (11) base and (12) wicked people, (13) cognitive debilitation, (14) the remainders among the three, (15) the immaturity of wisdom, (16) inherent debilitations, (17) laziness, (18) negligence, (19) attachment to existence, (20) attachment to wealth, (21) a dissolute state of mind, (22) lack of faith, (23) the absence of determination, (24) deliberation according to language, (25) disdain for the Dharma, (26) veneration of name and gain, (27) lack of compassion for sentient beings, (28) deficient learning and (29) little learning, and (30) lack of cultivation of meditative concentration.

Commentary: These are called obstacles to virtue, etc. What are the characteristics of virtue, etc. that are obstructed? The verse reads as follows:

“Virtue, etc.” refers to: (1) virtue, (2) *bodhi* (awakening), (3) sustaining, (4) possession of wisdom, the absence of (5) confusion and (6) obstacles, (7) dedication, the lack of (8) fear and (9) avarice, and (10) mastery.

Commentary: With respect to these ten types of pure phenomena as they relate to virtue etc., which ones encompass which of the aforementioned types of obstacles? The verse reads as follows:

These ten (virtue, etc.) are each beset with three obstacles to start with.

Commentary: Virtue is beset with three obstacles: (1) the absence of application, (2) application in inappropriate places, (3) application in erroneous conduct.

Awakening is beset with three obstacles: (1) nonarising of wholesome phenomena, (2) not giving rise to correct thought, (3) lack of complete preparation.

The generation of the mind of awakening (*bodhicitta*) is called “sustaining.” This is beset with three obstacles: (1) lack of spiritual lineage, (2) lack of virtuous friends, (3) mental exhaustion.

“Possession of wisdom” refers to the bodhisattva who comprehends this nature; for them there are three obstacles: (1) lack of correct practice, (2) living together with base people, (3) living together with the wicked. Here “base people” refers to deluded types. Those who delight in the destruction of others are called the wicked.

The absence of confusion is beset with three obstacles: (1) the debilitations of cognitive distortion, (2) the residual qualities accompanying each of the three obstacles [of the afflictions, karma, and karmic fruition in the form of unfavorable rebirths], (3) the immaturity of wisdom that enables the maturation of liberation.

The elimination of inherent obstacles is called the absence of obstacles. This is beset with three obstacles: (1) being born with congenital debilitations, (2) laziness, (3) negligence.

Dedication is beset with three obstacles that make the mind face the other way, rather than facing unexcelled perfect awakening: (1) attachment to existence, (2) attachment to wealth, (3) a dissolute mind.

The absence of fear is beset with three obstacles: (1) lack of faith in persons, (2) absence of determination with respect to the Dharma, (3) deliberation according to language.

The absence of avarice is beset with three obstacles: (1) lack of veneration of the true Dharma, (2) venerating name, gain, and honors, (3) lack of compassion for sentient beings.

Mastery is beset with three obstacles that prevent one from gaining mastery: (1) deficient learning that emerges as a result of karma capable of causing deficiencies with respect to the Dharma, (2) little learning, (3) lack of cultivation of superior *samādhi*.

Furthermore, these obstacles have ten activations accompanying their other meanings with respect to the ten types (virtue, etc.). These should be known according to their respective meanings. The ten activations are as follows:

1. The activation of arising, such as the eyes and other organs in relation to the visual consciousness and other consciousnesses.
2. The activation of subsistence, such as the four types of food [coarse food, sensory food, and nourishment from thought and the six consciousnesses] consumed by beings.
3. The activation of preservation, which refers to the capacity for support provided by the receptacle world for sentient beings.
4. The activation of illumination, such as light in relation to forms.
5. The activation of alteration, such as fire and so forth in relation to that which is cooked.
6. The activation of separation, such as sickles and so forth in relation to what is cut.
7. The activation of transformation, seen in the work of the goldsmith and so forth who make metals into bracelets and such things.
8. The activation of belief, such as smoke in relation to fire [i.e., smoke indicates fire].
9. The activation of intellectual expression, such as a reason contained in a premise.
10. The activation of attainment, such as the noble path, etc., in relation to nirvana, etc.

On the basis of such meanings, the following verses are stated:

There are ten types of activations: (1) arising, (2) subsistence, (3) preservation, (4) illumination, (5) alteration, (6) separation, (7) transformation, (8) belief, (9) intellectual expression, and (10) attainment. Examples of consciousnesses, the four foods, the ground, the lamp, the fire, the sickle, the craftsman, smoke, reason, and the noble path relate to the activities of consciousnesses.¹⁵

The obstacles as they relate to virtue, etc., should be understood in the same way:

1. The obstacle to arising functions in relation to the virtues. Wholesome phenomena should arise.

2. The obstacle to subsistence functions in relation to awakening (*bodhi*). Great awakening is unshakeable.

3. The obstacle to preservation functions in relation to maintaining. The mind of awakening serves to preserve.

4. The obstacle to illumination functions in relation to the possession of wisdom (intelligence). Intelligence should be illuminated.

5. The obstacle to alteration functions in relation to the absence of confusion. Alteration is called the extinguishing of confusion.

6. The obstacle to separation functions in relation to the absence of obstacles. This is disassociation from the obstacles.

7. The obstacle to transformation functions in relation to dedication. The mind of awakening is of a transformative characteristic.

8. The obstacle to belief functions in relation to lack of fear. Those without belief have fear.

9. The obstacle to intellectual expression functions in relation to the lack of avarice. Those without avarice toward the Dharma reveal it to others.

10. The obstacle to attainment functions in relation to mastery. Through it one can attain the characteristics of mastery.

The point of the order of the ten things [listed above] that are obstructed is that if there is a desire to realize unexcelled awakening, superior virtuous roots should first be produced, since it (i.e., the desire for realization) will be preserved by the power of those superior virtuous roots. One will definitely gain the ability to abide in unexcelled awakening, having made virtuous roots grow.

Next, one should generate the mind of great awakening. This mind of awakening is the basis for the bodhisattva nature, since the bodhisattva in

this way has generated the mind of great awakening and is supported by the power of superior virtuous roots. They sever cognitive errors and give rise to the state of freedom from errors, since on the path of seeing there are no cognitive errors.

467c Next, on the path of cultivation one severs all obstacles. Having severed the obstacles and maintaining virtuous roots, one dedicates themselves to unexcelled perfect awakening. As a result of the support of the power of one's dedication to it, there will then be no fear with respect to the profound Dharma. Having no fear, one will then witness the superior merits of that Dharma and be able to explain it widely to others. Since the bodhisattva is supported by the power of these various merits, they quickly realize unexcelled perfect awakening and attain complete mastery over all phenomena.

This is called the order of the meanings with respect to the ten (virtue, etc.). Although these phenomena (virtue, etc.) comprise the factors of awakening, there are still general and specific differences so far as the perfections and the qualities of the various grounds (*bhūmis*) of practice are concerned.

Now I will explain the differences among the obstacles to the factors of awakening, etc. The verse reads as follows:

There are specific obstacles that should be understood with respect to the factors of awakening, the perfections, and the grounds.

Commentary: Again, with respect to the the factors of awakening, the perfections, and the qualities of the various grounds, each have their respective specific obstacles. With respect to the specific obstacles of the factors of awakening, the verse reads as follows:

(1) Lack of skill with respect to objects of meditation, (2) laziness, (3) the two deficiencies in meditation, (4) not planting, (5) weakness, and the faults of (6) false view and (7) debilitations.

Commentary: The obstacle of being unskillful in regard to specific objects of meditation is seen in the four bases of mindfulness. The obstacle of laziness impedes the four types of correct elimination. The obstacle of the two deficiencies in *samādhi* exist in relation to the four supernormal powers. The first is due to deficiencies in the completion [of meditation]: by way of either will, effort, mind, or contemplation. The second is due to deficiencies in

practice: by way of being deficient in at least one of the eight practices of severance.

The obstacle to the development of the superior virtuous roots lies in the lack of planting perfected factors that are conducive to liberation, such as the five spiritual faculties. The obstacle of weakness impedes five powers, referring to the five spiritual faculties beset with weakness as a result of interference by obstacles. The obstacle of errors in view impedes the seven factors of awakening. These are revealed during the path of seeing. The obstacle of debilitating faults impedes the branches of the Eightfold Noble Path. These are revealed during the path of cultivation.

Concerning the specific obstacles to reaching the other shore (the perfections), the verses read as follows:

Obstacles to (1) being wealthy, (2) birth in a favorable existence, (3) not abandoning sentient beings, (3) the decrease of faults and the increase of merits, (4) introducing beings to the Dharma and (5) liberation, obstacles to the (6) virtues of generosity etc., the (7) inexhaustible and (8) uninterrupted, (9) the skillful determination that is made, and (10) the maturation of the Dharma to be enjoyed.

Commentary: Here I explain the obstacles that impede the results attained via the ten perfections, to show the obstacles as they pertain to the inherent qualities of the ten perfections.

The obstacle to mastery (i.e., having financial means) is explained as an impediment to the perfection of giving. The obstacle to being reborn in a favorable existence is explained as an impediment to the perfection of morality. The obstacle to not abandoning sentient beings is explained as an impediment to the perfection of patience. The obstacle to the reduction of error and increase of merit is explained as an impediment to the perfection of effort. The obstacle to introducing the Dharma to those beings to be taught is explained as an impediment to the perfection of meditation. The obstacle to liberation is explained as an impediment to the perfection of wisdom. The obstacle to being inexhaustible with respect to the virtues of generosity and so forth is explained as an impediment to the perfection of skill in means. It is due to turning from here toward unexcelled awakening that the virtues of generosity and so forth are made inexhaustible. The obstacle to uninterrupted

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transmission of virtue through all rebirths is explained as an impediment to the perfection of vows. Wholesome phenomena arise through receiving and being accordant with the power of great vows. The obstacle to the firm attainment of produced virtues is explained as an impediment to the perfection of power. The powers of discernment and practice can subdue that obstacle, rather than one being subdued by it. The obstacle to the maturation of Dharma, enjoyed by both oneself and others, is explained as an impediment to the perfection of gnosis. Realization of meaning is unlike the words one has heard.

There are specific obstacles with respect to the qualities of each of the grounds. The verses read as follows:

(1) Omnipresence, (2) supremacy, (3) superior flow of continuity, (4) non-grasping, (5) uninterrupted continuity, (6) absence of both defilements and purity, (7) absence of distinction among various phenomena, (8) neither increasing nor decreasing, (9) the four masteries of nondiscrimination, etc., (10) the truth of the basis. Among these ten experiential realms there exists undefiled ignorance. There are obstacles to the qualities of the ten grounds, hence ten obstacles are explained.

Commentary: With respect to “omnipresence,” etc., the ten experiential realms are impeded by the obstacle of undefiled ignorance. The obstacles to the ten grounds (*bhūmis*) are set forth according to the qualities of the ten grounds.

468b The experiential realm realized on the first ground is called the principle of omnipresence. Having reached here, one realizes the dharma-nature in which self and other are equal.

The experiential realm realized on the second ground is called the principle of the supreme. Having reached here, one thinks, “Now having thus achieved the [aforementioned] liberation of sameness [of self and other], purifying practices should be carried out in every way.” This is diligence concomitant with liberation.

The experiential realm realized on the third ground is called the principle of the superior flow of continuity. Having reached here, one knows that the Dharma that has been heard is of a pure experiential realm, flowing from that which is supreme and so forth. In seeking this Dharma, one would not consider it difficult to try to grasp hold of it even if one were cast into a flaming pit as vast as trichilocosm.

The experiential realm realized on the fourth ground is called the principle of nongrasping. Having reached here, even love for the Dharma is completely extinguished.

The experiential realm realized on the fifth ground is called the principle of uninterrupted continuity. Having reached here, one attains the pure mind in which there is equality of the ten aspirations.

The experiential realm realized on the sixth ground is called the principle of the absence of both defilements and purity. Having reached here, one understands that the dharma of dependent origination is neither defiled nor pure.

The experiential realm realized on the seventh ground is called the principle of the absence of distinction among various phenomena. Having reached here, one understands that phenomena are without characteristics, without traversing through the various dharma characteristics in the scriptures, etc.

The experiential realm realized on the eighth ground is called the principle of neither increasing nor decreasing. Having reached here, one perfectly realizes the tolerance based on the nonproduction of phenomena. Not a single phenomenon is perceived to increase or decrease among pure and defiled phenomena.

There are four kinds of mastery: (1) mastery of nondiscrimination, (2) mastery of purifying the realm, (3) mastery of cognition, (4) mastery of karma. The experiential realm is the support for these four types, meaning it is the principle of support for these four kinds of mastery. On the eighth ground, one attains the first two kinds of mastery, which serve as bases.

On the ninth ground, one also attains the base of the mastery of cognition. One completely realizes unobstructed cognition. On the tenth ground, one can furthermore attain the base of the mastery of karma. One manifests various benefits and joys for sentient beings as one wishes.

The summary verse reads as follows:

Having explained the afflictive and cognitive obstacles, consider the extinguishing of these two as liberation from all obstacles.

Commentary: Since these two categories include all obstacles, it is held that liberation from all obstacles is attained when these are extinguished. The general meaning of the earlier obstacles encompasses eleven types: (1) major obstacles, which refer to whole obstacles; (2) minor obstacles, which refer to partial obstacles; (3) obstacles to application, which refer excessive

obstacles; (4) obstacles to attainment, which refer to normal obstacles; (5) obstacles to extraordinary attainments, which refer to obstacles related to grasping and rejecting samsara; (6) obstacles to proper application, which refer to the nine obstacles related to afflictions (i.e., the nine fetters); (7) obstacles to the causes, which refer to obstacles related to the ten activations of virtue and so forth; (8) obstacles to penetrating reality, which refer to obstacles to the factors of awakening; (9) obstacles to unsurpassed purity, which refer to obstacles to reaching the other shore; (10) obstacles to distinctions in paths, which refer to obstacles to the ten [bodhisattva] grounds; (11) the complete array of obstacles are summarized into the two obstacles.

End of Part I of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*

Part II

Chapter Three Discussion of Reality

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Having discussed the obstacles, I will explain reality. The verses read as follows:

Reality consists of only ten [types]: the realities that are (1) fundamental, (2) characteristic, (3) undistorted, (4) according to cause and effect, (5) coarse and subtle, (6) the logically accepted, (7) the sphere of purity, (8) inclusive, (9) differentiated, and (10) discerned through the ten skills, all of which remove views of self.

Commentary: It should be understood that there are only ten types of reality: (1) fundamental reality, (2) the reality of characteristic, (3) undistorted reality, (4) the reality of cause and effect, (5) coarse and subtle reality, (6) the reality of that which is accepted (axioms), (7) the reality of the purified sphere, (8) the inclusive reality, (9) the differentiated reality, (10) the reality of skills.

This [the reality of skills] encompasses a further ten types, [all of which reflect] the intention to remove the ten types of self-view. The ten skills [for approaching reality] are (1) skillful [contemplation of reality through] the aggregates, (2) skillful [contemplation of reality through] the perceptual bases, (3) skillful [contemplation of reality through] the sense bases, (4) skillful [contemplation of reality through] dependent origination, (5) skillful [contemplation of reality through] the appropriate and inappropriate, (6) skillful [contemplation of reality through] the faculties, (7) skillful [contemplation of reality through] time, (8) skillful [contemplation of reality through] the truths, (9) skillful [contemplation of reality] in relation to the vehicles, (10) skillful [contemplation of reality through] conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.

Herein, what is the fundamental reality? It refers to the three natures: (1) the nature of the conceptualized, (2) the nature of the other-dependent, (3) the nature of the perfectly accomplished. The other realities are established

based on these. What is considered to be the meaning of reality here in relation to the stated three natures? The verse reads as follows:

Considered as the reality of the three natures: solely, one is always non-existent, one is existent but is unreal, and one is existent and nonexistent.

Commentary: In this manner, among the three natures, the characteristic of the conceptualized is permanently nonexistent. Being permanently nonexistent, this nature is considered real because of the absence of cognitive distortion. The characteristic of other-dependency exists but is unreal. Only existing but unreal, the other-dependent is considered real because of confusion. The characteristic of the perfectly accomplished is both existent and nonexistent. Only existent and nonexistent, this nature is considered a reality because of emptiness.

469a What is the reality of characteristics? The verses read as follows:

Reifying and negating views regarding phenomena and the transmigrating person, the grasped and the grasper, and existence and nonexistence are discontinued having understood this. This is called the reality of characteristics.

Commentary: If all reifying and negating views of all phenomena and persons are understood in this way, then they will be discontinued. This is the characteristic of reality of the conceptualized nature. If all reifying and negating views of grasped and grasper are understood in this way, their activities will be discontinued. This is the characteristic of reality of the other-dependent nature. If all reifying and negating views of existence and nonexistence are understood in this way, they will be discontinued. This is the characteristic of reality of the perfectly accomplished nature.

Since there is no cognitive distortion within the characteristics of fundamental reality, it is called the reality of characteristics. The reality of the absence of cognitive distortions refers to impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and not-self. Through these one corrects the four cognitive distortions, such as those related to permanence and so forth.

How should one understand that impermanence and so forth are established based upon the fundamental reality? The verses read as follows:

Nonexistence, arising-ceasing, and defilement-purity constitute three types of (1) impermanence. The grasped, characteristics of things, and union constitute three types of (2) suffering. (3) Emptiness also includes three types: nonexistence, variant, and intrinsic natures. Absence of characteristics, variant characteristic, and intrinsic characteristic are the three types of (4) not-self. [These] four each [encompass] three types on the basis of fundamental reality.

Commentary: (1) The three types of impermanence are (1) Impermanence due to nonexistence, which refers to the conceptualized nature, since this is always nonexistent; (2) impermanence of arising and ceasing, which refers to the other-dependent nature, since there is origination and cessation; (3) the impermanence of defilement and purity, which refers to the perfectly accomplished nature, since the status of things is changeable.

(2) The three types of suffering are (1) suffering due to the grasped, which refers to the conceptualized nature, since personhood and phenomena are grasped; (2) suffering due to the characteristics of things, which refers to the other-dependent nature, because of the three characteristics of suffering; (3) suffering due to union, which refers to the perfectly accomplished nature, because of being bound up with suffering.

(3) The three types of emptiness are (1) emptiness due to nonexistence, which refers to the conceptualized nature. There is no line of reasoning by which it can be said to be existence. From this its nonexistence is said to be emptiness; (2) emptiness related to variant nature, which refers to the other-dependent nature, since what is grasped in delusion does not exist in such a manner, yet is not entirely bereft of qualities; (3) emptiness related to intrinsic nature, which refers to the perfectly accomplished, since its intrinsic nature is that which is revealed by the emptiness of the two.

(4) The three types of not-self are (1) not-self [stemming from] no characteristics, which refers to the conceptualized nature. Since these characteristics are fundamentally nonexistent, it is therefore said to be without characteristics. This absence of characteristics is said to be not-self; (2) not-self related to possessing variant characteristics, which refers to the other-dependent nature. Although there are these characteristics, they are unlike what is conceptualized, hence the name variant characteristics. These variant characteristics are called

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not-self; (3) not-self as intrinsic characteristic, which refers to the perfectly accomplished nature. What is expressed by not-self is to be considered the intrinsic characteristic. This intrinsic characteristic is said to be not-self.

The four matters of impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and not-self are as explained in this manner. Each are divided into three types in their respective order based on fundamental reality. Each of the three types of the four should be understood as above.

The reality of cause and effect refers to the Four Noble Truths. How is this based on fundamental reality? The verses read as follows:

The three characteristics of suffering having been explained, the noble truth of arising also includes three types: (1) habituated energies, (2) manifestation, and (3) conjunction. The noble truth of cessation includes: (1) intrinsic nature, (2) the two forms of grasping not having arisen, and (3) two eliminations of defilement. The noble truth of the path includes (1) full comprehension, (2) permanent severance, and (3) realization.

Commentary: The noble truth of suffering includes three types, which refer to the four items (impermanence and so forth), each divided into three characteristics as explained above.

The noble truth of arising is threefold: (1) the arising of habituated energies, which refers to the habit energies of attachment to the conceptualized nature; (2) the arising of manifestation, which refers to [the co-arising of] karma and afflictions; (3) the arising of conjunction, which refers to conjunction obstructing thusness.

The noble truth of cessation is threefold: (1) cessation related to intrinsic nature, which is intrinsic nature being unproduced [in the conceptualized nature]; (2) cessation related to the two forms of grasping, which is due to the grasped and the grasper both being unproduced [in the other-dependent nature]; (3) cessation related to original nature, which refers to the two eliminations of taints [in the perfectly accomplished nature], being cessation through analysis and thusness.

The noble truth of the path is threefold: (1) the path as full comprehension, (2) the path as the permanent severance [of afflictions], (3) the path as realization.

One should understand that herein full comprehension is related to the

conceptualized; full comprehension and permanent severance are related to the other-dependent; and the perfectly accomplished is related to full comprehension and realization. Thus, the noble truth of the path is established based on these three. The realities of coarse and subtle refer to the conventional and ultimate truths.

How is this based on the fundamental reality? The verses read as follows:

One should understand conventional truth, which is differentiated into three types: (1) nominal, (2) transient, and (3) disclosed, relying on the three fundamental realities in order. Ultimate truth is also threefold: (1) object, (2) attainment, and (3) correct practice. The two aspects, unchanging based upon fundamental reality and being free from cognitive distortion, are the perfectly accomplished.

Commentary: Conventional truth includes three types: (1) nominal conventional truth, (2) transient conventional truth, (3) disclosed conventional truth. These three conventional truths are established according to their order based on the three fundamental realities.

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Ultimate truth is also of three types: (1) the ultimate truth of an object. The object of supreme wisdom of thusness is called ultimate truth; (2) the ultimate truth of attainment, which refers to nirvana. This supreme fruit is also a benefit; (3) the ultimate truth of correct practice, which refers to the noble path. Its purport is the supreme Dharma.

These three ultimate truths should be understood as solely established based on the perfectly accomplished nature (included as one of the three fundamental realities). This, the perfectly accomplished, generally encompasses two types: the unconditioned and the conditioned, since there are differences. The unconditioned generally encompasses thusness and nirvana. The perfectly accomplished is so called because it does not change. The conditioned generally subsumes all noble paths. The perfectly accomplished is also so called because of the absence of cognitive distortion with respect to its objects.

Accepted reality is briefly twofold: (1) conventionally accepted reality, (2) reality accepted according to reason. How are these two explained based on the fundamental realities? The verse reads as follows:

The conventionally accepted depends upon one. That which is accepted by reason depends upon three.

Commentary: Things that are commonly established according to convention are grasped by the intellect through habituation. The whole mundane world grasps these phenomena: “This is earth, and not fire. This is form, and not sound,” and so forth. This is called the conventionally accepted reality. This one is solely established based on the conceptualized (one of the three fundamental realities). One who is skillful and learned in logic establishes [proofs] via reasoned argumentation based on the three means of valid cognition. This is called [knowledge of] reality accepted by reason. This is established based on the three fundamental realities.

The reality of the purified sphere also briefly includes two types: (1) the reality of the sphere of cognition purified of afflictive obstacles, (2) the reality of the sphere of cognition purified of cognitive obstacles. How are these two established based on fundamental reality? The verse reads as follows:

The purified sphere includes two, dependent upon one; namely, the perfectly accomplished.

Commentary: The reality of the sphere of cognition purified of the two obstacles (afflictive and cognitive) is established solely on the perfectly accomplished (one of the three fundamental realities), since the other two are not objects of this pure cognition.

How should we know that characteristics, names, discrimination, thusness, and accurate cognition are included among the three fundamental realities? The verse reads as follows:

Names depend upon the conceptualized. Characteristics and discrimination are other-dependent. Thusness and accurate cognition are included in the perfectly accomplished.

470a Commentary: The five factors of characteristics and so forth, according to the situation, are included in the three types of fundamental reality: (1) names are included in the conceptualized, (2) characteristics and (3) discrimination are included in the other-dependent. The perfectly accomplished includes (4) thusness and (5) accurate cognition.

The reality of differentiation briefly includes seven types: (1) continuing reality, (2) accurately characterized reality, (3) the reality of consciousness

only, (4) posited reality, (5) the reality of wrong practices, (6) pure reality, (7) the reality of correct practices.

How should one understand that these seven realities are established based on the three fundamental realities? The verse reads as follows:

Continuity, positing, and wrong practices depend upon the first two. The accurately characterized, consciousness only, purity, and correct practices depend upon the latter one.

Commentary: The seven items of continuity and so forth, according to the situation, are included in the three types of fundamental reality: continuity, positing, and wrong practice depend on the conceptualized and other-dependent [fundamental realities]. The accurately characterized, consciousness only, purity, and correct practice depend upon the perfectly accomplished [fundamental reality].

The reality of skills serves as an antidote to the ten types of self-view, hence ten are explained. What are the ten types of self-view that arise in relation to the aggregates, etc.? The verse reads as follows:

Self-view in relation to the aggregates, etc.[refers to] grasping onto qualities of (1) oneness, (2) a cause, (3) an experiencer, (4) agency, (5) independence, (6) personal sovereignty, (7) permanence, (8) a basis of defilement and purity, (9) contemplation, and (10) bondage and release.

Commentary: Ten phenomena in relation to the aggregates, etc. give rise to the ten types of self-view: (1) grasping to oneness, (2) grasping to causality, (3) grasping to being an experiencer, (4) grasping to agency, (5) grasping to a sense of independence, (6) grasping to a sense of personal sovereignty, (7) grasping to a feeling of permanence, (8) grasping to the quality of the basis for defilement and purity, (9) grasping to being a practitioner of meditation (yogi), (10) grasping to the sense of bondage and release. The ten skills are cultivated in order to remove these views.

How is the reality of the ten types of skills established based on the three fundamental realities? The ten matters in relation to the aggregates, etc. are all included among the intrinsic natures of the three types of fundamental realities. How are they included among the three intrinsic natures? The verse reads as follows:

Here the grasped and discriminated; the object of dharma-nature resides there.

Commentary: These ten phenomena in relation to the aggregates, etc. each include three objects. Three objects are included in the aggregate of form: (1) form as the object of grasping, which refers to the conceptualized nature of form; (2) form as a discriminated object, which refers to the other-dependent nature of form, since form is here conceived by discrimination; (3) form as an object related to dharma-nature, which refers to the perfectly accomplished nature of form. The aggregates have these three objects in the same manner as form.

470b The four other aggregates of feeling, etc., and the nine phenomena of the spheres, etc. each have three objects, which should be understood accordingly. These aggregates, etc. are differentiated via the three stated objects, and all of them are encompassed within the three natures. For this reason, one should understand that the realities of the ten skills are all established based on the three fundamental realities. Although it is explained in this way that the skills with the aggregates, etc. are practiced in order to correct the ten types of self-view, we have yet to explain the specific meaning of these aggregates. First, what is the meaning of “aggregate”? The verse reads as follows:

The meanings of multiple, compounded, and separated are included in the term “aggregate.”

Commentary: One should understand that the meaning of the term aggregate generally includes three senses: (1) the meaning of being nonsingular (i.e., multiple). As the sutras state, “All forms, etc., whether they are past, future, present, inner, outer, coarse, subtle, inferior, superior, distant, or near”; (2) the meaning of being compounded. As the sutras state, “Like this they are all compounded into one cluster”; (3) the meaning of being separated. As a sutra states, “It is explained that form and the other aggregates are each defined based upon their characteristics.” The meaning of aggregate is obtained from this meaning of cluster. Furthermore, in conventional discourse, a “cluster” is called an “aggregate” (i.e., bundle or collection).

Having explained the meaning of aggregate, what is the meaning of “element”? The verse reads as follows:

Grasping, the grasped, and that grasped; the meaning of the seed is expressed as “element.”

Commentary: The meaning of grasping seeds refers to the six inner elements of the eye [and other faculties]. The meaning of the grasped seed refers to the six external elements of form, etc. The meaning of the “that grasped seed” refers to the six elements of consciousness related to the eye consciousness, etc.

Having explained the meaning of the elements, what is the meaning of sense bases? The verse reads as follows:

The capacity for experience and the cognized objects, “base” means entryway to experience.

Commentary: Herein “experience”: the entryway to experiencing, which refers to the six internal sense bases. Cognized objects as an entryway to experience refers to the six external sense bases.

Having explained the meaning of the sense bases, what is the meaning of dependent origination? The verse reads as follows:

The meaning of dependent origination is to neither reify nor negate cause, effect, and activity.

Commentary: The meaning of dependent origination is neither reification nor negation in regard to cause, effect, and activity. One should understand that here reification of cause refers to grasping to the idea that the formations, etc., have inconsistent causation (i.e., they are nothing but chance occurrences). Denial of cause means grasping to the idea that they are without causation.

Reification of effect refers to grasping to the idea that the conditions for formations, such as selfhood, etc., are produced from ignorance, etc. Denying effect would refer to grasping to the idea that ignorance, etc. do not produce effects such as the formations, etc.

Reification of activity is grasping to the idea that there exists a separate activity apart from ignorance, etc. that produces the formations, etc. Denial of activity is grasping to the idea that there is absolutely no efficacy of ignorance, etc. in the production of the formations, etc.

One should understand that those who are free from these three types of reification and negation are skilled with respect to dependent origination.

470c Having explained the meaning of dependent origination, what is the meaning of possible and impossible? The verse reads as follows:

The meaning of possible and impossible is applied to inevitabilities connected to (1) the undesired, (2) the desired, (3) purity, (4) concurrent births, (5) sovereignty, (6) attainment, and (7) conduct.

Commentary: The meaning of “possible and impossible” is generally derived from seven types of inevitabilities (i.e., dependent relationships). One should understand their characteristics.

1. Inevitability in relation to the undesired, which refers to falling into unfavorable rebirths as a result of wrong actions, despite having no desire toward this end.

2. Inevitability in relation to the desired, which refers to ascending into favorable rebirths as a result of excellent behavior, despite having no desire toward this end.

3. Inevitability in relation to purity, which refers to being definitely unable to bring about an end to suffering without having severed the five obstructions, nor cultivated the seven factors of awakening.

4. Inevitability in relation to the concurrent births, which means that in any given world there are no two tathāgatas nor two wheel-turning kings appearing in the world at the same time.

5. Inevitability in relation to sovereignty, which refers to females not becoming wheel-turning kings and so forth.

6. Inevitability in relation to realization, which refers to females not being able to realize the states of *pratyekabuddha* or the unexcelled awakening [of a buddha].

7. Inevitability in relation to present activities, meaning that one who has perceived the truths does not behave in such a way as to harm sentient beings and so forth, whereas regular beings readily behave like this. These matters are extensively explained in the *Bahudhātuka-sūtra*.

One should resolutely understand what is possible and impossible. The meaning of possible and impossible having been explained thus, what is the meaning of the faculties? The verse reads as follows:

The compelling faculties are those that are involved with cognition, persistence, continuity, experience, and the two types of purity.

Commentary: The compulsions of the twenty-two faculties are established on [the above-mentioned] six [functions]. This refers to the following: (1) compelling by the six faculties, such as the eye, etc., that cognize external objects; (2) the life faculty compels continuity to persist for a time; (3) the two sexual faculties of male and female compel the continuation of a family; (4) the five faculties of pleasure and so forth compel the capacity to experience the karmic results of positive and negative behavior; (5) the five faculties of faith and so forth compel mundane purity; (6) the [three] faculties of [coming to know] the unknown, [knowing, and of having known] compel transmundane purity.

Having explained the meaning of the faculties, what is the meaning of the times? The verse reads as follows:

The meaning of the times should be understood as cause and effect having been experienced or not yet experienced.

Commentary: One should understand that cause and effect, as they are already or not yet experienced, are divided accordingly by the three times. Thus, cause and effect having both been experienced means the past. If cause and effect are both yet to be experienced, this means the future. If the cause has already been experienced while the effect has yet to be experienced, this means the present.

Having explained the meaning of time, what is the meaning of the truths? The verse reads as follows:

One should know these meanings of the truths: feeling and the facilitators of feeling, the activities that cause these, the cessation of the two, and the antidote.

Commentary: One should understand that “truths” refers to the Four Noble Truths: 471a

1. The noble truth of suffering, which refers to all feeling and the facilitators of feeling, since the sutras state that all forms of feeling are of suffering. The facilitators of feeling refer to the mental functions that constitute feeling.

2. The noble truth of arising, which refers to activities that cause suffering.

3. The noble truth of cessation, which refers to the ultimate cessation of the former two.

4. The noble truth of the path, which refers to the path that is able to counteract suffering and its arising.

Having explained the meaning of the truths, what is the meaning of the vehicles? The verse reads as follows:

One should understand the meaning of “vehicle” through merit and faults, as well as nondiscriminating cognition and liberation dependent upon others or oneself.

Commentary: One should understand that “vehicles” refers to the three vehicles. Their meanings are accordingly elucidated here. If a person hears from others the merits of nirvana and the faults of samsara, and then, having given rise to this awareness, they attain liberation based on this awareness, this is called the “vehicle of the hearers” (*śrāvakayāna*).

If a person does not hear from another the merits of nirvana and the faults of samsara but comes to this awareness on their own, and attains liberation based on this awareness, this is called the “vehicle of the solitary realizers” (*pratyekabuddhayāna*).

If nondiscriminating cognition is naturally generated and liberation is attained as a result of this awareness, this is called the “unexcelled vehicle” (i.e., Mahayana).

The meaning of vehicles having been explained, what is the meaning of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena? The verse reads as follows:

The meanings of conditioned and unconditioned refer to the nominal, causes, characteristics, quiescence, and what is observed.

Commentary: One should understand that here “the nominal” refers to names and so forth. “Causes” refer the store consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) in which seeds are held. “Characteristics” refer to the container world [i.e., the natural environment of mountains and rivers, etc.], the body, and that which is experienced.

The forthcoming consciousnesses includes mentation, grasping (i.e., sensation), and conceptualization. Mentation refers to constant deliberative activity. Grasping refers to the five consciousnesses, since they grasp present objects. Conceptualization refers to the sixth discriminating consciousness, since it can discriminate all objects. Like this, whether they are designations,

cause, characteristic, or concomitant phenomena, they are collectively called “conditioned.”

“Quiescence” refers to the cessation that is realized and the path that leads to realization, since it is able to silence [afflictions]. That observed object is thusness, since it is the object of the path of quiescence. Thus, whether it is forms of quiescence or the object observed, they are collectively called “unconditioned.” One should understand the correct knowledge that has arisen concerning the ten meanings in relation to the aggregates, etc. is called skill with the aggregates, etc.

The general meaning of reality includes two types in brief: reality that reveals and the reality that is revealed. Revealing realities refer to the first three types of fundamental realities, since they reveal the others. Revealed realities refer to the latter nine types, since these are revealed by the prior fundamental realities. The nine that are revealed include the following:

1. The reality revealed that allows one to not be proud of one’s own spiritual superiority.

2. The reality revealed that corrects cognitive distortion.

3. The reality revealed that leads to the liberation of the *śrāvakayāna*.

4. The reality revealed that leads to liberation of the unexcelled vehicle, resulting from the coarse brought to maturity and the subtle enabling liberation.

5. The reality revealed that brings the ability to refute the arguments of others. One refutes others by utilizing analogies and being guided by reason.

6. The reality revealed that clarifies the Mahayana.

7. The reality revealed that enables entry into all knowable things.

8. The reality revealed illuminating nonfalse thusness.

9. The reality revealed related to understanding matters of self-grasping and all mysteries.

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Chapter Four

Discussion of the Cultivation of Antidotes

Having explained reality, I will now explain the cultivation of antidotes. This includes the cultivation of all factors of awakening. Here I will first explain cultivation of the bases of mindfulness. The verse reads as follows:

In order to understand the Four Noble Truths, one should understand cultivation of the bases of mindfulness through (1) debilitations, (2) the causes of craving, (3) the object of self, and (4) the absence of delusion.

Commentary: Debilitations are made manifest through the body, hence it is through the contemplation of this that one understands the noble truth of suffering, since the body is characterized by its possession of debilitations and formations. The debilitations are comprised of the qualities of suffering caused by the formations. As a result of this, noble beings view all contamination as suffering. Feelings that are contaminated are said to be the causes of craving, thus contemplating this leads to understanding the noble truth of arising.

The mind is the objective basis for grasping to a self. Thus, contemplating this leads to understanding the noble truth of cessation. One is freed from the fear of the extinction of the self through contemplation of this. Contemplating phenomena leads to understanding the noble truth of the path, in that one becomes far removed from delusion with respect to defiled and pure phenomena. Hence, cultivation of the four bases of mindfulness is first explained as a means of understanding the principles of the Four Noble Truths.

Having explained cultivation of the bases of mindfulness, I will now explain cultivation of the [four types of] correct elimination. The verse reads as follows:

Now able to fully comprehend the antidotes to obstacles in all their differing types, the four types of correct elimination are diligently cultivated in order to be far removed [from obstacles] and to produce [the antidotes].

Commentary: It is through the aforementioned cultivation of the bases of mindfulness that one is able to fully comprehend the differences and distinctions among all obstacles and antidotes. Now there is diligent cultivation of the four types of correct elimination in order to be far removed from the obstacles to be remedied, and in order to cultivate a way that corrects. As is explained in detail [elsewhere], this is done so as to eliminate unwholesome states that have already arisen. Having explained cultivation of the correct eliminations, I will explain the cultivation of supernormal powers. The verse reads as follows:

On the basis of abiding with adaptability, the eight formative forces of elimination are diligently cultivated to accomplish all things, and to remove the five errors.

471c Commentary: The mind abides in stability based upon the aforementioned effort in cultivating the removal [of obstacles] and cultivation [of antidotes]. It then possesses adaptability. The four supernormal powers are cultivated to attain excellent objectives, because these are the causes for the desired excellent objectives. Abiding refers to the mind abiding, since this is meditative concentration. The four supernormal powers are explained following the correct eliminations. “Adaptability” refers to the cultivation of the eight formative forces of elimination that can remove the five types of errors. What are the five types of errors? The verse reads as follows:

These five faults should be understood: (1) laziness, (2) forgetting noble words, (3) laxity and excitement, (4) nonapplication, and (5) application.

Commentary: It should be understood that herein laxity and excitement are combined as a single fault. Not applying oneself to remove laxity and excitement, or applying additional effort when laxity-excitement have been removed, constitute faults. Cultivating the eight formative forces of elimination remove these five.

How are the characteristics of those forces established? The verses read as follows:

In order to eliminate laziness, cultivate (1) the desire to do so, (2) effort, (3) faith, and (4) serenity. These constitute the support, that which is sup-

ported, cause, and effect. In order to remove the four faults, cultivate (1) mindfulness, (2) attentiveness, (3) volition, and (4) equanimity, which [respectively constitute] recollection, awareness of laxity-excitement, subjugating activity, and the flow of equanimity following cessation.

Commentary: The four activities of elimination are cultivated in order to eliminate laziness: (1) the desire to do so, (2) correct effort, (3) faith, (4) pliancy. They should be understood as follows. They constitute supports and so forth, since “support” refers to the desire, which is the support for effort. “That which is supported” refers to effort, because it arises based upon desire. “Cause” refers to faith, the support for this being desire, which gives rise to direct causes, since there will be hope if there is belief in that. “Result” refers to pliancy, this being a directly caused result of that which is supported (effort), since those who exert themselves attain superior meditative concentration.

The remaining four types of forces of elimination are cultivated with the aim of correcting the latter four faults in sequence: (1) mindfulness, (2) correct attentiveness, (3) volition, (4) equanimity. They should be understood in order. These constitute recollection and so forth.

“Recollection” refers to mindfulness, being the mind's ability to not forget objects, since the words of the sages (i.e., Buddhist teachings) are kept in mind.

“Awareness of laxity and excitement” refers to correct attentiveness, since it is through mindfulness that one is able to remain aware of the two faults of laxity and excitement.

“Subjugating activity” refers to volition, since applied action is brought about to remove the faults of laxity and excitement after having become aware of them.

“Flow of equanimity following cessation” refers to the mind flowing evenly in equanimity, having eliminated laxity and excitement.

Having explained the cultivation of the supernormal powers, I will explain cultivation of the five faculties. How is the cultivation of the five faculties established? The verse reads as follows:

Having planted the factors conducive to liberation, further cultivate five overwhelming powers: (1) the desire to act, (2) application, (3) retention, (4) being undisturbed, and (5) critical analysis.

472a Commentary: The mind comes to possess adaptability from the four super-normal powers. The virtuous roots having been brought to maturity in relation to the factors conducive to liberation, one should further cultivate five overwhelming powers: (1) the overwhelming power of the desire to act, (2) the overwhelming power of application, (3) the overwhelming power of not forgetting objects [in the mind], (4) the overwhelming power of being undisturbed, (5) the overwhelming power of critical analysis. These five follow in order after the five faculties of faith and [effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom].

Having explained the cultivation of the five faculties, I will explain the cultivation of the five powers. What are the five powers and what is their sequence? The verse reads as follows:

Eliminating obstacles is called power. Its order is established as cause and effect.

Commentary: The aforementioned five faculties of faith and so forth are powerful, and thus they are also called powers. This means that they are able to eliminate the obstacles of disbelief and so forth because they are not mixed up with them. The ordering of these five is established based on cause and effect, since it is based on the earlier cause that the latter effect is brought about.

If (1) firm faith has a cause and effect, then (2) zeal will be aroused to attain this effect. Once zeal is aroused, one will abide in (3) correct mindfulness. Abiding in correct mindfulness, the mind will attain (4) meditative concentration. The mind having attained meditative concentration, it will be possible to (5) know things as they really are (i.e., wisdom). Knowing things as they really are, there is nothing that one cannot handle. Hence, this order is established based upon cause and effect. As explained earlier, the factors conducive to liberation having been perfected, one further cultivates the five faculties.

At what stage does one cultivate the elements conducive to penetrating insight: is it at the stage of the five faculties or of the five powers? The verse reads as follows:

Elements conducive to penetrating insight are assigned in pairs to the five faculties and five powers.

Commentary: Among the elements conducive to penetrating insight,

warmth and the tipping point are assigned to the five faculties. Tolerance and the highest mundane state belong to the five powers.

Having explained cultivation of the five powers, I will explain cultivation of the limbs of awakening. How is cultivation of the limbs of awakening established? The verse reads as follows:

The limbs of awakening briefly comprise five: the limbs of (1) support, (2) intrinsic nature, (3) liberation, (4) benefit, and (5) the three states of freedom from defilement.

Commentary: These limbs support awakening, which is why they are called the limbs of awakening. Since these limbs of awakening are included in the path of seeing, there are broadly seven types, briefly constituting five limbs: (1) the limb that supports awakening refers to mindfulness, (2) the limb of intrinsic nature related to awakening refers to analysis of phenomena, (3) the limb of liberation related to awakening refers to effort, (4) the limb of benefit related to awakening refers to joy, (5) the limb of being freed from defilement is related to awakening—which here is of three additional types: pliancy, meditative concentration, and equanimity.

Why is it explained that being free from defilement constitutes three further types? The verse reads as follows:

From the specific meanings of (1) causal condition, (2) support, and (3) intrinsic nature, the limbs of freedom from defilement are explained as (1) pliancy, (2) meditative concentration, and (3) equanimity.

Commentary: Pliancy is the causal condition for freedom from defilement, since debilitations serve as causes to produce various defilements, while pliancy is a direct antidote for that. The support refers to meditative concentration. The intrinsic nature is equanimity. Hence, this freedom from defilement includes three separate meanings.

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Having explained the cultivation of the limbs of awakening, I will explain the cultivation of limbs of the path. How are the cultivated limbs of the path established? The verse reads as follows:

The limbs of the path constitute eight, namely, (1) ascertaining and (2) instruction; (3–5) leading others to [have] faith includes three; and (6–8) the counteracting of obstacles also includes three.

Commentary: The limbs of the path are established at the stage of the path of cultivation, hence these limbs of the path are counted in detail as eight or briefly as four.

1. The limb of ascertainment refers to correct view. Even though [this ascertainment] is used in mundane [cognition], it is also used in the transmundane, subsequently attained [cognition]. This is because it is able to discriminate that which is witnessed in the stage of the path of seeing.¹⁶

2. The limb of instructing others refers to the partial arising of correct thought and correct speech. Others are instructed through utterances.

3. The limb of leading others to have faith. Here there are three types: correct speech, correct action, and correct livelihood.

4. The limb of counteracting obstacles also includes three types: correct effort, correct mindfulness, and correct meditative concentration.

In this way, the limbs of the path are elaborated in brief as four and in detail as eight. Why are the latter two each divided into three? The verse reads as follows:

Expression, morality, and detachment compel others to deeply believe, since they correct primary and secondary afflictions and the obstacles to mastery.

Commentary: The group of three, including correct speech and so forth, have already been presented respectively.

Expression, morality, and detachment cause others to have faith. This means that one causes others to have faith and understanding through debate and resolution carried out with correct speech; hence, one comes to possess superior wisdom. One leads others to faith and understanding by not carrying out mistaken activity, which results from correct action; and so one possesses pure morality. Leading others to faith through almsbegging in the prescribed manner in the proper proportions at the proper time with items such as robes and a bowl results from correct livelihood; hence one comes to possess superior detachment. The group of three, including correct effort and so forth, in said order correct the two types of afflictions (primary and secondary) as well as obstacles to mastery.

What is corrected here is generally of three types: (1) root afflictions, that is, afflictions eliminated on [the path of] cultivation; (2) secondary afflictions, which refer to laxity and excitement; (3) Obstacles to freedom (mastery),

which refer to obstructions to excellent qualities and superior merit that are to be brought about.

Herein correct effort specifically corrects the first, since that is corrected as a result of diligent cultivation of the path. Correct mindfulness specifically corrects the second, since fixed mindfulness and calm abiding, and being immersed in the signs of meditative absorption, etc., leads one far away from laxity and excitement. Correct meditative concentration corrects the third, since one quickly brings about the supernormal knowledges and superior merits based on superior meditation.

How should the differences in the cultivation of antidotes be understood? The verse reads as follows:

These are the differences in the cultivation of antidotes: having cognitive distortion but conducive to not having cognitive distortion; not [directly] having cognitive distortions but having ancillary cognitive distortions; and having neither cognitive distortions nor ancillary cognitive distortions. 472c

Commentary: Here the antidotes to be cultivated are of three general types: (1) possessing cognitive distortion but conducive to the absence of cognitive distortion; (2) free from cognitive distortion but possessing cognitive distortion in accompaniment; (3) the absence of cognitive distortion as well as the absence of cognitive distortion in accompaniment.

The differences in the three types of cultivated antidotes are as follows: ordinary beings, and the states of being engaged in or not being engaged in training. The antidotes cultivated by bodhisattvas and the two vehicles have their distinctive characteristics. How are they to be understood? The verse reads as follows:

That which the bodhisattva cultivates differs from the two vehicles on account of (1) objective supports, (2) mental orientation, and (3) realization of excellence.

Commentary: (1) *Śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* cultivate antidotes with their own bodily continuums as objects. Bodhisattvas cultivate antidotes taking bodily continuums belonging to themselves and others as objects. (2) *Śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* cultivate antidotes with attention to the aspects of impermanence and so forth, the objects being their bodies, etc. Bodhisattvas

cultivate antidotes with attention to aspects such as noncognition, the object being their bodies, etc. (3) *Śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* cultivate the bases of mindfulness, etc. but just to quickly achieve release from bondage to the body etc. Bodhisattvas cultivate the bases of mindfulness, etc. not to quickly achieve release from bondage to the body, etc. but only to realize nonabiding nirvana. The antidotes cultivated by bodhisattvas and [those of] the two vehicles include these differences stemming from these three conditions.

The general meaning of cultivating antidotes refers to the cultivation of awakening, the cultivation of elimination, the cultivation of adornment, the cultivation of elevation, the cultivation of approaching (referring to approaching the path of seeing), the cultivation of realization, the cultivation of excellence, cultivation in the beginning stages, cultivation in the middle stages, cultivation in the later stages, excellent cultivation, and unexcelled cultivation. These refer to the objects and mental orientation up to the attainment of the most excellent state.¹⁷

Chapter Five

Discussion of the Stages of Practice

Having explained the cultivation of antidotes, what of the stages of practice? The verses read as follows:

The cultivated antidotes having been explained, the stages comprise eighteen: (1) the causal, (2) entry, (3) application, (4) fruition, (5) activity, (6) no activity, (7) excellence, (8) superior, (9) unexcelled, (10) resolute practice, (11) realization, (12) liberation, (13) assurance, (14) eloquence, (15) consecration, (16) consummation, (17) superior benefit, and (18) completion of activity.

Commentary: As explained earlier, the antidotes to be cultivated are differentiated into eighteen types of stages:

1. The causal stage, which refers to a person abiding in a spiritual lineage.
2. The stage of entry, which refers to when the mind [of awakening] has already been generated.
3. The stage of application, which is when the mind [of awakening] has already been generated but the fruition of realization has yet to be attained. 473a
4. The fruition stage, which is when the result has been attained.
5. The stage of activity, which refers to residing in the stage in which there is still training.
6. The stage of no activity, which refers to residing in the stage in which there is no more training.
7. The stage of excellence, which refers to perfection of excellent merits, such as supernormal knowledges, etc.
8. The superior stage, which refers having entered onto the bodhisattva grounds beyond the *śrāvakas*, etc.
9. The unexcelled stage refers to having attained buddhahood, since above this there is no superior stage.
10. The stage of resolute practice, which refers to all bodhisattvas at the ground (*bhūmi*) of resolute practice.

11. The stage of realization, which refers to the ground of extreme joy.
12. The stage of liberation, which refers to the next six grounds.
13. The stage of receiving the assurance of future attainment of buddhahood, which refers to the eighth ground.
14. The stage of eloquence, which refers to the ninth ground.
15. The stage of consecration, which refers to the tenth ground.
16. The stage of consummation, which refers to a buddha's *dharmakāya* ("dharma body").
17. The stage of superior benefit, which refers to the *saṃbhogakāya* ("enjoyment body").
18. The stage of completion of activity, which refers to the *nirmāṇakāya* ("emanation body").

Although the differences between these stages are many, it should be understood that in the general explanation there are only three types. What are those three? The verse reads as follows:

One should understand that within experiential reality (*dharmadhātu*) there are in general three stages, namely, (1) impure, (2) pure and impure, and (3) pure, which correspond accordingly.

Commentary: There are, in brief, three stages of experiential reality, which according to circumstances encompass the aforementioned stages: (1) the stage of impurity, which refers to the causal stage up to that of application; (2) purity and impurity, which refers to the stage in which there is still training; (3) the stage of purity, which refers to the stage in which there is no more training.

How should one understand the positing of the *pudgala* (i.e., person) based on the differences between the aforementioned stages? The verse reads as follows:

On the basis of the aforementioned stages exist all the differing characteristics. The *pudgalas* are posited accordingly.

Commentary: One should understand, based on the aforementioned differing characteristics of the stages, that the *pudgala* is posited as appropriate: meaning that this one abides in a spiritual lineage, this one has generated the mind [of awakening], and so on.

The general meaning of the stages of cultivation is that the stage of one's spiritual lineage is equivalent to the stage of one's capacities. The stage of undertaking (i.e., undertaking the path to awakening) is entry into the stage of application, the stage of impurity, the stage of purity and impurity, the stage of purity, the stage of possessing ornaments, and the stage of encompassing, which refers to encompassing the ten grounds; hence it is the unexcelled stage.

End of Part II of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*

Chapter Six Discussion of the Attainments

Having discussed the stages of practice, what are the attained results? The verse reads as follows:

“Vessel” is explained as five results in this order: (1) maturation, (2) the power of which is compelling; (3) delighting, (4) increasing, and (5) purity.

Commentary: “Vessel” means maturation in accordance with wholesome phenomena. “Power” means the compelling power of that vessel, causing wholesome phenomena to become superior in quality. “Delight” means the wholesome power cultivated repeatedly in past lives. In the present life one deeply produces delight in wholesome phenomena. “Increasing” means repeatedly cultivating the power of wholesomeness in the present, making those wholesome roots that have been cultivated quickly attain perfection. “Purity” means the elimination of obstacles and the attainment of permanent separation from them.

The five results appear in the following order: (1) ripened result, (2) compelling result, (3) natural result, (4) cooperative result, (5) liberative result.

The verse reads as follows:

Furthermore, we briefly explain the remaining results: (1) the successive, (2) the initial, (3) the habituated, (4) the ultimate, (5) the conforming, (6) cessation of obstacles, (7) liberation, (8) the excellent result, (9) the superior, and (10) the unexcelled.

Commentary: There are in general ten distinctions with respect to the other results:

1. The successive result should be understood as a development, constituting results such as the result of generating the mind [of awakening] due to one’s spiritual lineage.

2. The initial result, which refers to the initial realization of transmudane dharmas.

3. The result of habituation, which refers to the various subsequent stages of applied training.

4. The ultimate result, which refers to level where applied training is no longer necessary.

5. The conforming result, which refers to the causal advancement. It should be understood that this is included in the successive result.

6. The result of the extinguishment of obstacles, which refers to the path of severing, being the first result in which obstacles are extinguished; hence, it is called the extinguishment of obstacles.

7. The result of liberation from bondage, which refers to familiarity and the final result, since the stages of training and nontraining in this sequence removes one distantly from the bondage of afflictions.

8. The excellent result, which refers to [the attainment of] excellent qualities such as supernormal knowledges, etc.

9. The superior result, which refers to the bodhisattva grounds, since they transcend the other vehicles [but where one has still] not attained buddhahood.

10. The unsurpassed result, which refers to the ground of the Tathāgata, since above this there is no other superior Dharma.

Herein the stated latter six results belong to the former four distinctions (the ultimate, etc.). Such results are only explained in brief. If explained in detail there would be countless [results].

473c The general meaning of “result” refers to that stemming from the collected, differentiation, past habituation, successively impelling, prescriptive, and ascertained.

Herein “collected” refers to the five results. “Differentiation” refers to the other results. “Past habituation” refers to matured results. “Successive impelling” refers to the other four results. “Prescriptive” refers to the four results (the successive, etc.). “Ascertained” refers to the six results (the conforming, etc.), since they differ from the earlier four results.

Chapter Seven

Discussion of the Unexcelled Vehicle

Having discussed the attained results, I will now explain the unexcelled vehicle. The verse reads as follows:

From the three types of unexcelled, the unexcelled vehicle is explained: being unexcelled in (1) correct practice, (2) its objective supports, and (3) cultivation of realization.

Commentary: Here the Mahayana is called the unexcelled vehicle because of three meanings related to “unexcelled.” The three ways in which it is unexcelled are (1) unexcelled with respect to correct practice, (2) unexcelled with respect to its objective support (basis), (3) unexcelled with respect to the cultivation of realization. Herein “unexcelled in correct practice” refers to practice of the ten perfections.

How should the characteristics of correct practice be understood? The verse reads as follows:

There are six kinds of correct practice: (1) the supreme, (2) through mental orientation, (3) in accord with Dharma, (4) free of the two extremes, (5) with differences, and (6) without differences.

Commentary: With respect to the differences in performing the ten perfections, there are six types of correct practice: (1) excellent practice, (2) the correct practice of mental orientation, (3) the correct practice according with the Dharma, (4) the correct practice free from the two extremes, (5) the correct practice with differences, (6) the correct practice without differences. What are the characteristics of supreme correct practice? The verses read as follows:

Supremacy includes twelve types: (1) that which is vast, (2) long-term, (3) the basis, (4) inexhaustible, (5) without gap (6) without difficulty, (7) mastery [over wealth], (8) reception, (9) initiative, (10) attainment, (11)

natural results, and (12) final outcome. From these are explained the ten perfections, called the *pāramitās*.

Commentary: Supreme correct action includes twelve types: (1) vast supremacy, (2) long-term supremacy, (3) the supremacy of the basis, (4) inexhaustible supremacy, (5) the supremacy without gap, (6) the supremacy of being free from difficulties, (7) the supremacy of mastery [over wealth], (8) the supremacy of reception, (9) the supremacy of initiative, (10) the supremacy of attainment, (11) the supremacy of natural results, (12) the supremacy of the final outcome.

Herein “vast supremacy” results from ultimately not delighting in any unfettered worldly fortune, enjoyment, or eminence.

“Long-term supremacy” results from the maturation of perfuming (i.e., karmic impressions) over three incalculable *kalpas*.

474a “Supremacy of the basis” results from the basis from which one extensively benefits all sentient beings.

“Inexhaustible supremacy” results from the inexhaustibility of dedication toward unexcelled perfect awakening.

“Supremacy without gap” results from conviction in the equality of self and other, stemming from the swift consummation of perfections, such as initiating generosity and so forth in relation to sentient beings.

“Supremacy of being free from difficulties” results from the swift consummation of perfections, such as generosity and so forth, in which there is deep corresponding delight at wholesome dharmas cultivated by other beings.

“Supremacy of mastery [over wealth]” results from the swift consummation of cultivated generosity and so forth stemming from the power of the *ākāśa-garbha samādhi*, etc.¹⁸

“Supremacy of reception” results from having gained nondiscriminating cognition that can foster extreme purity in relation to generosity and so forth.

“Supremacy of initiative” is at the highest level of tolerance on the ground of resolute practice.

“Supremacy of attainment” is on the ground of extreme joy.

“Supremacy of natural results” means that results occur naturally on the following eight grounds.

“Supremacy of the ultimate outcome” occurs at the tenth ground and the ground of buddhahood, since the causes and effects related to bodhisattvas

and tathāgatas are perfected. As a result of the ten perfections (generosity, etc.), all [buddhas] possess these twelve types of supremacy. This is why all are said to have reached the other shore.

What are the ten perfections (“ten kinds of reaching to the other shore”)? The verse reads as follows:

The ten perfections are: (1) generosity, (2) morality, (3) tolerance, (4) effort, (5) meditative concentration, (6) *prajñā*, (7) skillful means, (8) vows, (9) powers, and (10) awareness.

Commentary: Here are explained the specific names of the ten perfections (generosity, etc.). What are the specific activities of each of these (generosity, etc.)? The verse reads as follows:

(1) Benefiting beings, (2) not harming, (3) tolerance, (4) increasing merit, (5) converting beings, (6) teaching liberation, (7) inexhaustible merit, (8) constant engagement, (9) making definite, and (10) maturation of enjoyment for others.

Commentary: Here are explained the specific activities associated with the ten perfections (generosity, etc.), which should be understood in sequence.

Bodhisattvas extensively benefit beings as a result of the perfection of generosity. They bring no harm toward beings as a result of the perfection of pure morality. They remain deeply patient when others harm them as a result of the perfection of tolerance. They increase merit as a result of the perfection of effort. They are able to bring sentient beings into the true Dharma by generating supernormal knowledges and so forth as a result of the perfection of meditative concentration. They are able to teach beings to attain liberation through correctly explicating the doctrine and the precepts as a result of the perfection of *prajñā*. They are able to make inexhaustible the merits of generosity, etc. dedicated to unexcelled perfect awakening, as a result of the perfection of skillful means. They receive a superior birth, accordant with generosity, etc. as a result of the perfection of vows; in all lifetimes they always meet with a buddha, venerating them and making offerings, and constantly giving rise to generosity, etc. They possess the two powers of critical analysis and spiritual cultivation to eliminate various obstacles as a result of the perfection of powers, ensuring constant and definite engagement

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of generosity, etc. They are freed from misunderstandings about the literal meanings of Dharma (various teachings) as a result of the perfection of awareness, enjoying the Dharma in which generosity and so forth are predominant influences, and bringing beings to maturity without error.

Supreme correct practice having been explained like this, what are the characteristics of correct practice via mental orientation? The verse reads as follows:

The bodhisattva constantly contemplates the Mahayana with the three modes of wisdom according to prescribed Dharma. This is called correct practice via mental orientation.

Commentary: Correct practice through mental orientation is so called when bodhisattvas continually contemplate the Mahayana through excellent wisdom attained through hearing, thought, and cultivation, on the basis of generosity and so forth, as prescribed by the Dharma (teachings) of the sutras, etc. What is the merit of these bodhisattvas contemplating the Mahayana via the three kinds of excellent wisdom? The verse reads as follows:

This increases the elements of wholesomeness, understanding of meaning, and achieving things.

Commentary: Contemplating the Mahayana through wisdom gained through hearing can facilitate the growth of the elements of wholesome roots. Contemplating the Mahayana through wisdom attained through thought can allow true understanding of the real meaning of what is heard. Contemplating the Mahayana through wisdom attained through cultivation can enable the achievement of one's aims, since one can enter onto the [bodhisattva grounds] of spiritual purification.

What is associated with correct practice via mental orientation? The verse reads as follows:

The associations with this should be understood; namely, the ten acts of Dharma.

Commentary: It should be understood that correct practice via mental orientation like this is comprised of ten acts of Dharma. What are those ten acts of Dharma? The verse reads as follows:

(1) Copying scriptures, (2) making offerings, (3) generosity to others, (4) listening, (5) reading, (6) care [of texts], (7) proper explanation, (8) recitation, (9) contemplation, and (10) cultivation.

Commentary: Here the Mahayana includes ten acts of Dharma: (1) copying scriptures, (2) making offerings, (3) extending generosity toward others, (4) intently listening when others recite, (5) reading [scriptures] by oneself, (6) receiving [and taking care of scriptures], (7) accurately explaining the meaning of passages to others, (8) recitation, (9) contemplation, (10) cultivating practices.

How much merit is gained from these ten acts of Dharma? The verse reads as follows:

For one who practices the ten acts of Dharma, the accumulation of merit they gain is immeasurable.

Commentary: The accumulation of merit gained from practicing these ten acts of Dharma is limitless. Why is it only in the Mahayana sutras that the cultivation of practices that gain the greatest results are taught, whereas the *śrāvakayāna* does not provide such teachings? The verse reads as follows:

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For it is supreme and inexhaustible, due to it ceaselessly benefiting others.

Commentary: Cultivation of these acts of Dharma in the Mahayana gains the greatest results for two reasons: (1) because it is supreme and (2) because it is inexhaustible. The Mahayana is said to be supreme because it can confer benefits to other sentient beings. The Mahayana is said to be inexhaustible because although through it one realizes nirvana without remainder, one still ceaselessly benefits others.

Having explained correct practice via mental orientation in this manner, what are the characteristics of correct practice in conformity with the Dharma? The verse reads as follows:

Practice in conformity with Dharma comprises two types: (1) freedom from distractions, and (2) freedom from cognitive distortion, in which development occurs. Bodhisattvas should understand these.

Commentary: Correct practice in conformity with the Dharma includes

two types in brief: (1) development free from distraction, (2) development free from cognitive distortion.

The bodhisattva here should correctly comprehend that herein “free from distraction” refers to six types of freedom from distraction. The six distractions are: (1) inherent distraction, (2) external distraction, (3) inner distraction, (4) distraction by signs, (5) distraction by debilitations, (6) distraction in relation to mental orientation.

How should the characteristics of these six types be understood? The verse reads as follows:

The wise should understand these: (1) emergence from meditation, (2) flowing out to objects, (3) indulgence in sinking and excitement, (4) dissimulation, (5) self-attachment, and (6) inferior mental [orientation].

Commentary: Herein one should understand that emergence from meditation through the five bodily consciousnesses is “inherent distraction.” “Flowing [out] to an object” means wandering out to an external object, which is external distraction. “Indulgence [during] sinking and excitement” refers to indulging in the dullness and agitation of meditative concentration, which is inner distraction. “Dissimulation” is distraction in relation to signs (*nimitta*), in which one feigns the appearances (“pretends to do”) of applying oneself to meditative cultivation.¹⁹ “Self-grasping” refers to the distraction due to debilitation, since it is through the power of debilitation that conceit manifests. “Inferior mentality” is distraction in relation to mental orientation, since one orients oneself toward [the aims of] the inferior vehicles (i.e., the practitioner is satisfied with the nirvana of the two Hinayana vehicles). The bodhisattva should fully comprehend and quickly eliminate these six characteristics of distractions.

Having explained development free from distraction in this manner, how should development free from cognitive distortion be understood? The verse reads as follows:

The absence of cognitive distortion is to be cognized in relation to (1) syllables, (2) objects, (3) mental orientation, (4) immovability, (5) twofold characteristics, (6) defilement, (7) purity, (8) the adventitious, (9) absence of fear, and (10) absence of arrogance.

Commentary: One should understand that the ten names of freedom from cognitive distortion are established on the basis of the accurate cognition of ten items. What is freedom from cognitive distortion in regard to syllables? The verse reads as follows:

Know that it is from correspondence, consensus, or the reverse of this that meaning exists or not. This is freedom from cognitive distortion with regard to syllables. 475a

When syllables are pronounced in sequence in an uninterrupted manner, this is called correspondence. This name is commonly accepted, as in the case of “this thing only refers to an eye,” in which there is successive recollection [of the object]. This is called consensus. It is only from these two that syllable(s) possessing meaning are constituted. If this were not the case, syllables would not constitute any meaning. One who accurately knows these two types of syllables should understand these names in relation to freedom from cognitive distortion with respect to syllables.

What are the characteristics of freedom from cognitive distortion with respect to objects? The verse reads as follows:

The manifestation of the appearance of dual nature is in reality nonexistent. Knowing the separation from existence and nonexistence is freedom from cognitive distortion with respect to objects.

Commentary: The “manifestation of the appearance of dual nature” refers to the appearance of the manifestation of the qualities of grasped and grasper, since the disturbed consciousness seems to produce those modes of appearance. “Nonexistent in reality” means that what is manifest is not existent in such a manner in reality. “Separation from existence” is because the quality of this object as grasped or grasper is nonexistent. “Separation from nonexistence” is because that disturbed consciousness manifests the appearance of existence. One who accurately knows the meaning herein should understand that this is called freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to objects.

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in regard to mental orientation, the verse reads as follows:

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to mental

orientation, know that that is perfumed by speech. Mental orientation related to speech is a basis, since it is the cause for the appearance of duality.

Commentary: Grasped and grasper are perfumed by speech, and this is called mental orientation related to speech. This mental orientation is the basis for discrimination between grasped and grasper, since this is the cause underlying the appearance of the two forms of grasping. It is because this mental orientation is perfumed by discursive thinking that it is called mental orientation related to speech. One who accurately knows this mental orientation should understand this freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to mental orientation.

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion based on immovability, the verse reads as follows:

Freedom from cognitive distortion based upon immovability means knowing an object is neither existent nor nonexistent, like illusions, etc.; hence, one remains unmoved by existence and nonexistence.

Commentary: Earlier it was explained that objects are free from notions of existence and nonexistence, since these are like illusions and so forth, being neither existent nor nonexistent, meaning that they are not really existent, like elephants and horses and so forth created by illusion. The elephants and horses and so forth in nature are also not entirely nonexistent, since the disturbed consciousness creates the appearances of those elephants and horses.

These objects do not exist in the manner in which they appear, as in the case of an [apparently] definitely real existence of grasped and grasper. They are also not entirely nonexistent, since the disturbed consciousness creates the appearances of the grasped and the grasper.

475b “And so forth” refers to things such as mirages, dreams, and the [reflection of the] moon in water, which should be understood accordingly. The mind will remain undistracted with respect to categories of existence and nonexistence when clearly observing objects such as illusions, etc. One who accurately knows this immovability should understand that this is freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to immovability.

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to twofold characteristics, it refers to being free from cognitive distortion in relation to

both the characteristic of being defined and the shared characteristic. With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to defining characteristic, the verse reads as follows:

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to defining characteristics, knowing that all things exist only by their being named, one is freed from all discrimination. This is based on the defining characteristics from the perspective of the supreme meaning.

Commentary: Accurately cognizing that everything—from the eye to perceived forms, and consciousness to conceptualized phenomena—merely exist based on their being named corrects all discrimination; one should know this as freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the defining characteristic. This is explained as the defining characteristic on the basis of supreme meaning. In the case of being based on worldly conception, it is not only because things have names that one can grasp onto various distinct characteristics.

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to characteristic of being shared, the verse reads as follows:

There is no separate single phenomenon existing apart from real experiential reality, hence one who has realized this is free from cognitive distortions with respect to common characteristics.

Commentary: Phenomena (dharmas) of the real experiential reality (*dharmadhātu*) possess a common characteristic, since not a single phenomenon exists apart from the absence of self in phenomena. One who accurately knows this characteristic of commonality should know that this is freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the common characteristic.

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to defilement and purity. The verse reads as follows:

Know erroneous intentions in relation to whether or not they have been eliminated. The absence of cognitive distortions [determines] defilement and purity in experiential reality.

Commentary: When one has not yet eliminated erroneous intentions experiential reality is said to be defiled, whereas when they have been eliminated it is said to be pure. One who accurately knows this defilement and purity

subsequently becomes free of cognitive distortion in relation to defilement and purity.

What are the characteristics of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the adventitious? The verse reads as follows:

Know that the original nature of experiential reality is pure like empty space. Hence, defilement and purity are not fundamental. This is freedom from cognitive distortion with respect to the adventitious.

Commentary: The original nature of experiential reality is pure like empty space. Hence one should understand that the two differing characteristics of being previously defiled and later pure is adventitious and not fundamental. One who accurately knows this adventitious characteristic should understand that this is freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the adventitious.

With respect to freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the absence of both fear and arrogance, the verse reads as follows:

475c Since beings and phenomena (dharmas) do not exist, the natures of defilement and purity are both nonexistent. Knowing this, one is free from fear and arrogance. This is freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to these two.

Commentary: Since beings and phenomena are both nonexistent, their natures as either defiled or pure are also both nonexistent. Since the meanings of both defilement and purity are untenable, their grades of defilement and purity are without inferiority and superiority. As a result of this there is neither fear nor arrogance. One who accurately knows this absence of fear and arrogance should understand that this is called freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to these two.

Regarding the general meaning of activity free from cognitive distortion, one is able to correctly understand the two characteristics of meditative cessation and observation as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to syllables. One is able to correctly understand the characteristics of cognitive distortion as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to objects. One is able to properly become freed from the causes and conditions relevant to cognitive distortion as a result of freedom from erroneous orientation [toward the lesser vehicles]. One skillfully grasps those

characteristics as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to being immovable. One cultivates its antidote, the path of nondiscrimination, as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the defining characteristic. One correctly understands the purity of original nature as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the common characteristic. One knows which obstacles have yet to be or have already been eliminated as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to defilement and purity. One accurately knows the two characteristics of defilement and purity as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the adventitious. Obstacles are eliminated and one attains permanent liberation as a result of freedom from cognitive distortion in relation to the absence of both fear and arrogance.

These ten freedoms from cognitive distortion are respectively established in relation to the ten adamantine (*vajra*) phrases. What are the ten adamantine phrases? They are (1) existence and nonexistence, (2) freedom from cognitive distortion, (3) the basis, (4) the simile of the illusion, etc., (5) nondiscrimination, (6) the purity of original nature, (7) defilement and purity, (8) the simile of space, (9) the absence of decrease, and (10) the absence of increase. There are two parts that encompass these ten adamantine phrases in this manner. The verses read as follows:

One should understand (1) existence and nonexistence, (2) freedom from cognitive distortion, (3) the basis, (4) the similes of the illusion, etc., (5) nondiscrimination, and (6) the constant purity of original nature; as well as (7) defilement and purity, (8) space as a metaphor for purity, (9) the absence of decrease, and (10) the absence of increase. These are the ten adamantine phrases.

First, when establishing the ten adamantine phrases, reference is made to intrinsic nature, i.e., in terms of intrinsic nature, objective support, nondiscrimination, and refutation of objections.

“Intrinsic nature” refers to the three intrinsic natures, i.e., the perfectly accomplished, the conceptualized, and the other-dependent. The first three words should be understood respectively. “Objective support” refers to the three intrinsic natures. “Nondiscrimination” refers to nondiscrimination due to this, i.e., nondiscriminating wisdom, as well as nondiscrimination here,

i.e., the purity of original nature. The establishment of objects and cognition should be understood respectively, which refers to the three intrinsic natures and nondiscrimination. “Refutation of objections” refers to the remaining phrases.

There is a critique that if the characteristics of the conceptualized and the other-dependent are nonexistent in reality, how would they be apprehendable? If they are existent in reality then phenomena should not be pure in their original nature.

476a In order to refute this criticism, the simile of an illusion and so forth are taught. For instance, although illusory things are nonexistent in reality, they can be seen.

There is a further critique that if all phenomena are pure in their original nature, how is it possible to have it that they are first defiled and subsequently purified? In order to refute this criticism defilement and purity are explained with reference to the simile of space, e.g., in the way that although space is originally pure there are times when it is defiled or pure.

There is a further critique that states that innumerable buddhas appear in the world, each being capable of liberating innumerable sentient beings, causing them to leave samsara and enter nirvana. What of the error [that suggests] no cessation of samsara and the fault [presuming that] within the state of nirvana there is no increase? In order to refute this criticism defilement and purity are explained with reference to the absence of decrease and increase. It is also because the realms of beings and their grades of purity are both innumerable.

Second, with respect to establishing their intrinsic natures. The verse reads as follows:

The object, intrinsic nature and cause of confusion; the intrinsic nature and object of non-error; the two results of error and non-error; and their two extremes.

Having already explained correct practice in conformity with the true Dharma in this manner, how is correct practice free from the two extremes to be understood? It is like the practice of the Middle Way as taught in the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*. What are the two extremes that this practice distantly avoids? The verses read as follows:

Variant nature and same nature; the heterodox (non-Buddhists) and *śrāvakas*; the extreme views of reification and negation are each twofold with respect to sentient beings and phenomena; that which is corrected and the antidote; permanence and annihilationism; the extreme views of grasped and grasper and defilement and purity, [these] two being of three types; one should understand the additional seven types of discrimination with respect to the natures of dual extremes: (1) the extremes of existence and nonexistence, (2) the calmed and the act of calming, (3) the feared and the fear produced from it, (4) grasped and grasper, (5) correctness and error, (6) activity and nonactivity, (7) nonarising and simultaneity. These are the two extremes of discrimination.

Commentary: If self is grasped as different from form, etc., or it is grasped as identical [to form, etc.], these are respectively called individual extreme views. The practice of the Middle Way is taught in order to free one from this grasping, meaning that when contemplating not-self up to and including the youth, one who perceives a self will definitely give rise to this grasping, since the self is either different from the body or is the body.²⁰

The heterodox extreme view is grasping to form, etc., as permanently abiding. Grasping to impermanence is an extreme view of the *śrāvakas*. The practice of the Middle Way is taught to [allow the practitioner to] be freed from these kinds of grasping, meaning that when contemplating form, etc. there is neither permanence nor impermanence.

Firmly grasping to the existence of self is the extreme view in which sentient beings are reified. Firmly grasping to the nonexistence of self is the extreme view in which beings are denied, even their nominal existence. The practice of the Middle Way is taught in order to free one from this grasping, which is awareness of the middle between the two extreme views of self and not-self.

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Firmly grasping to the mind as being real is the extreme view in which phenomena are reified. Firmly grasping to the mind as being unreal is the extreme view in which phenomena are denied. The practice of the Middle Way is taught to free the practitioner from this grasping, which means that there is no mind, volition, thought, or consciousness.

Grasping to the existence of defiled phenomena such as unwholesomeness and so forth is the extreme view regarding that which is corrected. Grasping to the existence of wholesome and other pure phenomena is the extreme view

regarding antidotes. The practice of the Middle Way is taught in order to free one from this grasping, meaning there is no following, contemplation, or discussion of the two extremes.

Firmly grasping to the phenomena of sentient beings as existent is the extreme view of permanence. Firmly grasping them as nonexistent is the extreme view of annihilationism. The practice of the Middle Way is taught to be freed from this grasping, meaning that this is the awareness between the two extreme views.

With respect to grasping to the existence of ignorance, the grasped and the grasper each constitute one extreme view. With respect to grasping to the existence of knowledge, the grasped and the grasper each constitute one extreme view.

In this manner, grasping to the existence of the mental formations to be corrected and the unconditioned that corrects—up to old age and death—as well as the corrective paths that can eliminate those as consisting of something grasped and a grasper, each respectively constitutes an extreme view.

Here that which is corrected and the antidote, and grasped and grasper, are differentiated into black and white parts. The practice of the Middle Way is taught in order to free one from this grasping, meaning that knowledge and ignorance are explained to be nondual, undivided, and so forth, since knowledge and ignorance, etc. with respect to the grasped and the grasper, are all nonexistent.

Defilement comprises three types: the defilements of afflictions, the defilements of karma, and the defilements of birth.

The defilements of afflictions further comprise three types: (1) views; (2) the characteristics of craving, anger, and ignorance; (3) the wish for rebirth. The antidotes for these are knowledge of emptiness, knowledge of signlessness, and knowledge of wishlessness.

Defilements of karma refer to wholesome and unwholesome actions that are carried out. The antidote for these is knowledge of nonaction (i.e., not forming new karma).

Defilements of birth comprise three types: (1) rebirth, (2) successive arising of the mind and mental factors once reborn, (3) the continuity of rebirth. The antidotes for these are knowledge of the birthless, knowledge of nonarising, and knowledge of the absence of intrinsic nature [across lifetimes].

In this manner, the elimination of the three types of defilements is called purity. The sphere of cognition as it relates to emptiness and so forth refers to dharmas such as emptiness. The three types of defilements accordingly are not made empty by the knowledge of emptiness, etc. The original nature of experiential reality is without defilement, since its original nature is emptiness, etc.

Grasping to defilement or grasping to purity in relation to experiential reality each constitute an extreme view, since their original nature is without defilement and is neither defiled nor pure. The practice of the Middle Way is taught to be freed from this grasping, meaning that it is not a result of emptiness that phenomena are made to be empty, as the nature of phenomena is in itself emptiness.

Furthermore, there are seven types of discrimination between dual extremes. What are the seven?

(1) Discriminating existence and discriminating nonexistence each constitute one extreme. These are due to grasping to a real existence of a *pudgala* (person), believing that it must be destroyed to establish emptiness, or otherwise discriminating not-self as unconditioned. The practice of the Middle Way is taught to free from this sort of discrimination of dual extremes, meaning that emptiness is not established in order to reject the [the notion of] *pudgala*. The original nature of that emptiness, however, is itself empty; it was also empty in the past, will also be empty in the future, and is also empty in the present. 476c

(2) Discrimination of something silenced and the act of silencing each constitute an extreme view, since grasping to the existence of something severed and the act of severance is due to fear of emptiness. The simile of space is taught in order to free one from this sort of differentiation of dual extremes.

(3) Discrimination of the fearsome and discrimination of fear produced from that each constitute an extreme view, because grasping to the existence of conceptualized forms and so forth can produce fear, and because grasping to the existence of painful phenomena produced from that can produce terror. The simile of the painter [who was frightened by his own painting] is taught in order to free one from this sort of differentiation of dual extremes. The former simile of space is taught for *śrāvakas*. The present simile of the painter is taught for bodhisattvas.

(4) Discrimination of something grasped and the act of grasping each constitute an extreme view. The simile of the illusionist is taught in order to free one from this sort of differentiation of dual extremes. Cognition of the nonexistence of object arises due to cognition of consciousness only, and [cognition of] consciousness only is furthermore abandoned due to arising of cognition of the nonexistence of object. Since the cognized object is nonexistent consciousness will also not be existent, since consciousness arises dependent upon the objective support. Hence, that to which the simile refers and the simile itself demonstrate similar properties (i.e., the simile properly applies to the actual situation).

(5) Discrimination of correct nature and discrimination of mistaken nature each constitute an extreme view, since grasping to accurate observation of what is real as either correct or incorrect constitute two types of natures. The simile of two pieces of wood producing fire is taught in order to be free from this sort of discrimination of dual extremes, meaning that although the two pieces of wood do not possess the characteristic of fire, by rubbing them together one can produce fire. Having produced fire, it comes to burn both pieces of wood. This accurate observation is also furthermore like this. Although there is no characteristic of correctness in the noble path it is possible to produce the noble wisdom of correctness; noble wisdom of correctness having been produced in this fashion, it furthermore can do away with this sort of accurate observation. Hence, that to which the simile refers and the simile itself demonstrate similar properties. With respect to accurate observation, however, although there is no characteristic of correctness, since it is in conformity with correctness there is also no characteristic of falsity.

(6) Discrimination of activity and nonactivity each constitute an extreme view. They grasp unto the notion that noble wisdom must first discriminate before it is possible to remove defilements, otherwise they are entirely without activity. The simile of the first lamp is taught in order to free one from this sort of differentiation of dual extremes.

(7) Discrimination of nonarising and simultaneity each constitute an extreme view. They grasp unto the notion that the antidote ultimately does not arise, or that grasping and defilement should persist for the same length of time. The simile of the subsequent lamp is taught in order to free one from this sort of differentiation of dual extremes.

Having explained correct practice free from the two extremes, what is correct practice with and without differences? The verse reads as follows:

Differentiated and undifferentiated should be understood in relation to the ten grounds. The ten perfections [relate to] predominance and equal cultivation.

Commentary: Each of the ten perfections predominates over one of the ten grounds respectively. One should understand that [when one is] being cultivated, this is called correct practice with differences (i.e., distinct). On all the grounds, when everything has been equally cultivated, i.e., the ten perfections such as generosity, etc., this sort of correct practice is called without differences (i.e., indistinct).

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The general meaning of the six types of correct practice [is as follows]: (1) the supreme of such categories [supreme correct practice], (2) the resulting contemplation of the established Mahayana Dharma and so forth [correct practice via mental orientation], (3) resulting from cultivation of *śamatha* aimed at such classes of unconfused development, and cultivation of *vipaśyanā* aimed at development free from cognitive distortion [correct practice in conformity with the Dharma], (4) cultivation of the practice of the Middle Way and seeking liberation with such an aim [correct practice that is free from the two extreme views], and on the ten grounds (6) cultivation with differences and (7) practice without differences.

Having explained the unexcelled with respect to correct practice, what are the characteristics of the unexcelled with respect to its objective support? The verse reads as follows:

The objective supports for: (1) establishing designations, (2) experiential reality, (3) what is established, (4) establishing, (5) retention, (6) ascertainment, (7) preservation, (8) penetration, (9) development, (10) realization, (11) mental equanimity, and (12) the supreme.

Commentary: There are twelve types of such objective support: (1) objective support for establishing the designations of phenomena, (2) objective support that is experiential reality, (3) objective support of what is established, (4) objective support for establishing, (5) objective support for retention, (6) objective support for ascertainment, (7) objective support for preservation,

(8) objective support for penetration, (9) objective support for development, (10) objective support for partial realization, (11) objective support for meditative equanimity, (12) supreme objective support.

Herein the first refers to what is established, referring to the differing Dharma practices of the respective perfections. The second refers to thusness. The third and fourth should be understood in order, meaning that these latter two types of differentiated Dharma practices related to the perfections must be attained via penetration into experiential reality. The fifth refers to objects of knowledge comprised from what is heard, since there is retention of words. The sixth refers to objects of knowledge comprised from thought, since there is ascertainment of meaning. The seventh refers to objects of knowledge comprised from [meditative] cultivation, since there is individual preservation. The eighth refers to the objects of the path of seeing on the first ground. The ninth refers to the objects on the path of cultivation unto the seventh ground. The tenth refers to the objects on the seventh ground, stemming from bit-by-bit realization of differing categories in relation to the mundane and transmundane paths. The eleventh refers to the objects on the eighth ground. The twelfth refers to the objects on the ninth, the tenth, and the tathāgata grounds.

One should understand that there are only the first two, while the others are taken from the meanings and the stages.²¹

Having explained the unexcelled in relation its objective support, what are the characteristics of the unexcelled with respect to cultivation and realization? The verse reads as follows:

Cultivation and realization relates to: (1) faultlessness, (2) not denigrating [the Mahayana], (3) remaining unmoved [by the inferior vehicle], (4) perfection [of the perfections], (5) generation [of the noble path], (6) firm [roots], (7) flexibility [of mind], (8) not abiding [in either samsara or nirvana], (9) the absence of obstacles, and (10) the absence of rest.

Commentary: Such cultivation and realization generally comprise ten types:

1. Cultivation and realization within one's spiritual lineage, since one does not lack anything in terms of [requisite] conditions.

2. Cultivation and realization based on conviction, since one does not denigrate the Mahayana.

3. Cultivation and realization in generating the mind [of awakening], since one is uninclined toward the lesser vehicle. 477b

4. Cultivation and realization based on correct practice, since one consummates the perfections.

5. Cultivation and realization in the entry into the state of freedom from arising, since one gives rise to the noble path.

6. Cultivation and realization in the maturation of sentient beings, since one accumulates firm wholesome roots over the long term.

7. Cultivation and realization in purifying a realm [in which sentient beings dwell], since one has mental pliancy.

8. Cultivation and realization in receiving the assurance [of future awakening] on the stage of nonretrogression, meaning that one does not abide in either samsara or nirvana, since one does not retreat from either.

9. Cultivation and realization to the ground of buddhahood, since one is free from the two obstacles.

10. Cultivation and realization in the exposition of awakening (*bodhi*), since [one teaches] without respite.

The general meaning of the unexcelled vehicle: in brief, there are three meanings in connection to the unexcelled vehicle: it is as such because it is (1) unexcelled in correct practice, (2) unexcelled in support for correct practice, and (3) unexcelled in the results of correct practice.

Why is this treatise called “Analysis of the Middle and Extremes”? The verse reads as follows:

This treatise analyzes the middle and extremes, being profound and substantial in meaning, as well as grand and all-encompassing in meaning, and removing misfortunes.

Commentary: It is called an analysis of the middle and extremes because this treatise analyzes the middle and extremes, meaning that this reveals the two extremes situated relative to the middle, in relation to subjective conditions and actions. Also, since this analyzes objects related to the middle and extremes, it is called an explanation of the middle and extremes, meaning that this reveals the two extremes situated relative to the middle in relation to objective support and object; or this properly analyzes the Dharma of the

Middle Way that is free from extremes in the beginning and end, which is why it is called an analysis of the middle and extremes.

What this treatise analyzes is of profound meaning, since it is not within the limits of speculations. This is of substantial meaning, since it destroys other analyses and is not refuted by them. This is of grand meaning, since it analyzes matters related to benefit and joy for oneself and others. This is of all-encompassing meaning, since this universally determines the Dharma (teachings) of the three vehicles in a conclusive manner. Also, it eliminates various misfortunes, since it permanently eliminates afflictive and cognitive obstacles.

May the merit from having produced this treatise be completely held and universally given to sentient beings, ensuring their attainment of superior birth, increase of merit and wisdom, and quick realization of great, perfect awakening.

End of Part III of the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*

Notes

- ¹ The most recent and comprehensive analysis of Xuanzang’s chronology was done by Yoshimura Makoto, “Genjō no nenji mondai ni tsuite 玄奘の年次問題について,” *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyōgakubu ronshū* 駒沢大学仏教学部論集 46 (2015): 183–205. For a recent critical discussion of the sources used to reconstruct Xuanzang’s life, see Jeffrey Kotyk, “Chinese State and Buddhist Historical Sources on Xuanzang: Historicity and the *Daci’en si sanzang fashi zhuan* 大慈恩寺三藏法師傳,” *T’oung Pao* 105 (2019): 513–544.
- ² Gadjin Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya: A Buddhist Philosophical Treatise Edited for the First Time from a Sanskrit Manuscript* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1964), p. xi.
- ³ The corresponding Sanskrit reads *śūnyatā vidyate tv atra, tasyām api sa vidyate*. Gadjin Nagao, “From Mādhyamika to Yogācāra, an Analysis of MMK XXIV. 18 and MV. 1.1–2,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 2/1 (1979): 36, translates this as follows: “Emptiness, however, exists in it, and also the former exists in the latter.”
- ⁴ Although these statements appear contradictory, as is explained below there exists the undeniable appearance of phenomena (in particular, the subject-object dichotomy of “grasped” and “grasper”), but these have no substantial existence and dissolve via analysis of their emptiness, demonstrating that they are, in reality, imaginary in nature. Subjectivity and perceived objects, in effect, arise due to false discrimination of what is essentially empty.
- ⁵ Xuanzang curiously translates *artha* as both *yi* 義 and *jing* 境 here. See Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*, p. 18. I interpret both instances as referring to objects.
- ⁶ *Liao* 了 (“cognition”) is a translation of *vijñapti*; Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*, p. 18. Mario D’Amato, *Maitreya’s Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes: Madhyāntavibhāga Along with Vasubandhu’s Commentary: Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya, A Study and Annotated Translation* (New York: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2012), translates the Sanskrit as “representations.” Kuiji explains that the cognitions of the former two consciousnesses, in this case the *ālaya* (store) and *manas*, are fine, whereas the cognitions of the six consciousnesses are coarse, since they are neither the root of conscious activity nor are they continuous (T.1835:3c4–8).
- ⁷ The Chinese here is ambiguous. *Ru wu-xiang fangbian xiang* 入無相方便相 (literally, “characteristic of the means [by which] one enters into the characteristic of nonexistence”) is derived from *asallakṣaṇānupraveśopāyalakṣaṇa*; Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*, p. 209. Compare with D’Amato, *Maitreya’s Distinguishing the Middle*

from the Extremes, p. 121: “[U]nreal imagination’s definition as a means of realizing its aspect of nonexistence.” Kuiji explains that these means are carried out in relation to false discrimination, since the means for entry into the absence of characteristics require discrimination for contemplating the mind, while the means themselves also constitute an object (T.1835:4b27–c1).

- ⁸ In other words, perception of objects (that which is grasped) halts when consciousness only (the grasper) is perceived, which subsequently leads to the cessation of consciousness, since there is nothing left to be grasped (i.e., the duality of grasped and grasper ceases).
- ⁹ This section of the text is terse. Kuiji explains, “The ‘two nonexistents’ refer to the principles of the two forms of selflessness (*anātman*). There are these two principles, hence it is said ‘not-nonexistent.’ This is different from a definite existence on the basis of the other-dependent, so far as conventional truth is concerned. It also differs from absolute nonexistence to which one becomes attached” (T.1835:6c14–16). In other words, epistemological principles are identified and discussed here. Neither the text nor Kuiji posit ontological categories.
- ¹⁰ Reading *quan* 全 as *jin* 金.
- ¹¹ Kuiji explains this as follows: “The earlier treatise (Paramārtha’s translation) calls this the emptiness of nonabandonment. One contemplates emptiness in order to ensure that virtuous dharmas are not abandoned. Here ‘dispersal’ means abandonment. One specifically contemplates emptiness for virtue, or one contemplates virtue as empty; either of these constitute the emptiness of nonabandonment. It is termed as a *tatpuruṣa* compound. Virtuous roots are extinguished when the two vehicles enter nirvana. This is not so with the *bodhisattva*. They contemplate [virtue] as empty. . . . Contemplation of emptiness is called the emptiness of nonabandonment” (T.1835:8c15–23).
- ¹² Kuiji explains this ambiguous part as follows: “The emptiness revealed by these two [categories of] nonexistence refers to the principle of thusness. It is not the substance (*ziti* 自體) of nonexistence. This emptiness has nonduality for its substance. Hence the substance is established and [this] is called the emptiness of the intrinsic nature of nonexistence” (T.1835:9a23–26). The emptiness of nonexistence is explained in order to prevent attachment to negation through emptiness, which is explained in the following lines.
- ¹³ “Etc.” here refers to *pratyekabuddhas*, awakened beings who achieve liberation by themselves but do not teach the Dharma to others. They belong to the latter of the two spiritual lineages (along with *śrāvakas*) mentioned here.
- ¹⁴ That is to say, the force of self-conceit prevents it from being abandoned, even during meditative contemplation.
- ¹⁵ Reading *yin* 因 as *si* 四.
- ¹⁶ Kuiji writes: “This is discerning analysis. It is included among wisdom obtained after [enlightenment], since it is attained after transcendental fundamental wisdom. It is called ascertainment because one ascertains the earlier realized Four Noble Truths and sixteen states of mind” (T.1835:25a18–21).

- ¹⁷ This appears to refer to the state of excellence, the seventh state of eighteen listed in the next chapter.
- ¹⁸ Kuiji explains that this state enables the bodhisattva to inexhaustibly transmute things such as gold and silver to bestow unto beings, like a sky treasury (i.e., wealth as infinite as the sky) (T.1835:29c2–9).
- ¹⁹ Kuiji cites the *Abhidharma-samuccaya*, which defines a “disturbance in relation to signs” as “feigning cultivation of virtues in order to gain the faith of others” (T.1605:665b11–12). D’Amato’s translation of the Sanskrit, *Maitreya’s Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes*, p. 178, reads: “Being directed toward what arises [in the mind] is distraction through signs—which is due to becoming engaged with signs”; see Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*, pp. 65, 189. Xuanzang, however, translates *abhisandhi* as *jiaoshi* 矯示, “deception” or “dissimulate.”
- ²⁰ Kuiji notes that this is in reference to eight things that are not posited in the Middle Way as taught by the Buddha in the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* (T.310:299c18–21), the first of which is a self, the eighth of which is *māṇava* (T.1835:39c27–40a3). Kuiji translates the latter as “youngster.” He refers the reader to fascicle eighty-three of the *Yogācāra-bhūmi* (see T.1579:764b12–20).
- ²¹ The meaning of this line is unclear.

Glossary

Xuanzang's translation in some cases simply transliterates Sanskrit words. In some instances, I have reproduced this convention. Elsewhere I use Sanskrit equivalents for semantic Chinese translations of Indian terms for the sake of clarity and readability, especially when such terms are widely used in modern English translations of Buddhist literature. A list of critical terms appears below.

bodhisattva: A being who has dedicated themselves to the Mahayana path, i.e., the attainment of full buddhahood for the benefit of all beings, contrasted against the so-called Hinayana path, which leads to becoming an arhat.

manas: Mind, intellect, perception.

prajñā: Wisdom.

pratyekabuddha: One who attains liberation from samsara by themselves during an age when no buddha is present to teach the Dharma.

samādhi: A state of sustained meditative concentration or absorption.

śamatha: The meditative state of quietude, in which one cultivates a state of mind free from obtrusive thoughts and impulses.

śrāvaka: "Hearer," a disciple who hears the uddha-Dharma and subsequently aims to achieve nirvana and become an arhat, thereby gaining permanent liberation from samsara, in contrast to the bodhisattva who remains engaged in the world lifetime after lifetime.

śrāvakayāna: Equivalent to Hinayana, the vehicle or path leading to one becoming an arhat, against which the Mahayana contrasts itself.

Sugata (*shan shi* 善逝): "Well-gone," an epithet for the Buddha.

vipaśyanā: The practice of examination or contemplation within a meditative framework.

Critical Terms

The following list is limited to critical terms. For a full list of Chinese-Sanskrit correspondences, see Gadgin Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya: A Buddhist Philosophical Treatise Edited for the First Time from a Sanskrit Manuscript* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1964), pp. 183–231.

Analysis of the Middle and Extremes

- action (karma): *ye* 業.
- affliction (*kleśa*): *fannaο* 煩惱.
- aggregate (*skandha*): *yun* 蘊.
- antidote (*pratipakṣa*): *duizhi* 對治.
- causal state (*hetv-avasthā*): *yinwei* 因位.
- cessation (*nirodha*): *mie* 滅.
- characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*): *xiang* 相.
- cognitive distortion (*viparīta, viparyāsa*): *diandao* 顛倒.
- collective characteristic (*saṃgraha-lakṣaṇa*): *she xiang* 攝相.
- conceptualized (*parikalpita*): *bianji suozhi* 遍計所執.
- conditioned (*saṃskṛta*): *youwei* 有爲.
- consciousness (*vijñāna*): *shi* 識.
- contaminated (*sāsrava*): *youlou* 有漏.
- conventional truth (*saṃvṛti, saṃvṛtisatyatva*): *shisu di* 世俗諦.
- conviction (*adhimukti*): *xinjie* 信解.
- defilement (*kliṣṭa, saṃkliṣṭa*): *ran* 染.
- dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*): *yuanqi* 緣起.
- dharma body (*dharmakāya*): *fa shen* 法身.
- effect (*phala*): *guo* 果.
- effort (*vīrya*): *jingjin* 精進.
- emanation body (*nirmāṇakāya*): *bianhua shen* 變化身.
- emptiness (*śūnyatā*): *kongxing* 空性.
- empty space (*ākāśa, vyoma*): *xukong* 虛空.
- enjoyment body (*saṃbhogakāya*): *shouyong shen* 受用身.
- factors of awakening (*bodhipakṣya*): *juefen* 覺分.
- false discrimination (*abhūtaparikalpa*): *xuwang fenbie* 虛妄分別.
- feeling (*vedanā*): *shou* 受.
- form (*rūpa*): *se* 色.
- grasped (perceived object) (*grāhya, ādāna*): *suoqu* 所取.
- grasper (perceiving subject) (*grāhaka*): *nengqu* 能取.
- habituated energies (*vāsanā*): *xiqi* 習氣.
- liberation (*mukta, mukti, mokṣa*): *jietuo* 解脫.
- meditative concentration (*dhyāna*): *dīng* 定.
- Middle Way (*madhyamā-pratīpat*): *zhongdao* 中道.
- mode of appearance (*ākāra*): *xingxiang* 行相.
- morality (*śīla*): *jie* 戒.
- negative karma (*akuśala*): *e ye* 惡業.

- noble (*ārya*): *sheng* 聖.
- obstacle (*āvāraṇa, āvṛti, vipakṣa*): *zhang* 障.
- other-dependent (*paratantra*): *yita qi* 依他起.
- path of seeing (*darśana-mārga*): *jian dao* 見道.
- perfectly accomplished (*pariniṣpanna*): *yuancheng shi* 圓成實.
- perfuming (*vāsanā, bhāvita*): *xiongxi* 熏習.
- positive karma (*kuśala*): *shan ye* 善業.
- reality (*tattva*): *zhenshi* 真實.
- root (*mūla*): *genben* 根本.
- self (*ātman*): *wo* 我.
- sentient being (*pudgala, sattva*): *youqing* 有情.
- six sense bases (*ṣaḍ-āyatana*): *liu chu* 六處.
- store consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*): *zangshi* 藏識.
- suffering (*duḥkha*): *ku* 苦.
- synonym (*paryāya*): *yimen* 異門.
- thought (*manas*): *yi* 意.
- transmundane phenomena (*lokōttara-dharma*): *chushi jian fa* 出世間法.
- ultimate (*niṣpatti, samāpti*): *jiujing* 究竟.
- ultimate truth (*paramārtha, paramārthasatya*): *sheng yi di* 勝義諦.
- unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*): *wuwei* 無爲.
- view (*darśana*): *jian* 見.
- volition (*cintā*): *si* 思.
- wisdom (*prajñā*): *hui* 慧.

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**THE SCRIPTURE ON THE
MONK NĀGASENA**

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As an act of *Dhammadāna*, Bhikkhu Anālayo has waived payment for the translation of *The Scripture on the Monk Nāgasena*.

Translator's Introduction

The text translated here is one of the two extant Chinese counterparts to the *Milindapañha*, the “Questions of Milinda,” a debate on central themes of Buddhist doctrine between a Greek king and a monk. These two Chinese counterparts appear to go back to a single original; they differ due to a loss of text in the shorter of the two and because both seemingly underwent subsequent editorial interventions. The version translated here, found in the Taishō edition as entry T. 1670B, is the longer and thus more complete one of the two.

Information is no longer available on the actual circumstances of the translation into Chinese of T. 1670B, as a result of which the identity of the translator(s) and the time when the work was carried out remain uncertain. The archaic translation terminology employed, however, makes it fair to conclude that the original translation is probably best placed at some point in the second or third century of the present era.¹

In addition to these two Chinese parallels, extracts of the debate between the monk Nāgasena and the king Milinda are available. One of these takes the form of an *Avadāna* account extant in Chinese translation. This provides an additional perspective on the first dilemma with which King Milinda succeeded in silencing another Buddhist monk, whom he had met before his encounter with Nāgasena. Having ascertained that lay practitioners can reach the final goal, Milinda concluded that it is pointless to become a monk. In the Pāli *Milindapañha* and its Chinese parallels, Milinda employed this dilemma only with the Buddhist monk whom he met before his encounter with Nāgasena. According to the *Avadāna* account, however, Milinda posed the same question again to Nāgasena, who was not short of a reply. The *Avadāna* version reports that Nāgasena got Milinda to acknowledge the difference in reaching a destination between a young and strong man traveling on horseback with provisions, and an old man who rides an old horse and has no provisions.² The young and strong traveler represents one who has gone forth; the old traveler represents a practitioner who remains at home. In other words, although both are able to reach the goal, the former does so more easily and swiftly.

The *Avadāna* account covers several exchanges between the two. One of these is a question about the nature of the self. In his reply, Nāgasena compares such a query to wanting to know the taste of mango fruits on nonexisting trees. A version of this particular exchange is also found as a quotation in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*,³ but not known in the *Milindapañha* and its two Chinese parallels. In this way, the *Avadāna* account and the quotation in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* show that versions of the debate between Nāgasena and Milinda were in circulation in the past that differed from the well-known *Milindapañha* and its two Chinese parallels.⁴

Knowledge of the existence of Chinese parallels to the *Milindapañha* became available to readers in the West with the publication in 1883 of *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka* by Bunyiu Nanjio.⁵ This aroused the interest of Sylvain Lèvi, who in turn invited Edouard Specht to translate extracts from the Chinese, which were published in 1893. The plan of these two scholars to translate the whole work was never realized and it was not until 1924 that a full translation of both versions into French, combined with a detailed study, was published by Paul Demièville. In 1964 Thich Minh Chau complemented Demièville's groundbreaking and exemplary work by publishing a comparative study of the Chinese versions with the corresponding parts of the Pāli *Milindapañha*. In 2007 a free translation of the Chinese text was published by Guang Xing.

Compared to the Chinese versions, the Pāli *Milindapañha* is substantially longer. This appears to be due to a process of expansion, evident in the fact that the Pāli text corresponding to the material covered in the Chinese versions concludes with the remark “here ends the answering of the problems of the questions of Milinda.”⁶ Most of what appears to be the historically earlier part of the *Milindapañha* is found in the Chinese versions; their main point of divergence concerns the introductory portion, where the Pāli and Chinese versions clearly developed their own respective hagiographical accounts of Nāgasena's and Milinda's former lives.

The actual encounter between Nāgasena and Milinda stands in the tradition of ancient Indian debate, where the point at stake is not primarily to refute an argument with sound proofs. Instead, the task is to counter a challenge with success in order to win the debate and convert the opponent. This is where a quick reply or a dexterous simile have their place, whatever the accuracy of the logic involved. A similar setting can be found in the *Pāyāsi-sutta*, which features a

Buddhist monk debating the doctrine of rebirth with a materialist king who asserts that nothing survives the death of the body.⁷ The popularity of such types of debate in the ancient Indian setting finds its reflection in the fact that, in addition to the Buddhist discourse, a record of this discussion is also found in the *Śvetāmbara* canon of the Jains.⁸

The two debates involving King Pāyāsi and King Milinda respectively share the rich use of metaphors and similes, together with the display of quick wit when debating a topic of continuing interest. This topic is how to reconcile the Buddhist doctrine of not-self with the idea of karma and rebirth.⁹ Other topics taken up in the *Milindapañha* and its Chinese parallels concern aspects of mental cultivation and the analysis of experience in Buddhist soteriology, as well as the nature of the Buddha and the extent of his knowledge. The discussion reported in the *Milindapañha* and its Chinese parallels gradually evolves from its starting point as a debate to becoming more of an exchange between teacher and pupil.

The continuing relevance of the topics raised in this way, together with the entertaining manner of their presentation, must have contributed to the appeal of the record of Nāgasena's replies to King Milinda's inquiries from ancient to modern times.¹⁰ An additional appeal of the text emerges nowadays with Buddhism's recent spread to the West.¹¹ The encounter of the Buddhist monk Nāgasena with Milinda, apparently corresponding to the Bactrian Greek King Menander who reigned around one hundred and fifty years before the present era, covers ground that is remarkably fresh in relevance. This is particularly the case for the topics taken up in the probably historically earlier part of the much better known *Milindapañha*, which has a parallel in the Chinese parallel translated in the following pages.

The Scripture on the Monk Nāgasena

[Introductory Narration: Events at the Time of the Buddha]

The Buddha was staying at Sāvattī in Jeta's Grove, the Park of Anāthapiṇḍika. At that time the community of monks, nuns, male lay disciples, and female lay disciples, the *devas*, kings, great ministers, [eminent] householders, [general] people, and those engaged in the ninety-six type of paths,¹² more than ten thousand people, came daily to listen to discourses in front of the Buddha.

The Buddha thought to himself that with the congregation of people increasing daily he did not obtain physical ease. The Buddha had the wish in his mind to leave the congregation of people and depart toward a solitary place to sit in mindful recollection of the path. Leaving the congregation of people and departing, the Buddha entered a mountain and arrived at a Sāla grove.¹³ The Buddha sat in mindful reflection on the path of purification under a tree [inhabited by] spirits.

Not far from the grove there was a herd of over five hundred elephants. The elephant king among them was virtuous and skilled; similar to humans, he understood matters that are good and that are bad. Among the congregation of many elephants that surrounded the king elephant there were males and females, those with long teeth, medium teeth, and small teeth.

When the king elephant was thirsty and wanted to go and drink water, all the small elephants would run ahead of him and enter the water to drink. Having drunk, they would run around and play in the water, agitating and dredging up the water, which made it become muddy and disgusting. The king elephant was unable to get clean water to drink.

[When] the king elephant was hungry and wanted to go and eat grass, all the small elephants again would run ahead of him and eat the tasty grass. They would run around and play, trampling on it. The king elephant was unable to get clean grass to eat.

The king elephant thought to himself, "I am much troubled by my numerous herd. All the elephants and the small elephants agitate the water, they

make it muddy, and they make the grass unclean. In turn I always drink muddy water and eat grass that has been trampled on.”

The king elephant thought to himself, “I wish to abandon all these elephants. Would it not be enjoyable to depart toward some sheltered place?” Then the king elephant abandoned the herd and departed. He went to enter a mountain and in turn arrived at the Sāla grove.

Seeing the Buddha, the Buddha being seated under a tree, the king elephant’s mind was greatly delighted. He went in front of the Buddha, knelt down to bow and pay respect to the Buddha, and retreated to stand to one side.

704a The Buddha thought to himself, “I have abandoned the crowd of people to come here and the king elephant has also abandoned the crowd of elephants and has come to this grove. Our purposes are exactly the same.”¹⁴

The Buddha taught the elephant from the discourses, saying, “A Buddha is most respected among men and a king elephant is also respected among all elephants.”

The Buddha said, “My mental state and the mental state of the king elephant correspond to each other. The king elephant and I completely delight in being in this grove.”

Hearing from the discourses [the Buddha had taught to him], the mental faculty of the elephant king opened up and he understood the Buddha’s meaning. He in turn looked after the place where the Buddha was practicing walking meditation. With his trunk he fetched water to sprinkle the ground. Taking grass with his trunk, he swept the ground. With his feet he trampled the ground to make it properly even. The elephant king undertook such services daily in the morning and evening.

Then, after a long time, the Buddha in turn departed, taking the path of the unconditioned, nirvana. The elephant king did not know where the Buddha was. He went around searching for the Buddha but was not successful. Crying and in grief, he was joyless and did not dare to eat and drink.

At that time in that region there was a Buddhist monastery on top of a mountain, called Kālavana.¹⁵ Five hundred recluses were residing in it together, all of whom had attained the awakening of arahants. On the six days of fasting in the month they regularly recited the discourses throughout the night.¹⁶ The elephant king was also staying close to the monastery on top of the mountain. The elephant king knew that there was recitation of the discourses on the six

days of fasting. On such days the elephant king would regularly come to enter the monastery and listen to the discourses.

The recluses knew that the elephant king delighted in hearing the discourses. When they wished to recite the discourses, they would wait for the elephant king to arrive and then recite the discourses. The elephant king would listen to the discourses until morning without sleeping, without lying down, and without moving, remaining motionless.

[Introductory Narration: The Next Life]

Because the elephant king had frequently listened to the discourses and done services for the Buddha, when after a long time he also passed away and died in turn, the elephant king obtained becoming a human being. He was reborn as a child in a brahmin household, where he no longer heard Buddhist discourses and also did not see recluses. He abandoned the household in turn and entered a remote mountain to train on top of the mountain in the path of brahmins. Nearby there was another brahmin practicing the path. Being together on top of the mountain, they visited and became acquainted with each other.

One of them thought to himself:

I am weary of governmental authority over the world. There is the sorrow and pain of old age, disease, and death, after which one will enter hell or be reborn as a hungry ghost, an animal, or among the needy. For this reason I shall shave off my hair and beard, wear monastic robes, and become a recluse to seek the world-transcending path to the unconditioned.

The other of them thought to himself:

I aspire and seek to become the unimpeded king of the country; let all people in the world together be subject to me and follow my commands.¹⁷

The aspirations of the two were like this.

[Introductory Narration: The Present Life of Nāgasena]

After a long time the two each passed away and again obtained becoming humans in the world. The one who in the former life had wished to become

the king of the country was reborn as the crown prince in a country by the seaside. His parents in turn gave the child the name Milinda.¹⁸

704b The one who in the former life had wished for the world-transcending path to the unconditioned, nirvana, was reborn in India in the country of Kashmir. On being reborn, he was in turn born wearing a monastic robe, so his parents in turn gave him the [nick]name Tuolie.¹⁹ His aspiration in the former life was the reason why he was reborn with a monastic robe. On the same day an elephant king was born in that household. In India elephants are called *nāga*.²⁰ Relying on this word for an elephant, the parents in turn gave their child the [proper] name Nāgasena.²¹

Nāgasena grew up and had become between fifteen and sixteen years [of age]. He had a maternal uncle called Rohaṇa.²² Rohaṇa, who had become a recluse, had superior abilities and was without match in the world. With his eyes he was able to see penetratingly, with his ears he was able to hear penetratingly, and he knew from where he had himself come to be reborn. Walking, he was able to fly; he was able to come out where there is no gap; he was able to enter where there is no hole. He could transform himself at will; there was nothing he did not do. Rohaṇa also had foreknowledge of all thoughts in the minds of people in heaven and on earth, even of the species of flying creatures and those that crawl [on the ground].

Nāgasena on his own went to his maternal uncle and in turn told about his own plans, “My intention is set on the Buddhist path.²³ I wish to shave off my hair and beard, wear monastic robes, and become a recluse. Now I should [instead] become a disciple of my maternal uncle. Would you approve of and support me in becoming a recluse myself?”

Rohaṇa, who knew that Nāgasena had in former lives performed what is wholesome and that he was wise, deeply sympathized and therefore allowed him to become a recluse. Beginning by becoming a small novice, Nāgasena took the ten precepts. Daily he recited the discourses, trained in learning, and reflected on the precepts [found] in the scriptures. He attained the four absorptions and completely knew the discourses. He only had not yet received the precepts of a great recluse.

At that time, on a mountain in the region there was a Buddhist monastery called Pliable Meditation. In the monastery Pliable Meditation there were five hundred recluses who all had attained the awakening of arahants. The

foremost arahant among them was called Anpoyue.²⁴ He was able to know about matters past, present, and future in heaven and on earth.

Because Nāgasena had turned twenty years old, he received the precepts of a great recluse and became a great recluse. He in turn went to the monastery Pliable Meditation and approached Anpoyue inside. Just at that time it was the fifteenth day [of the month] and the five hundred arahants were to sit in the hall above to recite the precepts [found] in the scriptures for great recluses. The great recluses all entered and Nāgasena was also among them. All the recluses in the community sat down.

Anpoyue surveyed the minds of all the recluses that were seated inside. All were arahants, only Nāgasena had not yet attained the awakening of an arahant. Anpoyue in turn taught a parable from the discourses:

It is just like receiving broken rice, and among the rice that is truly pure there is a black [grain] of rice: One removes the bad one. Now all among us seated here are pure, only Nāgasena is blackened by not yet having attained the awakening of an arahant.

Hearing Anpoyue teach from the discourses in this way, Nāgasena was greatly worried. He in turn got up and, having paid respect to the five hundred arahants, went outside. Nāgasena thought to himself:

It is not suitable for me to sit in this gathering. I have indeed not yet attained deliverance; all the other recluses have already been liberated. It is similar to a jackal being among a pride of lions.²⁵ Now I am just like that. From now on, not having attained awakening, I will not enter to sit among the community again.

Anpoyue knew what was on Nāgasena's mind. He in turn called Nāgasena to come forward and with his hand caressed Nāgasena's head, [saying], "Soon you will become an arahant, do not worry!" Anpoyue in turn wanted Nāgasena to sit down and stay [for the recitation of the precepts found in the scriptures].

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Nāgasena also had another teacher who was over eighty years old and had the name Jiaweyue. In that county there was a lay disciple of great virtue and goodness who daily provided food for Jiaweyue and his disciples. It was Nāgasena's turn to take the appropriate utensil and go to fetch food provisions

on behalf of his teacher. The teacher made Nāgasena keep water in his mouth on going to the lay disciple's house to fetch food provisions.²⁶

The lay disciple saw that Nāgasena was young and handsome, and that his comportment was unusual among people. For a long time having known that Nāgasena had wisdom, and previously having heard of his bright aspirations and of his reputation for being able to teach the discourses on the path, on seeing him enter the house the lay disciple rose up and in turn came forward to pay respect. With palms held together he said:

For a long time I have fed the recluses and those who come have [never] taught me from the discourses.²⁷ Now I request Nāgasena, out of compassion for my wish, to teach me from the discourses and relieve me from my ignorance.

Nāgasena thought to himself, "I received my teacher's instruction that I am to keep water in my mouth, not being allowed to speak. Spitting out the water now, I would violate my teacher's command. It being like this, what should I do?"

Nāgasena thought, "The lay disciple is of great ability and he also has an aspiration. Being taught from the discourses by me, I think he will attain the path."

Nāgasena in turn spat out the water and sat down to teach from the discourses:

A person who makes offerings, does what is wholesome, and undertakes the precepts [found] in the scriptures is at ease in the present life and in the next life will in turn be reborn in heaven. Being reborn among humans [again], he will be intelligent and wealthy; he will no longer enter hell or be reborn among hungry ghosts or animals. A person who does not undertake the precepts [found] in the scriptures is afflicted in this life and in the next life falls again into the three bad destinies, which lack opportunities to get out.²⁸

Hearing from the discourses, the mind of the lay disciple was delighted. Knowing that the lay disciple's mind was delighted, Nāgasena taught him again and from the profound discourses in turn, saying:

All things in the world, they will all pass away; none of them remains forever. All things pass away; they are all unsatisfactory. People in the world are themselves also like this. People in the world all say, “This body of mine will pass away; I accept it.” [Yet] they all have not gained independence by awakening to nirvana. [Only] with the supreme joy of nirvana is one not reborn, does not age, does not get sick, does not die, does not worry, and does not grieve. Evil and hardships are all completely exterminated.

Nāgasena having taught him from the discourses, the lay disciple attained stream-entry, the first [level of] awakening. Nāgasena himself also attained stream-entry, the [first level of] awakening.

The lay disciple was greatly delighted and in turn offered excellent food to Nāgasena. Nāgasena told the lay disciple to put provisions first into the bowl of the teacher. Having completed eating and rinsing his mouth, Nāgasena took the food provisions and returned to give them to his teacher.

The teacher saw the food provisions and said, “Today you have come to bring food provisions, very good. [Yet], having violated the community’s agreement, you should be expelled.”²⁹ Nāgasena was worried and unhappy.

The teacher called a communal meeting of the monks of the community. The monks of the community being completely seated for the meeting, the teacher said, “Nāgasena has committed a violation of our community’s agreement. We should jointly expel him; he should not be allowed to stay in our community.”

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Anpoyue taught a simile, saying:

He is like a person who has shot two targets with a single arrow. A type of person like this should not be expelled. By teaching, Nāgasena attained the path himself and also caused the lay disciple to attain the path. He should not be expelled.

Nāgasena’s teacher Jiaueiyue said:

Even if he had shot a hundred targets with a single arrow, we have met about the community’s agreement. He should not be allowed to stay. Others are not all able to attain the path like Nāgasena. This should never happen again. If Nāgasena is not expelled, others will follow suit and there is no way to stop it later.

All those seated in the community remained silent.

Following the teacher's injunction, Nāgasena was expelled. Nāgasena in turn paid respect with his head at the teacher's feet, got up and paid respect, circumambulating the community of monks. Having finished paying respect, he in turn left, entered a remote mountain, and sat under a tree in its midst. Day and night exerting himself mindfully in the path without negligence, he in turn accomplished the awakening of an arahant himself. He was also able to fly and with his eyes he also saw penetratingly, with his ears he heard penetratingly. He was also able to know the thoughts in the minds of others. He knew his own former lives and from where he had come to be reborn.

Having become an arahant, he in turn came back to enter inside the monastery Pliable Meditation. He prostrated himself amidst the community of monks and confessed his transgression, seeking forgiveness from the community of monks at Pliable Meditation. The monks in the community accepted it. Having completed paying respects, Nāgasena in turn went out and left.

Nāgasena went on a walking tour, entering the streets of prefectures and counties and the winding lanes of villages. He taught people the scriptures and precepts and instructed people in what is wholesome. Some among them took the five precepts, some attained the awakening of a stream-enterer, some attained the awakening of a once-returner, some attained the awakening of a non-returner, and some became recluses and attained the awakening of an arahant.

The Four Heavenly Kings from the first [heavenly realm], Sakka from the second [heavenly realm] of Tusita, and the heavenly king Brahmā from the seventh [heavenly realm] all came before Nāgasena, paid respect with their heads at his feet and sat back, [while] Nāgasena was teaching from the discourses to all people. His fame was heard in the heavens of the four [directions]. Wherever Nāgasena went, *devas*, humans, spirits, and *nāgas* were all without exception delighted to see Nāgasena and all of them gained merit.

Nāgasena arrived on his tour in the country of Shejje (Sāgala) in India in turn,³⁰ where he stayed in the monastery Xiedijia.

[Introductory Narration: The Present Life of Milinda]

The one person who had been his former acquaintance in the past life had become the crown prince in a country by the sea; his name was Milinda. In

his youth, Milinda was fond of reading the discourses of heterodox practitioners and he knew all heterodox practices. Debating their discourses and regulations, none of the heterodox practitioners could overcome him. [When] Milinda's father, the king, had passed away, Milinda was crowned king of the country.

Being the king, he asked his ministers, who were surrounding him to his left and right, "Who of the religious practitioners and people in the country is able to debate together with me on the discourses about the path?"

The surrounding ministers said to the king:

There is a practitioner of the path of the Buddha; people call him a "recluse." That man is wise and erudite; he is able to debate together with the great king on the discourses about the path.

Now [Milinda had been dwelling] in a palace of ancient kings which was in the country called Shejie (Sāgala), to the north of the great Qin (Greek colonial) empire.³¹ That country was at peace inside and outside, and its people were all skillful. The city was on all four sides surrounded by roads and all city gates were ornamented with sculptures and written engravings. Each of the women in the palace had her own room. The roads, markets, and neighborhoods were aligned in rows.

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The main roads, which had shops aligned in rows, were large, flourishing with elephants, horses, chariots, and pedestrians, male and female. At pools, which had fords,³² religious practitioners, relatives, craftsmen, ordinary people and those from [other] small countries [gathered].³³ They were all very wise. People's clothes were brilliant with the five colors. Women dressed in white and were all adorned with jewelry.

The territory of the country was high and dry, with many treasures. Traders from the four directions came for trading; they all used gold coins. The five grains were in abundance and the families had [surplus] provisions and domestic animals.³⁴ Around the market sweet soups with rice were sold for the hungry to get food, and there was wine from mixed grapes for the thirsty to drink. It was so enjoyable that it can hardly be expressed.

The king named Milinda was in that country and he was governing over this country by relying on proper laws. Milinda with his great intelligence and wisdom was versed in worldly discourses and methods, being capable of debating on matters of the past, the present, and the future. He had understanding

of public affairs and warfare skills; there was nothing his cleverness did not penetrate.

At that time the king had gone out of town for a leisure walk, surrounded by a crowd of soldiers. That king took pride in himself, [thinking] in his mind, “I am the king and I am able to reply to adherents of the ninety-six types of discourses on the path. [Even] on being interrogated by innumerable people, I in turn know in advance what they are going to say, as soon as people are about to think it.”

The king said to his attendant ministers:

It is still early to enter the city; there is also nothing to be done there. Could there be in this vicinity a religious practitioner or recluse who is versed in the discourses and able to debate with me together on the discourses that make declarations about the path?

The king’s attendant ministers were called Zhanmili and Wangqun. Zhanmili and Wangqun said to the king:

Indeed, there is a recluse called Yeheluo who has a great understanding of the discourses on the path.³⁵ He will be able to debate together with the king on the discourses that teach about the path.

The king in turn ordered Zhanmili and Wangqun to approach him and invite him to come. Zhanmili and Wangqun went to invite Yeheluo, saying, “The Great King wishes to see the great teacher.”

Yeheluo said, “It is very well that the king wishes to meet me. He should just come himself; I am not coming.”

Zhanmili returned to tell the king that it was like this. Driving in a chariot, the king approached the monastery in the company of five hundred horsemen and went inside. On meeting, the king and Yeheluo first exchanged greetings and then sat down in turn; the five hundred horsemen followed suit by all sitting down as well.

The king asked Yeheluo:

Dear, for what reason have you left the household, abandoned wife and children, shaved off hair and beard, and put on monastic robes to become a recluse? Dear, in quest of what path are you?

Yeheluo replied to the king:

We train in the path of the Buddha with upright practice,³⁶ in order to gain merits in this life and also gain merits in the next life. For this reason I have removed hair and beard and become a recluse wearing monastic robes.

The king asked Yeheluo:

Are there laypeople who have wife and children and who, being at home with their wife and children, with upright practice gain merits in this life and also gain merits in the next life?

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Yeheluo said, “There are laypeople who, being at home with their wife and children, with upright practice gain merits in this life and also gain merits in the next life.”

The king said:

Dear, [as] laypeople, who are at home with their wife and children, with upright practice similarly gain merits in this life and in the next life, it is in vain that you have abandoned wife and children, removed your hair and beard, and become a recluse wearing monastic robes.³⁷

Yeheluo in turn remained silent, being unable to reply to the king.

The attendant ministers said, “This recluse is of great strength of understanding and has wisdom. [Yet], on being pressed, he has nothing to say.”

The king’s attendant ministers raised their hands, saying, “The king has gained victory, the king has gained victory!”

Yeheluo in turn was silent, accepting his defeat.

Looking at the lay disciples to the left and the right, the king saw that the faces of the lay disciples were not mortified [by Yeheluo’s defeat]. The king thought, “The faces of these lay disciples indeed show no mortification.³⁸ It can only be that there is another recluse strong in being versed in the discourses who is able to debate with me.” The king said to Zhanmili, “Could there be another wise recluse able to debate together with me on the discourses that teach about the path?”

Immediately [Zhanmili thought of] Nāgasena, who was the master of all [Buddhist] recluses and who always traveled together with recluses, with all recluses getting him to expound from the discourses. At that time Nāgasena

completely knew how to debate the essentials of the discourses. He was able to teach the twelve divisions of the discourses.³⁹ When teaching from the discourses, he analyzed each matter, having separated its different sentences and definitely explained its phrases.

He knew the path to nirvana. There was no one able to refute him and no one able to gain victory over him. He was able to clear up all doubts and able to reason clearly; what he spoke with wisdom was like a river [flowing into] the ocean. He was able to overcome [adherents] of the ninety-six types of paths and was respected by the four assemblies of Buddhist disciples,⁴⁰ being esteemed by all knowledgeable ones for regularly instructing people based on the discourses about the path. Nāgasena had arrived in the country of Shejie (Sāgala) with a following of disciples who were also all wise. Nāgasena was like a fierce lion.

Zhanmili said to the king:⁴¹

There is another recluse, his name is Nāgasena, who is wise and has a profound and good understanding of the essentials of the discourses. He is able to clear up all doubts and there is nothing that he does not penetrate. He is capable of debating together with the king on the discourses about the path.

The king asked Zhanmili, “Will he indeed be able to debate with me together on the discourses about the path?”

Zhanmili replied:

He certainly will be able to debate together with the king on the discourses about the path. After all, he would be able to debate on the discourses about the path together with Brahmā of the seventh [heavenly realm], let alone with humans.

[The Debate]

The king ordered Zhanmili to go and invite Nāgasena in turn to come. Zhanmili went to Nāgasena and said, “The great king wishes to meet you.” Followed by his disciples, Nāgasena approached the king.⁴²

Although the king had never met Nāgasena, in the crowd of people Nāgasena’s way of wearing the robes and mode of walking were unique and unlike those of the others. On seeing him from afar, the king divined that this was Nāgasena. The king said to himself, “I have seen one after the other

many great crowds of people and entered great meetings many times, [but] I never experienced fear myself [until] now that I see Nāgasena. Today Nāgasena is certainly going to win victory over me; I am certainly not going to be up to it. My heart is very agitated and not at ease.”

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Zhanmili said to the king, “Nāgasena has come and is outside; Nāgasena has already arrived.”

The king asked Zhanmili which one was Nāgasena. Zhanmili pointed him out to the king with a finger. The king was very happy, [thinking], “Exactly the one I had divined is in the end Nāgasena.” The king watched Nāgasena’s wearing of the robes and mode of walking, which were unique and unlike the crowd of people. Nāgasena came forward to exchange greetings and speak to the king, who was in turn greatly delighted. They carried on [conversing] together and sat down facing each other.

Nāgasena said to the king:

In the discourses the Buddha says that the greatest profit for a person is to be at peace, knowing contentment is a person’s greatest wealth, faith is a person’s greatest largesse, and awakening to nirvana is the greatest happiness.⁴³

[On the “Person”]

The king asked Nāgasena in turn, “Dear, what is your name?”⁴⁴

Nāgasena said:

My parents gave me the name Nāgasena and in turn called me Nāgasena. At times my parents called me Weixian, at times my parents called me Shouluoxian, and at times my parents called me Weijixian. By reason of such usage, people all recognize me. People in the world all just have such names.

The king asked Nāgasena, “Who is Nāgasena?”

The king asked again, “Is the head Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “The head is not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Are the eyes, ears, nose, or the mouth Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “The eyes, ears, nose or mouth are not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Are the neck, shoulders, arms, feet, or hands Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “They are not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Are the thighs or lower legs Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “They are not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Is the countenance Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “It is not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Is [the experience of] pain and pleasure Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “It is not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Is [the doing of what is] wholesome and evil Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “It is not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Is the body Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “It is not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Are the liver, lung, heart, spleen, veins, intestines, or the stomach Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “They are not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “The countenance, [the experience of] pain and pleasure, [the doing of what is] wholesome and evil, the body, and the mind—is the conjunction of these five things rather Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “They are not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again:

In case there is no countenance, [experience of] pain and pleasure, [doing of what is] wholesome and evil, body, and mind—is the absence of these five things rather Nāgasena?

Nāgasena said, “It is not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “Is the sound of the respiration Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena said, “It is not Nāgasena.”

The king asked again, “What is Nāgasena?”⁴⁵

Nāgasena asked the king, “[You came in] what is called a ‘chariot.’⁴⁶ What is a chariot? Is the axle the chariot?”

The king said, “The axle is not the chariot.”

706b Nāgasena said, “Is the rim the chariot?”

The king said, “The rim is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Are the spokes the chariot?”

The king said, “The spokes are not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the hub the chariot?”

The king said, “The hub is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the drawbar the chariot?”

The king said, “The drawbar is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the yoke the chariot?”

The king said, “The yoke is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the carriage’s framework the chariot?”

The king said, “The carriage’s framework is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the pole [of the canopy] the chariot?”

The king said, “The pole [of the canopy] is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the canopy the chariot?”

The king said, “The canopy is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the combined assembly of all these wooden parts, placed to one side, rather the chariot?”

The king said, “The combined assembly of all these wooden parts, placed to one side, is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “In case there is no combined assembly of all these wooden parts, is that rather the chariot?”

The king said, “The absence of the combined assembly of all these wooden parts is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “Is the sound [of driving] the chariot?”

The king said, “The sound [of driving] is not the chariot.”

Nāgasena said, “What is the chariot?”

The king was silent in turn and had nothing to say.

Nāgasena said:

It is taught in a Buddhist discourse:⁴⁷ “Just as by means of the combined assembly of all these wooden parts one constructs a chariot and thereby gets a chariot, similarly it is for a person.” It is the combined assembly of head, face, ears, nose, mouth, neck, shoulders, arms, bones, flesh, hands, feet, liver, lung, heart, spleen, kidneys, intestines, stomach, countenance, sound of breathing, [the experiencing of] pain and pleasure, [the doing of what is] wholesome and evil; such a combined assembly is called a person.

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

[Types of Discussions]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Are you able to debate together with me on the discourses about the path?”

Nāgasena said:

Provided the king sticks to wisdom in exchanging questions with me, we are able to debate with each other. [But if] the king sticks to his opinions out of pride of his rank, we are not able to debate with each other.⁴⁸

The king asked Nāgasena, “Of what type is conversation by the wise?”⁴⁹

Nāgasena said:

The wise fully discuss with each other, question each other’s statements, comprehend each other’s statements. They recognize on their own as factual or not factual which of each other’s statements is superior and which statement is inferior, which [statement] is victorious or which [statement] is defeated, which statement is correct and which statement is incorrect, and who is the most wise. The wise have no need to become angry. The wise are like this.

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Of what type is conversation by kings?”

Nāgasena said:

Kings speak arbitrarily and with presumption. There being opposition and disagreement with what the king said, the king will strongly punish or execute them. Kings converse like this.

The king said:

I wish to converse by way of the wise, not to converse by way of a king. Do no longer have the attitude of confronting a king when discussing with me. Discuss with me just as if you were discussing with a recluse, just as if you were discussing with a disciple, just as if you were discussing with a lay disciple, just as if you were discussing with an attendant of the community of recluses. Do not harbor fear. With a completely straight mental attitude, we should discuss openly with each other.

Nāgasena said, “It is very well.”

The king said, “I wish to ask a question.”⁵⁰

Nāgasena said to the king, “Do in turn ask it.”

The king said, “I have already asked it.”

Nāgasena said, “I have already answered it.”

The king said, “What was your answer to me?”

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Nāgasena also said to the king, “What did you ask me?”

The king said, “I did not ask anything.”

Nāgasena said, “I gave no answer.”

[Invitation for the Next Day]

The king thought to himself in private, “This recluse is very intelligent and wise. We have just started and I have many questions.” The king thought to himself, “The sun is about to set and it is becoming dark. Should I invite Nāgasena for tomorrow? Having returned to the palace, we can have a good debate with each other.”

The king told Zhanmili to tell Nāgasena that today the sun [is about to set] and darkness is approaching and to invite him for tomorrow when, having returned to the palace, they can have a good debate with each other and question each other.

Zhanmili and Wangqun told Nāgasena, “The sun is about to set and it is becoming dark; the king should return to the palace. The king wishes to invite Nāgasena for tomorrow.”

Nāgasena said, “Very well.”

Riding on his horse, the king returned to the palace.⁵¹ Being on his horse, the king kept thinking about Nāgasena and, while thinking the name in his mind, he wanted to enunciate it, “Nāgasena, Nāgasena,” thinking of him until the next day.

The next day Zhanmili, Wangqun, and the attendant ministers said to the king, “Should we indeed invite Nāgasena?”

The king said, “You should invite him.”

Zhanmili and Wangqun said, “On inviting him, with how many recluses together should we get him to come?”

The king said, “Let Nāgasena come with just as many recluses together as he likes.”

The king had a treasurer called Stingy. Stingy said to the king, “Let Nāgasena come together with ten recluses; that will do.”

[The king] said again, “I permit Nāgasena to come with just as many recluses together as he likes.”

Stingy again said to the king, “Let Nāgasena come together with ten recluses; that will do.”

The king said again, “I permit Nāgasena to come at his own wish with as many recluses together as he likes.”

Stingy again said to the king, “Let Nāgasena come together with ten recluses; that will just do.”

The king, on hearing Stingy say this so many times to his king, became angry in turn with Stingy, [saying]:

You are really stingy without equals. Your name is Stingy and you are hopeless. You are very stingy with the king’s wealth; how about your own wealth? You do not realize that going against my intentions you could be punished or executed for being at fault.⁵²

The king said, “Yet, let it be. I pardon your fault out of compassion. Now, being the king, am I not able to nourish recluses?” Stingy was ashamed and in turn did not dare to speak again.

Zhanmili and Wangqun approached Nāgasena, went forward to pay respect to him in turn and said, “The Great King invites Nāgasena.”

Nāgasena said, “With how many recluses will the king want me to come together?”

Zhanmili and Wangqun said, “Let Nāgasena at his own wish come together with as many recluses as he likes.” Nāgasena in turn came together with eighty recluses, Yeheluo and others.⁵³

Zhanmili and Wangqun went together with them at dawn. On the road and about to enter the town, Zhanmili and Wangqun conjointly asked Nāgasena, “Yesterday you said in your reply to the king what is not [Nāgasena], so in what way is there a Nāgasena?”

Nāgasena asked Zhanmili and Wangqun, “Dears, what do you think is Nāgasena?”

Zhanmili and Wangqun said, “We take it that the breath going in and out, being the life force, is Nāgasena.”

707a Nāgasena asked Zhanmili and Wangqun, “[If] a person’s breath, once it has gone out, does not return to enter them, will that person continue to live?”

Zhanmili and Wangqun said, “[If] the breath goes out and does not return, they will certainly die.”

Nāgasena said:

Suppose a person blows a conch; once the breath has gone out, it does not return to enter them. Suppose a person blows on fire, holding a goldsmith’s bellows; once the breath has gone out at that time, will it be able to return and enter them again?

Zhanmili and Wangqun said, “It will not return and enter them again.”

[Nāgasena said], “Suppose a person blows on the earth through a horn; once the breath has gone out, will it return and enter them again?”

Zhanmili and Wangqun said, “It will not return and enter them again.”

Nāgasena said, “The same breath goes out and does not return to enter again. Why does the person not just die because of this?”

Zhanmili and Wangqun said, “We are unable to understand what you asked about the breath; please explain it to us.”

Nāgasena said:

Breathing and the breath are all matters in the body. If a person has a thought in the mind and speaks words with the tongue, this is a matter of the tongue. [If] they ponder and have in their mind thoughts of doubt, this is a matter of the mind. Each of these has its own domain. Examining them analytically, they are all empty. There is no Nāgasena [as such].

The minds of Zhanmili and Wangqun opened to understanding. They took the five precepts and became lay disciples in turn.

Nāgasena in turn went forward and entered the palace to reach the king, who was in the upper hall. The king paid respect to Nāgasena and stepped back. Nāgasena sat down together with all the eighty recluses. The king had gotten very excellent food and drink prepared. With his own hands the king served first Nāgasena with food and then the community of recluses with food. The meal being completed and the hands washed, the king gave each recluse a double robe and each a pair of leather sandals.⁵⁴ He gave to Nāgasena and Yeheluo each [a set of] three robes and each a pair of leather sandals.

The king said to Nāgasena and Yeheluo, “Let ten people stay together with you and send away the other people, getting them to go.” Nāgasena sent

away the other people and got them to go, remaining to stay together with ten people.

The king gave the order:

The ladies from the inner courts and the women from the harem should all come to the upper hall and from behind a curtain listen to me debating together with Nāgasena on the discourses about the path.

Then the ladies from the inner courts and the women from the harem all came out and went to the upper parts of the palace behind a curtain to hear Nāgasena speak about the discourses.⁵⁵

[The Goal of the Holy Life]

Then the king took a seat and sat in front of Nāgasena. The king said, “What shall we discuss?”

Nāgasena said, “[If] the king wishes to hear important statements, we should discuss important statements.”

The king said, “Dear, for you being on the path, what is most important, for what reason have you become recluses?”

Nāgasena said:

We wish to abandon *dukkha* in this life and we do not wish to experience further *dukkha* in a next life. For this reason we have become recluses; this is for us the most important good.

The king said, “Do all recluses wish not to experience further *dukkha* in the present life and the next life and for this reason become recluses?”

Nāgasena said, “Not all become recluses for this reason. There are four types of recluses.”

707b The king said, “What are the four?”

Nāgasena said:

Some among them are in debt and become recluses,⁵⁶ some among them are afraid of the government and become recluses, some among them are poor and become recluses, and some among them truly wish to abandon and eradicate *dukkha* in this life and the next life and for this reason become recluses.

Nāgasena said, “As for myself, my basic and true intention is to seek the path and it is for this reason that I became a recluse.”

The king said, “Dear, have you become a recluse for the sake of the path right now?”

Nāgasena said:

I became a recluse when I was young. There were the Buddhist discourses on the path and the disciples, recluses who were all very wise, and learning from them the scriptures and the precepts, these entered my heart. I became a recluse for the sake of abandoning *dukkha* in the present life and a next life; this is the reason.

The king said, “It is well.”

[Transcending Rebirth]

The king asked, “Could there be people who after death are not reborn again?”

Nāgasena said, “Some among them are reborn in the next life, some among them are not reborn again.”

The king said, “Who is reborn in the next life and who is not reborn again?”

Nāgasena said:

People who have craving and lustful desires are in turn reborn again in the next life. People who have no craving and lustful desires are not again reborn in the next life.”

The king said, “Being mindful of the true Dharma and of what is wholesome with mental unification, will a person for these reasons not be reborn again in the next life?”

Nāgasena said:

Being mindful of the true Dharma and being mindful of what is wholesome with mental unification, and [also] having wisdom and other good qualities, a person will for these reasons not be reborn again in the next life.

The king said:

Thus a person [will not be reborn again] by being mindful of the true Dharma and of what is wholesome with mental unification as well as by having wisdom. Do these two qualities have the same meaning?

Nāgasena said, “The meaning of each is different; they are not the same.”

The king asked Nāgasena, “Oxen and horses, the six [types] of domestic animals, do they have wisdom or do they not have wisdom?”

Nāgasena said, “Oxen and horses, the six [types] of domestic animals, each have their own [type] of wisdom; [but] their minds differ.”

Nāgasena said to the king, “Have you seen in the past a harvester of wheat? With the left hand they grasp the wheat and with the right hand they cut it.”

Nāgasena said, “A wise person cuts off craving and desire similar to a harvester of wheat.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What are the ‘other good qualities?’”

Nāgasena said:

The [other] good qualities are sincere faith, having devotion,⁵⁷ being energetic, being mindful of what is wholesome, mental unification, and wisdom. These are the [other] good qualities.

The king said, “What is sincere faith?”

Nāgasena said:

One who has sincere faith has nothing further to doubt. He has faith in the Buddha, in the Dharma of the Buddhist discourses, and faith in the monastic community. He has faith in arahants, faith in the present life, and faith in the next life. He has faith in devotion toward one’s parents, faith that doing what is wholesome has wholesome results, and faith that doing what is evil has evil results. By gaining faith, the mind is subsequently purified and in turn becomes remote and secluded from the five evils. What are the five evils? The first is sexual desire, the second is anger, the third is sloth-and-torpor, the fourth is restlessness-and-worry,⁵⁸ and the fifth is being doubtful. The mind of a person who has not left behind these five evils will not become concentrated. Leaving behind these five evils, the mind in turn becomes pure.

Nāgasena said:

707c It is similar to a wheel-turning king who with chariots, horses, and men crosses the water of a river via a ford, making the water muddy and disgusting. Having already gone over by crossing it, the king becomes thirsty

and wishes to get water to drink. The king has a water-purifying gem, which he puts into the water so that the water becomes pure. Thus the king obtains in turn pure water to drink.

Nāgasena said:

The evils in people's minds are similar to the muddy water. The disciples of the Buddha cross over birth and death and gain awakening by purifying their minds just as the gem purified the water. Retreating from all evils, a person's sincere faith becomes purified, similar to the brilliance of the moon or a gem.

The king said, "It is well, it is well."

The king asked, "How is a person with sincere faith energetic?"

Nāgasena said:

The disciples of the Buddha see among each other some who have removed evil [states] from the mind. Some among them have attained stream-entry, some among them have attained once-return, some among them have attained non-return, and some among them have attained arahantship. Pursuing examples from among them with sincere faith, they all gain the world-transcending path as well.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to abundant water that flows down from the top of the mountain during a heavy rain. All the people on both sides do not know how deep it is and are afraid, not daring to cross over. Suppose a person comes from far away and, looking at the water, divines the water's extents, limits, and its depth. They know their own strength and ability, enter the water, and in turn are able to cross it. The crowd of people on both sides in turn follow their example and are also able to cross it and depart.

The disciples of the Buddha are also like that. They see that their fore-runners have purified their minds and attained stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and the awakening of arahants, all of which are the result of a wholesome mind and being energetic. In a discourse the Buddha said that people who have sincere faith in their minds can themselves gain the world-transcending path. People who are able to be restrained and to retreat from the five strands of sensuality, who know by themselves that

the body is unsatisfactory, are able to gain the world-transcending path. It is by wisdom that all people accomplish the path of virtue.⁵⁹

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

The king said, “What is devotion?”

Nāgasena said:

All that is wholesome is such on account of devotion. All the thirty-seven requisites [of awakening described] in the discourses derive from devotion, which is their root.

The king said, “What are the thirty-seven requisites [of awakening described] in the discourses?”

Nāgasena said:

They are the four establishments of mindfulness,⁶⁰ the four [right] efforts, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, and the eightfold path of practice.

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What are the four establishments of mindfulness?”

In reply, Nāgasena said to the king:

The Buddha has taught the first establishing [of mindfulness] by contemplating the body as a body, the second establishing [of mindfulness] by contemplating feelings as feelings, the third establishing [of mindfulness] by contemplating mind as mind, and the fourth establishing [of mindfulness] by contemplating dharmas as dharmas. These are the four establishments of mindfulness.

The king asked again, “What are the four [right] efforts?”

Nāgasena said:

The Buddha has taught that, having distinctly established oneself in the four aspects of no longer having [evil] thoughts, these are the four [right] efforts.⁶¹ By gaining the four right efforts one in turn gains oneself the four bases of success and remembrance.⁶²

The king asked again, “What are the four bases of success and remembrance?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is being able to see penetratingly with the eye, the second is being able to hear penetratingly with the ear, the third is being able to know the thoughts in the minds of others, and the fourth is being able to fly with the body.⁶³ These are the four bases of success and remembrance. 708a

The king asked again, “What are the five faculties?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is [when] the mind does not have lustful attachment on seeing with the eye beautiful forms and ugly forms, this is a faculty. The second is [when] the mind does not have lustful attachment on hearing with the ear pleasant sounds and evil or abusive sounds, this is a faculty. The third is [when] the mind does not have lustful attachment on smelling with the nose fragrances and stench, this is a faculty. The fourth is [when] the mind does not have lustful attachment on getting in the mouth delicious flavors and bitter or pungent ones, this is a faculty. The fifth is [when] the mind does not delight in touching with the body what is fine and smooth and when the mind is also not averse to touching with the body what is rough and solid. These are the five faculties.⁶⁴

The king asked again, “What are the five powers?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is the ability to restrain the eye, the second is the ability to restrain the ear, the third is the ability to restrain the nose, the fourth is the ability to restrain the mouth, and the fifth is the ability to restrain the body, [each] making the mind not sink down. These are the five powers.

The king asked again, “What are the seven factors of awakening?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is the awakening factor of mindfulness,⁶⁵ the second is the awakening factor of discrimination [of things], the third is the awakening factor of being energetic, the fourth is the awakening factor of joy,⁶⁶ the fifth is the awakening factor of tranquility, the sixth is the awakening factor of concentration, and the seventh is the awakening factor of equanimity.⁶⁷ These are the seven factors of awakening.

The king asked again, “What is the eightfold path of practice?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is right view,⁶⁸ the second right thought, the third right speech, the fourth right livelihood,⁶⁹ the fifth right action, the sixth right effort, the seventh right mindfulness, and the eighth right concentration. This is the eightfold path of practice. All these thirty-seven requisites [of awakening described] in the discourses derive from devotion [to them], which is their root.

Nāgasena said:

Ordinary people who by hard work achieve their goal, whatever they accomplish and establish is all accomplished based on the earth. The five grains in the world, the trees and plants that face the sky, they all grow based on the earth.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a master artisan who plans to construct a great city. First he should take measure and prepare the foundation. This being completed, he can start the city.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to an acrobat who wishes to perform. He should first clean the ground by sweeping and making it even, and then perform. [In the same way] a disciple of the Buddha in quest of the path should first practice the precepts [found] in the scriptures and be mindful of what is wholesome. Relying on that, to understand *dukkha* and in turn abandon all craving and desire, he in turn mindfully attends to the eightfold path of practice.

The king said, “How does one abandon all craving and desire?”

Nāgasena said, “Being mindful of the path with mental unification one eradicates one’s own craving and desire.”

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

The king asked again, “What is being energetic?”

Nāgasena said, “To take hold of what is wholesome and support what is wholesome, this is being energetic.”

Nāgasena said, “It is similar to supporting a wall that is about to fall to one side or else further supporting a house that is about to collapse, this is being energetic.”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to the king of the country who, on being attacked, dispatches his soldiers. [Being few],⁷⁰ the soldiers are weak and nearly not up to it. The king again dispatches soldiers in support and with these soldiers in turn gains victory. People who have evils are like soldiers at the time of being few and weak. With the support of wholesome states of mind, people eliminate evil states of mind. It is similar to the king’s reinforcements, who gained victory. With the support of the five wholesome states of mind one dispels the five evil states of mind. It is similar to gaining victory in war. This is being energetic in support of what is wholesome.

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“In this way,” Nāgasena said, “with the support of having been energetic, people who have been on the path of wholesomeness attain the world-transcending path completely and do not turn back.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked again, “What is the meaning of being properly mindful of wholesome things?”

Nāgasena said, “It is similar to a person who takes different types of flowers and with a string binds them together so that the wind cannot blow them apart.”

Nāgasena said again:

It is similar to the king’s treasurer who knows that in the treasury of the king there is that much of gold, silver, gems, jade, beryl, and treasures. It is exactly similar to this when a person on the path who wishes to attain awakening is mindful of the thirty-seven requisites [of awakening described] in the discourses, namely when being mindful of the world-transcending path. People who have the intention to awaken know what is wholesome and what is evil, know what should be practiced and know what should not be practiced, they distinguish black and white. Paying attention on their own, they subsequently abandon what is evil and in turn engage in what is wholesome.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to the king's gatekeeper, who knows whom the king respects and knows whom the king does not respect, he knows who is beneficial for the king and knows who is not beneficial for the king. Knowing whom the king respects and knowing who is beneficial for the king, the gatekeeper will in turn let them inside, and knowing whom the king does not respect and who is not beneficial for the king, the gatekeeper will not let them inside.

Nāgasena said:

A person who takes hold of the intention [to awaken] is just like that; they should let wholesome [qualities] inside and should not let unwholesome [qualities] inside. Guarding one's intention and restraining the mind is just like this simile.

Nāgasena taught from the discourses, saying:

A person should on their own keep guarding and protecting their intentions and bodily [acts]. Being among [what arouses] the six cravings and desires, they should uphold their intention and keep guarding it. Then they will on their own transcend the world.

The king said, "It is well, it is well."

The king asked Nāgasena, "What is mental unification?"⁷¹

Nāgasena said, "Among all skills, mental unification alone is foremost. All skills ensue for a person who is able to unify the mind."

Nāgasena said, "It is similar to a flight of steps to an upper story which should have something as its support, so all skills adhere to mental unification."

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a king who goes out to battle with his four types of troops, his elephant troops, his cavalry, his chariot troops, and his infantry, all of which are led by the king, whom they surround. The Buddhist scriptures and precepts, and all other wholesome things, all ensue from mental unification, being similar to the troops.

Nāgasena taught from the discourses, saying:

Among all skills, mental unification is the root. The many people who

train in the path will all first rely on mental unification [to realize that] the births and deaths of a person's body pass by like water flowing downwards, from beginning to end, following each other without stopping [at any] time.

The king said, "It is well."

The king asked again, "What is wisdom?"

Nāgasena said, "I already explained it earlier.⁷² A person who has wisdom is able to cut off all doubt and have clarity about all wholesome things; this is wisdom."

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to holding a burning lamp to enter a dark room, as one proceeds with the flame to enter the room, the darkness in turn recedes and it certainly becomes bright. The brightness of a person who has wisdom is similar to the light of the flame.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person holding a sharp knife to cut down a tree. A person who has wisdom is able to cut off all evils, which is similar to having a sharp knife. 708c

Nāgasena said, "For people in the world wisdom is foremost. People who have wisdom are able to attain deliverance from the *dukkha* of births and deaths."

The king said, "It is well."

The king said:

The discourses quoted by Nāgasena earlier and later are from a variety of different types. Are they solely motivated by concern with retreating from all that is evil?

Nāgasena said, "Yes, the different discourses spoken by the Buddha on what is wholesome are solely motivated [by concern] with retreating from all that is evil."

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a king who dispatches his four types of troops. Although they march to give battle, from the time of setting out his only intention

is solely the wish to defeat the enemy. The different discourses spoken by the Buddha on what is wholesome just share the motivation of attacking and removing all that is evil.

The king said, “It is well, it is well. The discourses quoted by Nāgasena are very much to the point.”

[On Rebirth]

The king asked Nāgasena again:

[When] a person at death proceeds on the paths of good and evil, does he continue keeping the consciousness of his former body on going to be reborn?⁷³ Or does he rather change to another consciousness on going to be reborn?

Nāgasena said, “It is neither the consciousness of the former body nor different from the consciousness of the former body.”

On account of this, Nāgasena asked the king, “When your body was small and breastfeeding and when your body had come to grow up, did you continuously have the [same] former body?”

The king said, “When I was small my body was different.”

Nāgasena said:

When a person’s embryo in the mother’s womb has just formed and when the embryo matures,⁷⁴ is it the former embryo or is it different from it? [When] it solidifies into muscles and bones, is it the former embryo or is it different from it? When being just born and when being a few years old, is it the former embryo or is it different from it? When a person studies writing, can a bystander do the work in their stead?

The king said, “[The bystander] is not able to do the work in their stead.”

Nāgasena said, “If a person violates the law and [faces] punishment, can one take an innocent person in their stead?”

The king said, “One cannot do this.” The king did not understand in his mind what Nāgasena had told the king by way of consciousness and the law of punishment. On account of that, the king said, “If a person were to question Nāgasena [in the above manner], how would Nāgasena explain it?”

Nāgasena said:

My body is the former one, from the time when I was just small. From being small until growing up the old body continued. Being grown up or when small, it remains a single body that is nourished, whose destiny is to be nourished.

Nāgasena asked the king, “It is similar to a person who lights the flame of a lamp; will it last until daybreak?”

The king said, “A lighted lamp that has [sufficient] oil will last until daybreak.”

Nāgasena said:

Does the flame on the wick in the lamp at one time in the night always continue to be the light of the old flame? Reaching midnight, is it at that time still the light of the old flame? Reaching daybreak, is it at that time still the light of the old flame?

The king said, “It is not the light of the old flame.”

Nāgasena said:

The lamp being lighted, did it reach from one [time] in the night until midnight or was the flame of the lamp lit again? Was the lamp lit again close to the time of dawn?

The king said, “No, the flame that was alight at midnight just continued burning on the former single wick until the flame in the morning.”

Nāgasena said:

The successive continuity of a person’s consciousness is just like in this simile. One goes and one comes. From there being consciousness, a person is born and reaches old age and death, after which the consciousness proceeds further toward being reborn. The successive continuity is not the former consciousness and it is also not different from the former consciousness. After a person passes away, the consciousness proceeds toward being reborn.

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Nāgasena said:

It is similar to milk which coagulates into curds. The cream of curds being taken and simmered, it turns into ghee. Can one take the ghee or the cream

of curds and still call them “milk”? Would such a statement made by someone be adequate?

The king said, “Such a statement made by someone is not adequate.”
Nāgasena said:

The consciousness of a person is [similar] to the milk. From the milk one gets curds, from the curds one gets cream, and from the cream one gets ghee. The consciousness of a person is also like that. From there being consciousness, one is reborn, and from being reborn one reaches growing up, from growing up one reaches old age, from old age one reaches death, and after death one’s consciousness will again take rebirth. One body being dead, one will again take another body. It is similar to two flames that light each other.⁷⁵

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

[The Arahant]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “A person who will not be reborn again in the next life, would those persons know this for themselves?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, they are able to know it for themselves.”

The king said, “How do they know?”

Nāgasena said:

Those persons know for themselves that there is no craving, no lustful desire, and no evils. For this reason they know for themselves that they will not be reborn again in the next life.

Nāgasena asked the king:

It is similar to a farmer who plows and sows grain, reaps much, and places it into a bamboo [granary]. In subsequent years he no longer plows and no longer sows, but just eats in reliance on what is in the bamboo [granary]. Will the farmer further expect to get new grain?

The king said, “The farmer has nothing further to expect.”

Nāgasena said, “How does the farmer know that he will not get further grain?”

The king said, “The farmer has no longer plowed and no longer sowed; therefore he has nothing to expect.”

Nāgasena said:

Those who have attained awakening are also like this. They know for themselves that they have already given up and relinquished craving, with pain or pleasure their minds are without lust. For this reason they know for themselves that they will not be reborn again in the next life.

[The king said, “It is well, it is well.”]⁷⁶

The king said again, “Those persons, who will not be reborn again in the next life, do they at present have wisdom that is different from that of [other] people?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, they have wisdom that is different from that of [other] people.”

The king said, “Would they be able to have clarity about that?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, they have clarity about that.”

The king said, “What is the difference between wisdom and clarity?”

Nāgasena said, “Wisdom and clarity are just the same.”

The king said, “Those who have wisdom and clarity, would they completely know all things? Could it be that they do not know something?”

Nāgasena said, “Of some things [such] persons have knowledge and of some things they do not have it.”

The king said, “Of what do they have knowledge and of what do they not have it?”

Nāgasena said:

What those persons have previously not studied, they do not know from earlier. What those persons have previously studied, they know from earlier. The wise ones see that people and all things will all pass away, they return to emptiness and do not gain independence, [they see] that all lust for pleasure in the mind of a person is the seed for *dukkha*, the root from which *dukkha* is caused. The wise ones know impermanence and the ups and downs of things. This is how the wise ones differ from [other] people.

The king asked, “A person who has [such] wisdom, do they have delusion anywhere?”

Nāgasena said, “A person who has [such] wisdom has themselves eliminated all delusion.”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who enters a dark room holding a burning lamp. Everything in the room becomes illuminated and the darkness is exterminated. Wisdom is like that. A person who has wisdom eliminates all delusion.

The king said, “Where is that person’s wisdom?”

Nāgasena said:

[When] a person’s wisdom has carried out [its task], this wisdom in turn disappears afterward. What as a result of the wisdom has been done, it [remains] done.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who at night writes a letter under the flame [of a lamp]. The flame becomes extinct, [but] the letter remains. What the wise one has accomplished is like that. The wisdom in turn disappears, what it has done remains.

The king said, “What does the statement mean that wisdom, having accomplished something, in turn disappears on its own?”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who, to be prepared in advance for [the event of] a fire, sets up five jars with water to stop the fire. If something catches fire, that person takes the five jars of water and, pouring out the water, extinguishes the fire. After the fire has been extinguished, will the person, who has fought the fire, on returning home want to take the used jars along for their use?

The king said, “That person will not want the jars anymore and will break them. The fire being extinct, how could they further want the jars?”

Nāgasena said:

A person on the path who takes hold of the five wholesome mental states to eliminate all evils is similar to [the person] extinguishing the fire with the jars of water.

The king said, “What are the five wholesome [mental states]?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is faith that there is good and evil, the second is not violating the precepts [found] in the scriptures, the third is being energetic, the fourth is having wisdom and being mindful of what is wholesome, and the fifth is being mindful of the path with mental unification. These are the five wholesome [mental states]. A person able to undertake these five wholesome [mental states] in turn gains wisdom and knows in turn that the body and all things are impermanent, he knows in turn that they are *dukkha* and do not gain independence, he knows in turn that they are empty and with nothing in them to be owned.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a physician who takes [a mixture of] the five types of medicine and approaches the house of a sick person and gives the medicine to the sick person to drink. The sick one drinks the medicine and recovers. Would the physician again want to get that former medicine to go again to cure people?

The king said, “He will not again want to get that former medicine.”

Nāgasena said:

The five types of medicine are like the five wholesome [states of mind] of a wise one. The physician is like a person in quest of the path. The disease is like all evils. A deluded person is like a sick person. One who gains the world-transcending path is like a sick person who has been healed. What is accomplished by wisdom is to convey the person on the world-transcending path. [When] the person has already reached the path, the wisdom disappears by itself.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a strong warrior who, grasping a bow and holding arrows, advances toward the enemy. Shooting five arrows at the enemy, he gains victory. Would that person want his arrows to return to him again and again?

The king said, “He no longer wants the arrows.”

Nāgasena said:

The five arrows are the fivefold wisdom of a person. A wise person gains the path through wisdom, just as the warrior gained victory. All the evil ones in the enemy’s party are like all evils. A person on the path takes hold of the five wholesome states of mind to extinguish and retreat from all evils. All evils being extinguished, skillful wisdom arises. Through skillful wisdom the person attains the world-transcending path, and this remains constantly present and is not extinguished.

The king said, “It is well.”

709c The king said, “If a person has attained awakening and is not reborn again in the next life, will they afterward still experience pain?”

Nāgasena said, “They will experience some pain and not experience other pain.”

The king said, “How is it that they experience [some] pain and do not experience [other] pain?”

Nāgasena said, “Only their body experiences pain; their mind does not experience pain.”

The king said, “How is it that [only] their body experiences pain and their mind does not experience pain?”

Nāgasena said:

Their body experiences pain as a result of the body being in existence at present, therefore they experience pain. Their mind has discarded all evils and is without any desires, therefore it no longer experiences pain.

The king said, “In case a person attains awakening and is not able to be free from bodily pain, is this because they have not yet attained awakening to nirvana?”

The king said:

[If] a person, who has attained awakening and is without craving, has the mind at peace [yet] their body is in pain, of what use is it for them to have attained awakening?

The king said, “In case a person has attained awakening, why would they further remain?”

Nāgasena said, “It is similar to fruit that is not yet ripe, it will not ripen by being forced. Being already ripe, there is also nothing further to wait for.”

Nāgasena said:

What the king has focused on in regard to awakening has been explained by Sāriputta. When still alive, Sāriputta said, “I do not seek death and I also do not seek life. I solely wait for my time. When the suitable time has arrived, I will in turn depart.”⁷⁷

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

[Types of Experiences]

The king asked:

Is it wholesome or is it unwholesome for a person to experience pleasure? Is it wholesome or is it unwholesome for a person to experience pain? The Buddha would not have denied that there is pleasure or that there is pain.

The king said [further], “Provided that there is not [only] pain in what is conditioned.”⁷⁸

Nāgasena asked the king:

If a person takes burning hot iron in the hand, would that person’s hand be burnt? Again, [if] he takes ice in the [other] hand, would that ice also burn the [other] hand?

The king said, “Yes, each of the two hands will be affected.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “In this way are each of the things he takes in his two hands burning?”

The king said, “They are not both burning.”

Nāgasena said, “Are they both cold?”

The king said, “They are not both cold.”

Nāgasena said, “[Yet,] both hands are all burnt.”

Nāgasena said:

I again ask your majesty. [If] the former and the latter are both hot, your majesty should say, “Both are hot.” [If] both are cold, you should say, “Both are cold.” What is the reason, one being cold and one being hot, for you to be able to say equally that they burn the person’s hand?

710a The king said, “My wisdom is very elementary and I am not able to debate this. May Nāgasena explain it to me.”

Nāgasena said:

The Buddha has taught in a discourse that there are altogether six things that cause joy inside of a person, six things that cause sadness inside of a person, and again six things that cause neither joy nor sadness [inside of] a person; moreover there are six things that, being outside [of attachment], cause a person [joy], sadness, [and neither joy nor sadness].⁷⁹

The king asked, “What are the six things that cause joy inside of a person?” Nāgasena said:

The first is [pleasant] sights and what one hopes [to see] with the eye; this is a reason for causing joy inside of a person.

The second is pleasant sounds and what one hopes to hear with the ear; this is a reason for causing joy inside of a person.

The third is pleasant fragrances and what one hopes to smell with the nose; this is a reason for causing joy inside of a person.

The fourth is delicious flavors and what one hopes to get [to taste] with the tongue; this is a reason for causing joy inside of a person.

The fifth is [touching] what is fine and smooth and what one hopes to get [to touch] with the body; this is a reason for causing joy inside of a person.

The sixth is [mental] pleasure and what one hopes to get to experience with the mind; this is a reason for causing joy inside of a person.

In this way there are six things that cause joy inside of a person.

The king asked again, “What are the six things that, being outside [of attachment], cause a person joy?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is [when], on seeing pleasant forms with the eye, one is aware that they cannot be constantly gotten and that they are all to be abandoned, whereupon one personally gives careful attention to their impermanent nature; this is a reason for causing a person joy outside [of attachment].

The second is [when], on hearing pleasant sounds with the ear, one is

aware that they cannot be constantly gotten and that they are all to be abandoned; this is a reason for causing a person joy outside [of attachment].

The third is [when], on smelling pleasant fragrances with the nose, one is aware that they cannot be constantly gotten and that they are all to be abandoned; this is a reason for causing a person joy outside [of attachment].

The fourth is [when], on getting delicious flavors in the mouth, one is aware that they cannot be constantly gotten and that they are all to be abandoned; this is a reason for causing a person joy outside [of attachment].

The fifth is [when], on getting [to touch] what is fine and smooth with the body, one is aware that this cannot be constantly gotten and that it is all to be abandoned; this is a reason for causing a person joy outside [of attachment].

The sixth is [when], on having thoughts of craving and desire in the mind, one gives attention to them and is aware that these are all impermanent and that they are all to be abandoned; by being aware of them in this way one experiences joy afterward.

These are the six things that, being outside [of attachment], cause a person joy.

The king asked again, “What are the six inner things that cause sadness inside of a person?”

Nāgasena said:

The first to cause sadness inside of a person is seeing what is unpleasant with the eye; this causes sadness inside of a person.

The second is hearing what is unwanted with the ear; hearing it causes sadness inside of a person.

The third is smelling unwanted stenches with the nose; this causes sadness inside of a person.

The fourth is getting an unwanted [flavor] in the mouth; getting [to taste] it causes sadness inside of a person.

The fifth is touching what is unwanted with the body; touching it causes sadness inside of a person.

The sixth is having what cannot be enjoyed in the mind; its existence causes sadness inside of a person.

These are six things that cause sadness inside of a person.

The king asked again, “What are the six things that, being outside [of attachment], cause neither joy [nor sadness] in a person?”⁸⁰

Nāgasena said:

The first is [if] seeing evil forms with the eye causes neither joy [nor sadness] in a person.

The second is [if] hearing evil sounds with the ear causes neither joy [nor sadness] in a person.

The third is [if] smelling stench and what is rancid with the nose causes neither joy [nor sadness] in a person.

710b The fourth is [if] getting what is bitter or pungent on the tongue causes neither joy [nor sadness] in a person.

The fifth is [if] touching with the body what is rough and solid causes neither joy [nor sadness] in a person.

The sixth is [if] having in the mind what is hateful causes neither joy [nor sadness] in a person.

These are the six things that, being outside [of attachment], cause neither joy [nor sadness] in a person.

The king asked again, “What are the six things that cause neither joy nor sadness [inside of] a person?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is seeing with the eye what is neither enjoyable nor saddening.

The second is hearing with the ear sounds that are neither enjoyable nor saddening.

The third is smelling with the nose what is neither enjoyable nor saddening.

The fourth is getting in the mouth what is neither enjoyable nor saddening.

The fifth is touching with the body what is neither enjoyable nor saddening.

The sixth is thinking in the mind of what is neither enjoyable nor saddening.

These are the six things that cause neither joy nor sadness inside of a person.

The king asked again, “What are the six things that, being outside [of attachment], cause a person sadness?”

Nāgasena said:

The first is seeing with the eye what is dead, because of which one is aware of one’s own body and all things as impermanent. Those persons are aware of this and say to themselves, “Having such awareness, why have I not [yet] attained awakening?”; and because of that there is sadness outside [of attachment].

The second is not delighting in desirable sounds by the ear. Those persons are aware of this and say to themselves, “Having such awareness, why have I not [yet] attained awakening?”; and because of that there is sadness outside [of attachment].

The third is not delighting in stench or fragrances at the nose. Those persons are aware of this and say to themselves, “Having such awareness, why have I not [yet] attained awakening?”; and because of that there is sadness outside [of attachment].

The fourth is not [delighting] in tasting what is bitter or sweet in the mouth. Those persons are aware of this [and say] to themselves, “Having such awareness, why have I not [yet] attained awakening?”; and because of that there is sadness outside [of attachment].

The fifth is not delighting in touching with the body what is fine and smooth, nor getting [averse to] what is rough and solid. Those persons are aware of this [and say] to themselves, “Having such awareness, why have I not [yet] attained awakening?”; and because of that there is sadness outside [of attachment].

The sixth is not delighting in cravings and desires in the mind. Those persons are aware of this [and say] to themselves, “Having such awareness, why have I not [yet] attained awakening?”; and because of that there is sadness outside [of attachment].

These are the six things that cause a person sadness outside [of attachment].

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

[On Rebirth Again]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “After a person’s death, who is reborn in the next life?”

Nāgasena said, “Name-and-form are reborn in the next life.”

The king asked Nāgasena, “Is it the former person’s name-and-form that go to be reborn?”

Nāgasena said:

No. What persists is neither the old name nor the old body. With this name-and-form one does good and evil in this life. [Then] there is just rebirth in the next life.

The king said:

Provided that by means of this name-and-form good and evil are performed in the present life, and the [same name-and-]form is not reborn again because of that in the next life, then can one be delivered directly by the path of performing good and evil, without experiencing further *dukkha*?

Nāgasena said:

One who does what is good in the present life and is not reborn again in the next life, would [such a one] not in turn have gained deliverance? [However], persons who do good and evil without stopping will later just be reborn; for this reason they have not gained deliverance.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who steals another person’s fruit. The owner arrests the thief of the fruit and brings him before the king, saying, “This person has stolen my fruit.” The thief says, “I did not steal this person’s fruit. This person just planted a small seed; he did not originally plant the fruit. I myself took the fruit. How could I be a thief? I did not steal this man’s fruit. I do not accept being at fault.”

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Nāgasena asked the king, “Of the two men disputing in this way together, who is right and who is wrong?”

The king said, “The one who planted the seed at his home is right. The

seed was formerly planted by him. The thief is guilty and has to accept being at fault.”

Nāgasena said, “Why is [the thief] at fault?”

The king said:

As a result of stealing he is at fault. Earlier the planter of the seed planted it at his home. It was from what he had planted that the roots grew and just for this reason there were fruits up on the [tree].

Nāgasena said:

A person who is reborn is similar to that. By means of doing good and evil in this life with this name-and-form a person is reborn in the next life; doing good and evil in this life is the root.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who steals another person’s ripe grain. The owner arrests the thief and, leading [the person] in turn along to be investigated, [says], “You stole my ripe grain.” The thief says, “I did not steal your ripe grain, my dear. You yourself planted grain [seeds], my dear; I myself took ripe grain. How could I have committed a theft?” The two persons lead each other in front of the king and state [the situation] in this way. Who is right and who is wrong?

The king said, “The planter of the seed is right, the thief is wrong.”

Nāgasena said, “How can one know that the thief of the ripe grain is wrong?”

The king said, “The planting of the grain forms the root; without planting the grain there is no condition for it, so how could there be ripe grain?”

Nāgasena said:

A person being reborn is similar to that. By means of doing good and evil in this life with this name-and-form a person is reborn in the next life; doing good and evil in this life is the root.”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who in winter feels cold and in one house lights a

fire wishing to warm themselves. [Then] that person leaves the fire behind and goes. Gradually burning, it reaches the walls and the floors [until] it burns down the room and contiguous stories of the house. The owner of the house, being told about the one who started the fire, leads [the person] in front of the king and says, “This person started a fire that continued to burn down the stories of my house.” Yet the arsonist says, “I just lit a small fire to warm myself. I did not burn down the stories of the house.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Who is right?”

The king said, “The one who earlier lit the fire is wrong; it is from that earlier place that [the great fire] arose.”

Nāgasena said:

A person who is reborn is similar to that. It is just like that [when], by means of doing good and evil in this life with this name-and-form a person is reborn in the next life; doing good and evil in this life is the root.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who at night lights the flame of a candle and puts it on the wall, wishing to eat his meal by means of its light. The candle diminishes, yet [the flames burn] the walls above and reach the bamboo and wooden material. They burn down one house in turn and, becoming a great conflagration, they continue to burn down the whole town. The people in the whole town are angry and together say to him, “Why did you burn down the whole town like this?” Yet the arsonist says, “I lit a small candle flame just to eat my meal in its light. This great fire [arose] by itself; it is not my fire.” In this way they in turn litigate with each other, leading [the arsonist] in front of the king.

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Nāgasena said to the king, “In this way, who is right and who is wrong?”

The king said, “The arsonist is wrong.”

Nāgasena said, “How can one know that?”

The king said:

It arose from the earlier fire. [The arsonist should be told,] “Having eaten your meal, you did not undertake to put out the fire and this has caused the fire to burn down the whole city.”

Nāgasena said:

A person who is reborn is similar to that. In this way by means of doing good and evil in this life with this name-and-form a person is reborn in the next life; doing good and evil in this life is the root. Out of a lack of understanding a person does good and evil, being unable to attain deliverance for this reason.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who pays a bride price for a small girl in another person's family. Afterward the woman grows up and another man in turn gives a bride price for that woman to get that woman as his wife. The one who previously contracted the marriage with the family comes himself and says, "Return to me the wife you took." The one who later [contracted the marriage] with the family says, "You contracted marriage with the woman yourself when she was small. I contracted marriage with the woman myself when she had grown up. How could she be the infant you married?" They lead each other in front of the king.

Nāgasena said to the king, "In this way, who is right and who is wrong?"

The king said, "The one who previously contracted marriage with the family is right."

Nāgasena said to the king, "How can one know that?"

The king said:

This woman was earlier small and now she has gradually grown up; for this reason one can know that he is right, that she is married to the one who previously contracted marriage with the family.

Nāgasena said:

A person who is reborn is similar to that. By means of doing good and evil in this life with this name-and-form a person is reborn in the next life; doing good and evil in this life is the root.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who carries a bottle to buy milk from a dairy farmer's family. Having gotten the milk, he returns it to the owner in

deposit, saying, “I will come back today.” Soon after, the man returns for a moment to take the bottle with the milk. The milk has in turn coagulated into curds. The one who bought the milk from the family says, “Dear, I took milk and deposited it with you. What you are now handing over for me to take in return is curds.” The dairy farmer says, “This is your old milk; by now it has coagulated into curds on its own.” The two men litigate with each other and lead each other in front of the king.

Nāgasena asked the king, “In this way, who is right and who is wrong?” The king said, “The dairy farmer’s family is right.”

Nāgasena said to the king, “How can one know that?”

The king said:

[The buyer should be told], “You bought the milk yourself and deposited the milk in that place where it coagulated into curds on its own.” What is there to blame the family of the dairy farmer?

Nāgasena said:

A person who is reborn is similar to that. By means of doing good and evil in this life with this name-and-form a person is reborn in the next life; doing good and evil in this life is the root.

The king asked again, “Now will Nāgasena be reborn again in the next life?”

Nāgasena replied to the king:

I have already replied to that question previously in this way, “Provided that I have craving, I will again be reborn in the next life. Provided I have no craving, I will not be reborn.”

Nāgasena said:

711b It is similar to a person who serves the king with all their forces. Knowing of their skills makes the king grant them wealth. Having gotten the wealth, the person makes the utmost use of it by means of getting for themselves clothes, food, and drink, delighting in their own pleasures. During discussions, that person states, “I have done service to the king and the king has not yet bestowed a reward on me.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “If that person, who got the reward, instead states that they have not yet received it, are the words of that person proper?”

The king said, “The words of that person are improper.”

Nāgasena said:

For this reason I said to the king, “Provided that I have craving, I will again be reborn in the next life. Provided I have no craving, I will not be reborn in the next life.”

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena, “Dear, previously you spoke of the name-and-form of a person; what is ‘name’ and what is ‘form’?”

Nāgasena said, “Now, what visibly exists is ‘form’; thoughts in the mind are ‘name.’”

The king asked again, “Why is it that a person has a name that goes to be reborn in the next life and the form is not going to be reborn?”

Nāgasena said:

The form and the name of a person are mutually connected from beginning to end. It is similar to the liquid in the egg and its outer shell, which becomes an egg. A person’s name-and-form are mutually connected in this way and cannot be separated.

The king said, “It is well.”

[On Time]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is a duration of time?”

Nāgasena said:

By way of things of the past there is a duration of time and [by way of] things of the future there is also a duration of time. With present things there is no duration of time.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Does a duration of time verily exist?”

Nāgasena said, “At times a duration of time exists, at times a duration of time does not exist.”

The king said again, “How does a duration of time exist and how does a duration of time not exist?”

Nāgasena said:

For those who have attained awakening to nirvana, a duration of time does not exist. For those who have not attained awakening and who will experience further deaths and rebirths, a duration of time exists. [Nevertheless, if] a person in this life is fond of giving and has regard for their parents, in the next life they will gain good fortune.

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

[On the Origin of Things]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Regarding things of the past, things of the future, and things of the present, what is at the root of these three things?”

Nāgasena said:

Delusion is at the root of things of the past, things of the future, and things of the present. Having arisen, delusion gives rise to consciousness, consciousness gives rise to the body, the body gives rise to name, name gives rise to form, and form gives rise to the six [spheres of] knowledge.⁸¹ The first is knowing through the eye, the second is knowing through the ear, the third is knowing through the nose, the fourth is knowing through the mouth, the fifth is knowing through the body, and the sixth is knowing through the mind. These are the six [spheres of] knowledge. These six things are all directed toward the external.

How are they directed toward the external? The eye is directed toward forms, the ear is directed toward sounds, the nose is directed toward fragrances, the mouth is directed toward flavors, the body is directed toward what is smooth, and the mind is directed toward lustful cravings. These six are directed toward the external through what is called contact.

For one who has contact, who is conjoined with contact, there is knowledge of pain and knowledge of pleasure. From pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires, becoming arises and in turn the condition for old age arises. From old age [comes] the condition for disease, from disease [comes] the condition for death,

from death [comes] the condition for lamentation, from lamentation [comes] the condition for sadness, from sadness [comes] the condition for being internally afflicted in the mind. 711c

Together, in conjunction, these are all *dukkha* and their conjunction is what one calls “a person.” Therefore, at that time, births and deaths do not end for [such] “a person,” and of [such] “a person” a former origin of the aggregate [of *dukkha*] cannot be obtained.⁸²

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who plants the five [types of] grain and their roots grow. From the roots, the stalks, leaves, and fruits grow. Having subsequently gotten grain, afterward, in the next year, they again plant and again get much grain.

Nāgasena asked the king, “If a person plants grain year after year, would the grain that is planted come to an end without growing in due time?”

The king said, “Planting grain year after year, it will not come to an end without growing in due time.”

Nāgasena said, “A person being reborn is just like this. At that time the continuity in the appearance of births does not come to an end.”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a chicken that gives birth to an egg, and the egg gives birth to a chicken. From the egg, [another] egg arises; from the chicken, [another] chicken arises. The births and deaths of a person are just like this and at that time do not come to an end.

Nāgasena in turn drew the wheel of a chariot on the ground and asked the king, “Does this wheel have corners?”

The king said, “It is well rounded and has no corners.”

Nāgasena said:

In a Buddhist discourse it is said that the births and deaths of a person are like the wheel of a chariot;⁸³ there is a continuity in the appearance of births at that time that does not come to an end.

Nāgasena said:

A person is aware by way of the eye, all types of forms, and consciousness; one knows by the conjunction of these three things. From their conjunction, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires, the condition for becoming arises; from becoming [comes] the condition for birth; from birth [comes] the condition for doing good and evil, and from [doing] good and evil there is in turn [another] birth.

One is aware [by way of] the ear, the hearing of sounds, and consciousness; one knows by the conjunction of these three things. From their conjunction, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires, the condition for becoming arises; from becoming [comes] the condition for birth; from birth [comes] the condition for doing good and evil, and from [doing] good and evil there is in turn [another] birth.

One is aware [by way of] the nose, the smelling of fragrances, and consciousness; one knows by the conjunction of these three things. From their conjunction, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires, the condition for becoming arises; from becoming [comes] the condition for birth; from birth [comes] the condition for doing good and evil, and from [doing] good and evil there is in turn [another] birth.

One is aware [by way of] the mouth, the getting of flavors, and consciousness; one knows by the conjunction of these three things. From their conjunction, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires, the condition for becoming arises; from becoming [comes] the condition for birth; from birth [comes] the condition for doing good and evil, and from [doing] good and evil there is in turn [another] birth.

One is aware [by way of] the body, the getting [to touch] what is fine and smooth, and consciousness; one knows by the conjunction of these three things. From their conjunction, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires, the condition for becoming arises; from becoming [comes] the condition for birth; from birth [comes] the condition for doing good and evil, and from [doing] good and evil there is in turn [another] birth.

One is aware [by way of] the mind, thoughts, and consciousness; one knows by the conjunction of these three things. From their conjunction, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires, the condition for becoming arises; from becoming [comes] the condition for birth; from birth [comes] the condition for doing good and evil, and from [doing] good and evil there is in turn [another] birth.

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Nāgasena said, “Thus the continuity in the appearance of a person’s births does not come to an end.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

Dear, you said that an origin of a person’s births and deaths cannot be obtained. What do you consider to be without an origin that could be obtained?

Nāgasena said, “There being [no] origin, it will not arise again.⁸⁴ There being an origin, it will pass on again. This is by dint of there being an origin.”

The king said:

There being no origin, it will not arise again. Evidently, there being an origin, it will pass on again. In this way its origin has not yet been terminated?

Nāgasena said, “Yes, and it will all pass on.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “From what else do the births and deaths of a person thrive?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Is there something else from which people in the world and creeping and wriggling beings thrive?”

The king said:

I did not ask Nāgasena about people in the world and about creeping and wriggling beings. I only wanted to ask you, dear, just about the origin of the births and deaths of a person.

Nāgasena said:

The growth of trees has as its origin being planted; the growth of the five

grains has its origin in grain [seed]. All things throughout the world, they all grow from their specific origin. A person has their origin in craving in regard to the six senses.

Nāgasena said:

For a person there are eyes, there are forms, and there is consciousness; there are ears, there are sounds, and there is consciousness; there is the nose, there are fragrances, and there is consciousness; there is the tongue, there are flavors, and there is consciousness; there is the body, there is touching of what is fine and smooth, and there is consciousness; there is thinking, there are mind-objects, and there is consciousness. From this, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desire, just the conjunction of these [types] of *dukkha* arise, which becomes a person.

Due to the eye . . . ear . . . nose . . . mouth . . . body . . . consciousness being conscious of thoughts, there is contact as their point of convergence. From contact, pain and pleasure arise; from pain and pleasure, craving arises; from craving, lustful desires arise; from lustful desires as the condition, becoming arises; from becoming as the condition, there is birth; from birth as the condition, there is old age, and from this condition there is disease; from disease as the condition, there is death, and from this condition there is sadness; from sadness as the condition, there is lamentation; and from lamentation as the condition, there is being internally afflicted in the mind. A person being born is like this.

Nāgasena said:

There being no eye and no seeing of forms, one is not aware of them and does not know them; from not being aware of them and not knowing them, there is no conjunction. There being no conjunction, there is no pain and pleasure; there being no pain and pleasure, in turn craving does not arise; there being no craving, lustful desires do not arise; there being no lustful desires, there is no becoming; there being no becoming, there is no birth and no old age; there being no birth and no old age, there is no disease and no death; there being no disease and no death, there is no worry and no lamentation; there being no worry and no lamentation, the mind is not

internally afflicted. There being none of all these [types of] *dukkha*, one is in turn delivered by attaining awakening to nirvana.

There being no ear, nothing is heard . . . there being no nose, nothing is smelled . . . there being no mouth, nothing is tasted . . . there being no body, nothing fine or smooth is touched . . . there being no consciousness, nothing is thought; nothing being thought, there is no contact; there being no contact, there is no pain and pleasure; there being no pain and pleasure, there is no craving; there being no craving, there are no lustful desires; there being no lustful desires, there is no coming to a womb; not coming to a womb, there is no being born; there being no birth, there is no old age; there being no old age, there is no disease; there being no disease, there is no death; there being no death, there is no worry; there being no worry, there is no lamentation; there being no lamentation, the mind is not internally afflicted. Abandoning all these [types of] *dukkha*, one attains in turn awakening to nirvana.

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The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Could there be in the world an entity that arises of itself?”

Nāgasena said, “There is no entity that arises of itself; all will do so being conditioned.”

Nāgasena for this reason asked the king, “The hall in which the king is seated now, has it been constructed by workers or has it arisen of itself?”

The king said, “Workers constructed it with wooden rafters that were produced from trees and with plaster on the wall that was produced from the earth.”

Nāgasena said:

The birth of a person is also like that. In this way the conjunction of elements results in a person. For this reason there is no entity that arises of itself, all are conditioned.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a potter who makes utensils. He takes earth and water, combines them so that they become clay and burns it to make various utensils. The clay is unable to become a utensil on its own. There must be a worker, firewood, and a fire, and just then it will become a utensil. In the world there is nothing that arises of itself.

Nāgasena said to the king, “It is similar to, for example, a lute without strings, without frame, and without a player; would it be able to make sound?”

The king said, “It will not be able to produce sound on its own.”

Nāgasena said, “If the lute is made to play, has strings and a frame, and there is a player, would sounds emerge?”

The king said, “There will be sound.”

Nāgasena said, “In the same way throughout the world there is no entity that arises of itself. All will do so being conditioned.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “It is like fire produced by drilling a flint. Without two pieces of wood and without a person to drill, would one be able to get fire?”

The king said, “One will not be able to get fire.”

Nāgasena said, “In case there are two pieces of wood and there is a person to drill, would one be able to get fire?”

The king said, “Yes, fire will arise.”

Nāgasena said, “Throughout the world there is no entity that arises of itself. All will do so being conditioned.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “It is similar to a speculum without a person to hold it and also without sun and without a [clear] sky,⁸⁵ would one be able to get fire?”

[The king said, “One will not be able to get fire.”]

Nāgasena said, “If a person holds the speculum and there is a [clear] sky and the sun, would one be able to get fire?”

The king said, “One gets fire.”

Nāgasena said, “Throughout the world there is no entity that arises of itself. All will do so being conditioned.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “If a person has no mirror and no light, and that person wishes to look at themselves, would they be able to see their appearance?”

The king said, “They will not be able to see themselves.”

Nāgasena said, “In case there is a mirror,⁸⁶ there is light, and there is a person who looks at themselves, would they be able to see their own form?”

The king said, “Yes, they will be able to see themselves.”

Nāgasena said, “Throughout the world there is no entity that arises of itself. All will do so being conditioned.”

The king said, “It is well.”

[On the Soul]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Among people of the world, could there be a [truly existing] person?”

Nāgasena said, “It is not possible to query if a person [truly] exists in the world [without clarifying] who is properly called a ‘[truly existing] person.’”⁸⁷

The king said, “Is it not the life principle in the body that is the [truly existing] person?”⁸⁸

Nāgasena asked the king:

Is the life principle in the body able to see form by means of the eyes? Is it able to hear sounds with the ears? Is it able to smell fragrances by means of the nose? Is it able to know flavors by means of the tongue? Is it able to know what is fine and smooth by means of the body? Is it able to know what is there by means of the mind?

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The king said, “It is able to do it.”

Nāgasena said, “Now the king and I are in the upper hall which has windows on the four sides. Are we able to see freely, as we wish, from any window?”

The king said, “We can see.”

Nāgasena said:

Supposing that a person’s life principle is inside the body and it can freely, as it wishes, see from any aperture. Looking through the ears, is it [also] able to see forms to be seen with the eye? Is it able to use the ear to see forms? Is it [also] able to use the nose to see forms? Is it [also] able to use the mouth to see forms? Is it [also] able to use the body to see forms? Is it [also] able to use the mind to see forms?

The king said, “It is not able to do it.”

Nāgasena said:

Supposing the life principle resides in the ear. Is it [only] able to hear something through the ear? [Or] is it [also] able to see what is there through the ear? Is it [also] able to know fragrances and stenches through the ear? Is it [also] able to know flavors through the ear? Is it [also] able to know what is fine and smooth through the ear? Is it [also] able to [know] what is thought through the ear?

Nāgasena said:

Supposing the life principle resides in the nose. Is it [only] able to know fragrances and stench through the nose? [Or is it also able to see something through the nose?]⁸⁹ Is it [also] able to hear sounds through the nose? Is it [also] able to know flavors through the nose? Is it [also] able to know what is fine and smooth through the nose? Is it [also] able to [know] what is thought through the nose?

Nāgasena said:

Supposing the life principle resides in the mouth. Is it [only] able to know flavors through the mouth? [Or] is it [also] able to see something through the mouth? Is it [also] able to hear sounds through the mouth? Is it [also] able to smell stench and fragrances through the mouth? Is it [also] able to know what is fine and smooth through the mouth? Is it [also] able to [know] what is thought through the mouth?

Nāgasena said:

Supposing the life principle resides in the body. Is it [only] able to know what is fine and smooth through the body? [Or] is it [also] able to see what is there through the body? Is it [also] able to hear sounds through the body? Is it [also] able to know stench and fragrances through the body? Is it [also] able to know flavors through the body? Is it [also] able to [know] what is thought through the body?

Nāgasena said:

Supposing the life principle resides in consciousness. Is it [only] able to [know] what is thought through consciousness? [Or is it also able to see something through consciousness?]⁹⁰ Is it [also] able to hear sounds through consciousness? Is it [also] able to know stench and fragrances through consciousness? Is it [also] able to know flavors through consciousness? Is it [also] able to [know] what is fine and smooth through consciousness?

The king said, “It is not able to know it.”

Nāgasena said, “What the king has said previously and subsequently do not tally with each other.”

Nāgasena said, “It is like the king and I being seated together in the upper hall and the four windows were to be demolished, could we see far and wide?”

The king said, “Yes, [we could see] far and wide.”

Nāgasena said:

Supposing the life principle is in the body. The eye being taken off, would one be seeing far and wide? The ears being cut off and [their orifices] being enlarged, would one be able to hear what is far? The nose being cut off and [its orifices] being enlarged, would one be able to smell fragrances far away? The mouth being cut off and enlarged, would one be able to know many [more] flavors? The skin being peeled off, would one know much [more] of what is fine and smooth? The mind being cut off and taken off, would its [ability to think] become large?

The king said, “No, it would not.”

Nāgasena said, “What the king said previously and subsequently also do not tally with each other.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “[If] the king’s treasurer came in and were to stand in front of the king, would your majesty be aware of him and know that he is in front of you?” 713a

The king said, “I would know that he is in front of me.”

Nāgasena said, “[If] the king’s treasurer came into the king’s room, would he know that he has come into the room?”

The king said, “He would know that he has come into the room.”

Nāgasena said:

Supposing that a person’s life principle is inside the body and the person has taken some flavor and placed it into the mouth, would it be able to know what is sweet, sour, acidic, salty, spicy, or bitter?

The king said, “It would know it.”

Nāgasena said, “What the king said previously and subsequently do not tally with each other.”

Nāgasena said:

It is like a person who buys exquisite wine and puts it into a large vessel. He forcefully blocks another person’s mouth and puts him upside down

into the wine to taste the wine. Would that person know the taste of the wine?

The king said, “That person will not know it.”

Nāgasena said, “Why will he not know the flavor?”

The king said, “It does not enter his mouth and reach the surface of his tongue; therefore he will not know the flavor.”

Nāgasena said, “What the king said previously and subsequently do not tally with each other.”

The king said, “I am bewildered and my intelligence is not up to debating this. May you explain how it appears [to you].”

Nāgasena said:

From a person’s eye and vision of forms, there is activity of consciousness. With activity of consciousness, pain and pleasure arise. [From the arising of pain and pleasure] there is a conjunction with intentions and thoughts. Their conjunctions with the ear, nose, mouth, body, and mind are all similar. There being the mind and what is thought, there is activity of consciousness. With activity of consciousness, pain and pleasure arise. From the arising of pain and pleasure, there is intention, and from its arising, there are thoughts. The continuity in their appearance is accomplished appropriately without there being a permanent owner.

The king said, “It is well.”

[On Experience]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “When in a person [experience through] the eye arises, do the eye and consciousness arise together?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, they arise together at the same time.”

The king asked again, “Does the domain of the eye arise before or does the domain of consciousness arise before?”

Nāgasena said, “The domain of the eye arises before and the domain of the mind arises afterward.”

The king said:

Did the eye say to consciousness, ‘Where I am proceeding to arise, you should follow me and arise afterward.’ Did the two communicate with each

other? Did consciousness say to the eye, ‘Where you arise, I shall follow you and arise afterward.’ Did the two communicate with each other?

Nāgasena said, “The two did not communicate with each other.”

The king said, “Dear, you did not state the reason why, [although] arising together at the same time, they did not communicate with each other.”

Nāgasena said, “There are four situations in which [things arise] together without communicating with each other.”

Nāgasena said on his own:

What are the four? The first is by descending, the second is by turning toward a door, the third is by proceeding along a rut, and the fourth is by estimating. These are four situations in which [things arise] together without communicating with each other.

The king asked again, “What is ‘descending’?”

Nāgasena replied to the king, “[When] the sky rains on top of a high mountain, where will the ensuing water proceed to flow?”

The king said, “It will descend.”

Nāgasena said, “At a later time the sky rains again, where will the water again proceed to flow?”

The king said, “It will proceed according to where the previous water has flowed.”

Nāgasena asked the king:

Would the previous water have said to the later water, “You should follow where I have gone”? Would the later water have said to the previous water, “I shall follow the place where you proceeded to flow”? Did the previous water and the later water communicate with each other?

The king said, “Each of the waters proceeded to flow on its own. The previous and the later one did not communicate with each other.”

Nāgasena said:

The eye is just like the water. The eye did not say to consciousness, “You should follow me after I arose.” Consciousness also did not say to the eye, “I shall follow you after you have proceeded to arise.” The eye and consciousness did not [come] together and communicate with each other.

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This is called “descending.” As with the eye, it is the same with the ear, the nose, the mouth, the body, and the mind.⁹¹

The king asked again, “What is ‘turning toward a door’?”

Nāgasena said, “It is similar to a great imperial city which has a single gate. Inside there is one person who wishes to go out. Toward where should they turn?”

The king said, “They should just go out through the gate.”

Nāgasena said, “Afterward, again a person wishes to go out. Toward where should they turn to go out?”

The king said, “As earlier, they should just go out through the gate [used] by the previous person.”

Nāgasena said to the king:

Would the person who went out previously have told the later person, “You should follow after me, where I went out”? Would the later person have told the previous person, “Dear, I shall follow after you, by the gate by which you went out”? Would the two persons have communicated with each other?

The king said, “The previous person and the later person did not [come] together and communicate with each other.”

Nāgasena said:

The eye is just like the gate. The eye did not say to consciousness, “You should follow me after I arose.” Consciousness also did not say to the eye, “Now I shall follow you after you arose.” The eye and consciousness did not [come] together and communicate with each other. This is “turning toward a door.” It is the same with the ear, nose, mouth, body, and the mind.

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is ‘proceeding along a rut’?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “A chariot has come previously and there is a rut. Where will a chariot that comes later proceed?”

The king said, “The later chariot will proceed following in the rut of the previous vehicle.”

Nāgasena said:

Would the previous chariot’s wheels have told the wheels of the later one,

“You should later follow from where I have come.” Would the wheels of the later chariot have told the wheels of the previous one, “We shall follow the places where you came.” Would they have communicated with each other?

The king said, “They did not [come] together and communicate with each other.”

Nāgasena said:

It is just like that for a person. The eye did not say to consciousness, “You should follow me after I arose in the place where I arose.” Consciousness also did not say to the eye, “Dear, I shall follow after you arose.”

Nāgasena said, “[It is the same with] the ear, nose, mouth, body, and consciousness; they do not [come] together and communicate with each other.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is ‘estimating’?”

Nāgasena said:

One who estimates determines by writing or by studying. This is estimating. The eye, ear, nose, mouth, body, and consciousness gradually all know and through the conjunction of these six things there is what is known. There is nothing known from [just] one of these things.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “When in a person [experience through] the eye arises, do pain and pleasure arise together with it?”

Nāgasena said, “[Experience through] the eye as well as pain and pleasure arise together. They are all rooted in arising from conjunction.”

The king said again, “What is ‘conjunction’?”

Nāgasena said:

Conjunction is the touching of two with each other. Conjunction is similar to two rams [head]butting with each other. This is conjunction. One ram is like the eye and the other ram is like visible form. Their conjunction is called “contact.” It is similar to one hand being [like] the eye and the other hand being [like] visible form; the conjunction of the two hands is contact. It is similar to two stones,⁹² one stone being [like] the eye and the other stone being [like] visible form; the conjunction of the two stones is contact. By all the same conjunctions of the eye, ear, nose, [mouth], body, and

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consciousness there is contact. It is similar to two stones,⁹³ one stone being [like] consciousness and the other stone being [like] intention; the conjunction of the two stones is contact. The conjunction of consciousness and intention is like that. This is called “contact.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is ‘characteristic of pleasure’?”

Nāgasena said, “One is aware of it by oneself and knows it as pleasure.”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person at the service of the king of the country. That person is virtuous and skilled, so the king grants him wealth. Having gotten it, that person makes use of it to enjoy himself with whatever he desires. That person thinks to himself, “Serving the king, I got wealth bestowed on me. Now I gain pleasure [over] pleasure like this.”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who thinks what is wholesome with the mind, says what is wholesome with the mouth, and does what is wholesome with the body. Having practiced what is wholesome in this way, after death they gain rebirth up in heaven. Up in heaven that person, delighting themselves to the utmost of their purposes, thinks to themselves, “When I was in the [human] world, I thought what is wholesome with my mind, said what is wholesome with my mouth, and did what is wholesome with my body. For this reason I have now come to be reborn in here, gaining pleasure and ever more pleasure.” This is their being aware of it.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is ‘being aware’?”

Nāgasena said:

From knowing one is aware. It is similar to the king’s treasurer who enters into the treasury and looks inside the room himself. He knows on his own that there is so much of coins, gold, silver, gems, jade, silk of various colors and scents, knowing them all in their various places. This is “being aware and knowing.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is ‘characteristic of what a person thinks’?”

Nāgasena said:

What a person does is because of what they think. It is similar to a person who, having mixed poison into a medicine, drinks it themselves and also gives it to others to drink. It afflicts their own body and also afflicts the bodies of others.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who does evil and after death will enter into hell. Those instructed by them will all enter into hell. What the evil person said was what they thought, it is like this.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is ‘inner reflection’?”

Nāgasena said, “When one intentionally thinks, there is in turn inner reflection.”

The king said, “How does reflection at that time proceed?”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a copper bowl or a copper cauldron. A person arrives and hits it.⁹⁴ The utensil produces sound and, on being raised with the hands,⁹⁵ a remainder of sound proceeds. A person is like that, reflection and thought proceed because of intention.

Nāgasena said, “The time of hitting is [like the onset of] the reflection and the remainder of the sound [like] its proceeding.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

Is one able to take what is conjoined and separate it as “this is their conjunction,” “this is the knowledge,” “this is the thought,” “this is the mind,” and “this is the reflection”?

Nāgasena said, “In case they have come to be conjoined, one cannot separate them again.”

Nāgasena said:

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[Suppose] the king gets his cook to prepare a delicious soup in which there is water, meat, onion, garlic, ginger, salted beans, and glutinous rice. The king gives the order to a kitchen servant, “From the delicious soup that has been made, come and fetch from the soup the water with the flavor it had previously, next come and fetch the flavor of the meat,⁹⁶ next come and fetch the flavor of the onions, next come and fetch the flavor of the ginger, next come and fetch the flavor of the salted beans, next come and fetch the flavor of the glutinous rice.” The soup being made, would the person be able to fetch each of the flavors from the soup and give it to the king?

The king said, “After the soup has been conjoined into one, one cannot separate each of the flavors.”

Nāgasena said:

All these things are also like that. Being conjoined into one, one cannot separate them as “this is pain and pleasure,” “this is knowledge,” “this is reflection,” and “this is thought.”

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “A person who keeps looking with the eye, can they distinguish and know the flavor of salt?”

Nāgasena said, “Is the knowledge of the king such as this? Is he able to keep looking with the eye and know the flavor of salt?”

The king said, “[So] the eye does not know the taste of salt?”

Nāgasena said, “A person who keeps [tasting] with the tongue is able to know and obtain the flavor of salt. They are not able to know the flavor of salt through the eyes.”

The king said again, “Does a person know flavors by means of the tongue?”

Nāgasena said, “People are all able to know flavors distinctly by means of the tongue.”

The king said, “Will all salty flavors be known distinctly by means of a tongue?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, all salty flavors will be known distinctly just by means of a tongue.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “[Suppose] a chariot transports salt and oxen are yoked to [the chariot transporting] the salt. Would the chariot’s oxen be able to know distinctly the flavor of the salt?”

Nāgasena said, “The chariot’s oxen are not able to know distinctly [or even just] know the flavor of the salt.”

The king asked Nāgasena, “Can the flavor of the salt be weighed?”

Nāgasena said, “The king knows whether one can weigh the flavor of salt.”

Being asked by the king, Nāgasena [nevertheless] said, “The flavor of salt cannot be weighed; just its weight can be weighed.”

The king said, “It is well.”

[On Karma]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Have all the five bodily [sense-]knowledges of a person been acquired by a variety of deeds? Does one acquire the five [sense-]knowledges by performing a single deed?”

Nāgasena said:

They have been acquired by a variety of deeds; they have not been acquired by a single deed. It is similar to five cereals [sown] in one field.⁹⁷ When they will grow, each one of them will grow its own respective type.⁹⁸ All the five bodily [sense-]knowledges of a person have each arisen by way of a variety of deeds.

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

People in this world are all completely endowed with a head, hair, beard, skin, face, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, body, four limbs, hands, and feet. What is the reason that some among them have a long life and some among them have a short life; that some [among] them have many diseases and some among them have few diseases; that some among them are poor and some among them are rich; that some among them are valued and some among them are despised; that some among them are eminent persons and some among them are insignificant persons; that some among them are beautiful and some among them are ugly; that some among them are trusted by the people and some among them are suspected by the people; that some among them are bright and filial and some among them are stupid? Why are they not similar?

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to the many tree fruits. Some among them are sour and not sweet, some among them are bitter, some among them are spicy, some among them are sweet, some among them are really acidic.

Nāgasena asked the king, “They all [grow] on trees; why are they not similar?”

714b The king said, “The reason they are not similar is that [the planted trees] are decidedly different in each case.”⁹⁹

Nāgasena said:

With people it is also like this. Each and every of the thoughts in their minds is different. This is the reason that makes people in the world not just be similar, so that some among them have a short life and some among them have a long life; some among them have many diseases and some among them have few diseases; some among them are rich and some among them are poor; some among them are valued and some among them are despised; some among them are eminent persons and some among them are insignificant persons; some among them are beautiful and some among them are ugly; some among them say what is useful and some among them say what is useless; some among them are bright and some among them are stupid.

Nāgasena said:

For this reason the Buddha said that people will get what accords with their own wholesome and evil deeds. Some among them are powerful and wealthy; some among them are poor and needy. All this is from the merit each gained in accordance with their own wholesome and evil deeds in previous lives and former existences in the world.¹⁰⁰

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “A person who wishes to do what is wholesome, should it be done earlier or should it be done later?”

Nāgasena said, “It should be done earlier; what will be done later is not capable of benefiting the person [now]. What has been done earlier will benefit the person.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “When the king has thirst and wishes to drink, should he employ people to dig the ground and build a well? Will they be able to attend to the king’s thirst?”

The king said, “They will not [be able] to attend to my thirst. They just should have built the well earlier.”

Nāgasena said, “With people it is just like that. Wherever people stay, all should be done prior to their stay. Doing it later will be of no benefit.”

Nāgasena asked the king:

The king is hungry and only at that time he employs people to plow the ground, fertilize the ground, and sow grains. Being hungry, will he be able to get a meal [or] should he have made provisions in advance?

The king said, “No, I should have made provisions earlier.”

Nāgasena said:

With people it is just like that. They should earlier have done what is wholesome. Doing what is wholesome only when one is under pressure will not be of personal benefit.

Nāgasena asked the king:

It is similar to the king having an enemy. Would the king, right at the time of going out to battle, be able to employ people to train the horses, train the elephants, train the people, and produce the tools for battle?

The king said:

No, I should have made provisions long ago, [so that] right at that time I can then give battle. Right at that time to train the horses, train the elephants, train the people, [and produce the tools for battle] is of no benefit.

Nāgasena said:

The Buddha said in a discourse that people should recollect their own earlier wholesome bodily deeds. To do what is wholesome later will be of no benefit.

Nāgasena said to the king:

One should not discard the great way to undertake the wrong way. To no avail the stupid person, who has discarded what is wholesome and has done evil, sits down afterward and cries; this is of no benefit. A family

man who discards and rejects loyalty and what is right and who undertakes what is wrong will later, right at the time of death, regret it.

The king said, “It is well, it is well.”

[On Hell]

The king asked Nāgasena again:

Dear, you recluses say, “Fires in the world do not burn like the fires in hell.”

Dear, you [recluses] further say, “A small stone, placed into a fire in the world, will not be consumed by the evening.” Dear, you [recluses] further

say, “Placing a very big stone into the fires in hell, it will right away be totally consumed.”¹⁰¹ For this reason I do not believe you. Dear, you

714c [recluses] further say, “People who have done evil will at death be [thrown] into hell, where for millions of years those persons will not be consumed or die.” For this reason, again, I do not believe such statements.

Nāgasena asked the king:

Would the king have heard or seen that in the water there are female pythons, female crocodiles, female tortoises, and female crabs who, being pregnant with a child, eat sandstones?

The king said, “Yes, all of them use this for food.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Will the sandstones be consumed in their bellies?”

The king said, “Yes, they will all be consumed.”

Nāgasena said, “Will the children with which they are pregnant also be consumed in their bellies?”

The king said, “They will not be consumed.”

Nāgasena said, “What is the reason that they will not be consumed?”

The king said, “Solely the good fortune of their physiognomy is the reason why they are certainly not consumed.”

Nāgasena said:

For people in hell it is just like this; for millions of years they will not be consumed or die. The reason they will not be consumed or die is that the faults committed by these people have not yet been exhausted.

Nāgasena asked the king:

A lioness, a tigress, a female dog, and a female cat, being pregnant with a child, all eat meat. Would the bones they chew and swallow be consumed in their belly?

The king said, “They will all be completely consumed.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Will the children with which they are pregnant also be consumed in their bellies?”

The king said, “They will not be consumed.”

Nāgasena said, “What is the reason that they will not be consumed?”

The king said, “It is solely by way of the good fortune of their physiognomy, which is the reason why they are not consumed.”

Nāgasena said:

For people in hell it is just like this; for millions of years they will not be consumed or die. The reason people in hell will not be consumed or die is that the evil deeds committed by them have not yet been dispelled.

Nāgasena asked the king, “Do female cows, mares, female donkeys, female elk, and female deer, being pregnant with a child, all eat grass and hay as their fodder?”

The king said, “Yes, they all use it for their food.”

Nāgasena said, “Would the hay and grass in their belly be completely consumed?”

The king said, “It will all be completely consumed.”

Nāgasena said, “Will the children in their bellies be completely consumed?”

The king said, “They will not be completely consumed.”

Nāgasena said, “What is the reason that they will not be completely consumed?”

The king said, “It is solely by way of the good fortune of their physiognomy, which is the reason why they are not completely consumed.”

Nāgasena said, “For people in hell it is just like this, because their faults have not yet been exhausted, they will not be consumed or die.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Ladies of high rank and women from rich families all eat delicious food, eating what they like. Would the food in their bellies be consumed?”

The king said, “It will all be consumed.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Would the children with which they are pregnant be consumed in their bellies?”

The king said, “They will not be consumed.”

Nāgasena said, “What is the reason that they will not be consumed?”

The king said, “It is solely the good fortune of their physiognomy, which is the reason causing them not to be consumed.”

Nāgasena said:

For people in hell it is just like this; for millions of years they will not be consumed or die. The reason they will not be consumed or die is that the evil deeds they did in previous lives have not yet been dispelled.

Nāgasena said, “People are [born] in hell, grow up in hell, and become old in hell. Their faults being exhausted, they will [eventually] die.”

The king said, “It is well.”

[On the Elements]

715a The king asked Nāgasena again, “Dear, you recluses say, ‘In the entire world, the earth rests on water, water rests on wind, and wind rests on space.’ I do not believe this.”

Nāgasena in turn came forward and took the king’s writing ink. Lifting it up with three fingers, he asked the king, “Is the water in here supported by the wind?”¹⁰²

The king said, “Yes, it is supported by the wind.”

Nāgasena said, “The wind supports water just like this.”

The king said, “It is well.”

[On Nirvana]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “On awakening to nirvana, is everything past left behind and there is no further becoming?”

Nāgasena said, “On awakening to nirvana there is no further becoming.”

Nāgasena said:

Ignorant people come by the track of being in quest of bodily cravings, internally and externally. Settled on [such craving], they are for this reason unable to attain deliverance from old age, disease, and death.

Nāgasena said:

The wise who train in the path are persons who do not attach to bodily [cravings], internally and externally. They are persons who have no craving. One who has no craving has no lustful desires. One who has no lustful desires is not [subject] to conception in a womb. One who is not [subject] to conception in a womb is not born and does not age. Not being born and not aging, there is no disease and no death. There being no disease [and no death],¹⁰³ there is no sadness and no lamentation. There being no sadness and no lamentation, one is not internally afflicted in the mind and in turn attains awakening to nirvana.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Are all those who train in the path able to attain awakening to nirvana?”

Nāgasena said:

Not all of them are able to attain awakening to nirvana. Those who rightly proceed on the path of wholesomeness, who train in understanding things correctly, who pursue what should be pursued, who keep away from and discard what should not be pursued, who think what should be thought, who discard what should not be thought—people like this will attain awakening to nirvana.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Would a person who has not attained awakening to nirvana know that awakening to nirvana is happiness?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, although they have not attained awakening to nirvana, they have reasons to know that awakening to nirvana is happiness.”

The king said, “How does a person, who has not attained awakening to nirvana, know that it is happiness?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “A person who since birth has never had their hands and feet cut off, [would they know that] this is an occasion for pain?”¹⁰⁴

The king said, “Although a person has never had their hands and feet cut off, they have reasons to know that this is painful.”

Nāgasena said, “How do they know that this is painful?”

The king said, “[When seeing] another person scream on having their hands and feet cut off,¹⁰⁵ one has reason to know that this is painful.”

Nāgasena said:

It is just like this with people. Those who have previously attained awakening to nirvana state in continuity that awakening to nirvana is happiness. This is the reason why [those who have not yet attained it] believe in it.

The king said, “It is well.”

[On the Buddha]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Would Nāgasena have seen the Buddha before?”

Nāgasena said, “I have never seen him.”

The king asked, “Would Nāgasena’s teachers have seen the Buddha before?”

Nāgasena said, “My teachers have also not seen the Buddha.”

[The king said,]¹⁰⁶ “Given that Nāgasena and his teachers have not seen the Buddha, there certainly is no Buddha.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Has the king seen the place of conjunction of the five hundred waters?”¹⁰⁷

The king said, “I have not seen it.”

715b Nāgasena said, “Have the king’s father or grandfather all seen this water?”

The king said, “They all have not seen it.”

Nāgasena said, “The king, his father, and his grandfather all have not seen the place of conjunction of the five hundred waters. So, is there certainly no place of conjunction of these five hundred waters in the world?”

The king said, “Although myself, my father, and my grandfather, all of us have not seen this water, it is true that this water exists.”

Nāgasena said, “Although myself and my teachers have not seen the Buddha, it is true that the Buddha existed.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked again, “Is there nobody else who excels the Buddha?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, there is nobody who excels the Buddha.”

The king asked again, “How can one know that there is nobody who excels the Buddha?”

Nāgasena asked the king:

It is like a person who has never entered the great ocean, would he know that the waters of the ocean are vast? There are five rivers, and [for each great] river there are five hundred smaller rivers that flow into the great rivers: the first is called Ganges, the second is called Indus (Sindhu), the third is called Tarim (Śītā), the fourth is called Oxus (Vākṣu), and the fifth is called Sarasvatī. Day and night water of these five rivers flows into the ocean without there being an increase and also without there being a decrease of the water of the ocean.

Nāgasena said, “Would your majesty be able to hear about and know this?”

The king said, “It is true, I know this.”

Nāgasena said, “As people who have attained awakening and share [the experience] of awakening say that there is nobody who excels the Buddha, therefore I believe it.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “By what [additional] means can one know that there is nobody who excels the Buddha?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Who is the master who created the script?”

The king said, “The master who created the script is called Zhi.”¹⁰⁸

Nāgasena said, “Would your majesty before have seen Zhi?”

The king said, “Zhi died long ago; I have never seen him.”

Nāgasena said, “As your majesty has never seen Zhi, by what means can you know that Zhi is the master who created the script?”

The king said:

The characters of the script have been maintained since ancient times and been continuously taught and explained. For this reason I know his name to have been Zhi.

Nāgasena said:

Due to the [same] reason, [although] I have never seen the Buddha, the discourses and discipline are like seeing the Buddha; there is no difference. The discourses spoken by the Buddha on the path are very profound and

delightful. People who have come to know the Buddha and his discourses and discipline later taught them in turn continuously. For this reason I know that there is no one who is able to excel the Buddha.

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Can one practice for a long time having personally seen [just] the Buddha’s discourses and discipline?”

715c Nāgasena said, “The precepts, discourses, and discipline taught by the Buddha are so very delightful that one will pursue them until one’s old age.”

The king said, “It is well.”

[On Rebirth]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “After a person has died, does the body not follow him to his birth in the next life?”

Nāgasena said, “After a person has died, he will rather receive a new body; the old body does not follow him.”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to lighting a lamp from the wick of another one. The old wick continues to stay; it is rather a new wick that is being lit. The body of a person is like that. The old body does not carry on; one rather receives a new body.

Nāgasena asked the king, “When small, did your majesty learn writing and reading of the scriptures from a teacher?”

The king said, “Yes, and I continue to remember it.”

Nāgasena asked the king:

The scriptures that your majesty received from his teacher, would the teacher still know these original scriptures? Did you completely carry off those original scriptures?¹⁰⁹

The king said, “No, my teacher continued to know himself just those original scriptures.”

Nāgasena said, “The body of a person is like that, one receives a new body that is apart from the old one.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Verily, does one who knows exist [in the sense of a transmigrating entity]?”¹¹⁰

Nāgasena said, “One who knows does not exist [in the sense of a transmigrating entity].”¹¹¹

Nāgasena said, “It is similar to a person who steals another person’s fruit. Would the thief be at fault?”

The king said, “He is at fault.”

Nāgasena said, “At the time of the seed being first planted there were no fruits on it. Why should the thief be at fault?”

The king said, “In case the seed is not planted, how could there be a fruit? For this reason the thief is guilty.”

Nāgasena said, “With people it is just like that. Due to doing good and evil in this life, one is born in the next life and again receives a new body.”

The king said, “Due to having performed good and evil with this old body, a person again receives a new one. In what place do the good and evil [deeds] remain?”

Nāgasena said:

The good and evil done by a person follow that person, like the shadow follows the body. At death a person loses their body; they do not lose their deeds. It is similar to lighting a flame to write in the night. The flame being extinguished, those letters continue to exist. They will again appear when reached by a flame. What has been done in the present life will appear in the next life, like this one receives it in this way.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king said, “Would Nāgasena be able to distinguish and point out the place where good and evil remain?”

Nāgasena said, “It is not possible to know the place where good and evil remain.”

Nāgasena asked the king:

Say, when trees have no fruit as yet, would one be able to distinguish, point out, and say that [in the place of this branch there will be such fruits] and in the place of that branch there will be no fruit?¹¹² Would one be able to know it in advance?

The king said, “It is not possible to know it.”

Nāgasena said, “A person who has not yet attained awakening is unable to know in advance the place where good and evil are.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked again, “A person who will be reborn in the next life, would he be able to know that himself?”

Nāgasena said, “One who will be reborn [can] know that himself.”

The king said, “By what means does he know it?”

Nāgasena said, “It is similar to a farmer who plows and sows and the sky rains in due time. Would that person know in advance that he will get grain?”

The king said, “Yes, he even knows that he will get much grain.”

Nāgasena said, “A person is just like that. A person [can] know for themselves in advance that they will be reborn in the next life.”

The king said, “It is well.”

[On the Buddha]

716a The king asked Nāgasena again, “Verily, does nirvana exist?”

Nāgasena said, “Verily, it exists.”

The king said, “Would Nāgasena be able to point out to me a certain spot where the Buddha is?”

Nāgasena said:

I am not able to point out a certain spot where the Buddha is. The Buddha has departed by taking final nirvana; it is not possible to point him out, to point out a place to be seen.

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who, having lit a great fire,¹¹³ extinguishes that fire. Of that fire, could one further point out and know the place where the light remains?

The king said, “One cannot know the place.”

Nāgasena said, “The Buddha has departed by taking final nirvana; one cannot further know his place.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Would recluses have affection for their own body?”

Nāgasena said, “Recluses do not have affection for their own body.”

The king said:

If recluses do not have affection for their own body, what is the reason they lie down to rest, wishing to ease themselves and be comfortable, and they drink and eat, wishing to get what is delicious and good? What is the reason they take care of themselves?

Nāgasena asked the king, “In the past, would you have entered the midst of a battle?”

The king said, “Yes, in the past I entered the midst of a battle.”

Nāgasena said, “Being in battle in the past, were you cut by a sword or [hit] by an arrow?”

The king said, “In the past I was quite cut by a sword.”

Nāgasena said, “Your majesty being wounded by a sword-cut [or else] by a spear [or an] arrow, what would you do?”

The king said, “I just applied medical ointment and bandaged it with padded cotton.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Did your majesty have affection for the wound and for this reason applied medical ointment and bandaged it with padded cotton?”

The king said, “I had no affection for the wound.”

Nāgasena said, “If you really had no affection for the wound, why did you use medical ointment and use bandaging with padded cotton to protect it?”

The king said, “I just wished to get my affliction cured. I did not have affection for the wound.”

Nāgasena said:

Recluses are just like that. They do not have affection for their bodies. Although they eat and drink, their mind does not delight in it, they do not use it to become beautiful, they do not use it to become attractive, and they do not use it to get [an attractive] skin color.¹¹⁴ Their aim is just to support the body to pursue the discourses and discipline of the Buddha. The Buddha said in a discourse, “A person has nine apertures. The nine apertures are [like] wounds by a spear. All these apertures are smelly and a place of impurity.”¹¹⁵

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Did the Buddha verily have thirty-two marks, eighty minor characteristics, and a wholly golden-colored body emitting a halo?”¹¹⁶

Nāgasena said, “The Buddha verily had thirty-two marks and eighty minor characteristics, and he was wholly golden-colored and emitted a halo.”

The king said, “Would the Buddha’s parents also have had thirty-two marks, eighty minor characteristics, and a wholly golden-colored body emitting a halo?”

Nāgasena said, “The Buddha’s parents did not have these marks.”

The king said, “Provided the Buddha’s parents did not have these marks, [then] the Buddha also did not have these marks.”

The king further said, “People and children born of them have similar features. The parents not having these marks, certainly the Buddha did not have these marks.”

Nāgasena said:

Although the Buddha’s parents did not have these thirty-two marks, eighty minor characteristics, and a golden-colored body [with a halo],¹¹⁷ the Buddha verily had these marks.

Nāgasena asked the king, “Has your majesty in the past seen a lotus flower?”

716b The king said, “I have seen it.”

Nāgasena said:

This lotus flower is born in the earth and grows up in mud and water. It has color and is very fragrant and attractive. Would it accord with and resemble the type of color of mud and water?

The king said, “It does not resemble the type of color of earth, mud, and water.”

Nāgasena said:

Although the Buddha’s parents did not have these marks, the Buddha verily had these marks. The Buddha was born in the world and grew up in the world, yet he did not resemble matters of the world.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Was the Buddha’s conduct verily like that of Brahmā, the ruler of the seventh heaven; did he not consort with women?”¹¹⁸

Nāgasena said, “Yes, he verily was apart from women, being pure and without flaws.”

The king said:

In case the Buddha’s conduct was like that of Brahmā, the ruler of the seventh heaven, [then] the Buddha was a disciple of Brahmā, the ruler of the seventh heaven.

Nāgasena asked the king, “Does the ruler of the seventh heaven have intelligence (*buddhi*) or does he have no intelligence?”¹¹⁹

The king said, “Brahmā, the ruler of the seventh heaven, has intelligence.”

Nāgasena said, “For this reason, Brahmā, the ruler of the seventh heaven, and all the higher *devas* are disciples of the ‘Buddha.’”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Of what type is the sound made by the voice of an elephant?”¹²⁰

The king said, “The sound made by the voice of an elephant is like the sound of a wild goose.”

Nāgasena said:

In this way an elephant would be the disciple of a wild goose, each being of a different species. With the Buddha it is just like that, he is not a disciple of Brahmā, the ruler of the seventh heaven.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Was the Buddha completely trained in understanding and pursuing the discourses and the discipline?”

Nāgasena said, “The Buddha was completely trained in understanding and pursuing the discourses and the discipline.”

The king said, “From which teacher did the Buddha receive the discourses and discipline?”

Nāgasena said:

The Buddha was without a teacher.¹²¹ When the Buddha attained awakening, he in turn completely understood by himself all the discourses and the

path. The Buddha is not like the disciples who train in understanding what was taught by the Buddha, which is what all disciples will pursue until their old age.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

People cry and shed tears at the death of their parents. People also cry and shed tears on hearing the Buddha’s discourses. They all shed tears. What is the difference between them?

Nāgasena said:

People who weep for their parents all give attention to their affection and recollect it with grief and pain. Such grievers are aggrieved just out of ignorance. Those who shed tears on hearing the Buddha’s discourses on the path all have compassion in their minds on recollecting the afflictions of the world. For this reason they shed tears. The merit they gain [thereby] is enormous.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is the difference between one who has attained deliverance and one who has not yet attained deliverance?”

Nāgasena said:

A person who has not yet attained deliverance has lustful desires in the mind. A person who has attained deliverance has no lustful desires in their mind. Nevertheless they wish to get food to eat just to sustain life.

The king said, “I have seen people in the world; they all want bodily delights and want to get delicious food without becoming sated of it.”

Nāgasena said:

A person who has not yet attained deliverance eats food for the sake of thriving in pleasure and to become attractive. A person who has attained deliverance, although they eat food, they do not regard it as pleasurable or regard it as satisfying. Their aim is just to support the body.

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The king said, “It is well.”

[On Memory]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Do people remember what they have done and matters of the distant past?”¹²²

Nāgasena said, “When people are worried, they all remember matters of the distant past.”

The king said, “In what way does one recollect? Does one recollect by way of intention? [Or] does one recollect [just] by way of recollection?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Have you [in vain tried to] recollect at a later time what you trained in and understood in the past?”

The king said, “Yes. What I trained in and understood in the past, at a later time I had forgotten again.”

Nāgasena said to the king, “Were you without intention at the time of forgetting it?”¹²³

The king said, “At that time I had [simply] forgotten my memories.”

Nāgasena said, “That distinguishes the [memory] of the king from that of an elephant.”¹²⁴

The king asked Nāgasena again:

Does a person remember all of what he has done; does he understand by way of remembering all of what he has done right from the beginning [up to] what he is doing now, in the present?

Nāgasena said, “He understands all matters that are past by way of remembering them and he understands matters now, in the present, by way of remembering them.”

The king said, “A person who remembers just matters that are past in this way should be unable to remember new matters as well.”

Nāgasena said, “It is in this way [only] in case one cannot as well remember new matters that are being done.”

The king said, “Is [memory] useless for a person who newly learns the craft of writing?”

Nāgasena said:

A person who newly learns to write and draw has memory. This is the reason that makes a disciple who learns possess knowledge; it is only because they have memory.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “In how many ways does memory arise in a person?”

Nāgasena said:

There are sixteen ways in which memory arises in a person. The first is memory arisen of what was done in the distant past. The second is memory arisen from what has been newly learned. The third is memory arisen from a major event. The fourth is memory arisen from reflecting about what is good. The fifth is memory arisen from pain experienced in the past. The sixth is memory arisen from paying attention on one’s own. The seventh is memory arisen from diverse former deeds. The eighth is memory arisen from teaching someone. The ninth is memory arisen from a resemblance. The tenth is memory arisen in relation to what one had forgotten in the past. The eleventh is memory arisen because of cognizing. The twelfth is memory arisen from calculation. The thirteenth is memory arisen from having incurred a debt. The fourteenth is memory arisen from unification of the mind. The fifteenth is memory arisen from reading a book. The sixteenth is memory arisen from the experience of seeing what one had in the past entrusted [to others]. These are the sixteen ways in which [memory] arises.

(1) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory of the distant past?” Nāgasena said:

The Buddha’s disciple Ānanda and a female disciple, the female lay follower Khujjuttarā, remembered countless past lives and remembered current matters.¹²⁵ Many of the other practitioners of the path are like Ānanda and the female disciple [Khujjuttarā], all being able to remember matters of the past. They remember, and this is how they in turn give rise to memory.

(2) The king asked again, “What is memory arisen from newly learning something?”

Nāgasena said:

It is like a person who in the past learned and knew calculation and later forgot it again. Seeing a person calculating, he in turn experiences the arising of memory.

(3) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from a major event?”

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Nāgasena said:

It is similar to the crown prince who has been established as the king. He remembers by himself the extraordinary elevation of becoming the king. This is memory arisen from a major event.

(4) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from reflecting about what is good?”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to being invited and entertained with supreme goodwill by someone. That person remembers by themselves, ‘On a former day I was invited and entertained with [supreme] goodwill by someone.’ This is memory arisen from reflecting about what is good.

(5) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from the experience of pain?”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who in the past has been beaten or bound and imprisoned by someone. This is memory arisen from the experience of pain.

(6) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from paying attention on one’s own?”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to [paying attention] to what one has formerly seen, such as one’s wife, relatives, or domestic animals. This is memory arisen from paying attention on one’s own.

(7) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from diverse former deeds?”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person’s name, the names of all things, type of colors, fragrances and smells, sweet and bitter [tastes], remembering these things is memory arisen from diversity.¹²⁶

(8) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from teaching someone?”

Nāgasena said:

A person who enjoys himself is forgetful of people close by, of some he has [recollection] and of some he is forgetful. On teaching people, memory arises of what he had forgotten.

(9) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from a resemblance?”

Nāgasena said, “People, cows, and horses each have their own type of resemblance. This is how memory arises from a resemblance.”

(10) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen in relation to what one had forgotten in the past?”

Nāgasena said:

It is similar to a person who has suddenly forgotten something. Repeatedly remembering it when being alone, he regains it. This is memory arisen in relation to what one had forgotten in the past.

(11) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen because of cognizing?”

Nāgasena said, “Having learned writing, one is able to select a particular letter. This is memory arisen because of cognizing.”

(12) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from calculation?”

Nāgasena said:

It is like people who have completed calculating together. They all know well their plan and method, which are distinctly clear to them. This is memory arisen from calculation.

(13) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from having incurred a debt?”

Nāgasena said, “It is similar to looking at what served as a deposit for [one’s] debt, [such as] a drum. This is memory arisen from having incurred a debt.”

(14) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from unification of the mind?”

Nāgasena said:

A recluse who has unification of their mind recollects themselves matters from the time of countless past lives up to now. This is memory arisen from unification of the mind.

(15) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from reading a book?”

Nāgasena said:

The emperor has ancient books from long ago. From the books he remembers the time of a certain emperor at a certain year. This is memory arisen from reading a book.

(16) The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is memory arisen from the experience of seeing what one had in the past entrusted [to others]?”

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Nāgasena said:

When a person has entrusted something [to others] and he experiences seeing it with his eyes, memory in turn arises. This is memory arisen from [seeing] what was entrusted [to others].

The king said, “It is well.”

[On the Buddha]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Would the Buddha have known all things in the past, from their beginning to what will come?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, the Buddha knew it all.”

The king said:

In case the Buddha completely knew all things, what is the reason he did not teach them to his disciples at once? What is the reason he taught them little by little?¹²⁷

Nāgasena asked the king, “Is there a physician in the country?”

The king said, “There is a physician.”

[Nāgasena asked the king,] “Would he know all the medicines on earth?”

The king said, “He is completely able to discern all medicines.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “When that physician cures a disease, does he give the medicine all at once or does he give it little by little?”

The king said, “He cannot give medicine in advance to a person who has not yet become sick. He will just give medicine only in conformity with the sickness.”

Nāgasena said:

Although the Buddha knows all matters past, present, and future, he also cannot teach them all at once to people on the earth. He will teach to them little by little the discourses and discipline just so that they pursue them.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

Dear, you recluses say that people who do evil in their life for up to hundred years, and who at the time close to death recollect the Buddha, will after death all be reborn in heaven. I do not believe this statement. Again, you say that killing a single being, on passing away one will enter hell. I also do not believe this statement.¹²⁸

Nāgasena asked the king, “It is like a person who takes a small stone and places it on water. Will the stone float or will it sink?”

The king said, “The stone will sink.”

Nāgasena said, “Suppose he were to take a hundred big stones and place them on a boat. Will the boat sink?”

The king said, “It will not sink.”

Nāgasena said:

Because of the boat, a hundred big stones in the boat will not sink.¹²⁹ Although a person has formerly been evil, recollecting the Buddha once, he will, for this reason, not enter hell and in turn will reach rebirth in heaven. The sinking of the small stone is like the evil done by a person who, not knowing the discourses of the Buddha, after death will in turn enter hell.

The king said, “It is well.”

[On Time]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Dear, for what reason did you become recluses to train in the path?”

Nāgasena said:

We wish to discard all *dukkha*—*dukkha* of the past, *dukkha* of the present, and *dukkha* of the future—we do not wish to experience it further. This is the reason why we became recluses to train in the path.

The king asked Nāgasena again, “*Dukkha* being of the future, why train in the path in advance, becoming recluses?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Would your majesty have adversaries from enemy countries who wish to attack him?”

The king said, “Yes, there are adversaries from enemy countries who constantly wish to attack me.”

Nāgasena asked the king:

Will your majesty, when the time has come and the leader of the enemies is close, only then produce the tools for battle and have moats dug out for protection, or will you have this done in advance?

The king said, “I will get preparations ready in advance.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “What is the reason for getting preparations ready in advance?”

The king said, “The reason is that, when the enemy comes, there is no [more] time to get ready.”

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Nāgasena asked the king, “Is it for this reason that you are getting ready in advance for an enemy that has not yet come?”

[The king said, “Yes.”]

Nāgasena asked the king again, “Should one plow and sow only on becoming hungry? Should one dig a well only on becoming thirsty?”

The king said, “It should all be done in advance.”

Nāgasena said, “Is it for this reason that one has provisions in advance when one is not yet hungry or thirsty?”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “How far away is the seventh heaven of Brahmā?”

Nāgasena said:

It is very far away. Letting a stone as big as the king’s palace fall from

the seventh heaven of Brahmā, it will only fall on this earth just here after six days.”¹³⁰

The king said:

Dear, you recluses say that one who has attained the awakening of an arahant is able to fly up to the seventh heaven of Brahmā as quickly as a person bends or stretches an arm.

The king said, “I do not believe this. How could one travel millions of (Chinese) miles so quickly?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “In what country was the king originally born?”

The king said, “I was originally born in a city called Alisan (Alexandria),¹³¹ in the great Qin (Greek colonial) empire.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “How many (Chinese) miles from here is Alisan?”

The king said, “It is two thousand *yojanas* or about eight thousand (Chinese) miles.”¹³²

Nāgasena asked the king, “In the past, would you have thought of some matter in your distant country of origin?”

The king said, “Yes, I often think just of matters in my country of origin.”

Nāgasena said, “May your majesty try to think again of a matter in your country of origin, something you did in the past.”

The king said, “I have thought of it.”

Nāgasena said, “How has the king traversed eight thousand miles and come back again so quickly?”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

If there are two people who pass away at the same time, one person is born in the seventh heaven of Brahmā and one person is born in Kashmir, seven hundred and twenty (Chinese) miles from here, who of them arrives first?¹³³

Nāgasena said, “The two persons arrive just at the same time.”

The king said, “There is a great difference in the respective distance, how could they arrive at the same [time]?”

Nāgasena said,¹³⁴ “May your majesty try to think of Alisan.”

The king said, “I have thought of it.”

Nāgasena said again, “May your majesty try to think again of Kashmir.”

The king said, “I have thought of it.”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Which of these two countries did you think of faster?”

The king said, “[I thought] of both just equally [as fast].”

Nāgasena said:

The two persons who died together, one person being reborn up in the seventh heaven of Brahmā and one person reborn in Kashmir, were also just equally [as fast].”

Nāgasena asked the king:

If there is a pair of birds flying and one bird settles on a big tree and one bird settles on an inferior small tree, the two birds settling together, whose shadow falls first on the ground?

The king said, “Their shadows just reach the ground together.”

Nāgasena said:

The two persons who died together, one person being reborn up in the seventh heaven of Brahmā and one person being reborn in Kashmir, they also just arrive at the same time.

The king said, “It is well.”

[On Miscellaneous Matters]

The king asked Nāgasena again, “By training in how many ways does a person come to know the path?”

Nāgasena said:

By training in seven ways one comes to know the path. What are the seven? The first is being mindful of good and evil things. The second is being energetic. The third is delighting in the path. The fourth is subduing the mind in what is wholesome. The fifth is being mindful of the path. The sixth is unification of the mind. The seventh is being without aversion or craving in regard to whatever one encounters.

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The king asked Nāgasena again, “Does a person train by way of these seven ways to come to know the path?”

Nāgasena said:

It is not by training in all of the seven ways that one comes to know the path. The wise take up wisdom to distinguish good and evil. By way of just this one way they distinctly come to know [the path].

The king asked Nāgasena again, “In case one comes to know it by one way, why do you speak of seven ways?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “If a person takes a sword, puts it into the scabbard, and leans that against a wall, would the sword by itself be able to cut anything?”

The king said, “It would not be able to cut anything.”

Nāgasena said, “Even though a person has clarity in the heart, he ought to obtain these six ways together just to accomplish wisdom.”

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Is the gaining of merit by people who have done good greater or is their gaining of demerit on having done evil greater?”

Nāgasena said:

The gain of merit by people who have done good is greater; the gaining of demerit on having done evil is less. People who have done evil themselves regret it daily, therefore daily their fault becomes less. People who do good themselves recollect it day and night with joy, therefore the merit they attain becomes greater.

Nāgasena said:

Formerly, at the time the Buddha was alive, in the country there was a mutilated person without hands and feet. He took a lotus flower and offered it to the Buddha. The Buddha said to the monks, “This mutilated child without hands and feet will for ninety-one eons in the future no more descend into hell or be born as an animal or on the path of hungry ghosts. He will gain rebirth up in heaven, and at the end of life up in heaven he will return to become a human again.” For this reason I know that a person who does a small good will gain merit that becomes greater. Having done

evil, people regret their own fault. It daily diminishes and is exhausted. For this reason I know that the demerit of a person who has committed a fault becomes less.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “A wise one does evil and a fool does evil. Which of these two persons gains greater demerit?”

Nāgasena said, “The fool who does evil gains greater demerit; the wise one who does evil gains lesser demerit.”¹³⁵

The king said, “Nāgasena says that they are not equal!”

The king said:

The governmental law of my country heavily punishes a chief minister who is at fault and lightly punishes an ignorant person who is at fault. Therefore [I know] that the wise one who does evil gains greater demerit,¹³⁶ the fool who does evil gains lesser demerit.

Nāgasena asked the king:

It is similar to burning iron that is on the ground. One person knows that this is burning iron; one person does not know it. The two persons come forward together and take hold of the burning iron. Whose hands will have greater burns?

The king said, “The hands of the one who did not know it will have greater burns.”¹³⁷

Nāgasena said:

A fool who does evil is unable to regret it on his own; for this reason their demerit becomes greater. A wise one who does evil knows that what they did is not proper and daily regrets their fault, for this reason their demerit becomes less.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

Are there people able to fly by means of their body up to the seventh heaven of Brahmā, to reach the territory of Uttarakuru, or to reach [other] places according to their wish?

Nāgasena said, “They have the ability.”

The king said:

718b How do they fly by means of their body up to the seventh heaven of Brahmā, to reach the territory of Uttarakuru, or to reach [other] places according to their wish?

Nāgasena asked the king, “Would your majesty remember that, when being small yourself and in a game, you jumped a distance of one *zhang*?”

The king said, “I remember that when I was of young age and had in my mind the wish to jump, I would jump for a distance of one *zhang* or more.”

Nāgasena said:

It is like this when a person who has attained awakening wishes to jump and reach up to the seventh heaven of Brahmā or reach the territory of Uttarakuru.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

Dear, you recluses say, “There are bones which are four thousand (Chinese) miles long.” What body could have bones that are up to four thousand (Chinese) miles long?

Nāgasena asked the king, “Did you hear formerly that in the great ocean there is a large fish called Zhi, whose body is twenty-eight thousand (Chinese) miles long?”

The king said, “Yes, I formerly heard that these exist.”

Nāgasena said, “Of a fish twenty-eight thousand (Chinese) miles long like this, the rib bones are four thousand (Chinese) miles long.”

The king was surprised on account of this.

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Dear, you recluses say, ‘We are able to stop the activity of breathing.’”

The king said, “How can one stop the air of breathing?”

Nāgasena asked the king, “Have you formerly heard of ‘intention’?”¹³⁸

The king said, “I have heard of it.”

Nāgasena said, “Does your majesty consider intention to be inside of a person’s body?”

The king said, “I consider intention to be inside of a person’s body.”

Nāgasena said to the king:

Consider a foolish person who is unable to control body and speech and unable to uphold the discourses and discipline. Such persons are also without the bodily delight [of attaining absorption].

Nāgasena said:

Persons who train in the path are able to control body and speech, able to uphold the discourses and discipline, and able to have unification of the mind. They attain the fourth absorption and in turn are just able to have no more breath.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena, “One speaks of the ‘ocean’. Is the ocean called ‘ocean’ on account of its water or is it called ‘ocean’ because of other reasons?”

Nāgasena said, “The reason people call it the ‘ocean’ is that the water is mixed with salt; each is half [of the reason]. This is just the reason for [calling] it ‘ocean.’”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “What is the reason that the ocean is completely salty and has a taste like salt?”

Nāgasena said:

The reason the water of the ocean is salty is that insipid water accumulated for a long time and many fish, turtles, and reptiles have together stained it in turn.¹³⁹ For this reason it has become just salty.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “Would a person who has attained awakening be able to attend to all profound types of matters?”

Nāgasena said, “Yes, a person who has attained awakening is able to attend to all profound matters.”

Nāgasena said:

The discourses of the Buddha are on understanding very profound types of matters, types of matters that are beyond measure, all of which can evenly be decided by wisdom.

The king said, “It is well.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “A person’s consciousness, wisdom, and original nature, would these three things be the same and [only] their names be different?”

Nāgasena said, “From a person’s consciousness, awareness arises.¹⁴⁰ Wisdom is the dawn of awakening. As one’s nature is empty, there is no person [as such].”

The king asked Nāgasena again:

718c [People say that] a person [as such] is obtained.¹⁴¹ What kind of a person is being obtained? The eye sees forms, the ear hears sounds, the nose smells fragrances, the mouth knows flavors, the body knows what is touched,¹⁴² and the mind knows matters good and evil. Where else could a person be obtained?

Nāgasena asked the king:

If one could make the “person” be able to see through their own eyes, on taking out the pupils, would they be able to see far and wide? Breaking up and enlarging their ear, would they be able to hear sounds far and wide? Cutting off the nose to enlarge [its orifices], would they be able to smell many fragrances? Opening the mouth to enlarge it, would they be able to know many flavors? Peeling off the skin and muscles, do you believe that would make them know [better] what is touched? Removing intention, would they be thriving with many thoughts?

The king said, “No.”

Nāgasena said, “What the Buddha did, while being alive, was very difficult. What the Buddha [did, while being alive,] was very sublime.”

The king asked Nāgasena again, “How was what he did very difficult? How was it very sublime?”

Nāgasena said:

The Buddha spoke of and was able to know what is inside a person’s bosom. He was able to comprehend all matters invisible to the eyes,¹⁴³ and he was able to comprehend matters of the eye, able to comprehend matters of the ear, able to comprehend matters of the nose, able to comprehend matters of the mouth, able to comprehend matters of the body,

able to comprehend matters in decline, able to comprehend doubtful matters, able to comprehend matters of memory, and able to comprehend matters of consciousness.

Nāgasena said:

A person who takes water from the ocean in his mouth, would he be able to know distinctly that the water in his mouth is water from that spring, water from that particular stream, water from that particular river?

The king said, “The various waters are all conjoined and have become one, it is difficult to know each distinctly.”

Nāgasena said:

What the Buddha did was very difficult. He was able to know distinctly the flavor of all these waters. Now the water of the ocean is a matter visible before one’s eyes, yet your majesty is not able to know it distinctly now, [let alone knowing distinctly] a person’s consciousness, which is invisible, [or] the six ways [of sense experience] in a person’s body, which cannot be seen.

Nāgasena said:

The reason is that the Buddha comprehended that, following the mind, thought reaches what is seen by the eye; following the mind, thought reaches what is heard by the ear; following the mind, thought reaches what is smelled by the nose; following the mind, thought reaches flavors known by the mouth; following the mind, thought reaches pain and pleasure known by the body, tangibles that are cold and warm, rough and solid. Following the mind, thought proceeds toward whatever there is. The Buddha knew it all, analyzed it, and comprehended it.

The king said, “It is well.”

[Conclusion]

Nāgasena said, “It is already midnight, I wish to retire.”

The king ordered the ministers of his entourage to take four pieces of cotton rolled up and dipped in oil to carry as lamps and escort Nāgasena on his return, “Be as respectful to Nāgasena as if you were waiting on me.”

The ministers of the entourage all said, “We have received your instruction.”

The king said, “Gaining a teacher like Nāgasena and having a disciple like me, awakening can be attained quickly.”

All the questions by the king had been fully answered each time. The king was greatly delighted. The king took out from the treasury an exquisite cloth worth a hundred thousand [coins] and offered it to Nāgasena. The king said to Nāgasena:

From now on may Nāgasena with eight hundred recluses together daily take the meal in the palace. May he take from the king whatever he wishes to get.

Nāgasena replied to the king, “I am a person practicing the path; in short, there is nothing I desire.”

The king said to Nāgasena, “You should protect yourself and you should also personally protect me.”

Nāgasena said, “How should I protect myself and personally protect your majesty?”

The king replied:

719a I am afraid people who discuss it will say that the king is a miser. Nāgasena has explained to the king all that he had doubts about, yet he was unable to grant him a gift. I am afraid that people will say that Nāgasena was unable to explain what the king had doubts about and for this reason the king has not granted him a reward.

The king said, “[If] Nāgasena accepts it, it will make me gain merit and Nāgasena will also protect his reputation.”

The king said:

I am similar to a lion in a golden cage who, in spite of being shut up, constantly has the wish to leave in the mind. Although I am now the king of the country in the royal palace, my mind does not delight in it. I wish to abandon the country, leave it, and engage in the training of the path.

[When] the king had finished speaking, Nāgasena in turn got up to return to the monastery. [When] Nāgasena had left, the king thought quietly to himself,

“What matters did I ask Nāgasena about? What matters has Nāgasena explained to me?” The king thought to himself, “Of what I asked Nāgasena, there is nothing I had on my mind that he has not explained.”

Returning to the monastery, Nāgasena also thought to himself, “What matters did the king ask me? Also, what matters did I reply to the king?” Nāgasena thought to himself, “What the king asked me, I have explained it all.” They thought about these matters until dawn.

The next day Nāgasena put on his robe, took his bowl, and went directly into the upper hall of the palace to sit down. The king came forward and, having paid respect to Nāgasena, stepped back to sit down. The king said to Nāgasena:

[When] Nāgasena had left, I thought to myself, “What did I ask Nāgasena? What did Nāgasena reply to me?” I further thought, “Whatever I asked Nāgasena, there is nothing I had on my mind that Nāgasena has not explained.” Thinking of these statements I was happy and slept well until dawn.

Nāgasena said:

Returning to the monastery, I also thought to myself, “What matters has the king asked me about? Also, what matters have I explained to the king?”¹⁴⁴ I further thought to myself, “What the king has asked me, I have fully explained it.” For this reason I was happy until dawn.

Having finished speaking, Nāgasena wished to leave. The king in turn rose up and paid respect to Nāgasena.

Notes

- ¹ According to the summary by J. W. de Jong, “Review,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59/2 (1996): 383, of the research undertaken by Mizuno (which due to my ignorance of Japanese I have been unable to consult): “Mizuno argues that the renderings of technical terms suggest the second or third century A.D. as date of the translation into Chinese.” For a survey of archaic translation terminology employed in the text, see Guang Xing, “The Different Chinese Versions of the Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka* 7 (2009): 236–239.
- ² T.203.4:493a28, translated by J. Takakusu, “Chinese Translations of Milinda Pañho,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1896): 20; by Édouard Chavannes, *Cinq Cents Contes et Apologues, Extraits du Tripiṭaka Chinois et Traduits en Français* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1911), p. 123; and by Charles Willemen, *The Storehouse of Sundry Valuable* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1994), p. 226.
- ³ A translation of the Chinese version was provided by Sylvain Lévi, “Un nouveau document sur le Milinda-praṇa,” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 37/4 (1893): 233f; see also Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu, Traduction et annotations, Nouvelle édition anastatique présentée par Étienne Lamotte* (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1925, reprint 1980), vol 5, p. 263. For a comprehensive study with edition and translation of the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, see Peter Skilling, “A Note on King Milinda in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 24 (1998): 81–101. The question leading to the simile differs slightly, as in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* quotation the issue at stake is the identity or difference of body and self, whereas in the *Avadāna* text it is the permanent or impermanent nature of the self.
- ⁴ If T. 203 should indeed be Sarvāstivāda, as argued by Charles Willemen, “A Chinese Kṣudrakapiṭaka (T. IV. 203),” *Asiatische Studien* 46/1 (1992): 513, and given that the quote from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* would reflect a Mūlasarvāstivāda version of the text (school affiliations that would fit with the quote being similar but differing in details), then the complete absence of this dilemma from the Pāli and Chinese versions would make it less probable that any of these should be considered as reflecting a Sarvāstivāda line of transmission. Of course, within reciter lineages of a particular school divergent texts can come into existence; in fact, by now we are aware even of “the existence of multiple Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinayas,” as noted by Shayne Clarke, “Vinayas,” in J. Silk, O. von Hinüber, V. Eltschinger, eds., *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 73. My point is only that a Sarvāstivāda affiliation of the original now extant in Pāli, for example, would need to be established beyond

the mere fact that in Mil 268,14 and 271,11 Nāgasena considers space not to be the product of conditions, supposedly standing in contrast to Theravāda orthodoxy; see, e.g., I. B. Horner, *Milinda's Questions, Volume I, Translated from the Pali* (London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1969), pp. xviii, xlii; and K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature, Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of all the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), p. 112. Another argument by Guang Xing, "Introduction to the Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra," *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka* 6 (2008): 238, concerns a reference to past, present, and future in Mil 49,30 and T.1670B.32:711b13, yet this distinction is regularly found in the early discourses and thus is not a marker of Sarvāstivāda influence. As noted by Y. Karunadasa, *Buddhist Analysis of Matter* (Singapore: Buddhist Research Society, 1967, reprint 1989), p. 94, according to the *Kathāvatthu* space should not be reckoned as either conditioned or as unconditioned; see Kv 330,6. Edward Conze, "Review," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 33/2 (1970): 412, comments that this "disposes of the argument of some scholars . . . who believe that the *Milindapañha* was originally a Sarvāstivādin work because it is said to reckon *ākāśa* among the *asaṅkhata*." Thus this reference involves only a relatively minor difference from the position taken in the *Kathāvatthu*, inasmuch as the *Kathāvatthu* reckons space as not *saṅkhata* but nevertheless not *asaṅkhata*, whereas the *Milindapañha* has no qualms about qualifying it as *ahetuja*. This does not suffice to turn the entire *Milindapañha* into a Sarvāstivāda treatise. Besides, this minor issue occurs in a part of the work that, judging from the Chinese parallels, is a later addition. This would support the suggestion by Skilling, "A Note on King Milinda in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya," p. 94, that, rather than being of Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) origins, the parts not found in Chinese "may have been composed in India and circulated independently—that is . . . they could represent another development of the rich Indian Milinda tradition—and later translated into Pāli and conjoined with the main text." Had the additions been composed in Ceylon, as assumed by, e.g., H. Bechert, "Einleitung," in Nyanaponika, ed., *Milindapañha, die Fragen des Königs Milinda, Zwiegespräche zwischen einem Griechenkönig und einem buddhistischen Mönch, Aus dem Pāli übersetzt von Nyānatiloka* (Interlaken: Ansata-Verlag, 1985), p. 20, it could reasonably well be expected that the position taken in the *Kathāvatthu* on the nature of space would have been followed to the letter.

- ⁵ Bunyiu Nanjio, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka, The Sacred Canon of the Buddhists in China and Japan* (Delhi: Classics India Publications, 1883, reprint 1989), p. 304, reported that his entry number 1358 "seems to be a translation of a text similar to the Milinda-pañho, though the introductory part is not exactly the same as that of the Pāli text."
- ⁶ Mil 89,17: *milindapañhānaṃ pucchāvissajjanā samattā*; although, as noted by F. Otto Schrader, *Die Fragen des Königs Menandros, Aus dem Pali zum ersten Male ins Deutsche übersetzt* (Berlin: Paul Raatz, 1907), p. xxviii, and Wilhelm Geiger, *Pāli Literatur und Sprache* (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1916), p. 18 (§20), in the PTS edition already at an earlier point the statement *nāgasena milindarāja-pañhā*

niṭṭhitā can be found; see Mil 64,25. In his discussion of the *Milindapañha*, Oskar von Hinüber, *Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1996, reprint 1997), p. 84, n. 296, points out that a concluding remark is also found in the midst of the *Parivāra*; see Vin V 179,19.

- ⁷ DN 23 at DN II 316,1; for a comparative study and translation of one of the Chinese parallels see Anālayo, “Debate with a Sceptic—The Dīrgha-āgama Parallel to the Pāyāsi-sutta (1),” *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 13 (2012): 1–26, and “Debate with a Sceptic—The Dīrgha-āgama Parallel to the Pāyāsi-sutta (2),” *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 14 (2013): 1–27. The similarity in debate character between this discourse and the *Milindapañha* has already been noted by Jan Gonda, “Tarn’s Hypothesis on the Origin of the *Milindapañha*,” *Mnemosyne* (fourth series) 2/1 (1949): 60. T. W. Rhys Davids, “Milinda,” in J. Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916), vol. 8, p. 631, rather considers the *Sakkapañha-sutta* (DN 21) as a model for the *Milindapañha*, stating that “in all probability it was with the *Sakka Pañha Suttanta* in his mind that the author of the *Milinda Pañha*, whoever he was, framed his work.” This seems less probable, as the *Sakkapañha-sutta* is not a debate, nor does it involve the type of dilemmas raised in DN 23 and the *Milindapañha*.
- ⁸ Edited and translated in William B. Bollée, *The Story of Paesi (Paesi-kahāṇayam): Soul and Body in Ancient India. A Dialogue on Materialism, Text, Translation, Notes and Commentary* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2002). A comparison of the Buddhist and Jain versions can be found in Ernst Leumann, “Beziehungen der Jaina-Literatur zu anderen Literaturkreisen Indiens,” *Actes du Sixième Congrès International des Orientalistes tenu en 1883 à Leyde, troisième partie, section 2, Aryenne* 3/2 (1885): 470–539, and Walter Ruben, “Materialismus im Leben des alten Indiens,” *Acta Orientalia* 13 (1935): 143–151.
- ⁹ On the continuity of the debate concerned with these topics see Anālayo, *Rebirth in Early Buddhism and Current Research* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2018).
- ¹⁰ T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda, Translated from the Pāli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. xvi, highlights that the *Milindapañha* is “the only book, outside of the Pāli Piṭakas, which Buddhaghosa defers to” as authoritative; in fact as noted by Jessica Main, “The Karma of Others: Stories from the *Milindapañha* and the *Petavatthu-aṭṭhakathā*,” in C. Prebish, D. Keown, and D. S. Wright, eds., *Revising Karma* (Journal of Buddhist Ethics Online Books, 2005, reprint 2007), p. 311, the *Milindapañha* “remains a key narrative in . . . Theravāda regions.” G. P. Malalasekera, *The Pāli Literature of Ceylon* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1928, reprint 1994), p. 303f, reports how for the “Buddhist renaissance movement” in nineteenth-century Ceylon, the publication of a Sinhala translation of the *Milindapañha* was a project of foremost importance, as “it was felt that the book would be most useful in refuting the arguments hurled at the Buddhists by their adversaries.” As already pointed out by Mabel Haynes Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1903), p. 4, in Burma (Myanmar) the *Milindapañha* is even considered

canonical. The text has also been of continuous interest in the academic realm; for a survey of publications concerned with the *Milindapañha*, see Siegfried Behrsing, “Beiträge zu einer Milindapañha Bibliographie,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 7/2 (1943): 335–348, 7/3 (1943): 517–539; with supplements in Oskar von Hinüber, “The Oldest Dated Manuscript of the Milindapañha,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 11 (1987): 118f, and “An Additional Note on the Oldest Dated Manuscript of the Milindapañha,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 12 (1988): 173; and in Peter Skilling, “Problems with Milinda (I): The Opening Verses and Prose of the Printed Siamese Milindapañhā,” *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka* 8 (2010): 14–20.

- 11 Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Introduction,” in *The Questions of King Milinda: An Abridgement of the Milindapañha* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1993), p. 13, notes that the text “is the product of the encounter of two great civilizations—Hellenistic Greece and Buddhist India—and as such it throws into relief issues that are still very much alive today.”
- 12 Regarding the count of ninety-six teachings, Max Deeg, *Das Gaoseng-Faxian-Zhuan als religionsgeschichtliche Quelle, Der älteste Bericht eines chinesischen buddhistischen Pilgermönchs über seine Reise nach Indien mit Übersetzung des Textes* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2005), p. 310, n. 1512, refers to an explanation in the *Vinayavibhāṣā*, T.1440.23:536a22, according to which the doctrines of every one of the six teachers (described in the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* and its parallels) led in each case to further doctrines by fifteen disciples, resulting in a total count of six plus six times fifteen and thus ninety-six.
- 13 校羅; see the discussion in Paul Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême Orient* 24 (1924): 76, n. 4.
- 14 A departure of the Buddha to live alone in the company of a solitary elephant is reported in discourses in the *Udāna* and the *Madhyama-āgama*, Ud 4.5 at Ud 41,19 and MĀ 72 at T.26.1:536a7, as well as in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*, T.1421.22:160a24 and Vin I 352,34; on this episode see also Reiko Ohnuma, “An Elephant Good to Think: The Buddha in Pārileyaka Forest,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 35/1–2 (2012–2013): 259–293. These sources (for Ud 4.5 see Ud-a 248,20) relate his withdrawal to the Kosambī incident, when monks had begun to quarrel with each other, regarding a minor matter of monastic discipline, to the extent of being unwilling to accept the Buddha’s injunction that they should stop their litigation.
- 15 迦羅洹; see Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 77, n. 5.
- 16 As explained by Haiyan Hu-von Hinüber, “Aśoka und die buddhistische Uposatha-Zeremonie (I), Aśoka’s 256 Nächte,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 40 (1996): 90, the count of six refers to what actually are only four days in a month, namely the eighth and either the fourteenth or else the fifteenth of every fortnight.

- ¹⁷ A comparable contrast in aspiration between two monks can be found in MĀ 66 at T.26.1:510a2 and T.44.1:830b2, where one monk expresses in front of the Buddha his aspiration to become a wheel-turning king in the future, whereas another monk rather aspires to become the future Buddha Maitreya.
- ¹⁸ 彌蘭, Mílán, which thus only really corresponds to the first syllable of the Pāli counterpart Milinda.
- ¹⁹ 陀獵; see also Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 80, n. 1. Takakusu, “Chinese Translations of Milinda Pañho,” p. 9, suggested a possible *dhāra*; Guang Xing, “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka* 5 (2007): 192, n. 23: *dhārin*; yet M. Paul Pelliot, “Les noms propres dans les traductions chinoises du Milindapañha,” *Journal Asiatique* 11/4 (1914): 388, objected that the transcription requires a final labial.
- ²⁰ 那, *na*, which only reflects the first syllable of *nāga*.
- ²¹ 那先, *Naxian*, which only reflect the first and third syllable of its Pāli counterpart Nāgasena; see also the previous note.
- ²² 樓漢, *Louhan*, for which Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 83, n. 1, gives *Rohaṇa*.
- ²³ According to the *Milindapañha*, Mil 11,30, the uncle rather got Nāgasena to join the Buddhist monastic order by stipulating this as a precondition for giving him teachings. The account in the *Milindapañha* in general resembles, as noted by Bimala Charan Law, *The Life and Work of Buddhaghosa* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1923, reprint 2005), p. 44, the story of Buddhaghosa’s birth, early life, and conversion.
- ²⁴ The *Milindapañha*, Mil 14,11, speaks of Assagutta.
- ²⁵ The comparison with a jackal among a pride of lions occurs also in the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, T.1425.22:491a22, where it is spoken by Mahākassapa at the first *saṅgīti* when expressing his refusal to let Ānanda participate in the gathering of five hundred arahants who were to recite the Dharma and Vinaya.
- ²⁶ A comparable comportment by a group of monks is reported in the commentary on the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, Ps I 258,33. Having agreed not to speak to each other until they had attained arahantship, they filled their mouths with water on entering the village to beg for alms, spitting it out after having left the village. The villagers were then able to know from the spots of water that had been spat out the number of monks that had come to the village for alms.
- ²⁷ The supplementation of “never” is based on the parallel T.1670A.32:694c23: 未曾 (the corresponding passage in the *Milindapañha*, Mil 16,1, proceeds differently and does not have the injunction to keep water in the mouth and the reaction by the teacher when Nāgasena does not follow this injunction). Given the setting, with the teacher asking Nāgasena to keep water in the mouth as a mode of conduct apparently incumbent

on anyone going to this householder or even anywhere else to receive alms, it seems more probable that the householder had not been receiving teachings when donating food. Guang Xing, “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” p. 194, n. 49, observes that “according to the tradition, after a meal monks should give some short talks on dharma to those who offered the meal.” Yet the custom of keeping water in the mouth would only be meaningful (and its breach warrant punishment, as evident in the later denouement of the tale) if the tradition of giving a short talk after the meal had not been followed.

- ²⁸ The teaching given here by Nāgasena is in line with the standard procedure in the early discourses of providing first basic instructions on generosity, morality, and rebirth in heaven. Seeing that the audience is receptive, teachings on insight are given next. In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 16,4, however, Nāgasena straightaway teaches Abhidharma. As noted by Thich Minh Chau, *Milindapañha and Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra: A Comparative Study Through Pāli and Chinese Sources* (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1964), p. 25f, this is one of several such references in the Pāli version supporting the impression that the *Milindapañha* presents a more developed and later version of the debate between Nāgasena and Milinda.
- ²⁹ This would refer to being expelled from that particular monastery, in the sense that by not following the conduct agreed among its monastic inhabitants he had lost his residential rights. It could not intend the type of expulsion that is appropriate when a fully ordained monk conceals having violated one of the four main rules, *pārājika*, on which see Anālayo, “The Legal Consequences of pārājika,” *Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 5 (2016): 1–22.
- ³⁰ 舍竭, counterpart to Sāgala in Mil 19,4.
- ³¹ 大秦國, counterpart to the country of the Yonakas in Mil 1,13. A reference to the Yonaka country that is then interpreted from the viewpoint of local geographical awareness occurs also in two cases noted by Emmanuel Guillon, “Le questions de Milinda. Un roi gréco-indien dans un texte mōn,” *Cahiers de l’Asie du Sud-Est* 29/30 (1991): 85f. In one case a Mon version of the *Milindapañha* takes the term to refer to the Vietnamese, in the other case a Burmese version understands it to denote those from the region of Chiang Mai in Thailand.
- ³² My conjectural translation is based on adopting the variant 陂門 instead of 乘門. Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 91, n. 7, comments that the expression 乘門, “ne parait pas offrir de sens,” based on which he suggests an emendation of the first character and then translates it as a reference to “recluse.” Guang Xing “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” p. 195, n. 68, objects against this, arguing that 乘門 means wealthy people. Both thus take the phrase to refer to a particular group of people. Yet, it seems to me that, once the main modes of locomotion have been mentioned (elephants, horses, chariots, and pedestrian), what follows need not intend still other people on the roads, but could also be about the city as a whole having pools as gathering places.
- ³³ The supplementation of “other” follows T.1670A.32:695b12: 及餘小國 (T. 1670B reads: 及諸小國).

- ³⁴ The supplementation “surplus” follows T.1670A.32:695b14: 有餘.
- ³⁵ The *Milindapañha*, Mil 19,14, speaks of Āyupāla.
- ³⁶ The translation is based on emending 行忠政, probably the result of a textual corruption, by instead relying on the corresponding passage in T.1670A.32:695b28: 行中正. Mil 19,29 refers to *dharmacariyasamacariyatthā*. Nevertheless, the reading 行忠政 could perhaps be made sense of as a reference to “acting with loyalty to the government,” in the sense that, presumably being the first Buddhist monk to meet the king, he might want to assure the king that both monastic and lay followers of the Buddha are loyal to the government. Such a reading would fit the impression of some degree of similarity between the present encounter and that of the Buddha and the king Ajātasattu in the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*; similarities already noted for the *Milindapañha* by T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda, Translated from the Pāli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 8, n. 2; p. 10, n. 1, 3; p. 37, n. 1; p. 38, n. 1, 2; p. 41, n. 2, 3; p. 42, n. 1. Graeme MacQueen, *A Study of the Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988), p. 206f, suggests that the question posed by the king to the Buddha in the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* carries with it a subtle challenge, in that the head of a government asserting control asks a representative of the community of recluses to stand up and define their role and function. The Buddha then dexterously meets this challenge by getting the king to affirm publicly his respect for a recluse even if the same person had gone forth after earlier being a slave in the royal household. On possible political motivations behind Milinda’s wish to discuss with Buddhist monks see also Osmund Bopearachchi, “King Milinda’s Conversion to Buddhism, Fact or Fiction?,” *Ancient Ceylon, Journal of the Archaeological Survey Department of Sri Lanka* 7 (1990): 7ff.
- ³⁷ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 20,11, the king adds that becoming a Buddhist monk and undertaking ascetic practices must be the result of evils done in former lives. Such a more detailed argument fits the context well as a means to reduce the monk to silence. The continuous relevance of this type of question up to nowadays has been noted by A. Foucher, “À propos de la conversion au bouddhisme du roi indo-grec Ménandre,” *Mémoires de l’Institut National de France* 43/2 (1951): 279, who writes, “la première réaction, toute spontanée, d’un Européen confronté . . . avec les représentants réguliers du bouddhisme est de se demander, puisque la salut est accessible aux laïques, ‘à quoi bon se faire moine?’”
- ³⁸ The translation is based on adopting the variant 不 instead of 難, in keeping with the formulation found in the previous sentence.
- ³⁹ These are the twelve (or nine) *aigas*; see, e.g., Anālayo, “Āgama and aṅga in the Early Buddhist Oral Tradition,” *Singaporean Journal of Buddhist Studies* 3 (2016): 9–37.
- ⁴⁰ These are monks, nuns, male lay disciples, and female lay disciples.
- ⁴¹ The one who informs the king in the *Milindapañha*, Mil 22,18, is called Devamantiya.
- ⁴² The meeting between the two appears to have taken place in the same location as the meeting with Yeheluo. In fact, after only a short exchange between the king and

Nāgasena, it has become too late to continue and the king needs to return to his palace, inviting Nāgasena to meet him there the next day. This makes it clear that the initial meeting with Nāgasena did not take place in the palace.

- ⁴³ Contentment as the greatest wealth and nirvana as the highest happiness are also mentioned in Dhṛ 204, but the rest of the verse differs. The *Milindapañha* does not report that Nāgasena started the conversation by delivering a teaching on his own account. In fact, given the debate setting, the presentation in the Chinese version is unexpected.
- ⁴⁴ C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *The Milinda-Questions: An Inquiry into its Place in the History of Buddhism with a Theory as to its Author* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1930), p. 25f, reasons that the debate would have been conducted in a Prakrit, as one would expect Milinda to be bilingual, whereas there is no reason why Nāgasena should be fluent in Greek.
- ⁴⁵ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 26,23, the king presses his point more strongly by accusing Nāgasena of falsehood, inasmuch as there is no Nāgasena to be found.
- ⁴⁶ The supplementation “you came in” takes its inspiration from the *Milindapañha*, Mil 26,32, where in reply to an inquiry by Nāgasena the king had stated that he had come in a chariot. This helps understand why Nāgasena would take up a chariot in his reply, making it fairly probable that the same sense also underlies his inquiry in T. 1670B.
- ⁴⁷ A corresponding passage can be found in SN 5.10 at SN I 135,20, SĀ 1202 at T.99.2:327b9, SĀ² 218 at T.100.2:454c29, and D 4094 nyu 82a1; see Anālayo, “Defying Māra—Bhikkhunīs in the Saṃyukta-āgama,” in A. Collett, ed., *Women in Early Indian Buddhism: Comparative Textual Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 126. Notably, Mil 28,5 agrees with SN 5.10 in attributing the verses to Vajirā, whereas in the parallels they are instead spoken by Selā.
- ⁴⁸ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 28,29, Nāgasena distinguishes between *pañḍitavāda* and *rājāvāda*.
- ⁴⁹ The translation is based on emending 諸 to read 語, following a suggestion by Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 99, n. 1.
- ⁵⁰ A version of this exchange can be found in T.2004.48:253b26.
- ⁵¹ Whereas at the present juncture the king rides on a horse to leave, T.1670B.32:706c8: 騎馬, according to the description of his arrival he drove a chariot, 705b22: 乘車. Yaroslav Vasil’kov, “Did East and West Really Meet in Milinda’s Questions?”, *The Petersburg Journal of Cultural Studies* 1/1 (1993): 68f, comments on the same contrast in the *Milindapañha* that in this way the king “first visits Nāgasena in a chariot; but after the [first] discussion, in which he is defeated, he returns home on horseback . . . one might suggest . . . that the king abandons his chariot out of vexation, since it was precisely the celebrated ‘example of the chariot’ which the monk had just used to prove to him that he was wrong.” Or else, perhaps “Milinda’s leaving behind the chariot after the [first] dispute with Nāgasena is a direct result of the king’s defeat in

the debate. A traditional coupling of two motifs, defeat in a contest, verbal or otherwise, and the surrender of the chariot to the victor, would seem to explain the strange incident of Milinda's departure on horseback."

- ⁵² In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 30,14, the king does not threaten any punishment.
- ⁵³ According to the *Milindapañha*, Mil 30,23, he came with eighty thousand monks, *asītiya bhikkhusahasseehi saddhiṃ*. Such numbers tend to have a symbolic meaning, in fact T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, p. 48, and N. K. G. Mendis, *The Questions of King Milinda: An Abridgement of the Milindapañha* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1993), p. 33, have opted to translate the Pāli phrase freely as "with the whole company of the brethren" or just "a large number of monks."
- ⁵⁴ The *Milindapañha*, Mil 31,16, does not mention any gifting of sandals.
- ⁵⁵ The *Milindapañha*, Mil 31,20, does not refer to the presence of the ladies.
- ⁵⁶ The *Milindapañha*, Mil 32,3, also mentions being indebted as a possible reason for going forth. However, being in debt is one of the factors that make a candidate unfit for ordination as a Buddhist monk; cf. Vin I 93,29. As noted by Horner, *Milinda's Questions*, Volume I, p. 42, n. 5, going forth because of being in debt also finds mention in MN I 463,24 and SN III 93,8, but these instances depict *not* going forth for such a reason. In the present case, the reference to those who did go forth for such a reason could thus hardly intend Buddhist monks, but must be referring to recluses in general.
- ⁵⁷ The text speaks of 孝順, which conveys in particular the sense of filial piety. However, as becomes evident in the exposition given later of the significance of this quality, this sense would not be appropriate in the present context. My rendering as "devotion" attempts to do justice to the later exposition, which relates the present quality to the thirty-seven requisites of awakening.
- ⁵⁸ The original actually speaks of 戲樂, which taken literally conveys the sense of an indulgence in worldly pleasures, although from the context it is clear that this must intend the fourth of the five hindrances. The expression 戲樂蓋 occurs in T.13.1:234c26 as a rendering of the hindrance of restlessness-and-worry, *auddhatya-kaukrtya-nīvaraṇa*; see Tilman Vetter, *A Lexicographical Study of An Shigao's and His Circle's Chinese Translation of Buddhist Texts* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2012), p. 123.
- ⁵⁹ A comparable instruction can be found in the first and last line of a stanza found in SN 10.12 at SN I 214,27 (see also Sn 184) and its parallels SĀ 603 at T.99.2:161a29 (see also SĀ 1326 at T.99.2:365a12) and SĀ² 325 at T.100.2:483a10, according to which one crosses the flood by faith and by wisdom one is purified. Mil 36,15 explicitly indicates that this statement is found in the *Samyutta-nikāya*. Minh Chau, *Milindapañha and Nāgasenabhikshusūtra*, p. 26, reasons, due to the absence in general of any reference in the Chinese version to specific discourses in particular Nikāyas, that the text reflected in Chinese translation "was compiled at a time, very near after the

demise of the Buddha, when the above divisions and classifications had not yet been in vogue.” Given that the division into Āgamas and Nikāyas appears to be comparatively early and as such is mentioned in the accounts of the first *saṅgīti* in the Vinayas of different schools (see Anālayo, “Āgama and aṅga in the Early Buddhist Oral Tradition,” pp. 12–14), it seems more natural to see the lack of such references simply as a reflection of the debate situation. Neither the king nor his assembly would have been acquainted with subdivisions of the Buddhist scriptural collections such as, in the present instance, the *Samyutta-nikāya*, making it futile for Nāgasena to refer to them. The occurrence of such type of references in the Pāli *Milindapañha* would simply reflect its increased usage as a work of reference by Buddhists themselves, which makes it indeed meaningful to supply more detailed referencing. Moriz Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Literatur, Band 2, Die Buddhistische Literatur und die Heiligen Texte der Jainas* (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler, 1920, reprint 1968), p. 146. n. 2, points out that quotations in the first three chapters of the Pāli work are from early parts of the canonical collections, unlike quotations in subsequent chapters as well as in later parts of the introduction. This gives the impression of a process of updating of such referencing in the *Milindapañha*, which seems to have continued until the time of Buddhaghosa. Padmanabh S. Jaini, *Milinda-ṭīkā* (London: Pali Text Society, 1986), p. xii, notes that the commentary on the *Milindapañha* attributes the introductory verses and several other sentences to Buddhaghosa, which “shows the existence of a tradition which believed that he was actively responsible in revising or even recasting the Miln. (*Milindapañha*). It will not be too bold a conclusion to draw from this statement that the Miln. received several additions during the time of Buddhaghosa.”

- ⁶⁰ 意止, literally “stilling of the mind,” a rendering of *satipaṭṭhāna/smrtyupasthāna* also adopted by Ān Shigāo (安世高); see Vetter, *A Lexicographical Study of An Shigao’s and His Circle’s Chinese Translation of Buddhist Texts*, p. 117.
- ⁶¹ It seems that this cryptic passage is meant as a summary of the four right efforts. According to the standard presentation, the four right efforts are concerned with avoiding the arising of evil states, overcoming arisen evil states, developing not yet arisen wholesome states, and maintaining arisen wholesome states; see also T.1670A.32:697b27. Given the more adequate presentation in T. 1670A, the present passage is probably the result of some editorial intervention in China. The whole detailed discussion of the thirty-seven requisites of awakening is without a counterpart in the *Milindapañha*, which only lists them briefly in its discussion of mindfulness; see Mil 37,10.
- ⁶² The present and the next quality end with a reference to 念, which appears to be the result of a textual corruption. In an attempt to make sense of it, I have rendered it as “remembrance,” in the sense that this is an additional benefit accruing from cultivating the four right efforts.
- ⁶³ The description presents supernormal abilities that are held to be the potential fruit of cultivating the four bases of success. The standard presentation of these four lists

desire, being energetic, mind, and investigation, each occurring in conjunction with concentration and formations of striving. The presentation in the corresponding part in T.1670A.32:697c1 indeed lists desire, energy, control of the mind, and attention. This supports the suggestion made in note 61 above that the presentation in T. 1670B is probably best considered the result of a maladroït editorial intervention in China.

- ⁶⁴ According to the standard presentation, the five faculties (as well as the five powers) are faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom; see T.1670A.32:697c3 and above notes 61 and 63.
- ⁶⁵ 意, literally “the mind,” a rendering of *smṛti/sati* also employed by Ān Shīgāo; see Vetter, *A Lexicographical Study of An Shigao’s and His Circle’s Chinese Translation of Buddhist Texts*, p. 117.
- ⁶⁶ 可, literally “to approve,” a character employed by Ān Shīgāo to convey the sense of “pleasant” or “pleasing”; see Vetter, *A Lexicographical Study of An Shigao’s and His Circle’s Chinese Translation of Buddhist Texts*, p. 54.
- ⁶⁷ 護, literally “to protect,” a character sometimes used to render *upekkhā/upekṣā*.
- ⁶⁸ The text qualifies each factor as 直, literally “straight,” a translation of *sammā/samyak* also employed by Ān Shīgāo; see Vetter, *A Lexicographical Study of An Shigao’s and His Circle’s Chinese Translation of Buddhist Texts*, p. 209.
- ⁶⁹ 治, sometimes employed by Ān Shīgāo as a rendering of *ājīva* (but at times also to render other path factors); see Vetter, *A Lexicographical Study of An Shigao’s and His Circle’s Chinese Translation of Buddhist Texts*, p. 168. If the reference should indeed be to right livelihood here, then this would imply that the sequence got reversed at this juncture, as in the standard presentation right action comes before right livelihood.
- ⁷⁰ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:697c17: 少; in fact the fewness of the soldiers is also mentioned in the next part of T. 1670B.
- ⁷¹ A version of the present exchange on unification of the mind can be found in T.2016.48:936b20.
- ⁷² See above (p. 136) the simile of the harvester of wheat.
- ⁷³ The original speaks of the 神 of the former body. Earlier in the text the same term 神 did carry a more literal meaning as “spirit,” but in the present and later passages it rather functions as a rendering of *vijñāna/viññāna*.
- ⁷⁴ The original speaks of the 精, the “semen.” As a literal translation would fail to convey the sense of the passage, in my rendering as “embryo” I follow the example set by Guang Xing, “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” p. 141.
- ⁷⁵ The translation is based on emending 主 to read 炷, following the reading found in T.1670A.32:698b23.
- ⁷⁶ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:698c4.

- ⁷⁷ A comparable statement by Sāriputta can be found in Th 1002f, where he states that he longs neither for death nor for life and that he just awaits his time. Notably, the corresponding quotation in Mil 45,3 differs from the actual wording found in Th 1002f, as already noted by T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, p. xli.
- ⁷⁸ Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 122, n. 1, comments that the present passage has suffered from such a degree of corruption that it no longer allows for correction. The text reads: 佛得無不說有樂或有苦。王言：如使有為無有苦。Guang Xing “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” p. 201, n. 168, suggests that a reference to Nāgasena has been lost before the present passage. He then translates it as follows (p. 146): “Nāgasena replied: ‘As the Buddha has attained non-activity, he does not speak of suffering or happiness.’ ‘If so,’ the king asked, ‘Is it as if there is no suffering in conditioned dharma?’” It is not clear to me in what sense the Buddha “does not speak of suffering or happiness,” since in many a discourse he is on record for speaking of these two. My own tentative translation intends to convey the sense that the king expresses an afterthought. In this way, after the inquiry about the ethical perspective on pleasure and pain, based on the assumption that the Buddha could hardly have denied the existence of these two, this afterthought by the king relates to the difference between *dukkha* as “unsatisfactory,” a general characteristic of all conditioned phenomena, and *dukkha* as “pain,” a felt experience that occurs in alternation with experiences felt as pleasant or neutral.
- ⁷⁹ The contrast made here and in what follows between 內 and 外 is not entirely clear and my supplementation of “attachment” to references to “outside” is an attempt to make sense of the contrast between the two terms in the light of the ensuing discussion. This discussion appears to be along the lines of an exposition found in MN 137 at MN III 217,9 and MĀ 163 at T.26.1:692c17, which differ from each other insofar as MN 137 distinguishes the sets of six types into those related to the household or to renunciation, whereas MĀ 163 instead distinguishes the same sets into those based on attachment and those based on dispassion; for a comparative study see Anālayo, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya* (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation, 2011), p. 782. Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 123, n. 4, suggests that the distinction between 內 and 外 could perhaps be understood in the sense of “internal” to the household life and “external” in the sense of having renounced household life, hence he translates the two terms as “profane” and “religieuse.” Guang Xing “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” p. 146f, opts for a literal translation as “internal” and “external” feelings. Although true to the original, a distinction of feelings into internal and external types would relate to their objects, namely external feelings arise through contact at the five sense-doors, in contrast to internal feelings arise at the mind-door. This would not work for the present exposition, where both qualifications are used for the entire set of six senses. Nor would the distinction between internal senses and external objects seem relevant.
- ⁸⁰ The present passage is clearly the result of a textual corruption. In order to arrive at a coherent presentation, I add “nor sadness” to “no joy,” 不喜, on the assumption that a reference to 不愁亦 has been lost. The exposition of this topic also seems to miss

some text that somehow conveys the sense of non-reactivity toward what is unpleasant. In order to make up for that lack, I supplement “if.”

- ⁸¹ The presentation here differs from the standard account of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), which proceeds from ignorance to the six sense-spheres via the following links: formations, consciousness, and name-and-form. Although one might take 身 to stand for formations (see Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 131, n. 3), it would still be out of sequence. Moreover, name-and-form normally occur together rather than name conditioning form.
- ⁸² The translation is only tentative; the original reads: 人以是故生死無有絕時, 人故本身不可得也. I assume that the second part corresponds in sense to the indication in Mil 50,21 that a beginning point of *dukkha* cannot be designated.
- ⁸³ The comparison with a chariot’s wheel is found in SN 4.10 at SN I 109,2 and its parallels SĀ 1085 at T.99.2:284c20 and SĀ² 24 at T.100.2:381b21.
- ⁸⁴ The present exchange is rather cryptic and the translation is only tentative. The supplementation of “no” suggests itself from the ensuing statement by the king. In the corresponding section in Mil 51,32, Nāgasena at first clarifies that the statement regarding the impossibility to designate an origin refers to ignorance. In contrast, an origin can be designated of what comes into existence from not existing and of what falls apart after having been in existence.
- ⁸⁵ 陽燧鉤; for a discussion of which see Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 136f, n. 7. I follow Guang Xing “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra,” p. 158, who translates the expression as “speculum.”
- ⁸⁶ The translation is based on emending 有有 to read 有.
- ⁸⁷ The translation is only tentative.
- ⁸⁸ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 54,18, the king explains that what he means with the *vedagū* is the life principle within that sees through the eyes, hears through the nose, etc. This helps explain the ensuing refutation by Nāgasena of the existence of such an entity as the recipient of six sense-door experience.
- ⁸⁹ The possibility of seeing forms seems to be missing in the original.
- ⁹⁰ Here, again, the possibility of seeing something seems to be missing in the original.
- ⁹¹ The reference to the eye could be the result of a textual error.
- ⁹² The *Milindapañha*, Mil 60,20, speaks of two cymbals, instead of two stones.
- ⁹³ The translation is based on adopting the variant 兩 instead of 雨.
- ⁹⁴ The original speaks of “burning” 燒, which fails to make sense in this context; see Guang Xing “Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra” p. 206, n. 248. The *Milindapañha*, Mil 62,31, speaks of a copper vessel being beaten, *kaṃsathālam ākoṭitam*.

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- ⁹⁵ The translation is based on adopting the variant 手 instead of 乎.
- ⁹⁶ The translation is based on adopting a variant that adds 次取肉味來.
- ⁹⁷ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:698c9: 種.
- ⁹⁸ The translation is based on emending 動類 to read 種類, the reading found in the corresponding passage in T.1670A.32:698c10.
- ⁹⁹ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:698c19: 本裁.
- ¹⁰⁰ A comparable but much more detailed exposition can be found in MN 135 at MN III 203,16 and a range of parallels; see Anālayo, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya*, pp. 767–775.
- ¹⁰¹ Versions of this dilemma can be found in T.1719.34:246a3, T.2122.53:326c9, and T.2123.54:170a16.
- ¹⁰² T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, p. 106, n. 2, comments on the corresponding simile in the Pāli version that “this was a pot so made that no water could pass from it except through a filtering medium. When not being actually used, the water was no doubt kept at a certain height in it by the pressure of the atmosphere.”
- ¹⁰³ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:699b24: 不死.
- ¹⁰⁴ The text here seems to have suffered from loss; the supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:699c4: 寧知.
- ¹⁰⁵ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:699c6: 見.
- ¹⁰⁶ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:699c11: 王言.
- ¹⁰⁷ On the five hundred waters see also DĀ 30 at T.1.1:116c24.
- ¹⁰⁸ The *Milindapañha*, Mil 71,6, speaks of the Elder Tissa.
- ¹⁰⁹ The translation is based on emending 舊得 to read 奪得, which is the reading found in the corresponding section in T.1670A.32:700a14.
- ¹¹⁰ According to Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 155, n. 1, here 智 corresponds to *vedagū*, which in the *Milindapañha* carries the connotation of a transmigrating soul; see T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1921, reprint 1993), p. 647: “a peculiar meaning of *vedagū* is that of ‘soul’ (lit. attainer of wisdom) at Miln 54 & 71.”
- ¹¹¹ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 72,3, the king next asks if, given that there is no transmigrating entity, there will be no continuity of evil deeds either. This helps explain why Nāgasena next takes up the topic of the theft of fruit.
- ¹¹² The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:700a29: 某枝間有某菓.
- ¹¹³ The translation is based on adopting the variant 已 instead of 以.

- ¹¹⁴ This appears to be a reference to the standard food reflection; see, e.g., MN 2 at MN I 10,8. Notably, the parallels MĀ 10 at T.26.1:432b24 and EĀ 40.6 at T.125.2:741a4 do not mention the use of food to become attractive or beautiful; see also the discussion in Anālayo, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya*, p. 31.
- ¹¹⁵ See AN 9.15 at AN IV 386,15, Sn 197f, Th 1151f, SĀ³ 9 at T.101.2:495b9, EĀ 12.1 at T.125.2:568b1 (not specified to be nine), EĀ² 29 at T.150A.2:880b2, and T.210.4:573c27.
- ¹¹⁶ A version of this dilemma can be found in T.1719.34:246a11.
- ¹¹⁷ The supplementation is based on T.1670A.32:700c9: 光.
- ¹¹⁸ The inquiry is based on a play on the etymological relationship between *brahmacariya*, literally “the conduct of Brahmā” as a reference to the celibate life of a monastic, and the actual conduct of Brahmā.
- ¹¹⁹ The reply involves a play on words similar to the king’s question on *brahmacariya* (see previous note), proposing that those endowed with *buddhi*, intelligence, on adopting the same type of reasoning should be considered disciples of the Buddha.
- ¹²⁰ The text speaks of a bird 鳥, which in this context does not make sense. The emendation follows T.1670A.32:700c21, which rather refers to an elephant 象; see also Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” p. 158, n. 4. In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 76,1, Nāgasena’s second reply to the etymological play by the king on the term *brahmacariya* is based on a play of words involving *koñcanāda*, “the trumpeting of an elephant,” and *koñca*, the heron.
- ¹²¹ A version of this dilemma can be found in T.1912.46:143c2.
- ¹²² The text here alternates between 人家 and 人, which I take to be equivalents.
- ¹²³ The translation is based on adopting the variant 志 instead of 忘.
- ¹²⁴ The text is probably corrupt here; the translation is based on assuming that a contrast is made between the proverbial ability of elephants to remember well and the king’s loss of memory.
- ¹²⁵ Both are on record for remembering many discourses spoken by the Buddha, therefore being foremost among their respective class of disciples in being *bahussuta*, literally “having heard much”; see AN at AN I 24,32 and 26,19. In the case of Khujjuttarā, the texts remembered by her are according to tradition those collected in the *Itivuttaka*; see Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, vol. 1, p. 720.
- ¹²⁶ The translation is based on emending 語 to read 語, following T.1670A.32:701b21.
- ¹²⁷ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 74,20, the king’s question is more specifically why the Buddha only gradually laid down the rules of training, *sikkhāpada*. Toshiichi Endo, “Some Significant Epithets and Qualities of the Buddha as found in the *Milindapañha*,” in Y. Karunadasa, ed., *Ananda: Papers on Buddhism and Indology, A Felicitation*

Volume Presented to Ānanda Weihena Palliya Guruge on His Sixtieth Birthday (Colombo: Felicitation Volume Editorial Committee, 1990), p. 164, comments that “here the Buddha’s all-knowing and all-seeing cognitive faculty is questioned in terms of his knowledge of the future.” As pointed out by Richard F. Gombrich, “Popperian Vinaya: Conjecture and Refutation in Practice,” in B. Kellner, et al., ed., *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday* (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 2007), p. 206f, “the idea that the Buddha was omniscient is strikingly at odds with the picture of him presented in every Vinaya tradition.” These “show that the Buddha . . . occasionally made a false start and found it necessary to reverse a decision. Since omniscience includes knowledge of the future, this is not omniscience.” In the formulation of the dilemma adopted in the *Milindapañha*, the problem that results from attributing omniscience to the Buddha comes out with increased clarity.

¹²⁸ Versions of this dilemma can be found in T.1718.34:57c9, T.1969A.47:199a18, T.1972.47:299b12, T.1976.47:398b9, T.2017.48:967a12, T.2122.53:457c26, and T.2123.54:165a8.

¹²⁹ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 80,26, Nāgasena explains that the boat represents wholesome actions.

¹³⁰ The rendering “six days” is based on emending 六月日 to read 六日, thus deleting a reference to “months.” The corresponding section in T.1670A.32:702a15 speaks of six days, 六日.

¹³¹ According to Gérard Fussman, “L’Indo-Grec Ménandre ou Paul Demiéville revisité,” *Journal Asiatique* 281/1–2 (1993): 79, this would refer to Alexandria in Egypt; see also the discussion in Étienne Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, des origines à l’ère Śaka* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, 1958), p. 414.

¹³² One *yojana* corresponds to about seven miles; see the detailed discussion in Peter Skilling, “A Note on Dhammapada 60 and the Length of the Yojana,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 24 (1998): 149–170.

¹³³ Versions of Nāgasena’s reply to this dilemma with the help of the simile of two birds can be found in T.1719.34:246a15, T.2122.53:458a8, and T.2123.54:165a18.

¹³⁴ The translation is based on emending 問 to read 言, the reading found in the corresponding section in T.1670A.32:702a28.

¹³⁵ A version of this dilemma can be found in T.2122.53:458a12 and T.2123.54:165a22.

¹³⁶ The supplementation is based on T.1670B.32:702c3: 我知.

¹³⁷ James Paul McDermott, “Kamma in the *Milindapañha*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 97/4 (1977): 464, comments on the version of this simile in the *Milindapañha* that of the two persons, “one individual is ignorant of the temperature of the ball. Thus it is to be supposed that he seizes it less carefully, with a stronger grasp, and that he is more severely burnt for this reason. As the illustration is set up,

the only difference between the two men who grasp the ball is that one of them is ignorant of its true nature. It is precisely this which results in his being burned more severely.”

- ¹³⁸ In the *Milindapañha*, Mil 85,22, Nāgasena asks if the king has heard someone snoring and if that could not be stopped if the person bent his body. Given that even an untrained person can accomplish this simply by bending the body, why should those accomplished in the three trainings not be able to stop their breathing on attaining the fourth absorption?
- ¹³⁹ The translation is based on emending 清 to read 漬; the reading found in T.1670A.32:702c14.
- ¹⁴⁰ The translation is based on emending 主 to read 生; the reading found in T.1670A.32:702c21.
- ¹⁴¹ The supplementation is based on text found additionally in T.1670A.32:703a16: 人言.
- ¹⁴² 麤軟, literally what is “rough and fine,” a rendering of *spraṣṭavya/phoṭṭhabba* also employed by Ān Shīgāo; see Vetter, *A Lexicographical Study of An Shigao's and His Circle's Chinese Translation of Buddhist Texts*, p. 342.
- ¹⁴³ The translation is based on emending 目所見事 to read 目所不見事; the reading found in T.1670A.32:703a22.
- ¹⁴⁴ The translation is based on emending 說 to read 解, the reading found in T.1670A.32:703c1.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Āṅguttara-nikāya</i>
D	Derge edition
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
DN	<i>Dīrgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T. 125)
EĀ ²	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T. 150A)
Kv	<i>Kathāvatthu</i>
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T. 26)
Mil	<i>Milindapañha</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T. 99)
SĀ ²	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T. 100)
SĀ ³	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T. 101)
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
T	Taishō edition
Th	<i>Theragāthā</i>
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Ud-a	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>
Vin	Vinaya

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BDK English Tripiṭaka (First Series)

Abbreviations

<i>Ch.</i> :	Chinese
<i>Skt.</i> :	Sanskrit
<i>Jp.</i> :	Japanese
<i>Eng.</i> :	Published title

Title	Taishō No.
Ch. Chang ahan jing (長阿含經) Skt. Dīrghāgama Eng. <i>The Canonical Book of the Buddha's Lengthy Discourses</i> (Volume I, 2015) <i>The Canonical Book of the Buddha's Lengthy Discourses</i> (Volume II, 2017) <i>The Canonical Book of the Buddha's Lengthy Discourses</i> (Volume III, 2018)	1
Ch. Zhong ahan jing (中阿含經) Skt. Madhyamāgama Eng. <i>The Madhyama Āgama (Middle-length Discourses)</i> (Volume I, 2013) <i>The Madhyama Āgama (Middle-length Discourses)</i> (Volume II, 2020)	26
Ch. Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing (大乘本生心地觀經) Eng. The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground (2021)	159
Ch. Fo suoxing zan (佛所行讚) Skt. Buddhacarita Eng. <i>Buddhacarita: In Praise of Buddha's Acts</i> (2009)	192
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Eng. <i>The Sutra of the Vow of Fulfilling the Great Perpetual Enjoyment and Benefiting All Sentient Beings Without Exception</i> (in <i>Esoteric Texts</i> , 2015)	
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Ch. Dasheng zhuangyanjing lun (大乘莊嚴經論) Skt. Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra	1604
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Ch. Dasheng ji pusa xue lun (大乘集菩薩學論) Skt. Śikṣāsamuccaya	1636
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Ch. Putixing jing (菩提行經) Skt. Bodhicaryāvatāra	1662
Ch. Jingangding yuqie zhongfa anouduoluo sanmiao sanputi xin lun (金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論) Eng. <i>The Bodhicitta Śāstra</i> (in <i>Esoteric Texts</i> , 2015)	1665
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Ch. Fumu enzhong jing (父母恩重經)	2887
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Jp.	Sangō shīki (三教指歸)	extracanonical
Jp.	Mappō tōmyō ki (末法燈明記)	extracanonical
Eng.	<i>The Candle of the Latter Dharma</i> (1994)	
Jp.	Jūshichijō kenpō (十七條憲法)	extracanonical