

THE MAHAYANA SUTRA OF  
PREVIOUS LIVES AND  
CONTEMPLATION OF THE MIND-GROUND

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**BDK English Tripiṭaka Series**

**THE MAHAYANA SUTRA OF  
PREVIOUS LIVES AND  
CONTEMPLATION OF THE  
MIND-GROUND**

(Taishō Volume 3, Number 159)

Translated by Rolf Giebel

**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.

August 7, 1991

NUMATA Yehan  
Founder of the English  
Tripiṭaka Project



## 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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**THE MAHAYANA SUTRA OF  
PREVIOUS LIVES AND  
CONTEMPLATION OF THE MIND-GROUND**



## Translator's Introduction

### The Text

The *Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground* (*Dasheng besheng xindi guan jing*), a lengthy work perhaps best known for its exposition of the four debts of gratitude, was the last Buddhist text to be translated into Chinese with the full support of the Tang imperial house. The translation, by Prajña (or Prajñā; 733/734–ca. 810), a Kashmiri monk and the last of the great translators of Buddhist texts in the Tang period, was begun in 810 and submitted to the throne the following year. The translation is also notable for the fact that the Japanese monk Ryōsen (759?–827?) played a key role in the actual translation, acting as the scribe who wrote down the initial draft translation, the only instance in which a Japanese monk is known to have played such a prominent role in the translation of a Chinese Buddhist text.

The sutra's title, *Dasheng besheng xindi guan jing*, has been translated into English in various ways, including *Mahāyāna Former Birth Scripture on Contemplating the Mind-ground*, *Mahāyāna Sutra of Contemplating the Mind Ground in the Buddha's Life*, *Sutra on Contemplation of the Ultimate Source of the Heart Ground*, *Mahayana Sutra on Contemplation of the Mind-ground of Essential Nature*, and *Scripture on the Contemplation of the Mind Ground of Intrinsic Origination in the Mahāyāna*. It is the term *besheng*, corresponding in the above renderings to “former birth,” “Buddha's life,” “ultimate source,” “essential nature,” or “intrinsic origination,” that is the most problematic, for it does not appear once in the text of the sutra. When one considers, however, that *besheng* is a standard translation of *jātaka*, signifying narrative accounts of previous lives of the Buddha, and several incidents from previous lives of the Buddha are indeed mentioned in Chapter I, it would seem reasonable to take *besheng* in the sense of “former birth” or, as translated here, “previous lives,” which is how it would seem to have been interpreted by the editors of the Taishō canon when they included this sutra in the Jātaka section of the Taishō canon. Here

the title has accordingly been translated as *Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*.

The Chinese translation is said to have been based on a Sanskrit text that had been brought to China from Sri Lanka during the reign of Gaozong (r. 649–683). No Sanskrit manuscript of this sutra has been discovered nor was it translated into Tibetan, and in view of the absence of any references to it in Indian materials, as well as the seemingly mutually unrelated topics with which it deals, it has even been suggested that it was in fact composed in China. However, judging from the character of several other translations attributed to Prajña, it would seem more likely that Prajña had at hand a base text in Sanskrit (brought to China more than a hundred years earlier if the historical record is to be believed), which he then augmented in various ways.

A word-for-word commentary on the *Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground* is provided by the *Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing qianzhu* (Manji Zokuzōkyō, vol. 34), completed in 1696 by Yunzhong Laizhou (d.u.), who refers to himself as the twenty-eighth patriarch of the Xian-shou (i.e., Huayan) school. For a more modern commentary, reference can be made to the *Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing jiangji* by Taixu (1890–1947). A representative Japanese rendition in classical *kundoku* style is included in the *Kokuyaku Issaikyō* series (“Kyōshū-bu” 6).

## Contents

As noted above, in content the *Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground* covers several seemingly unrelated topics, and its thirteen chapters can for convenience’s sake be broadly divided into five parts.

The first part, corresponding to Chapter I (“Introduction”), first sets the scene, as it were, in the conventional format of Buddhist scriptures, and this is followed by a manifestation of the Buddha’s miraculous powers in the form of great rays of light in which there appear all manner of scenes, including some from the Buddha’s previous lives when he was still a bodhisattva. It is to be supposed that it is these events to which *bensheng* in the title refers. As is the case in many of the following chapters, the contents of the prose section are then reprised in verse, in this case by the bodhisattva Simhanāda.

The second part, corresponding to Chapter II (“Repaying Debts of Gratitude”), the longest chapter, provides a detailed exposition of the four debts of gratitude,

i.e., one's debts of gratitude to one's parents, to all beings, to the king, and to the Three Jewels, first in prose and then in verse, the latter for the benefit of a householder named Jñānaprabha, who arrives belatedly at the assembly together with his recalcitrant son. It may be noted that a different enumeration of four debts of gratitude is found in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna-sūtra*, translated into Chinese circa 538–543 (Taishō no. 721), where the objects of indebtedness are given as mother, father, Tathāgata, and Dharma teacher.

The third part, corresponding to Chapters III–IX, extols and describes the practices of the renunciant bodhisattva. There are some close parallels with the *Ugraparipṛcchā* in particular, and Yoritomi Motohiro has speculated that this section constituted the core of Prajñā's Sanskrit text.

Chapter III (“Renunciation”) begins with Jñānaprabha voicing doubts about what he sees as inconsistencies between the teaching of repaying debts of gratitude and the life of a renunciant. The Buddha dispels his doubts with nine analogies that illustrate the many ways in which the renunciant bodhisattva is superior to the householder, and this chapter ends with several thousand people, including Jñānaprabha, being ordained by the bodhisattvas Maitreya and Mañjuśrī.

Chapter IV (“Nondefilement”) deals with a set of practices for renunciants known as the four “noble traditions” (*āryavaṃśa*), for each of which ten benefits are enumerated. In Chapter V (“The *Aranya*”), in response to a question posed by the bodhisattva Nityodyukta, the Buddha extols the fourth of the practices described in the previous chapter, namely, dwelling in an *aranya*, i.e., the wilderness or a forest (which is not, however, included in standard enumerations of the four *āryavaṃśa*). In Chapter VI (“Detachment from the World”) a bodhisattva named \*Vivekācārin first sets out the various fears that may assail the bodhisattva and then goes on to describe in further detail the *aranya* and its benefits. In Chapter VII (“Revulsion of the Body”) the Buddha lists in response to a question by Maitreya thirty-seven ways in which the bodhisattva is to observe the shortcomings of his body. In Chapter VIII (“The *Pāramitās*”), again in response to a question by Maitreya, the Buddha explains how the renunciant bodhisattva living in an *aranya* should practice the ten *pāramitās*, or perfections, and in Chapter IX (“Adornment with Merits”), the final chapter of the third part, he describes, again prompted by Maitreya, the requisite qualities of the bodhisattva who is suited to living in an *aranya* as well as the qualities that he should cultivate while living there.

In part four, corresponding to Chapters X–XII, “Contemplation of the Mind,” “Generating the *Bodhi*-Mind,” and “Becoming a Buddha,” the Buddha’s interlocutor is Mañjuśrī, and these chapters deal with the second element in the sutra’s title, namely, “contemplation of the mind-ground.” Following a discussion of “mind,” there is described a meditative practice that represents an abridged version of a five-stage process for attaining enlightenment (*pañcākārābhisaṃbodhikrama*) that is distinctive of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, along with the associated mantras and *mudrās*, or hand gestures. Several passages describing the Buddha in these chapters are also reminiscent of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, one of the most important Buddhist tantras, and it would seem reasonable to suppose that this section was added, or at least given its Tantric overtones, by Prajña. It should be noted that Prajña translated a text closely related to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, the *Zhufo jingjie she zhenshi jing* (Taishō no. 868), although the date of its translation is not known, and there are some parallels between this text and part four of the present work.

The fifth and final part, corresponding to Chapter XIII (“The Entrustment”), brings the sutra to a close with an explanation of the benefits of upholding and disseminating the sutra along with an exhortation to the assembled multitudes to do so.

As can be inferred from the brief overview of its contents presented above, the *Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground* is a composite text that would seem to bring together several disparate strands of thought. Rather than being a faithful translation of a single Sanskrit text, it would seem more reasonable to suppose that, assuming that there was a Sanskrit base text, it was augmented in various ways by the translator Prajña. The Chinese text draws on Vijñānavāda thought and, in addition to the texts already mentioned, the influence of sutras such as the Mahayana *Mahānirvāṇa-sūtra*, *Avataṃsakasūtra*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, *Acintyabuddhaviṣayanirdeśa*, and *Fanwang jing* (\**Brahmajāla-sūtra*) can also be discerned. In addition, the structure of Prajña’s translation would seem to suggest a progression from the practices of the householder, as exemplified by the repaying of the four debts of gratitude, to the ascetic practices of the wilderness-dwelling renunciant bodhisattva, and finally to the visualization practices of Tantric Buddhism. There is, however, no way of knowing to what degree this reflects the contents of the original Sanskrit text and to what degree it is due to Prajña’s embellishments.

This scripture is best known in China and Japan for its exposition of the four debts of gratitude and perhaps, to a lesser extent, its instructions concerning an abridged version of a visualization practice characteristic of the *Sarvatathā-gatatattvasaṃgraha*. It also merits attention on account of its chapters on the renunciant bodhisattva and his practices, which are likely to be the most faithful to Prajñā's Sanskrit base text and provide further insights into the current of eremiticism that is known to have constituted an important aspect of the early Mahayana.



*The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and  
Contemplation of the Mind-ground*  
Translated by Tripiṭaka [Master] Prajña from  
the Land of Kashmir during the Greater Tang



## Fascicle One

### Chapter I Introduction

Thus have I heard. Once the Buddha was staying in the city of Rājagṛha, on Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa (Vulture Peak), together with a great multitude of thirty-two thousand monks, all of whom were arhats whose minds were well liberated, whose wisdom was well liberated, and who had done what had to be done, were free from heavy burdens, had attained what was to their own advantage, had put an end to the bonds of existence, had gained great freedom, abided in the pure precepts, were skilled in expedient means and adorned with knowledge, had realized the eight liberations, and had reached the further shore. Their names were the Venerable Ājñātakauṇḍinya, Aśvajit, Mahānāma, Bhadrīka, Mahākāśyapa, Gavāmpati, Revata, Uruvilvākāśyapa, Nadikāśyapa, Gayākāśyapa, Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākātyāyana, Mahākapphina, Zhentina,<sup>1</sup> Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra, Aniruddha, Subāhu, Subhūti, Bakkula, Nanda, Sundarananda, and Rāhula. These venerable arhats, and Ānanda and others who were still learning, were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants. Each made obeisance at the Buddha's feet, withdrew, and sat down to one side.

With him were also bodhisattvas and *mahāsattvas*, eighty-four thousand of them, all of whom were great Dharma princes who would succeed to the position [of a buddha] after one more birth. They possessed great awe-inspiring virtue like great *nāga* kings; they were perfectly endowed with a hundred blessings; light shone forth from their bodies, just like a thousand suns breaking through the darkness; their wisdom was more pellucid than the ocean, and they fully understood the buddhas' state of mystery; lighting great Dharma torches, they guided beings, and in the sea of birth-and-death they acted as great ship masters; they took pity on beings as if they were infants, and at all times they constantly bestowed happiness; their fame was universally known throughout world-systems in the ten directions; they disported freely

291b with subtle supernormal faculties; they had been well able to master the *dhāraṇī* gateways; they were masterful, being endowed with fourfold unimpeded eloquence; they were masterful, having achieved fulfillment of their great vow; they were masterful in their wonderful accomplishment of deeds; they were masterful, having been well able to enter *samādhi*; they were masterful in their complete perfection of merit; they were always uninvited friends for beings; they had for immeasurable eons diligently cultivated the six perfections and served buddhas one after another without abiding in nirvana; they had cut off mental afflictions and eliminated all latent habit energy; though they might be born in the six paths [of transmigration] they were faultless; manifesting themselves in the ten directions,<sup>2</sup> they discoursed on the wondrous Dharma, and in immeasurable world-systems they converted and benefited many beings; they brought non-Buddhists under control, vanquished their wrong thoughts, freed them from the causes of [the wrong views of] annihilation and permanence, and caused them to engender the right view, and yet they showed no signs of coming and going or vacillation; they adorned without adorning buddha fields in the ten directions and taught without teaching that the wondrous [truth-]principle is quiescent; abiding in a state of nonabiding, they had delivered multitudes of humans and gods [to the further shore]; they had experienced unexperienced vast Dharma bliss;<sup>3</sup> they had donned the armor of effort, wielded the sword of wisdom, destroyed Māra's army, beaten the Dharma drum, and always sat in all places of practice everywhere; they had blown the great Dharma conch to awaken all kinds of beings; all sentient beings received benefit and there were none who, having heard their names and seen their person, spent the time in vain; they were endowed with the knowledge of the three attainments and understood the dharmas of the three ages; they were familiar with the faculties of beings, both sharp and dull, and dispensed medicine according to the illness without entertaining any doubts; they deployed great Dharma clouds from which showers of nectar rained down; they turned the Dharma wheel of the seal of knowledge of nonretrogression; they had shut the prison of birth-and-death and opened the gate to nirvana; and they had made a vast vow to liberate all beings until the end of time.

These bodhisattvas would before long gain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, and their names<sup>4</sup> were: [the bodhisattva] Untainted (Vimala), the bodhisattva

Maitreya, the bodhisattva Lion's Roar (Siṃhanāda), the bodhisattva Wondrous Auspiciousness (Mañjuśrī), the bodhisattva Vimalakīrti, the bodhisattva He Who Is Masterful at Observing (Avalokiteśvara), the bodhisattva He Who Has Attained Great Strength (Mahāsthāmaprāpta), the bodhisattva King of the Adamantine Repository (Vajragarbharāja), the bodhisattva King of the Earth Repository (Kṣitigarbharāja), the bodhisattva King of the Repository of Empty Space (Ākāśagarbharāja), the bodhisattva King Masterful with Dhāraṇīs (Dhāraṇīsvararāja), the bodhisattva King Masterful in Samādhi (\*Samādhisvararāja), the bodhisattva King of the Wondrous High Mountain (Sumerurāja), the bodhisattva King of the Depths of the Ocean (\*Sāgaragambhīrarāja), the bodhisattva King of the Adornment of Wondrous Eloquence (Pratibhānālamkārarāja), the bodhisattva King of the Loftiness of Joy (\*Unnatanandarāja), the bodhisattva King of Great Supernormal Transformations (Maharddhirāja), the bodhisattva King Masterful in the Dharma (Dharmeśvararāja), the bodhisattva King of Pure Rain (\*Śuddhavarṣarāja), the bodhisattva Medicine King (Bhaiṣajyarāja), the bodhisattva Medicine Superior (Bhaiṣajyasamudgata), the bodhisattva Healer of the Illnesses of Mental Afflictions (\*Kleśavyādhipraśāmin), the bodhisattva Jewel Mountain (Ratnaparvata), the bodhisattva Jewel Wealth (Ratnadhana), the bodhisattva Jewel Supreme (Ratnottama), the bodhisattva Jeweled Virtue (Ratnaguṇa), the bodhisattva Jewel Repository (Ratnākara), the bodhisattva Heap of Jewels (Ratnakūṭa), the bodhisattva Jeweled Hand (Ratnapāṇi), the bodhisattva Jeweled Seal Hand (Ratnamudrāhastā), the bodhisattva Jeweled Light (Ratnaprabha), the bodhisattva Gift of Jewels (\*Ratnadāna), the bodhisattva Jeweled Banner (Ratnaketu), the bodhisattva Great Jeweled Banner (Mahāratnaketu), the bodhisattva Rain of Jewels (Ratnavarṣa), the bodhisattva Jeweled Attainment (\*Ratnādhipgama), the bodhisattva Jeweled Staff (Ratnayaṣṭi), the bodhisattva Jeweled Topknot (Ratnacūḍa), the bodhisattva Jeweled Auspiciousness (Ratnaśrī), the bodhisattva Masterful with Jewels (Ratneśvara), the bodhisattva Sandalwood Fragrance (Candanagandha), the bodhisattva Great Jeweled Torch (Mahāratnolka), the bodhisattva Great Jeweled Adornment (Mahāratnavyūha), the bodhisattva Sunlight (Sūryaprabha), the bodhisattva Moonlight (Candraprabha), the bodhisattva Starlight (Jyotiṣprabha), the bodhisattva Firelight (Agniprabha), the bodhisattva Lightning (Vidyutprabha), the bodhisattva Bestower of Mindfulness and Wisdom (\*Smṛtiprajñāprada), the bodhisattva

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Destroying Māra (Mārapramardin), the bodhisattva Victorious Over Māra (Māra-vijayin), the bodhisattva Constant Exertion (Satatasamitābhīyukta), the bodhisattva Never Resting (Anikṣiptadhura), the bodhisattva He Who Does Not Break the Great Vow (\*Avicchinmahāprañidhāna), the bodhisattva Great Fame (Mahā-yaśas), the bodhisattva Unimpeded Eloquence (Asaṅgapratibhāna), and the bodhisattva Unimpeded Turner of the Dharma Wheel (\*Asaṅgadharmacakrapravartin). The bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Vimala and these others were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also billions of gods (*devaputras*) of the six [heavens in the realm of] desire. Their names were: the *devaputra* Well-abiding (Supraṭiṣṭhita), the *devaputra* Awesome Virtue (\*Tejovati), the *devaputra* Universal Light (Saman-taprabha), the *devaputra* Pure Wisdom (Viśuddhamatī), the *devaputra* Auspicious One (Śrī), the *devaputra* Great Auspicious One (Mahāśrī), the *devaputra* Masterful One (Īśvara), the *devaputra* Great Masterful One (Maheśvara), the *devaputra* Sūryaprabha, and the *devaputra* Candraprabha. These *devaputras*, headed by Śakra Devendra, all cherished the wondrous Dharma of the Mahayana and wished to serve tathāgatas of the three ages, enter an inconceivable state of mystery, and adorn the buddhas' assemblies and places of practice. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also gods (*devaputras*) of the realm of form [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges. Their names were: the *devaputra* Universal Illumination by Great Light (Mahāvabhāsaprabha), the *devaputra* Untainted Adornment (Vimalavyūha), the *devaputra* Disporting with Supernormal Faculties (\*Ṛddhivikrīḍin), the *devaputra* Masterful in Samādhi (\*Samādhivaśavartin), the *devaputra* Masterful with Dhāraṇīs (Dhāraṇīśvara), the *devaputra* Great Nārāyaṇa (Mahānārāyaṇa), the *devaputra* Fulfilling the Superior Vow (\*Pravaraprañidhānaparipūrṇa), the *devaputra* Unimpeded Eloquence (Asaṅgapratibhāna), the *devaputra* Auspicious Merit (\*Punyaśrī), and the *devaputra* Constantly Making Great Vows (\*Nityanibaddhamahāprañidhāna). These *devaputras*, headed by the heavenly king and Great Brahmā Radiance (Jyotiṣprabha), were all endowed with the supernormal faculties of *samādhi* and with eloquence in their desire to preach; they had served buddhas and tathāgatas of the three ages one after another, and when these had sat on an adamant seat beneath a *bodhi* tree and, having destroyed Māra's army, realized *bodhi*, they had gone to assemblies everywhere and had all at the outset requested

the tathāgatas to turn the wheel of the wondrous Dharma, open the gate to the nectar [of nirvana], and deliver multitudes of humans and gods [to the further shore]; and they well understood the secret intent of the buddhas and would never again turn back from great *bodhi*. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also forty-eight thousand great *nāga* kings: the *nāga* king Manasvin, the *nāga* king Takṣaka, the *nāga* king Nanda, the *nāga* king Upananda, the *nāga* king Anavatapta, the *nāga* king Great Golden Face (\*Mahāsuvarṇamukha), the *nāga* king Wish-fulfilling Jewel (Cintāmaṇi), the *nāga* king Raining Wondrous Rare Jewels (Ratnavarṣa), the *nāga* king Constantly Discharging Sweet Rain (\*Sadāpravarṣin), the *nāga* king Possessing Great Majesty (Mahātejas), and the *nāga* king Masterful in Strength (\*Baleśvara). These *nāga* kings, headed by the *nāga* king Sāgara, all cherished 292a the wondrous Dharma of the Mahayana and had made a vast vow to revere and protect it. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also fifty-eight thousand *yakṣa* gods: the *yakṣa* god Great Lion King (Mahāsimharāja), the *yakṣa* god Effulgence of the Sun Disc (\*Sūryamaṇḍalaprabhāsa), the *yakṣa* god Wondrous Nārāyaṇa (Sunārāyaṇa), the *yakṣa* god Extremely Terrifying (Bhīmottara), the *yakṣa* god Lustrous Color of Lotus (\*Padmavarṇa), the *yakṣa* god Exquisite in Sense Organs (\*Cārvin-driya), the *yakṣa* god External Protector of the Right Dharma (\*Saddharma-parigrāhaka), the *yakṣa* god Worshiping the Three Jewels (\*Ratnatrayapūjaka), the *yakṣa* god Raining Rare Jewels (Ratnavarṣa), and the *yakṣa* god Mañipāla. These *yakṣa* gods, headed by the *yakṣa* god Saṃjñeya, were all endowed with the radiance of knowledge difficult to conceive, the torch of knowledge difficult to conceive, the conduct of knowledge difficult to conceive, and a mass of knowledge difficult to conceive, and for the sake of beings they subdued wicked demons, made them attain happiness, extended their merit and knowledge, and protected the Mahayana to ensure that it would not come to an end. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also eighty-nine thousand *gandharva* kings: the *gandharva* king Jeweled Crown on the Head (\*Śiromakūṭa), the *gandharva* king Universally Emitting Radiance (\*Raśmipramuñcaka), the *gandharva* king Adamantine Jeweled Banner (Vajraratnaketu), the *gandharva* king Pure of

Wondrous Sound (\*Madhurasvara), the *gandharva* king Going to Assemblies Everywhere (\*Sarvapaṣadanugata), the *gandharva* king Universally Manifesting in All Directions (\*Sarvadiksaṃdarśana), the *gandharva* king Cherishing the Mahayana (\*Mahāyānābhirata), and the *gandharva* king Turning the Nonretrogressing Wheel (\*Avivartacakrapravartin). These *gandharva* kings, headed by the *gandharva* king Pure of Sense Organs (\*Śuddhendriya), had all aroused a deep love and respect for the Mahayana, brought benefit and happiness to beings, and were forever tireless. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also a thousand million *asura* kings: the *asura* king Rāhula, the *asura* king Vemacitra, the *asura* king Manifesting Majesty (\*Tejhaṣaṃbhava), the *asura* king Great Firm Strength (\*Mahādṛḍhabala), the *asura* king Exquisite Voice (Madhurasvara), the *asura* king Illuminating Everywhere with Radiance (\*Virocana), the *asura* king Ever-victorious in Battle (\*Saṃgrā-mavijayin), and the *asura* king Skilled in Illusionary Transformations (\*Nirmitakauśalya). These *asura* kings, headed by the *asura* king Vast Wondrous Eloquence (\*Vipulapratisaṃvid), were skilled in practice and free from all [kinds of] self-pride, upheld the Mahayana, and venerated the Three Jewels. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

292b There were also five million *garuḍa* kings: the *garuḍa* king Ratnacūḍa, the *garuḍa* king Adamantine Pure Light (\*Vajrasuddharaśmi), the *garuḍa* king Swift Like the Wind (\*Vāyuvega), the *garuḍa* king Pure Wisdom of Empty Space (\*Ākāśaviśuddhamati), the *garuḍa* king Vast in His Wondrous Body (Mahākāya), the *garuḍa* king Nonretrogressing in the Mind (\*Cittāvaivartika), the *garuḍa* king Wide-eyed Purity (\*Virūpākṣasuddhi), the *garuḍa* king Big-bellied Satiation (\*Mahodarapūrṇa), the *garuḍa* king Mahātejas, and the *garuḍa* king Radiance of Wisdom (Jñānaraśmi). These *garuḍa* kings, headed by the *garuḍa* king Light of Wish-fulfilling Jewels (\*Cintāmaṇi-prabha), had all achieved acceptance of the nonarising of dharmas and were adept at bringing benefit to all beings. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also nine million *kiṃnara* kings: the *kiṃnara* king Earth-shaking (\*Pṛthivīkampin), the *kiṃnara* king Wondrous Jeweled Flower Banner (\*Suratna-puspaketu), the *kiṃnara* king Radiance of Jeweled Trees (\*Ratnadrumaprabha), the *kiṃnara* king Radiance of the Wondrous Dharma (Sudharmaprabha), the

*kiṃnara* king Supreme Adornment (\*Paramavyūha), the *kiṃnara* king Radiance of the Great Dharma (Mahādharmaprabha), the *kiṃnara* king Upholding the Wondrous Dharma (Dharmadhara), the *kiṃnara* king Adorned with Wondrous Jewels (\*Ratnabhūṣita), and the *kiṃnara* king He Who Has Accomplished Wondrous Vision (\*Svavalokanasiddha). These *kiṃnara* kings, headed by the *kiṃnara* king Sound Pleasing to the Mind (Manojñasvara), all possessed pure wondrous wisdom, were blissful in body and mind, and disported freely. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also ninety-eight thousand *mahoraga* kings: the *mahoraga* king Wondrous Topknot, the *mahoraga* king He Who Has Great Majesty (Mahātejovati), the *mahoraga* king Adorned with a Jeweled Topknot (\*Ratnacūḍālamkṛta), the *mahoraga* king Subtle with Pure Eyes (\*Sūkṣmavimalanetra), the *mahoraga* king Radiant Jeweled Banner (\*Prabharatnaketu), the *mahoraga* king Lion's Breast (\*Simhastana), the *mahoraga* king Unmoving Like a Mountain (\*Parvatācala), and the *mahoraga* king Delightful Radiance (\*Priyaprabha). These *mahoraga* kings, headed by the *mahoraga* king Rddhivikrīḍin, were already well-practiced in skillful means to make beings forever free from the entanglements of craving. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also wheel-turning sage-kings from myriads of millions of lands in other directions: wheel-turning sage-kings with a golden wheel, wheel-turning sage-kings with a silver wheel, wheel-turning sage-kings with a copper wheel, and wheel-turning sage-kings with an iron wheel together with their seven precious things, a thousand sons, and attendants. Their finery was immeasurable: elephant- and horse-carriages, innumerable jeweled banners hung with great jeweled pennants, garlands of flowers, jeweled canopies, silk festoons, white fly whisks, all kinds of rarities, necklaces of fine jewels, and unguents and powdered incense compounded with myriads of kinds of fine and special aromatics. Each [sage-king] held a priceless many-jeweled censer burning very precious incense as an offering to the World-honored One, and having with fine words extolled the Tathāgata's profound oceanlike wisdom, they said to the Buddha:

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World-honored One, I do not now seek the contaminated rewards of humans and gods in the three realms, but seek only supramundane *anuttarā*

*samyaksambodhi*. Why is this? Although the blessings and happiness of humans and gods in the three realms occupy an honorable position, once the merits of previous lives have been exhausted, one will be reborn in an evil destiny and experience immeasurable suffering. Who, possessing wisdom, would take pleasure in worldly happiness?

Having spoken these words, they singlemindedly pressed their palms together. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also the kings of sixteen great countries:<sup>5</sup> Great King Pure Rice (Śuddhodana) of the land of Kapila[vastu], King Bimbisāra of the land of Magadha, Great King Kāśi of the land of Vārāṇasī, Great King Udayana of the land of Yuyutuo, and King Kapphina, ruler of the land of Sāla. These sixteen great kings as well as petty kings and King Prasenajit, ruler of the land of Śrāvastī, were headed by [a king] named Candraprabha,<sup>6</sup> and they were all endowed with merit, knowledge, and supernormal faculties and possessed great majesty like that of wheel-turning kings; all their foes spontaneously surrendered, their people thrived, their lands were prosperous, and their roots of goodness planted in the presence of immeasurable buddhas were always protectively thought of by the buddhas. During the [past] Eon of Adornment one thousand buddhas appeared, and these kings always acted as their patrons; during the [present] Good Eon (*bhadrakalpa*) one thousand buddhas will appear, and these kings will again act as their patrons; during the Eon of Constellations (*tārapamakalpa*) in a future age one thousand buddhas will appear, and [these kings] will act as their patrons; and in all worlds in which buddhas will appear in the future these kings will through the power of their original vows always practice charity, bring benefit to sentient beings, and duly enter the gateways of expedient means as appropriate. Although they had become kings, they did not hanker for worldly happiness; having an aversion for birth-and-death, they cultivated the causes of liberation, diligently sought the path of the Buddha, cherished the Mahayana, converted and benefited all beings, were not attached to [distinguishing] characteristics, and continued the lineage of the Three Jewels to ensure that it would not come to an end. In order to hear the Dharma they made offerings to the Tathāgata, providing a wide range of rare dishes and solemnly bearing incense

and flowers, and came to where the Buddha was. They were each accompanied by one myriad, two myriads, or thousands of myriads of attendants.

There were also the wives of the kings of the sixteen great countries: Queen Vaidehī, Queen Fine Excellent Garland (Śrīmālā), Queen Very Delightful (\*Priyatamā), Queen Incomparable in the Three Realms (\*Trailokyātulyā), Queen Radiance of Blessed Recompense (\*Pun̄yaphalaprabhā), Queen Light of Wish-fulfilling Jewels (\*Cintāmaṇiprabhā), Queen Malli[kā], and Queen Wondrous Virtue (\*Supuṇyā). These wives, headed by Queen Exceptionally Fine Face (\*Sumukhaviśeṣā), were already well able to enter immeasurable right concentrations, and in order to deliver beings [to the further shore] they had manifested female bodies; they had trained their minds with the three liberations, possessed great wisdom, were perfect in merit, and with unconditional great kindness and unimpeded great compassion took pity on beings as if they were infants. Through the power of their original vows they had been able to encounter the World-honored One, and out of a desire to hear the Dharma they had come to where the Buddha was and, gazing up at his august countenance with unwavering eyes, offered up to the World-honored One immeasurable kinds of superior offerings among those of humans and also made offerings of innumerable necklaces of fine jewels to the Tathāgata. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

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There were also hundreds of thousands of innumerable people: monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, brahmans, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, *śūdras*, and eminent and ordinary householders and all people of [many] realms. These great multitudes had engendered pure faith, aroused thoughts of reverence, and planted in the past the roots of goodness; having been born [in this life], they had encountered the Buddhist Dharma, and in order to seek the supramundane they had aroused the thought that it is difficult to meet [a buddha] and had come to where the Buddha was, where they singlemindedly pressed their palms together. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also innumerable non-Buddhists: non-Buddhists who engaged in austerities, non-Buddhists who were very learned, non-Buddhists with worldly knowledge, non-Buddhists who delighted in detachment, and the Lokāyata non-Buddhists. Headed by the Lokāyatika<sup>7</sup> non-Buddhists, they had accomplished the five [supernormal] faculties and could fly freely. They

had aroused thoughts of wonder, and in order to hear the Dharma they came to where the Buddha was. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also immeasurable and innumerable nonhumans and hungry ghosts: namely, demons without wealth, demons who eat human vomit, demons who torment beings, demons who eat mucus and spittle, demons who eat insatiably, *piśāca* demons, demons who smell very smelly, demons who eat excrement, demons who eat human fetuses, demons who eat children [just] born, demons who eat impurities, and demons who produce auspiciousness. These demons, headed by the great king of demons and spirits Virūḍhaka, had abandoned venomous thoughts and taken refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and all of them protected the Tathāgata's right Dharma. In order to hear the Dharma they came to where the Buddha was, prostrated themselves on the ground, and looked up yearningly at the World-honored One. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

293b There were also immeasurable and innumerable kings of birds and beasts: the king of pheasants, the king of parrots, the king of lions, the king of elephants, and the king of deer. All these kings of birds and beasts, headed by the golden-colored king of lions, had all taken refuge in the Tathāgata and Great Teacher, and out of a desire to hear the Dharma they came to where the Buddha was. Each, in accordance with the power of his vow, made offerings to the World-honored One and said to the Buddha:

We but beseech you, O Tathāgata, to accept out of pity our meager offerings. May we be forever free from the seeds of evil deeds that lead to the three [evil] paths! May we be able to receive the rewards of the blessings and happiness of humans and gods! And may we open up the Dharma gateway to the nectar of the Mahayana, quickly cut off ignorance, and obtain liberation!

Then the kings of birds, having spoken these words, singlemindedly pressed their palms together and gazed up at the Tathāgata. They were each accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants.

There were also hundreds of thousands of King Yamas, together with innumerable great *rākṣasas*, all kinds of beings, evil kings, officials of the netherworld, and jailers and penal officers who weigh up sins and merits.

Moved by the Buddha’s awesome power, they had forsaken evil thoughts and come together with King Yama to hear the Dharma. [King Yama] said to the Buddha:

All beings, because of ignorance, hanker for the pleasures of the five desires, commit the five heinous crimes, enter into the various hells, transmigrate endlessly, and on account of their actions experience great hardship, just as a silkworm in the world at large enmeshes itself in its cocoon. I but beseech you, O Tathāgata, to cause great Dharma showers to rain down, to extinguish the fires of hell, to send cool breezes, to open the gate to liberation, and to shut off the three evil destinies.

Then King Yama, having spoken these words, made offerings of all kinds of rare jewels to the Tathāgata and circled him one hundred thousand times with singleminded reverence. He was accompanied by some hundreds of thousands of attendants, who each made obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, withdrew, and sat down to one side.

At that time the World-honored One was seated on a lion seat atop a jeweled lotus. The lion seat was the color of dark blue beryl and was studded and adorned with all kinds of rare [gems]. The stem [of the lotus] was made of precious crystal, the lotus petals were made of purple-tinged polished gold, and, as for the pericarp of the lotus, the pistils and stamens were made of *maṇi* jewels. [The seat] was attended by eighty-four thousand great jeweled lotuses made of gold from the Jambū River and surrounded in front and behind by great multitudes, who honored, revered, venerated, and praised [the World-honored One].

Now, the Bhagavān (Lord) was seated cross-legged on the lion seat with extraordinary bearing, just as four-jeweled Mount Sumeru rises naturally far up out of the ocean, just as one hundred thousand suns illuminate empty space, emit immeasurable light, and destroy the darkness, and just as a *koṭi* of full moons, [each] alone among the stars, sheds refreshing light and brightens world-systems.

At that time the Tathāgata entered the very best *samādhi* of the heaven Pinnacle of Existence (Akaniṣṭha), called “King of the Mind’s Adornment with Necklace Jewels.” Dwelling in this state of concentration, he did not move in body or mind.

293c Then all the *devaputras* in the realm of nonform rained down immeasurable kinds of exquisite flowers and incense, which descended through empty space like clouds. The eighteen Brahmā kings of the [eighteen] heavens in the realm of form rained down hundreds of thousands of myriads of kinds of innumerable heavenly flowers of sundry colors and the wondrous incense of Brahmā's heaven, which perfused empty space and descended like clouds. The gods and multitudes of *devaputras* of the six [heavens in the realm of] desire, through the power of the gods' merit, rained down all kinds of flowers—the *utpala* flower, the *padma* flower, the *kumuda* flower, the *puṇḍarī[ka]* flower, the *campaka* flower, the *atimukta* flower, the *vārṣikā* flower, the *sumanas* flower, the *māndāra[va]* flower, the *mahāmāndāra[va]* flower, the *mañjūsa[ka]* flower, and the *mahāmañjūsa[ka]* flower—which fell through empty space in confused profusion, and these they offered to the [Three] Jewels of the Buddha, Sangha, and Dharma. They also rained down priceless precious incense from the heavens above; this incense, like clouds, took on the colors of a hundred jewels, and through the supernormal powers of the gods its fragrance perfused these world-systems in an offering to the great assembly.

Then the World-honored One came out of *samādhi*, whereupon, [seated] on the same seat, he again entered the *samādhi* “Resolute Speed of the Lion” and manifested great supernormal faculties, causing this trigalactic megagalactic world-system to quake in six ways. That is to say, it shook, shook violently, and shook violently everywhere; it rose, rose violently, and rose violently everywhere; it moved, moved violently, and moved violently everywhere; it reverberated, reverberated violently, and reverberated violently everywhere; it roared, roared violently, and roared violently everywhere; and it crackled, crackled violently, and crackled violently everywhere. Further, this world-system rose in the east and sank in the west, rose in the west and sank in the east, rose in the south and sank in the north, rose in the north and sank in the south, rose in the center and sank at the edges, and rose at the edges and sank in the center. The ground was wholly purified and completely soft, it made plants and trees grow bigger, and it benefited all beings. The trigalactic [megagalactic world-]system was made devoid of hells, hungry ghosts, animals, and other inopportune evil destinies; beings all gained freedom from suffering, and after having abandoned this [present] body, they would be born in the path of humans and the six heavens [of the realm] of

desire; all knew their former lives, danced for joy, went together to where the Buddha was, bowed their heads at the Buddha's feet with thoughts of reverence, brought rare jewels and innumerable necklaces, and, understanding the emptiness of the threesome [of giver, recipient, and gift], thereby repaid their debt of gratitude to the Buddha.

Then the Tathāgata emitted great rays of light from his chest and pores, called *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* in which bodhisattvas disport with super-normal faculties to bring about nonretrogression. The color of these rays of light was like gold from the Jambū River, and this golden-colored light universally illuminated the trigalactic megagalactic world-system and other [world-]systems, as well as one hundred million Mountain-king Sumerus, all Snowy Mountains (Himavat, i.e., Himalayas), Fragrant Mountains (Gandha[mādana]), Black Mountains (Kīṭātri), Golden Mountains (Kāñcanaparvata), Jewel Mountains (Ratnaparvata), Meru Mountains, Great Meru Mountains, Mucilinda Mountains, Mahāmucilinda Mountains, Smaller Iron-ring Mountains (Cakravāḍa), and Greater Iron-ring Mountains (Mahācakravāḍa); rivers, oceans, springs, and ponds, as well as one hundred million worlds with the four great continents; suns, moons, and stars; palaces of gods, palaces of *nāgas*, and palaces of honored spirits; countries, towns, royal palaces, and hamlets; Yamarā[ja]'s world; scenes of beings with sinful karma experiencing suffering in all eight cold and eight hot hells through to scenes of animals and hungry ghosts in the ten directions experiencing suffering; and scenes of beings in all worlds and five destinies experiencing suffering and happiness. In this manner they all appeared in these golden-colored great rays of light.

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In this light there also appeared various scenes of the bodhisattva practicing the path to buddhahood, from when in a former time the bodhisattva Śākyamuni was King Radiant (Arcimat) and first generated the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* through to his accomplishment of the path to buddhahood beneath the *bodhi* tree and entry into nirvana in the grove of sal [trees], and in between all the [acts of] kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity and the gateways to eighty-four thousand *pāramitās* during three [a] *samkhyeya* hundreds of myriads of eons. That is to say, in the past he was a [wheel-turning] king with a golden wheel ruling over the four continents as far as the edge of the ocean; the people thrived, the land was prosperous, the right

Dharma had transformed the world for immeasurable eons, and every rare treasure filled the country, whereupon the wheel[-turning] king, observing that all worlds are impermanent, grew tired of the pleasures of the five desires, abandoned the position of wheel[-turning] king, and left home to study the path. Or he became the beloved son of a king in a large country and forsook life and limb, throwing himself to a starving tigress. Or he became king of the Śibis and cut off part of his body to save a dove. Or he saved a pregnant doe by giving up his body as the king of deer. Or he gave up his whole body in the Snowy Mountains in order to seek a half-verse. Or he manifested birth into the household of King Śuddhodana, where he abandoned sixty thousand handmaidens in the royal harem, forsook all kinds of fine merriment, and surmounted the city walls to leave home; during six years of austerities he ate hemp and barley daily, defeated heretics, and after having sat beneath the *bodhi* tree and destroyed Māra's army, he gained *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. There were practices and vows like these, equal [in number] to the sands of hundreds of thousands of Ganges Rivers and difficult to conceive, and scenes of them all suddenly all appeared in these golden-colored great rays of light.

Further, in this light there appeared the inconceivable eight great jeweled stupas of the Tathāgata: the jeweled stupa at his birthplace in the palace of King Śuddhodana of the land of Kośala; the jeweled stupa where he became a buddha beneath a *bodhi* tree on the outskirts of the city of Gayā in the land of Magadha; the jeweled stupa where he first turned the Dharma wheel and saved people in the Deer Park in the land of Vārāṇasī; the jeweled stupa where he debated for six months with heretics in Anāthapiṇḍada's garden in the land of Śrāvastī and won renown as an Omniscient One; the jeweled stupa of the miracle when, on the outskirts of the city of Kanyakubja in the land of Andhra,<sup>8</sup> he ascended to Trāyastriṃśa Heaven, preached the Dharma for his mother, and, manifesting a triple jeweled staircase, descended from the Heaven of the Thirty-three [Gods] (Trāyastriṃśa) to Jambū[dvīpa] together with the heavenly king Brahmā, Śakra Devendra, and a multitude of one hundred and twenty thousand; the jeweled stupa where he preached the Mahayana—the scriptures *Great Prajñā[pāramitā]*, *Lotus*, *One Vehicle*, *Mind-ground*,<sup>9</sup> and so on—on Mount Ḡṛdhraḱūṭa on the outskirts of the city of Rājagṛha in the land of Magadha;<sup>10</sup> the jeweled stupa where the eminent householder Vima[lakīrti] mysteriously manifested an illness in the grove

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of Āmrāpālī in the land of Vaiśālī,<sup>11</sup> and the jeweled stupa where [the Buddha entered] perfect quiescence in the grove of sal [trees] on the banks of the [Ajira]vatī River in the land of Kuśīna[garī]. These eight [jeweled] stupas are ways for the Great Sage to convert [people] and places of refuge for sentient beings in [the realms of] humans and gods, and if one worships and reveres them, they become a cause of buddhahood. These sounds and stupa images, as well as things difficult to conceive in the three ages, all appeared in the great rays of light.

Further, among the magical transformations due to supernormal faculties and the rare occurrences in the places of practice and assemblies of buddhas and great bodhisattvas of the three ages in [world-]systems in the ten directions, and in the wondrous Dharma preached by the tathāgatas, there was, just like the responses of echoes, nothing that was not seen or heard in these golden-colored great rays of light. All beings, on encountering this radiance and seeing these auspicious scenes, generated the aspiration for unequaled *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

Then the great multitudes, seeing the inconceivable things due to the Buddha's supernormal powers, marveled at the unprecedented [occurrence] and said to one another:

The Tathāgata has today entered *samādhi*, emitted great rays of light, and illuminated [world-]systems in the ten directions, and we have been able to see past incidents involving the Tathāgata difficult to conceive, how he subjugated beings of wrong views in evil ages and made them arouse right understanding and aim for *bodhi*. Remarkable is the Tathāgata, the father of all worlds and difficult to gain sight of during immeasurable eons. Having cultivated practices and vows eon after eon, we have been able to encounter the great teacher of humans and gods in the three realms. We but beseech you, compassionate Honored One, to take pity on the world, rise from meditation, preach the most profound Dharma, and, by revealing and teaching it, bring benefit and joy to all beings.

Having spoken these words, they looked up at his venerable countenance and remained silent.

At that time there was in the assembly a bodhisattva named Siṃhanāda. He had for three [a]*samkhyeya* [eons] cultivated merit and knowledge, and

in the Good Eon he would next succeed to the position of a buddha, receive [initiation into] the stage of consecration,<sup>12</sup> and become a great Dharma king. Looking in the four directions at the great multitude in the oceanlike assembly, he spoke these words in a loud voice:

During immeasurable eons in former times, having generated the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, I served one after another all buddhas [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges, and once at the site of the first assembly<sup>13</sup> I saw inconceivable magical transformations due to [the Buddha's] supernormal faculties. But I have never seen this golden-colored radiance manifesting all the practices and vows of the bodhisattva, showing various scenes [from former lives] of the Tathāgata, and making us see incidents from the three ages difficult to conceive.

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I but beg you, good people, to press your palms together singlemindedly and look up at the [Buddha's] venerable countenance so that he may rise from meditation, bestow nectarlike medicine, remove illnesses due to burning anguish, and make us realize the Dharma body and its permanence, bliss, self, and purity. There are two means on account of which tathāgatas do not dwell for long in *samādhi*. One is great kindness and the other is great compassion. Relying on great kindness they give beings happiness, and relying on great compassion they remove the suffering of beings. By these two means [the Buddha] habitually cultivated his mind for innumerable eons and accomplished right awakening. Beings in the world have many hardships, and for this reason the Tathāgata will before long rise from *samādhi*. He will expound the method of contemplating the mind-ground, the wondrous Dharma of the Mahayana, and declare to the great multitudes, “Would that you do not seek all the blessings and happiness of humans and gods, but quickly seek supramundane *anuttarā samyaksambodhi!*”

Why is this? Today the World-honored One has from his chest emitted golden-colored light, and everything illuminated by it is like gold in color. The import of that displayed by the Buddha is most profound and cannot be known by *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* in any worlds even if they ponder it to the best of their ability. You ordinary people do not observe your own mind, and consequently you drift about in the sea of birth-and-death. Because

buddhas and bodhisattvas are able to observe their minds, they cross the sea of birth-and-death and reach the further shore. The Dharma of the tathāgatas of the three ages is all like this, and the emitting of this radiance is not without reason.

On hearing the words of the great man, the hearts of those in the assemblies danced for joy at having experienced something unprecedented. Thereupon the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Śiṃhanāda, wishing to restate his meaning, spoke these verses:

I pay reverence to the Great Awakened One, the Honored One among  
 gods and humans,  
 who has perfected all merits and knowledge [as numerous as] the  
 sands of the Ganges.  
 His golden radiance and his embellishing marks of hundredfold merit  
 engender thoughts of delight in beings.  
 Transcending the three realms, he alone is honored,  
 his merits supreme and without equal.  
 Using the masterful powers of his supernormal faculties everywhere,  
 he appears to people in accordance with the deeds they have done.  
 When I observe the world with my divine vision,  
 there is no one anywhere like the Buddha.  
 Rare is his golden appearance, similar to that of a full moon,  
 and his rarity exceeds that of an *uḍum[bara]* flower.  
 His infinite merit and knowledge benefit beings,  
 and his great radiance shines everywhere like a thousand suns.  
 The suffering of foolish beings through the long night [of transmigration]  
 is completely eliminated when illuminated by his radiance.  
 I see the Tathāgata's former conduct,  
 how he served and honored innumerable buddhas,  
 Passed through [*a*]*saṃkhyā* immeasurable eons,  
 and aimed for *bodhi* for the sake of beings.  
 In the midst of the sea of suffering of birth-and-death he always  
 acts as a great shipmaster and saves all kinds of beings.  
 He expounds the nectarlike true and pure Dharma  
 and makes people enter the gate to unconditioned liberation.

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For three [a]*saṃkhyā* eons he saved beings  
and diligently cultivated eighty thousand *pāramitās*.  
The causes having been perfected and their results fulfilled, he  
accomplished right awakening;  
he is long-lived and motionless, neither coming nor going.  
Every one of his major marks and minor signs pervades the Dharma  
realm,  
and the characteristics of buddhas in the ten directions are all  
like this.  
Their most profound state is difficult to conceive,  
and no humans or gods can fathom it.  
In their essence and function there are no differences between buddhas,  
just as a thousand lamps, when shining, increase each other's  
brightness.  
Their wisdom, like space, has no bounds;  
it assumes a form in response to things, like the moon [reflected]  
in water.  
The infinite Dharma realm is always quiescent;  
thusness is unmoving, like empty space.  
The Tathāgata's pure and wondrous Dharma body  
is naturally endowed with virtues [as numerous as] the sands  
of the Ganges;  
It pervades the Dharma realm without end,  
is neither born nor perishes, and is without coming or going.  
The Dharma king permanently resides in the palace of the wondrous  
Dharma, and there is nothing on which the radiance of the Dharma  
body does not shine.  
The Tathāgata's Dharma-nature is without hindrance;  
responding everywhere in accordance with conditions, he benefits  
beings.  
Beings each see themselves in his presence  
[and think,] "He is expounding the nectarlike Dharma for me!"  
He is able to annihilate mental afflictions at will,  
and the sufferings of humans and gods are all eliminated.

The Dharma king, destroyer of [delusionary] existence, is most remarkable,  
 and his radiance gleams like a mountain of gold.  
 In order to save beings he appears in the world,  
 and burning the torch of the Dharma, he destroys darkness.  
 Beings submerged in the sea of birth-and-death  
 transmigrate in the five destinies with no chance of escape.  
 The Sugata constantly acts as a boat of the wondrous Dharma,  
 cleaving the current of craving and crossing over to the further shore.  
 His great wisdom and expedient means, which cannot be measured,  
 constantly give inexhaustible happiness to beings.  
 Acting as the greatly compassionate father of the world,  
 he takes pity on all sentient beings.  
 The Tathāgata's appearance in the world is most difficult to encounter,  
 and he appears once in innumerable millions of eons.  
 It is, for example, like the *uḍum[bara]*, a wonderfully auspicious flower,  
 regarded as rare by all humans and gods,  
 Which appears once in immeasurable eons—  
 to witness the Buddha's appearance in the world is also like this.  
 Those beings without merit or knowledge  
 are always foundering in the sea of birth-and-death;  
 Not seeing any tathāgatas for millions of eons,  
 they constantly experience suffering in accordance with their evil deeds.  
 We have for innumerable hundreds of thousands of eons  
 been practicing the four immeasurables and three liberations,  
 And now we behold the Great Sage, Muni, the Honored One,  
 just like a blind turtle encountering a floating piece of wood [in the ocean].  
 I hope that in future ages, for eons [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges,  
 I will not abandon the teacher of gods and humans for even a moment  
 And, like a shadow accompanying a shape, will not leave him even briefly,  
 diligently cultivating [all-]faceted knowledge day and night.

295b I but pray that the World-honored One will have pity on me  
and always enable me to see the Honored One of Great Kindness.  
Tirelessly always upholding [his teachings] with the three activities  
[of body, speech, and mind],  
I pray that I may accomplish right awakening together with [all]  
beings.  
Now the great guide of the three realms,  
cross-legged on his seat, has entered *samādhi*.  
Alone, he rests motionless in an empty and quiet abode,  
his body and mind unmoving, like [Mount] Sumeru.  
No Brahmā or Māra in the world  
can arouse the Tathāgata from his meditation.  
The multitudes of ordinary people and holy ones in this realm and in  
other quarters  
all know that the Tamer [of Men] dwells in *dhyaṇa*.  
Extensively preparing infinite and exquisite offerings,  
they offer them up to Śākyamuni, with his supreme virtues.  
The gods of the six [heavens in the realm of] desire come to make  
offerings:  
heavenly flowers fall in confusion throughout empty space,  
And priceless incense, reward for [the practice of] the ten good [deeds],  
changes into fragrant clouds the color of a hundred jewels,  
Which completely cover the immeasurable multitudes of humans  
and gods,  
rain down sundry wondrous jewels, and offer them to the Tathāgata.  
Fragrance fills the air in front of the Three Jewels,  
hundreds of thousands of musical instruments are suspended in midair,  
And without being struck they play of their own accord, creating  
wonderful melodies  
in offering to the Honored One among two-legged human beings.  
The eighteen heavens [of the realm of form, starting with] the hosts of  
Brahmā, rain down heavenly flowers  
and rain down sundry jewels of thousands of myriads of kinds,  
Pure *maṇi* gems, wondrous necklaces,  
fine heavenly vestments adorned with jewels,

And great jeweled and flowery banners, hung with pennants of victory,  
 with which they make offerings to Muni, the Honored One.  
 Gods of the heavens in the realm of nonform rain down precious flowers,  
 flowers as big as wheels,  
 And they rain down delicate incense that fills the world  
 in offering to the *samādhi* difficult to conceive.  
*Nāga* kings, [*a*]*suras*, humans, and nonhumans  
 offer up rare and wondrous jewels miraculously obtained,  
 Each offering them to the god of gods  
 out of a desire to hear the path to supreme *bodhi*.  
 Then the Bhagavān, the great king of physicians,  
 who skillfully treats the world's suffering from mental afflictions,  
 Like a lion roaring, with the power of his *samādhi*  
 caused [the earth] to quake in six ways throughout the trigalactic  
 [megagalactic world-system].  
 With this he awakened those with the right conditions,  
 and those without the right conditions for this did not wake up.  
 Those humans and gods who were to be saved  
 saw the various supernormal faculties of the Buddha.  
 They looked up at Muni, the Honored One, with his moonlike visage,  
 their three activities purified as they all gathered in clouds.  
 The Tathāgata can, with his unconditional kindness,  
 bring benefit to beings so that they accomplish superior merits.  
 From his chest he emitted these great rays of light,  
 called "nonretrogression of bodhisattvas."  
 Like the seven suns that appear when an eon comes to an end,  
 they blazed fiercely, emitting a thousand rays.  
 All the bright lights in the world  
 cannot match the light from a single pore of the Buddha.  
 The immeasurable and unimpeded great divine light  
 illuminated buddha lands everywhere in the ten directions.  
 The Tathāgata's merit and knowledge having been all perfected,  
 the divine light emitted by him is also without compare.  
 His light resplendent, like the color of gold,  
 illuminated lands everywhere in the ten directions.

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In what appeared in the golden light of the Great Sage  
there were visible all the material images of the world.  
All the mountain kings  
of the trigalactic megagalactic world-systems,  
Mount Sumerus composed of the four jewels,  
Snowy Mountains, Fragrant Mountains, Seven Golden Mountains,  
Mucilinda and Meru Mountains,  
Greater Iron-ring Mountains, Smaller [Iron-ring] Mountains,  
Oceans, rivers, and bathing pools,  
innumerable hundreds of millions of the four great continents,  
Suns, moons, and stars, jeweled palaces,  
palaces of gods, palaces of *nāgas*, palaces of spirits,  
Countries, towns, royal palaces, and hamlets—  
the likes of these all appeared in the light.  
It also manifested the Tathāgata's past causes [of his awakening],  
how he accumulated merit, amassed virtue, and sought the path to  
buddhahood.  
Formerly in the kingdom of the Śībis the Tathāgata  
once occupied an honorable position and became king of the people.  
Rare treasures all filled the country,  
and he always governed the world by means of the right Dharma.  
He never wearied of kindness, compassion, joy, or equanimity,  
and able to renounce that which is difficult to renounce, he aimed  
for [becoming] a bodhisattva.<sup>14</sup>  
He cut off part of his body to save a dove and had no regrets;  
taking pity deep in his heart, he saved beings.  
Then, when the Buddha was formerly an ordinary person,  
he entered the Snowy Mountains in search of the path to buddhahood;  
He concentrated his mind, valiantly and diligently applied himself,  
and gave up his whole body in order to seek a half-verse.  
Because he had sought the right Dharma,  
he transcended the suffering of birth-and-death for twelve eons.  
Once, when he was the seer Māṇa[va],  
he spread his hair [over the ground] in offering to the Buddha  
Dīpaṅkara,

And because of this effort  
     he transcended the sea of birth-and-death for eight eons.  
 Once, when he was Prince [Mahā]sattva,  
     he gave up his beloved body and threw himself to a starving tigress,  
 And because he had benefited himself and benefited others,  
     he transcended the causes of birth-and-death for eleven eons.  
 Jalavāhana, [the son of] an eminent householder and great king of  
 physicians,  
     in order to rescue beings equally,  
 Saved fish, who each gained birth in heaven,  
     and the gods rained down necklaces and came to repay their debt  
     of gratitude.  
 For seven days [in a former life the Buddha] kept his foot raised,  
     extolling the Tathāgata,  
     and because of his efforts he transcended nine eons.  
 Once he was a six-tusked white king of elephants,  
     whose tusks were especially fine and incomparable;  
 In order to give up life and limb he threw himself to hunters,  
     seeking the Buddha's unsurpassed great *bodhi*.  
 Or he became a king of perfect merit and knowledge  
     and gave his eyes in an effort to seek the path to buddhahood.  
 Again, he became a golden-colored great king of deer  
     and gave up his body in an effort to seek the path to buddhahood.  
 He became King Mairībala of the kingdom of Kāśi  
     and offered his whole body to five *yakṣas*.  
 Again, he became King \*Mahāvīyūha  
     and gave away his wife and children unstintingly.  
 Or he became the bodhisattva \*Uttamakāya  
     and offered his head, eyes, marrow, and brain to beings.  
 In this manner the bodhisattva practiced compassion,  
     all out of a wish to seek realization of the path to *bodhi*.  
 The Buddha once became a wheel-turning king:  
     the four continents were all full of rare treasures,  
 He had a thousand sons and many attendants,

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and he governed the people by means of the ten good [deeds] for  
hundreds of thousands of eons.  
The land was safe and secure like a palace of the gods,  
and he experienced the pleasures of the five desires without end.  
Then this wheel[-turning] king realized that his own person  
and the world are not solid,  
That for the gods [of the heaven] without thought, after eighty thousand  
years  
their merit is exhausted and they return to the evil paths [of  
transmigration],  
And that [everything] is just like a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a  
reflection,  
and like morning dew and a flash of lightning.  
Fully understanding that the three realms are like a house on fire,  
filled with the eight sufferings and difficult to escape,  
And not having attained liberation and crossed to the further shore,  
who, possessing wisdom, would enjoy transmigration?  
There is only the supramundane Tathāgata's body  
that is neither born nor perishes and is eternal and blissful.  
These bodhisattva's practices difficult to practice  
all appeared in the golden light.  
Further, in this light there appeared eight stupas,  
all of them good fields of merit for beings:  
The stupa of [Śākyamuni's] birthplace in the palace of King Śuddhodana,  
the stupa where he became a buddha beneath the *bodhi* tree,  
The stupa [marking the turning] of the Dharma wheel in the Deer Park,  
the stupa [marking his] renown in Anāthapiṇḍada's garden,  
The stupa [marking] the jeweled staircase on the outskirts of the city of  
Kanyakubja,  
the stupa [where he preached] the *Prajñā[pāramitā]-sūtra* on Mount  
Gṛdhrakūṭa,  
The stupa of Vimalakīrti in the grove of Āmrāpālī,  
and the stupa where [he entered] perfect quiescence in the grove of  
sal [trees].

These eight jeweled stupas of the World-honored One  
 are always worshiped by gods, *nāgas*, and spirits,  
 And adamantine ones with secret traces (*\*vajraguhyaka*) and the  
 Four Heavenly Kings  
 protect them day and night, never leaving them.  
 If one erects the eight stupas and worships them,  
 in one's present life one's blessings and life span will increase of  
 their own accord;  
 One will increase one's wisdom and be honored by all,  
 and one's wishes, mundane and supramundane, will all be fulfilled.  
 If someone makes reverence and keeps them in mind,  
 such is the inconceivable nature of these eight stupas  
 That both people<sup>15</sup> will acquire merit equally, without any difference,  
 and will quickly realize the path to unsurpassed *bodhi*.  
 Among these benefits of the three ages,  
 there were none that were not seen in this light.  
 Bodhisattvas from buddha lands in the ten directions,  
 numinous seers who disport with their supernormal faculties,  
 And wheel-turning kings from myriads of millions of lands  
 all gathered in clouds, seeking this radiance.  
 Each with supernormal power came to make offerings,  
 raining down wish-fulfilling jewels and offering them to the  
 Honored One of Kindness.  
 Musical instruments of the gods, of hundreds of thousands of kinds,  
 spontaneously emitted wonderful sounds without being struck.  
 Heavenly flowers fell in confusion, filling empty space, 296b  
 and many fragrances suffused the entire great assembly.  
 Jeweled banners and innumerable necklaces  
 they bore and offered them to the Honored One among humans.  
 With exquisite *gāthās* (verses) they extolled the Tathāgata:  
 "Excellent! You have entered *samādhi*,  
 Manifested inconceivable great supernormal powers,  
 and subjugated sentient beings difficult to convert,  
 Making them abide in firm thoughts of nonretrogression:  
 in the presence of the Buddha we deeply rejoice."<sup>16</sup>

I but beseech the World-honored One to rise from meditation,  
turn the Dharma wheel for beings,  
Cut off all their mental afflictions forever,  
and make them abide in nonabiding great nirvana.  
Those of my ilk, with minds pure,  
have come from myriads of millions of lands to listen to the Dharma.  
Always clearly observing with the power of *samādhi*,  
please be kind enough to accept our meager offerings.  
The giver, the recipient, and the gift  
are not apprehended in the three ages.  
Dwelling at ease in supreme thoughts, we  
make offerings to all buddhas in the ten directions.<sup>17</sup>  
Life after life we have drawn near to the Lord of Great Compassion  
and have always served the Honored One of Great Kindness.  
With inapprehensible wondrous roots of goodness  
we have perfectly merged with the Dharma realm and are aiming  
for true awakening.  
Tathāgatas of the past entered quiet meditation,  
manifested great supernatural faculties, and turned the Dharma wheel;  
Now the Buddha and World-honored One, too, in the same way  
has entered meditation and emitted light just as those buddhas did.  
Therefore, I surmise that the Lion of the Śākyas  
definitely wishes to preach the method of [contemplating] the  
mind-ground.  
If you wish to distance yourselves from the causes of birth-and-death  
and assuredly gain the fruit of true permanence in the three ages,  
Press your palms together, O people, and wait singlemindedly:  
you will enter the Tathāgata's palace of happiness.  
[Here ends] Fascicle One of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives  
and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*

## Fascicle Two

### Chapter II Repaying Debts of Gratitude

Then the World-honored One calmly came out of *samādhi* and addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya:

Excellent, excellent! You great beings and good sirs, out of a desire to serve the father of the world, out of a desire to listen to the supramundane Dharma, out of a desire to ponder the principle of thusness, and out of a desire to cultivate the wisdom of thusness, have come to where the Buddha is, made offerings, and paid your respects. I shall now expound the wondrous Dharma of the mind-ground and guide beings so that they enter the wisdom of a buddha. 296c

Buddhas and tathāgatas have preached this wondrous Dharma only when immeasurable eons have elapsed. The appearance of the Tathāgata and World-honored One is extremely difficult to encounter, just like an *uḍum[bara]* flower, and even if the Tathāgata does appear in the world, his preaching of this wondrous Dharma is still more difficult [to encounter]. Why is this? All beings have distanced themselves from the practices and vows of the Mahayana bodhisattva and aim for the *bodhi* of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*. Having an aversion for birth-and-death, they enter nirvana forever and do not desire the Mahayana's wondrous fruit of permanence and bliss. But the tathāgatas, when turning the Dharma wheel, preach the appropriate Dharma, being free from four faults: [that is to say, they preach] first, not in an unsuitable place; second, not at an unsuitable time; third, not to an unsuitable vessel; fourth, not an unsuitable Dharma. They dispense medicine according to the illness and effect its removal. This is, namely, a quality of a tathāgata not shared with others. *Śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have not yet gained mastery of the state of the bodhisattva multitudes not shared with others. For this reason, it is difficult [for them] to see and difficult [for them] to hear the right path to *bodhi*, the

Dharma discourse on the mind-ground. If any gentleman or lady hears this wondrous Dharma, having it pass through their ears just once, in an instant they will concentrate their thoughts, observe their mind, and create through habitual practice the seed of unsurpassed great *bodhi*, and before long they will sit on the adamantine jeweled seat beneath the king of *bodhi* trees and attain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

At that time there were in the great city of Rājagṛha five hundred eminent householders. Their names were: the eminent householder Wondrous Virtue (\*Supuṇya), the eminent householder Valor (\*Vīra), the eminent householder Good Dharma (\*Sudharma), the eminent householder Buddha-mindful (\*Buddhānusr̥mat), the eminent householder Wondrous Wisdom (\*Sumati), the eminent householder Bodhi, the eminent householder Wondrous Eloquence (\*Suvācas), the eminent householder Dharma Eye (\*Dharmanetri), the eminent householder Radiance (\*Jyotiṣka), the eminent householder Wish-fulfilled (\*Pūrṇa) [and so on]. These extremely wealthy eminent householders had accomplished the right view and made offerings to the Tathāgata and multitudes of holy ones.

These eminent householders, on hearing the World-honored One extol the Mahayana Dharma discourse on the mind-ground, formed this thought: “We have seen the Tathāgata emit golden-colored light and manifest the difficult practices and ascetic practices of the bodhisattva. We are not enamored of the idea of practicing austerities. Who could dwell in birth-and-death for everlasting eons and experience hardships for the sake of beings?”

Having formed this thought, they rose from their seats, bared their right shoulders, touched their right knees to the ground, pressed their palms together in reverence, and in unison advanced and said to the Buddha:

297a World-honored One, we do not desire the bodhisattva practices of the Mahayana, nor do we delight in hearing talk of austerities. Why is this? None of the practices and vows cultivated by all bodhisattvas are cognizant of debts of gratitude or repay debts of gratitude. Why? They distance themselves from their parents with the aim of leaving home. They give their wives and children to whomever they want, and as for their head, eyes, marrow, and brain, they give them all away in accordance with requests for them and endure torment. For three [a]samkhyā eons they

practice in full the perfections, the eighty-four thousand *pāramitā* practices, cross the current of birth-and-death, and reach the place of the great happiness of *bodhi*. It is better to aim for the path and fruit of the two vehicles, accumulating provisions for from three lives to one hundred eons, cutting off the causes of birth-and-death, realizing the fruit of nirvana, and quickly reaching happiness. This is called repaying debts of gratitude.

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the five hundred eminent householders:

Excellent, excellent! On hearing the extolling of the Mahayana, you have in your minds produced [thoughts of] retrogression and raised a wonderful issue, bringing benefit and happiness to all beings in future ages incognizant of the quality of indebtedness. Listen attentively, listen attentively, and consider it carefully as I now analyze and explain for you where there lie debts of gratitude, mundane and supramundane.

Good sirs, what you say cannot be right. Why? There are four kinds of mundane and supramundane debts of gratitude. First, the debt of gratitude to one's parents; second, the debt of gratitude to beings; third, the debt of gratitude to the king; fourth, the debt of gratitude to the Three Jewels. These four debts of gratitude are equally incurred by all beings.

As regards the debt of gratitude to one's parents, to one's father one owes the debt of kindness, and to one's mother one owes the debt of compassion. The debt of compassion owed to one's mother I could not exhaust were I to dwell in the world for one eon explaining it, and I shall now explain for you only a small portion of it.

Even if someone were for the sake of merit to revere and honor one hundred great brahmins of pure conduct, one hundred great divine seers possessing the five [supernormal] faculties, and one hundred good [spiritual] friends, install them inside an exquisite seven-jeweled hall, and singlemindedly make offerings of hundreds of thousands of kinds of fine delicacies, many-jeweled raiment hung with necklaces, houses built of sandalwood and aloeswood, bedding and mats adorned with a hundred jewels, and a hundred kinds of medicinal decoctions for treating illnesses for a full hundred thousand eons, it would not be as good as dwelling for a single moment in thoughts of filial obedience, cheerfully caring for one's compassionate mother with scant goods, and attending on her wherever

she goes. In comparison, the merits of the former cannot be measured as even a hundred-thousand–myriadth part.

297b The thoughts of a compassionate mother in the world for her child are without compare. The debt of gratitude extends to when one is yet without form. Starting from conception, for ten months she experiences unspeakable hardships, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. Although she may have desires for food, drink, and clothes, she does not arouse any craving for them. Thoughts of anxiety never cease, and she thinks only that she is going to give birth. Gradually she suffers more and more and is distressed day and night. In the case of a difficult birth, it is as if hundreds of thousands of knives are vying to carve her up, and she may die. If she suffers no hardship, kith and kin rejoice without end, as if a poor woman had obtained a wish-fulfilling gem. When her child utters a sound, it is like hearing music. The mother's chest is its bed, it is always moving around on her lap, and from her breasts she produces fountains of nectar. The debt of gratitude for her nurturing fills the heavens, and the quality of her tenderness is vast and without compare. Among things regarded as lofty by the world, nothing exceeds mountains, but the debt of gratitude to a compassionate mother surpasses [Mount] Sume[ru]. Among things that are weighty in the world, the earth is foremost, but the debt of gratitude to a compassionate mother again exceeds it.

If any man or woman turns their back on their debt of gratitude, is disobedient, and causes their parents to arouse thoughts of resentment, and their mother utters harsh words, the child will fall accordingly into either hell or [the realm of] hungry ghosts or animals. Among things that are swift in the world, nothing exceeds a fierce wind, but the slightest resentment is still faster than that, and no tathāgatas, adamantine gods, or seers possessing the five [supernormal] faculties are able to save [such people].

If any gentleman or lady follows the instructions of their compassionate mother, obedient and not defying them, the gods will think protectively of them, and there will be no end to their blessings and happiness. Men and women such as these are called the type of gods and humans who are honorable and respectable, or else they are bodhisattvas who, in order to save beings, have manifested as men and women and bring benefit to their parents.

If any gentleman or lady, in order to repay their debt of gratitude to their mother, were for one eon to cut off some of their own flesh three times daily and feed their parents with it, they would still not be able to repay a single day's debt of gratitude. Why is this? While in the womb, all men and women suckle at the root of the [mother's] breasts and imbibe the mother's blood. Then, after leaving the womb and before becoming a [weaned] infant, the mother's milk they drink amounts to one hundred and eighty *hu*.<sup>18</sup> If the mother obtains something of superior taste, she first gives it to her child, and it is the same with rare and fine clothes. Even if [the child] is stupid and vulgar, her love is peerless.

Once there was a woman traveling far away in another country. Carrying her child in her arms, she was crossing the Ganges River, but the waters suddenly rose and she did not have the strength to go forward. Out of thoughts of love, she did not abandon [the child], and the mother and child both drowned. Because of the power of this root of goodness of kind thoughts, she immediately gained rebirth up in the heaven Limit of Form (Akaṇiṣṭha) and became Great King Brahmā.<sup>19</sup>

For these reasons a mother has ten virtues. The first is called "earth," for while [the child is] in the mother's womb she acts as a support. The second is called "giving birth," for she experiences [many] sufferings to give birth. The third is called "rectifying," for with a mother's hands she is constantly caring for the [child's] five sense organs. The fourth is called "nurturing," for she raises [the child] as is appropriate in the four seasons. The fifth is called "wisdom," for she produces wisdom by means of expedient means. The sixth is called "adornment," for she beautifies [the child] with fine necklaces. The seventh is called "peaceful rest," for the mother's embrace is restful. The eighth is called "instruction," for she guides the child with skillful means. The ninth is called "admonition," for with good speech she distances [the child] from many evils. The tenth is called "giving an occupation," for she passes the family occupation on to the child.

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Good sirs, what is the greatest wealth and what is the greatest poverty in all worlds? A compassionate mother being at home is called wealth, and a compassionate mother being away is called poverty. When a compassionate mother is alive, this is called midday, and when a compassionate mother dies, this is called sunset. When a compassionate mother is alive,

this is called moonlight, and when a compassionate mother passes away, this is called darkness. Therefore, apply yourselves to practice and care for your parents with filiality. Were someone to make offerings to the Buddha, the blessings would be the same and no different. In this way you should repay your debt of gratitude to your parents.

Good sirs, as regards the debt of gratitude to beings, since beginningless time all beings have transmigrated in the five paths for hundreds of thousands of eons and have in many lives been fathers and mothers for one another. Because they have been father and mother for one another, all men are your kind father and all women are your compassionate mother. Because there has been a great debt of gratitude in former lives, this is just like the debt of gratitude to your present parents, the same and no different. You have still not been able to repay these past debts of gratitude, or else because of deluded actions there occur agreements and disagreements and on account of attachment you instead incur their hostility. Why? Ignorance obstructs knowledge of past lives, and you do not understand that in previous lives [others] were your parents. With those to whom debts of gratitude should be repaid you bring benefit to one another. Not bringing benefit is called “unfilial.” For these reasons, toward all kinds of beings, too, there is at all times a great debt of gratitude that is truly difficult to repay. Things like this are called the debt of gratitude to beings.

As regards the debt of gratitude to the king, his merits and virtues are supreme because, even though he has been born among humans, he has gained sovereignty and because the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-three [Gods] constantly confer on him their power and always protect him. The mountains, rivers, and earth within the borders of that country, as far as the ends of the ocean, belong to the king, for the merits and virtues of [this] single person far exceed the merits of all beings. This great sage-king governs by means of the right Dharma and is able to make all beings happy.

For example, just as pillars are the basis of all buildings in the world, so too is the king the basis of the prosperity and happiness of the people, for they rely on the existence of the king. Again, just as King Brahmā produced the myriad things, so too does the sage-king produce the laws to rule the country so as to benefit beings. Just as the sun god shines on

the world, so too does the king observe the realm for the sake of the happiness of the people.

Should the king forfeit right rule, the people will have nothing on which to rely. If he uses right governance, the eight great fears will not enter that country, namely, invasions by other countries, revolts within its own borders, illnesses due to evil spirits, nationwide famines, unseasonable wind and rain, belated wind and rain, solar and lunar eclipses, and anomalies in the constellations. Right governance by a king of men benefits the people, for these eight perils are unable to encroach. For example, just as an eminent householder who has only a single son thinks lovingly of him in a way that is without compare, takes pity on him, brings benefit to him, always grants him happiness, and does not abandon him day or night, so too is a great sage-king of a country like this: he regards all living beings equally, just like a single child, and does not abandon thoughts of protectiveness day or night.

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Such a king of men, if he makes others cultivate the ten good [deeds], is called a meritorious lord, and if he does not make others cultivate [the ten good deeds], he is called an unmeritorious lord. Why is this? If a single person within the kingdom cultivates good, the merits created by him are all divided into seven parts: the person who performed the good gets five parts, and the king of that country always obtains two parts, for if good is cultivated on account of the king, the merits and benefits are shared. If one performs the ten evil deeds, it is also like this, for they share them. Everything produced in the fields and groves of the country is also all divided into seven parts in the same way. If any king of men has accomplished the right view and governs the world in accordance with the Dharma, he is called a heavenly lord, for he governs the world by means of the good Dharma of heaven, gods, benevolent spirits, and world-protecting kings always come to afford protection and defend the royal palace, and although he dwells among humans, he practices heavenly deeds and is impartial in thoughts of praise and punishment.

All sage-kings are like this with respect to the Dharma, and such sage-rulers are called kings of the right Dharma. For this reason, they accomplish ten qualities. The first is called “illuminating,” for with the eye of wisdom they illuminate the world. The second is called “adornment,” for they

adorn the country with great merit and knowledge. The third is called “giving happiness,” for they bestow great happiness on the people. The fourth is called “subjugating foes,” for all enemies submit of their own accord. The fifth is called “fearlessness,” for they are able to dispel the eight perils and free [people from] fear. The sixth is called “appointing worthies,” for they gather together worthy men to assess state affairs. The seventh is called “basis of the law,” for all the people live in peace in dependence on the king. The eighth is called “maintaining the world,” for with the laws of a heavenly king they maintain the world. The ninth is called “lord of karma,” for good and evil deeds appertain to the king. The tenth is called “lord of humans,” for the king is lord of all people. All kings accomplish these ten kinds of superior qualities on account of their merits from previous lives.

298b The heavenly king Great Brahmā and [the gods of] Trāyastriṃśa Heaven always help a king of men to experience marvelous pleasures. The *rākṣasa* kings and [other] spirits, though they do not show themselves, come secretly to protect the king and his dependents. If the king sees people doing things that are not good and is unable to stop them, the gods and spirits will all keep their distance. If they see [people] cultivating good, they will rejoice and extol him, all crying out, “Our sage-king!” The *nāga* gods, delighted, will cause showers of nectar to rain down, the five grains will ripen, and the people will be prosperous and happy.

If [the king] does not associate with evil people and universally benefits the world, everyone will follow his right influence, a wish-fulfilling jewel will most certainly appear in the kingdom, neighboring countries will all come and submit to the king, and there will be no humans or nonhumans who do not praise him. If there is an evil person inside the kingdom and he arouses thoughts of defiance for an instant, the merit of such a person will deteriorate of its own accord, and when his life ends he will fall into hell, pass through [many lives as] an animal, and experience [many] sufferings. Why is this? Because he did not realize his debt of gratitude to the king, he committed outrageous acts and gained this retribution. If any person practices good thoughts, respectfully assists the benevolent king, and venerates him like a buddha, this person will be at ease, prosperous, and happy in this life and none of his desires will not be [fulfilled] in

accordance with his wishes. Why is this? All kings have in past times received the Tathāgata's pure prohibitory precepts and always become kings of men, at ease and joyful. For this reason, the rewards for obedience and disobedience are all like the response of an echo. Such is the vastness of the quality of indebtedness to a sage-king.

Good sirs, the debt of gratitude to the Three Jewels is called inconceivable, and they bring benefit and happiness to beings without cease. The body of the buddhas is true, good, and uncontaminated. It has been realized by cultivating its causes for innumerable great eons, and the karmic fruits of the three existences have long been exhausted without remainder. The precious mountain of its virtues towers loftily without compare, and it is unknowable to all sentient beings. Its merits are profound, like the ocean, and its wisdom unobstructed, like empty space. Magical transformations due to its supernormal faculties fill the world, and its radiance illuminates everything in the ten directions and the three ages. All beings are utterly unable to perceive it on account of mental afflictions and karmic hindrances, and they founder in the sea of suffering, being born and dying endlessly. The Three Jewels transcend the world and act as a great shipmaster, cleaving the current of craving and crossing over to the further shore. Those who possess wisdom all look up to them.

Good sirs, the Buddha Jewel alone has three kinds of bodies: first, the body of own-nature; second, the body of enjoyment; third, the body of transformation. The first buddha body possesses the great quality of severance [of mental afflictions], a manifestation of the two kinds of emptiness (i.e., of self and things), and all buddhas are equal. The second buddha body possesses the great quality of wisdom, true, permanent, and uncontaminated, and all buddhas are all of the same mind. The third buddha body possesses the great quality of beneficence, a transformation of the [supernormal] faculties of meditation, and all buddhas are the same in their deeds.

Good sirs, the body of own-nature is without beginning and without end, is free from all [distinguishing] characteristics, has ended all frivolous arguments, and is boundless all around, motionless, and eternal.

The body of enjoyment has two aspects: first, self-enjoyment, and second, other-enjoyment. As for the body of self-enjoyment, having brought benefit

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and happiness to beings through myriad practices cultivated for three [a]*samkhyā* eons, and the ten stages fulfilled, [the bodhisattva] betakes himself directly to the heaven Limit of Form (Akaniṣṭha), transcends the three realms, and in a pure and wonderful land sits on a jeweled lotus flower of immeasurable size, surrounded in front and behind by indescribable oceanlike assemblies of bodhisattvas who fasten untainted silken festoons on top of his head and honor, revere, venerate, and extol him. This is called the benefit of later reward. At that time the bodhisattva enters the adamant concentration (*vajra-samādhi*), cuts off all subtle cognitive and afflictive hindrances, and realizes *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. A wondrous fruit such as this is called the benefit of present reward. This true body of recompense has a beginning but no end; the number of eons of its life span does not have any limit; from the initial accomplishment of right awakening through to the end of time the [thirty-two] major marks and [eighty] minor signs of its physical organs will pervade the Dharma realm, and the four wisdoms will be perfected. This is the Dharma bliss enjoyed by the true body of recompense.

[The four wisdoms are as follows.] First, great perfect mirrorlike wisdom: one transforms maturing consciousness to obtain this wisdom. Just as a large round mirror manifests material images, so too does the Tathāgata manifest the good and evil deeds of beings in his mirrorlike wisdom. For this reason, this wisdom is called “great perfect mirrorlike wisdom.” Relying on great compassion he constantly perceives beings, and relying on great wisdom he is always like Dharma-nature; he observes both the true and the conventional without interruption, is always able to maintain a body with uncontaminated faculties, and has all merits as his basis. Second, the wisdom of equality: one transforms the consciousness of the [wrong] view of the self to obtain this wisdom, whereby one is able to realize the equality of self and other and the nature of the two kinds of no-self. This is called the “wisdom of equality.” Third, the wisdom of wondrous observation: one transforms differentiating consciousness to obtain this wisdom, [whereby] one is able to observe the distinctive characteristics and shared characteristics of all things, preaches wondrous teachings to assemblies, and is able to make beings obtain nonretrogression. Therefore, it is called the “wisdom of wondrous observation.” Fourth, the wisdom of accomplishing what is

to be done: one transforms the five kinds of [sensory] consciousness to obtain this wisdom, [whereby] one is able to manifest all kinds of metamorphic bodies and make beings bring good deeds to maturation. For this reason, it is called the “wisdom of accomplishing what is to be done.” [The Tathāgata] is endowed with eighty-four thousand gateways to wisdom, headed by these four wisdoms. All these meritorious qualities are called the Tathāgata’s body of self-enjoyment.

Good sirs, the second [body of enjoyment] is the Tathāgata’s body of other-enjoyment. Endowed with eighty-four thousand major marks and minor signs, he lives in a true and pure land, preaching the Dharma of the One Vehicle and making bodhisattvas enjoy the exquisite Dharma bliss of the Mahayana. In order to convert multitudes of bodhisattvas of the ten stages, all tathāgatas manifest ten kinds of other-enjoyment bodies. The first buddha body is seated on a hundred-petaled lotus flower and explains the lucid gateway to one hundred teachings for bodhisattvas of the first stage; after the bodhisattvas have understood [this], they activate great supernormal faculties and their transformations fill one hundred buddha world-systems, bringing benefit and happiness to innumerable beings. The second buddha body is seated on a thousand-petaled lotus flower and explains the lucid gateway to one thousand teachings for bodhisattvas of the second stage; after the bodhisattvas have understood [this], they activate great supernormal faculties and their transformations fill one thousand buddha world-systems, bringing benefit and happiness to immeasurable beings. The third buddha body is seated on a ten-thousand-petaled lotus flower and explains the lucid gateway to ten thousand teachings for bodhisattvas of the third stage; after the bodhisattvas have understood [this], they activate great supernormal faculties and their transformations fill ten thousand buddha lands, bringing benefit and happiness to innumerable beings. In this manner the Tathāgata gradually multiplies through to the body of enjoyment for bodhisattvas of the tenth stage, who is seated on an indescribable and wondrously jeweled lotus flower and explains the lucid gateway to indescribable teachings for bodhisattvas of the tenth stage; after the bodhisattvas have understood [this], they activate great supernormal faculties and their transformations fill indescribable exquisite buddha lands, bringing benefit and happiness to ineffably and inexpressibly

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immeasurable and infinite kinds of beings. These ten bodies all sit [beneath] seven-jeweled kings of *bodhi* trees and realize *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

Good sirs, every single flower petal each constitutes a trigalactic [megagalactic] world-system, each of which has a hundred million Mountain-king Sumerus, as well as four great continents, a sun, a moon, and stars, and not one is not endowed with the heavens of the three realms. The Jambūdvīpas on every single petal have an adamantine seat and a king of *bodhi* trees, and those hundreds of thousands of myriads of metamorphic buddhas, through to indescribably many, great and small, each having defeated Māra's army beneath the [*bodhi*] tree, all at once realize *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. These metamorphic buddha bodies, great and small, are each endowed with the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor signs. For bodhisattvas of [the stages of] equipment and four roots of goodness, those of the two vehicles, and ordinary people they preach as appropriate the wondrous Dharma of the three vehicles. For bodhisattvas they preach in accordance with the six *pāramitās*, making them gain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* and ultimately attain the wisdom of a buddha; for those seeking the [state of a] *pratyekabuddha* they preach in accordance with the Dharma of the twelve causes and conditions [of dependent coarising]; for those seeking the [state of a] *śrāvaka* they preach in accordance with the Dharma of the four truths so that they may overcome birth, old age, sickness, and death and ultimately attain nirvana; and for other beings they preach the teachings for humans and gods, making them gain the happiness and wondrous fruits of humans and gods. These metamorphic buddhas, great and small, are all called transformation bodies of the Buddha. Good sirs, although these two kinds of buddhas of response and transformation manifest extinction (i.e., nirvana), this buddha body has continuity and is eternal.

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Good sirs, the like of a single Buddha Jewel has immeasurable, infinite, and inconceivable vast qualities of beneficence such as these for bringing benefit and happiness to beings. For this reason, it is called the Tathāgata, Worthy One, Perfectly All Knowing One, Perfected in Knowledge and Conduct, Well-gone One, One Who Understands the World, Unsurpassed One, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, and World-honored One.

Good sirs, a single Buddha Jewel is endowed with six kinds of exquisite merits: first, it is an unsurpassed great field of merit; second, unsurpassed, it has a great quality of beneficence; third, it is honored among legless, two-legged, and many-legged beings; fourth, it is extremely difficult to encounter, like an *uḍum[bara]* flower; fifth, only one appears in a trigalactic megagalactic world-system; sixth, its mundane and supramundane merits perfect the support of all objectives. Possessing these six kinds of merits, it is always able to bring benefit and happiness to all beings. This is called the inconceivable debt of gratitude to the Buddha Jewel.

Thereupon the five hundred eminent householders said to the Buddha: World-honored One, according to what you have said, the immeasurable metamorphic buddhas within the single Buddha Jewel fill the world and bring benefit and happiness to beings. Why is it that beings in the world mostly do not see the buddhas and experience hardships?

The Buddha addressed the five hundred eminent householders:

Suppose, for example, that the sun god emits hundreds of thousands of rays and illuminates the world, and there is a blind person who does not see the light. Good sirs, what do you think? Is the sun god at fault or not?

Then the eminent householders said, “No, World-honored One.”

The Buddha said:

Good sirs, buddhas and tathāgatas are always preaching the true Dharma and bringing benefit and happiness to sentient beings. But these beings are always committing evil deeds, completely unaware and without any sense of shame, and do not wish to serve the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. These beings, the roots of their sins deep and grievous, pass through immeasurable eons without being able to see or hear the names of the Three Jewels, just as that blind person does not see the rays of the sun. If any being reveres the Tathāgata, delights in the Mahayana, and venerates the Three Jewels, know that the karmic hindrances of this person will disappear, his merit and knowledge will increase, and he will accomplish the roots of goodness, quickly be able to see the Buddha, be forever free from birth-and-death, and realize *bodhi*.

Good sirs, just as a single Buddha Jewel has immeasurable buddhas, so too is it with the Dharma Jewel preached by the Tathāgata. In a single Dharma Jewel there are immeasurable meanings.

299c Good sirs, as for the Dharma Jewel, there are four kinds: first, the Dharma of the teaching; second, the Dharma of principle; third, the Dharma of practice; fourth, the Dharma of the fruit. They are all uncontaminated and able to destroy ignorance, mental afflictions, and karmic hindrances. Sounds, words, phrases, and sentences are called the Dharma of the teaching. Dharmas existent and nonexistent are called the Dharma of principle. The practices of morality, meditation, and wisdom are called the Dharma of practice. The wondrous fruit of the unconditioned is called the Dharma of the fruit. These four kinds [of Dharma] are called the Dharma Jewel, which guides beings out of the sea of birth-and-death to the further shore.

Good sirs, the teacher for the buddhas is the Dharma Jewel. Why is this? The buddhas of the three ages practice in reliance on the Dharma, cutting off all hindrances, attaining *bodhi*, and benefiting beings until the end of time. For this reason, the tathāgatas of the three ages always honor the exquisite Dharma Jewel of the *pāramitās*; how much more so can all beings in the three realms, not yet having gained liberation, not revere the exquisite Dharma Jewel?

Good sirs, once when I was a king of men seeking the Dharma, I entered a large fire pit to seek the right Dharma, and I cut off forever birth-and-death and gained great *bodhi*. Therefore, the Dharma Jewel can break down the prison of all birth-and-death, just as a *vajra* can destroy myriad things; the Dharma Jewel can illuminate benighted beings, just as the sun god can illuminate the world; the Dharma Jewel can save indigent beings, for it is just like a *maṇi* gem that rains down jewels; the Dharma Jewel can give beings joy, for it is just like the heavenly drum that delights the gods; the Dharma Jewel can serve as a jeweled staircase to the heavens, for by listening to the right Dharma one gains birth in heaven; the Dharma Jewel can serve as a sturdy large ship, for it crosses the sea of birth-and-death and reaches the further shore; the Dharma Jewel is just like a wheel-turning sage-king, for it can eliminate the brigand-like mental afflictions of the three poisons; the Dharma Jewel can serve as a marvelous garment, for it covers shameless beings; the Dharma Jewel is like adamant armor,

for it can defeat the four demons and [allow one to] realize *bodhi*; the Dharma Jewel is like the sharp sword of wisdom, for it cuts off birth-and-death and severs its fetters; the Dharma Jewel is the jeweled carriage of the three vehicles, for it carries beings out of the house on fire; the Dharma Jewel is just like all bright lamps, for it can illuminate the pitch-dark places of the three [evil] paths; the Dharma Jewel is just like a bow, arrow, lance, and spear, for it can pacify state borders and crush foes; and the Dharma Jewel is just like a guide on a dangerous road, for it skillfully guides beings to the treasure site (i.e., nirvana). Good sirs, the wondrous Dharma preached by tathāgatas of the three ages has aspects difficult to conceive such as these, and this is called the inconceivable debt of gratitude to the Dharma Jewel.

Good sirs, there are three kinds of sanghas in the mundane and supra-mundane worlds: first, the sangha of bodhisattvas; second, the sangha of *śrāvakas*; third, the sangha of ordinary people. Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, and so on are the sangha of bodhisattvas. The likes of Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and so on are the sangha of *śrāvakas*. If there are true and good ordinary people who have accomplished the differentiated [rules for] liberation (i.e., the code of precepts), as well as being endowed with every right view, being able to expound and reveal widely for others the teaching of the path for holy ones, and bringing benefit and happiness to beings, they are called the sangha of ordinary people. Although they have not yet been able to gain uncontaminated morality, meditation, wisdom, and liberation, nonetheless those who honor them will obtain immeasurable merit. These three kinds [of sanghas] are called the sanghas of the true fields of merit.

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There is another type, called the sangha of the field of merit. If someone engenders deep faith in the Buddha's *śarīra* (relics) and images of the Buddha, as well as in the Dharma, the Sangha, and the precepts prescribed by holy ones, has himself no wrong views and causes others to be also like this, propounds the right Dharma and extols the One Vehicle, believes deeply in causality and always makes wholesome vows, and expiates karmic hindrances in accordance with his transgressions, know that this person believes in the power of the Three Jewels; he is hundreds and thousands and myriads of times superior to non-Buddhists and also superior

to the four kinds of wheel-turning sage-kings, not to mention all beings of other kinds. Just as a saffron flower, though wilted, is still superior to all sundry kinds of flowers, a monk with right views is also like this, hundreds and thousands and myriads of times superior to other beings so long as he does not endamage right views, even if he violates the prohibitory precepts. For this reason, it is called the sangha of the field of merit. If any gentlemen or ladies honor such a sangha of the field of merit, the merits gained will be inexhaustible, and if they honor the previous three true Sangha Jewels, the merits obtained will be exactly the same and no different.

These four types of Sangha Jewels of holy ones and ordinary people bring benefit and happiness to sentient beings, never forsaking them for even a moment. This is called the inconceivable debt of gratitude to the Sangha Jewel.

Thereupon the five hundred eminent householders said to the Buddha: World-honored One, we have today heard the sound of the Buddha's Dharma and have understood how the Three Jewels benefit the world. But now we do not know in what sense the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are referred to as "jewels." We beseech the Buddha to explain and clarify [the reason so that] the [present] assembly and all beings who will in future ages believe in the Three Jewels will forever cut through the web of doubt and gain indestructible faith, causing them to enter the inconceivable ocean of the Three Jewels.

Then the Buddha addressed the eminent householders, saying:

Excellent, excellent! You, good sirs, do well to ask about the Tathāgata's profound and wondrous Dharma, bringing benefit and happiness to all beings in future ages. For instance, just as the rarest jewel in the world possesses ten meanings, adorning state borders and bringing benefit to sentient beings, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this. The first is solidity: just as no one is able to destroy a *maṇi* jewel, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, for non-Buddhists and the heavenly demon (i.e., Paranirmitavaśavartin) are unable to destroy them. The second is untaintedness: superior jewels of the world are pure, their light clean and not mixed with impurities, and the Buddha,

Dharma, and Sangha Jewels are also like this, completely free from the grime of mental afflictions. The third is giving happiness: just as a pitcher of heavenly virtues can give happiness, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, able to give beings mundane and supramundane happiness. The fourth is being difficult to encounter: just as an auspicious jewel is rare and difficult to acquire, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, difficult for sentient beings with karmic hindrances to encounter for millions of eons. The fifth is destructiveness: just as a wish-fulfilling jewel can destroy destitution, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, for they can destroy the hardships of poverty in the world. The sixth is majesty: just as the wheel treasure possessed by a wheel-turning king can vanquish foes, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, possessing the six supernormal faculties and subjugating the four demons. The seventh is wish-fulfillment: just as a *maṇi* gem can rain down treasures in accordance with what one seeks in one's heart, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, able to fulfill the good vows cultivated by beings. The eighth is adornment: just as rare jewels of the world adorn royal palaces, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, adorning the jeweled *bodhi* palace of the Dharma king. The ninth is utmost exquisiteness: just as the wondrous jewels of heaven are the most exquisite, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, surpassing the best wondrous jewels in the world. The tenth is immutability: just as pure gold does not change when put in fire, so too are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels like this, the eight winds of the world unable to affect them. The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels are endowed with immeasurable magical transformations due to their supernormal faculties, bringing benefit and happiness to sentient beings without stopping for even a moment. It is in this sense that the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are referred to as "jewels."

Good sirs, I have explained in brief for you the objects of the four kinds of mundane and supramundane debts of gratitude. Know that, cultivating bodhisattva practices, you should repay these four kinds of debts of gratitude.

Then the five hundred eminent householders said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, it is extremely difficult to repay these four debts of gratitude. What practices should one cultivate to repay these debts of gratitude?

The Buddha addressed the eminent householders, saying:

300c Good sirs, for seeking *bodhi*, there are three kinds of ten *pāramitās*. The first is ten kinds of the *pāramitā* of giving, the second is ten kinds of proximate *pāramitā*, and the third is ten kinds of true *pāramitā*.<sup>20</sup> If any gentleman or lady generates the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, is able to fill a trigalactic megagalactic world-system with the seven precious things, and gives them to immeasurable destitute beings, such giving is merely called the *pāramitā* of giving and is not called the true *pāramitā*. If any gentleman or lady arouses thoughts of great compassion and, in order to seek unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*, gives his own wife and children to others, his heart unstinting, and gives his flesh, limbs, head, eyes, marrow, brain, and even his life to whoever comes seeking them, such giving is merely called the proximate *pāramitā* and is not yet called the true *pāramitā*. If any gentleman or lady generates the aspiration for unsurpassed great *bodhi*, abides in nonapprehension, urges beings to generate this aspiration in the same way, and gives a single four-line verse of the true Dharma to a single being, causing him to aim for unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*, this is called the true *pāramitā*.

The previous two [kinds of] giving are not yet called repaying one's debts of gratitude. If any gentleman or lady is able to cultivate this third *pāramitā* of truth, then it is called true repayment of the four debts of gratitude. Why is this? With the previous two [kinds of] giving there are thoughts of acquisition, and with the third [kind of] giving there are no thoughts of acquisition. If someone gives the true Dharma to a single sentient being and makes him generate the aspiration for unsurpassed great *bodhi*, when this person realizes *bodhi*, he will widely save beings without end and continue the lineage of the Three Jewels to ensure that it does not come to an end. For this reason, it is called repaying one's debts of gratitude.

Then the five hundred eminent householders, having heard from the Buddha this teaching about repaying debts of gratitude that had not been

previously heard, and their hearts dancing for joy at having experienced something unprecedented, generated the aspiration to seek unsurpassed *bodhi*, gained the *samādhi* of patient acceptance, entered inconceivable wisdom, and never turned back.

At that time eighty-four thousand beings in the assembly generated the *bodhi*-mind and gained firm faith and this *samādhi*. The great multitude in the oceanlike assembly all gained the *samādhi* of adamant patient acceptance, comprehended acceptance of nonbirth [of dharmas] and acceptance of compliance or else realized the first stage [of the bodhisattva] and gained acceptance of nonarising [of dharmas]. Immeasurable beings generated the *bodhi*-mind and dwelled in the stage of nonretrogression.

Then the Buddha addressed the five hundred eminent householders:

If there are any among all beings in future ages who are able to hear this “Chapter on Repaying Debts of Gratitude” in the *Contemplation of the Mind-ground* and uphold, recite, explain, copy, and disseminate it widely, the merit and knowledge of such people will increase, the gods will guard them, they will be without illness in their present body, and their life span will be prolonged. When their life ends, they will gain rebirth in Maitreya’s inner palace, see the mark of the white tuft of hair [between his eyebrows], transcend birth-and-death, gain liberation in the three assemblies under the dragonflower (*pumṇāga*) [tree], be reborn at will in pure lands in the ten directions, see the Buddha, hear the Dharma, enter the assembly of the rightly established, and quickly accomplish the Tathāgata’s wisdom of *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

[Here ends] Fascicle Two of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*

301a



## Fascicle Three

### Chapter II Repaying Debts of Gratitude (*continued*)

At that time there was eighty *yojanas* to the northeast of the great city of Rājagṛha a petty state called Puṇyavardhana. In this country there was an eminent householder called Jñānaprabha. Advanced in years, he had only one son, who was wicked by nature, did not obey his parents, and was unable to follow any instructions. Hearing from afar that the Tathāgata Śākyamuni was staying in the city of Rājagṛha, on Mount Gṛdhṛakūṭa, and expounding the Mahayana teaching of repaying debts of gratitude for immeasurable beings in [this] defiled and evil age, the parents and son, together with their kinsmen, and bringing offerings with them, arrived at where the Buddha was in order to listen to the Dharma. Having made offerings and paid their respects, [the father] said to the Buddha:

I have a son who is by nature corrupt and wicked and does not accept any of his parents' instructions. Hearing now that the Buddha is teaching repayment of the four kinds of debts of gratitude, we have come to where the Buddha is to listen to the Dharma. I but beseech you, World-honored One, to expound the profound and wondrous meaning of the four debts of gratitude for the likes of us and our kinsmen and make our wicked son arouse thoughts of filial obedience and gain happiness in this world and in future lives.

Thereupon the Buddha addressed Jñānaprabha:

Excellent, excellent! You have come to me for the sake of the Dharma and have made offerings and paid your respects, wishing to hear this teaching. Listen attentively and consider it carefully.

If any gentleman or lady generates the *bodhi*-mind and, in order to hear the essentials of the Dharma, raises their feet and lowers their feet [as they walk], they will on this account, according to the quantity of dust

particles of the ground over which they tread, be it a long distance or a short distance, attain [the state of] a wheel-turning sage-king with a golden wheel; the rewards of a wheel-turning king having been exhausted, they will become a king in the heavens of desire, and the rewards of the heavens of desire having been exhausted, they will become the heavenly king Brahmā, see the Buddha, hear the Dharma, and quickly realize the wondrous fruit [of awakening].

301b You, great eminent householder, and the others have for the sake of the Dharma come to me, and every single particle of the earth's dust particles in the eighty *yojanas* you have thus traversed will attract the rewards of humans, gods, and wheel[-turning] kings, and having already heard the Dharma, you will in the future realize *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. Although I earlier explained the subtle import of the profound four debts of gratitude, for you I shall now restate their meaning.

And he spoke these verses:

The supreme Dharma king, the great sage-ruler,  
has no peer among all humans and gods.  
He is endowed with [thirty-two] major marks and [eighty] minor signs,  
with which he adorns his person,  
and his oceanlike wisdom is like space, without measure.  
He has perfected all the practices for benefiting self and others,  
and his fame is heard everywhere in all lands.  
He has forever cut off mental afflictions and other habit energies,  
and duly upholding the hidden practice [of observing the precepts],  
he guards his sense organs.  
He has one hundred and forty unshared qualities  
and has completely perfected the vast ocean of merit.  
He is endowed with all *samādhis* and supernormal faculties  
and always disports in the palace of the eight masterful [powers].  
Among humans, gods, and non-Buddhists in the ten directions  
there are none who can cause difficulties for the Tamer [of Men].  
His golden mouth preaches with unimpeded eloquence,  
and even if there is no one to pose a question, he speaks of his own  
accord.

As the ocean tides do not miss their proper times,  
 and as the heavenly drum is attuned to the minds of the gods,  
 In the same way it is only the Buddha who possesses self-mastery,  
 not seers with the five [supernormal] faculties, demons, Brahmā,  
 and so on.  
 Having for [vast] oceanlike eons difficult to conceive cultivated practices  
 and vows,  
 he has attained great supernormal faculties such as these.  
 I entered the chamber of the great tranquility of *samādhi*  
 and observed the capacities [of beings], as well as medicines and  
 illnesses,  
 And coming out of meditation, I extolled  
 the Dharma of the buddhas of the three ages, the method of  
 [contemplating] the mind-ground.  
 At the time some eminent householders had turned back from the great  
 [*bodhi*-]mind  
 and were desirous of dwelling in the self-benefiting practices of the  
 two vehicles.  
 I revealed the great teaching of wisdom and expedient means  
 and drew them into the gateway to liberation through the three  
 emptinesses.  
 The Tathāgata's intent cannot be measured,  
 and only the Buddha can know the true secret.  
 Though *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* with sharp faculties  
 and bodhisattvas diligently striving for nonretrogression  
 May gauge and measure together for some twelve eons,  
 there will be none able to know even a small portion of it.  
 Even if the wisdom of [all] ordinary people and holy ones in the ten  
 directions  
 were bestowed on a single person, making him a wise person,  
 And wise people like this were [legion] like bamboo in a grove,  
 they would not be able to measure out even a small portion of it.  
 Ordinary people in the world, not having the eye of wisdom,  
 are confused about the objects of their debts of gratitude and miss  
 out on the wondrous fruit;

Beings in the evil age with five defilements  
do not understand their profound debts of gratitude and constantly  
turn their backs on virtue.

I reveal for them the four debts of gratitude  
and make them enter the path to *bodhi* [characterized by] right views.  
Indebted to their nurturing by a kind father and a compassionate mother,  
all men and women are happy.

One's debt of gratitude to a kind father is lofty, like the king of mountains,  
and one's debt of gratitude to a compassionate mother is deep, like  
the ocean.

Were I to dwell in the world for one eon  
and explain one's debt of gratitude to a compassionate mother, I  
would be unable to exhaust it.

I shall now explain in brief a small portion,  
just like a mosquito or gnat drinking from the ocean.

301c Even if someone were for the sake of merit  
to honor brahmans of pure conduct,  
Divine seers with the five [supernormal] faculties, adepts,  
teachers and elders with great wisdom, and good [spiritual] friends,  
Install [them in] a hall made of seven rare [jewels],  
and with buildings of oxhead sandalwood,  
Each spread with hundred-jeweled bedding,  
with nectarlike delicacies of the world,<sup>21</sup>  
And with medicinal decoctions for treating myriad illnesses  
that fill gold and silver vessels  
Make offerings in this manner thrice daily  
for a full hundred eons,  
It would not be as good as extending a small portion for a single moment  
in offering to one's compassionate mother, a field of great  
indebtedness:  
The merits would be infinite and could not be measured,  
and in computation or analogy they would all be without compare.  
When a compassionate mother in the world conceives her child,  
for ten months she is pregnant and long-suffering;

She is not attached in her feelings to the pleasures of the five desires,  
and at any time it is the same with food and drink;  
Day and night she always cherishes thoughts of pity,  
and whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down, she experiences  
[many] sufferings.  
When she is about to give birth to the child in her womb,  
it is as if she were being pierced by spearheads dissecting her limbs  
and joints;  
Her utter bewilderment is indescribable,  
and the aching pain throughout her body is unbearable.  
If her life should end because of this hardship,  
her six relations<sup>22</sup> and kinsmen will all be grief-stricken.  
These tribulations are all due to her child,  
and of her distress, deeply felt, she does not speak aloud.  
If she recovers and her body feels at ease,  
it is as if a poor person had acquired treasure, and her joy is difficult  
to measure.  
She gazes at the [infant's] features without tiring of them  
and does not abandon even briefly thoughts of tenderness.  
The affection between mother and child is always like this,  
and when going out or coming in, [the infant] never leaves [the  
mother's] breast.  
The mother's breasts are like fountains of nectar,  
and when the time comes for nursing [the infant] they never dry up.  
The debt of gratitude to her kind thoughts is truly difficult to compare,  
and the virtues of her rearing are also difficult to measure.  
In the world the earth is said to be weighty,  
but it is surpassed by the weightiness of the debt of gratitude to a  
compassionate mother;  
In the world [Mount] Sume[ru] is said to be high,  
but it is surpassed by the height of the debt of gratitude to a  
compassionate mother;  
In the world a fierce wind alone is swift,  
but it is surpassed [in speed] by a single thought in a mother's heart.

If any being acts unfilially  
and causes his mother to give rise to thoughts of ill will for even a  
moment

And utter even a few words of resentment,  
the child will encounter hardship in accordance with her words,  
And all the buddhas, adamantine gods,  
and secret rites of divine seers will be unable to save him.

If any man or woman follows their mother's instructions,  
obedient to her facial expression and not defiant,  
All calamities will completely disappear,  
the gods will protect them, and they will always be happy.

If they can obey their compassionate mother,  
such men and women are out of the ordinary;

302a They are bodhisattvas of great compassion who have metamorphosed  
in the human realm  
and are demonstrating expedient means for repaying debts of gratitude.

If any man or woman  
practices filial piety in order to repay their debt of gratitude to their  
mother,

Cutting off their flesh, drawing their blood, and always offering these,  
[acting] in this manner for a full eon,

And if they diligently cultivate the path of filiality in various ways,  
they will still not be able to repay a moment's debt of gratitude.

While in the [mother's] womb for ten months,  
one constantly suckles at the root of the [mother's] breast and drinks  
her fat and blood.

By the time one becomes a [weaned] infant and a child,  
the mother's milk drunk is more than a hundred *hu*.

Be it food and drink, medicinal decoctions or fine clothes,  
child first and mother second is the norm.

If the child is stupid and disliked by others,  
the mother still treats it tenderly and does not forsake it.

Once there was a woman who, carrying her child in her arms,  
was crossing the Ganges River, the waters of which were raging.

Because of the floodwaters she did not have the strength to go forward,  
and she drowned together with the child, unable to abandon it.  
On account of the power of this root of goodness of kind thoughts,  
when her life ended she was reborn up in Brahmā's heaven,  
And having long experienced the pleasures of *samādhi* in Brahmā's  
heaven,

she encountered the Tathāgata and received the Buddha's prediction  
[of her future enlightenment].

Therefore, a compassionate mother has ten virtues,  
named according to their meaning:<sup>23</sup>

The first is called "earth," the second "giving birth,"  
the third "rectifier," the fourth "nurturing,"

The fifth "giver of wisdom," and the sixth "adornment";

the seventh is called "peaceful rest," the eighth "instruction,"

The ninth "admonisher," and the tenth "giving an occupation."

Other debts of gratitude do not surpass the debt of gratitude to  
one's mother.

What is the greatest wealth in the world?

What is the greatest poverty in the world?

The presence of a mother is the greatest wealth;  
the absence of a mother is the greatest poverty.

When a mother is alive, it is midday;  
when a compassionate mother dies, it is sunset.

When a mother is alive, everything is perfect;  
when a compassionate mother dies, all is empty.

For all good men and women of the world  
the weightiness of their debt of gratitude to their mother and father  
is like mountains.

Filial respect should always be on one's mind;  
knowing one's debt of gratitude and repaying one's debt of gratitude  
are the path of the holy one.

Be not begrudging of life and limb, offer delicacies,  
and do not fail for a single moment to care [for your parents] with a  
cheerful expression.

When your parents die suddenly,  
even if you want to repay your debt of gratitude, it will truly be  
too late.

The Buddha formerly practiced for the sake of his kind mother,  
and he acquired a golden-colored body with [thirty-two] major marks  
and [eighty] minor signs;

His renown was vast, pervading the ten directions,  
all humans and gods bowed down to him,

And humans and nonhumans all paid their respects:

this was due to his having formerly repaid his debt of gratitude for  
[his mother's] kindness.

I ascended to the palace of the Thirty-three Gods,

and for three months preached the true Dharma for my mother,

Letting my mother listen, take refuge in the right path,

understand acceptance of nonbirth [of dharmas], and never turn back:

302b

This was all to repay my debt of gratitude for her compassion,

but even though the repaying of my debt of gratitude was profound,  
it still did not suffice.

Maudgalyāyana, foremost in supernormal faculties,

having cut off the mental afflictions of the three realms,

Observed his kind mother with the power of his supernormal faculties  
and saw her suffering among hungry ghosts.

Maudgalyāyana went himself to repay his debt of gratitude to his mother  
and rescued his kind parent from her suffering:

She was reborn up among the Paranirmita[vaśavartin] gods,

disported together with them, and resided in a heavenly palace.

Know that your debt of gratitude to your parents is most profound,  
and buddhas, holy ones, and worthies all repay their virtue.

If someone wholeheartedly makes offerings to the Buddha,  
and someone else assiduously discharges his filial duties,

There is no difference in the merits of these two people,

and their rewards received during the three ages will also be endless.

For the sake of their children worldlings commit sins,

fall into the three [evil] paths, and suffer for a long time.

Men and women, not being holy ones, do not have supernormal faculties,  
and not seeing the cycle of transmigration, it is difficult for them to  
repay [their debt of gratitude to their parents].  
Alas! Worldlings, not having the powers of holy ones,  
are unable to save their kind mothers.  
For this reason, you should know  
that you should diligently cultivate blessed benefits and merits.  
On account of the superior merit added posthumously by a man or woman  
there is a great golden light that illuminates hell,  
And in the midst of the light profound and wondrous sounds are uttered,  
which awaken the parents and make them generate the [*bodhi*-]mind.  
Recalling how in former lives they were always committing sins,  
they repent in a single moment of thought and all [their sins] are  
extinguished.  
Chanting “Homage to the buddhas of the three ages!”  
they gain release from their bodies of unremitting hardship.  
Reborn as humans and gods, they experience happiness for a long time,  
see the Buddha, hear the Dharma, and will become buddhas.  
Or else they are born in pure lands in the ten directions,  
seven-jeweled lotus flowers serving as their parents,  
And when the flowers open they see the Buddha, understand the  
nonarising [of dharmas],  
have nonretrogressing bodhisattvas as fellow students,  
Acquire the masterful powers of the six supernormal faculties,  
and gain entry to the sublime palace of *bodhi*.  
All this is bodhisattvas becoming men and women,  
riding on the great power of their vows, and converting the realm  
of humans.  
This is called truly repaying your debt of gratitude to your parents.  
You beings, practice and study it together!  
Sentient beings transmigrate and are born in the six paths,  
just like a wheel, without beginning or end.  
They either become fathers and mothers or become [other] men and  
women,  
indebted to one another from life to life, from birth to birth.

Though they are the same as one views one's parents and no different,  
not having realized the wisdom of a holy one, one has no way of  
knowing this.

All men are one's father,  
and all women are one's mother.

Not yet having repaid one's debt of gratitude from former lives,  
why does one instead produce thoughts of difference and create  
hostility?

One should always repay debts of gratitude and bring benefit to one  
another,  
and one should not beat and revile [others] and cause resentment.

If you wish to further cultivate the gateway to merit and knowledge,  
you should make a vow six times during the day and night:

302c "May I from life to life for immeasurable eons  
gain the great supernormal faculty of knowledge of past lives,  
Knowing hundreds of thousands of past lives  
and recollecting how we have been fathers and mothers for one  
another.

While moving in a cycle through the six destinies and the four kinds  
of birth,

let me in a single moment of thought always reach them,

Preach for them the wondrous Dharma so that they may be freed from  
the causes of suffering,

enable them to gain long enjoyment of the pleasures of humans  
and gods,

Encourage them to make a firm vow [to attain] *bodhi*,  
practice the bodhisattva's gateways to the six perfections,

Forever cut off the two causes of birth-and-death,  
and swiftly realize the unsurpassed path to nirvana."

Among all kings in the ten directions,  
those who govern people with the right Dharma are regarded as  
sage-rulers.

The merits of a king are supreme;  
he who is masterful in his actions is called a god.

The Thirty-three Gods and other gods  
constantly assist the king's governance with the power of their  
blessings.  
The gods protect him like an only son,  
whence he is addressed by the name "son of gods" (*devaputra*).  
In the world the king is regarded as the basis,  
and all people regard him as their support,  
Just as all houses in the world  
are erected with pillars as their basis.  
The king governs the people by means of the right Dharma,  
just as Great King Brahmā produced the myriad things.  
Should the king act contrary to the Dharma and lack principle in his rule,  
he will destroy the world, like King Yama.  
Villains tolerated by the king  
are the same as elephants trampling a lotus pond and no different.  
Do not say that we have happened to encounter a defiled and evil age;  
know that good and evil are cultivated by the king.<sup>24</sup>  
Just as the sun god shines on the world,  
so too does the king govern the world.  
Although sunlight does not shine at night,  
it can make sentient beings feel happy.  
Should the king govern the world by means contrary to the Dharma,  
all the people will have nothing on which to rely.  
All fears in the world  
cannot arise on account of the power of the king's merit.  
That peace and happiness are established among the people  
is, it should be known, due to the king's merit.  
All marvelous flowers in the world  
bloom on account of the power of the king's merit.  
All wonderful groves in the world  
flourish on account of the power of the king's merit.  
All medicinal herbs in the world  
cure illnesses on account of the power of the king's merit.  
The hundred grains and crops  
all ripen on account of the power of the king's merit.

That people in the world experience abundance and happiness  
is always naturally so on account of the power of the king's merit.  
Suppose, for example, that an eminent householder has a single son  
whose wisdom and fine looks are without compare in the world,  
And his parents love him like their own eyes  
and always engender protective thoughts day and night—  
A great sage-king of a country is also like this:  
he thinks lovingly of beings as if they were his only son,  
303a Caring for the elderly and giving relief to the lonely,  
and he is always impartial in thoughts of praise and punishment.  
A benevolent king such as this is regarded as a sage-ruler,  
and all beings revere him like a tathāgata.  
When a benevolent king governs the country, there are no calamities,  
and all the people are dutiful and always at ease.  
When a king governs the world lawlessly,  
illnesses are rife and calamitous for sentient beings.  
Thus, for all humans and nonhumans  
sin and merit are clear and there is nothing that is concealed.  
Good and evil things are divided into seven parts:  
the doer obtains five and the king gets two.  
Groves, fields, and residences are all thus,  
and the division of taxes and so on is also like this.  
When a wheel-turning sage-king appears,  
the division is made into six parts, the king getting one  
And the people at the time getting five parts;  
recompense for good and evil deeds is also all thus.  
If any king of men cultivates the right view  
and governs the world according to the Dharma, he is called a  
heavenly lord.  
Because he governs the world in accordance with heaven's Dharma,  
King Vaiśravaṇa always protects [him],  
And the other three gods [of the four quarters] and hosts of *rākṣasas*  
will all guard the sage-king's palace.  
When a sage-king appears in the world and administers the country,  
he brings benefits to beings and accomplishes ten qualities:

The first is called “illuminating state borders,”  
the second is called “adorning the country,”  
The third is called “giving every happiness,”  
the fourth is called “subjugating enemies,”  
The fifth is called “blocking fears,”  
the sixth is called “assembling holy ones and worthies,”  
The seventh is called “making laws the basis,”  
the eighth is called “protecting the world,”  
The ninth is called “performing the achievement of creation,”  
the tenth is called “lord of people within state borders.”  
If any king accomplishes [these] ten superior qualities,  
King Brahmā, Śakra, and other gods,  
*Yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, and kings of demons and spirits  
will, concealing themselves, always come and protect the state borders;  
*Nāga* kings will rejoice and cause sweet rain to fall,  
the five grains will ripen, and all the people will be at ease;  
Places throughout the country will produce rare jewels,  
men and horses will be strong, and there will be no enemies;  
Wish-fulfilling gems will appear before the king,  
and kings outside his territory will come and submit of their own  
accord.  
If someone does something unwholesome in the kingdom,  
a moment’s impulse will result in many evils,  
And when his life ends, this person will fall into hell  
and experience suffering for long eons with no chance of escape.  
If someone with diligent sincerity assists the king,  
gods will think protectively of him and increase his prestige.  
Eminent householder Jñānaprabha, know that  
all kings of men are the result of karma.  
There are no dharmas that do not come about through causes and  
conditions;  
if there were no causes and conditions, there would be no dharmas.  
To say that there is no birth in heaven or evil destiny—  
such a person does not understand causality.

- 303b That there are no causes and no results is a grossly wrong view,  
one that is ignorant of sin and merit and gives rise to deluded speculation.
- The blessings and happiness now enjoyed by a king  
are the consequence of his habitual cultivation of the virtue of morality,  
The three [sets of] pure precepts that he kept in former times,  
and he has obtained a king's body as a wondrous result [in the realms] of humans and gods.
- If someone arouses the *bodhi*-mind,  
the power of his vow will help accomplish the unsurpassed result.
- If he strictly keeps the pure precepts of the upper grade,  
he will be masterful in his activities and become a Dharma king;  
His magical transformations due to supernormal faculties will fill the ten directions,  
and he will universally save all beings according to their conditions.
- If one observes the bodhisattva precepts of the middle grade,  
one will gain mastery in merit and become a wheel-turning king;  
Everything will come about in accordance with the mind's actions,  
and immeasurable humans and gods will all faithfully obey.
- If one keeps [the precepts of] the upper lower grade, one will become a great demon king,  
and all nonhumans will lead one another on to submit;
- Even though, when observing the [different] grades of precepts, one may transgress against them,  
because of the superiority of the precepts one will be able to become a king.
- If one keeps those of the middle lower grade, one will become a king of birds and beasts,  
and everything that flies or runs will submit;
- [Even though] there may be transgressions of the pure precepts,  
because of the superiority of the precepts one will be able to become a king.
- If one adheres to those of the lower lower grade, one will become King Yama  
and, residing in hell, be ever masterful;

Even though one may violate the prohibitory precepts and be born in  
an evil path,  
because of the superiority of the precepts one will be able to become  
a king.

For this reason, all beings

should receive the bodhisattva's pure precepts;

If one duly observes them without transgression,  
one will become a king of men wherever one is born.

If someone has not received the Tathāgata's precepts,  
he will never be able to gain even the body of a jackal,

Let alone experience among humans and gods  
the supreme pleasures and occupy the position of king.

Therefore, kingship is not without its causes,  
and by assiduously applying oneself to precept-based action, one  
achieves wondrous results.

The king himself is the people's ruler,  
his compassion like a mother nursing her infant.

Thus there is a great debt of gratitude to a king of men,  
and it is difficult to repay his caring thoughts.

For these reasons, all sentient beings,  
if they are to cultivate and realize great *bodhi*

And arouse great compassion for all beings,  
should receive the Tathāgata's threefold precepts.

If one wishes to receive the precepts in accordance with the rules,  
one should repent of one's sins so as to extinguish them.

The causes giving rise to sins lie in ten conditions:  
three of the body, four of the mouth, and three of the mind.

Birth-and-death is beginningless, sins are endless,  
the ocean of mental afflictions is deep and bottomless,

And karmic hindrances tower up like [Mount] Sume[ru].

Action arises on account of a twosome,

Namely, the manifest and its seeds.

The storehouse consciousness contains as its objects all seeds,  
Which, like a shadow accompanying a shape, never leave the body  
and obstruct the path of holy ones at all times,

303c      Obstructing at close hand the fruits of the wondrous pleasures of  
              humans and gods  
              and obstructing far off the fruit of unsurpassed *bodhi*.  
Householders can attract the causes of mental afflictions,  
              and renunciants too may violate the pure precepts.  
If one can repent in accordance with the rules,  
              all mental afflictions will be completely eliminated,  
Just as the fire [at the end] of an eon destroys the world  
              and consumes [Mount] Sume[ru] and the vast ocean.  
By repenting one can burn the fuel of mental afflictions;  
              by repenting one can be reborn in the path to heaven;  
By repenting one can gain the bliss of the four *dhyānas*;  
              by repenting jewels and *maṇi* gems will rain down;  
By repenting one can extend one's adamant life span;  
              by repenting one can enter the palace of permanence and bliss;  
By repenting one can leave the prison of the three realms;  
              by repenting one can open the flower of *bodhi*;  
By repenting one sees the Buddha's great perfect mirror;  
              and by repenting one can reach the treasure site (i.e., nirvana).  
If one is to repent in accordance with the rules,  
              one should practice on the basis of two methods of contemplation:  
One is the method of extinguishing sins by contemplating the  
              phenomenal,  
              and the other is the method of extinguishing sins by contemplating  
              the noumenal.  
There are three [methods] for extinguishing sins by contemplating the  
              phenomenal:  
              [people with] superior, middling, and inferior capacities constitute  
              the three grades.  
If someone of superior capacity seeks the pure precepts,  
              he arouses great energy, his mind not turning back;  
He weeps bloodlike tears of grief, always sincere,  
              and feelings of sorrow pervade his body, all appearing as [tears of]  
              blood;

He focuses his thoughts on the places of the Three Jewels in the ten directions  
and also on beings in the other six paths,  
And going down on his knees, his palms pressed together and his mind undisturbed,  
he confesses [his sins], cleanses his mind, and seeks repentance:  
“I but beseech the buddhas in the ten directions and three ages  
to take pity on me with their great compassion.  
I find myself in transmigration without any support,  
never waking during the long night of birth-and-death.  
I am in the state of an ordinary person, complete with bonds,  
and my crazed mind, with its inverted views, clings everywhere to objects of cognition.  
I find myself in the three realms, a house on fire,  
deludedly defiled by the six sense objects and without a savior.  
I was born into a poor and lowly household,  
have not gained freedom, and am always experiencing suffering.  
I was born into a household with parents of wrong views  
and have committed sins through relying on wicked kinsmen.  
I but beseech the buddhas, Honored Ones of Great Kindness,  
to take pity on me and protectively think of me as an only son.  
Once I have repented, never again will I commit any sins:  
May the tathāgatas of the three ages bear witness!”  
If one resolutely repents like this,  
it is called seeking the pure precepts by someone of the upper grade.  
If someone of middling capacity seeks the precepts,  
he singlemindedly and resolutely repents of his sins<sup>25</sup>  
And, tears streaming down unawares  
and his whole body perspiring, pitifully beseeches the Buddha,  
Confessing his actions in birth-and-death since beginningless time:  
“I beg that the water of great compassion may cleanse sensory troubles,  
Wash away hindrances due to [past] sins, purify the six sense organs,  
and grant me the bodhisattva’s threefold precepts.

304a I vow to firmly keep them without turning back,  
to assiduously practice and liberate suffering beings,  
To first deliver others before gaining deliverance for myself,  
and to never desist until the end of time.”  
If someone thus assiduous and resolute,  
unbegrudging of life and limb, seeks *bodhi*,  
He will be able to experience the extraordinary aspects of the Three  
Jewels:  
this is called great repentance of the middle grade.<sup>26</sup>  
If someone of inferior capacity seeks the pure precepts,  
he arouses the aspiration for unsurpassed *bodhi*  
And, sadly shedding tears with gooseflesh all over his body,  
is deeply ashamed of the sins he has committed.  
In the presence of the Three Jewels in the ten directions  
and beings in the six paths  
He confesses with utmost sincerity every instance  
of his having tormented beings since beginningless time,  
Arouses thoughts of unimpeded great compassion,  
unbegrudging of life and limb repents of the three kinds of actions,  
Confesses all his sins already committed,  
and [vows] never to commit any evil not yet performed.  
Repenting of sins by people of these three grades  
is all called the first pure precept.  
With the water of shame one cleanses sensory troubles,  
and in both body and mind one becomes a pure vessel.  
Good sirs, know that  
the repentances by means of pure contemplation already explained  
Are no different in their phenomenal and noumenal aspects  
but are not the same because of people’s capacities and conditions.  
If you wish to practice contemplating the right noumenal principle,  
detach yourself from all distractions,  
Don new clean robes, sit cross-legged,  
compose your mind, regulate your thoughts, dissociate yourself  
from external objects,

And constantly contemplate the buddhas' wondrous Dharma body:  
"Its essential nature is like space, inapprehensible.  
All sins are [also] like this by nature,  
and deluded thoughts arise on account of inverted ideas.  
Thus the [distinguishing] characteristics of sins are originally empty  
and are never to be apprehended during the three ages.  
They are neither within nor without nor betwixt;  
[inherent] nature and [distinguishing] characteristics are thusness,  
both unmoving.  
The wondrous principle of thusness is ineffable,  
and only those with the wisdom of holy ones can penetrate it.  
It is neither existent nor nonexistent, nor existent and nonexistent,  
nor not existent and nonexistent, and is removed from names and  
characteristics.  
It pervades the Dharma realm and is without birth or extinction;  
the buddhas are originally of the same one essence.  
I but beseech the buddhas to grant protection  
and extinguish all inverted thoughts.  
May I soon understand the source of truth  
and quickly realize the Tathāgata's unsurpassed path!"  
If any gentleman of pure faith  
is able to contemplate the wondrous principle of emptiness day and  
night,  
All hindrances due to [past] sins will disappear of their own accord:  
this is called supreme adherence to the pure precepts.  
If someone observes and knows the emptiness of reality,  
he can extinguish all grievous sins,  
Just as a strong wind blowing on a raging fire  
can cause immeasurable grasses and trees to burn.  
Good sirs, contemplation of the truth  
is called the gateway to the buddhas' secret essentials.  
If you wish to explicate it in detail for others,  
do not expound it among the ignorant:  
The likes of all ordinary foolish beings will,

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on hearing it, most certainly give rise to doubts and not believe it in their minds.

In the case of a wise person, he will give rise to faith and understanding, observe from moment to moment, and understand thusness, Whereupon buddhas from the ten directions will all appear before him, and he will spontaneously realize the wondrous fruit of *bodhi*.

Good sirs, after my death

those of pure faith in future ages

Are to always repent by the two methods of contemplation and should receive the bodhisattva's threefold precepts.

If you wish to observe the precepts of the upper grade, you should invoke buddhas and bodhisattvas as preceptors.

Invoke me, Śākyamuni Buddha,

to act as *upādhyāya* of the bodhisattva precepts,

The Buddha Honored King of Pure Knowledge of the Nāga Lineage<sup>27</sup>

to act as *ācārya* of the pure precepts,

The future guide, Maitreya Buddha,

to act as instructor in purity,

Honored Ones among two-legged beings presently in the ten directions to act as witnessing preceptors of purity,

All bodhisattvas in the ten directions

to act as companions in the practice and study of the precepts,

And Śakra, Brahmā, the Four [Heavenly] Kings, and adamantine deities to act as outer protectors for the study of the precepts.

Invoking these buddhas and bodhisattvas,

as well as the present transmitting preceptor,

And for the sake of universally repaying the four debts of gratitude arousing the pure *bodhi*-mind,

You should receive the bodhisattva's three sets of precepts:

the precept to bring benefit to all sentient beings,

The precept to embrace all good dharmas,

and the precept to embrace all discipline.

These three sets of pure precepts

are protectively thought of by tathāgatas of the three ages.

Sentient beings who have not heard [the Dharma] or have acted contrary to the Dharma

have not heard or seen them during immeasurable eons.

It is only buddhas of the past in the ten directions

who have received the pure precepts, always observed them,

Forever eradicated mental afflictions due to the two hindrances,

and achieved realization of the fruit of unsurpassed *bodhi*.

All world-honored ones of the future

will protect the jewel of the three sets of pure precepts,

Eradicate the three hindrances and habit energy,

and realize perfect great *bodhi*.

Sugatas of the present in the ten directions

practice in full the causes of the three sets of pure precepts,

Forever cut off transmigration in the suffering of birth-and-death,

and gain realization of the fruit of *bodhi* in the three [buddha] bodies.

For crossing the deep ocean of birth-and-death

the bodhisattva's pure precepts serve as a ferryboat;

For cutting off forever the bonds of greed, anger, and ignorance

the bodhisattva's pure precepts serve as a sharp sword;

In fears along the steep paths of birth-and-death

the bodhisattva's pure precepts serve as a home;

For eliminating the causes of the sufferings of poverty and lowliness 304c

the pure precepts can serve as a wish-fulfilling jewel;

For illnesses caused by demonic possession

the bodhisattva's pure precepts serve as good medicine;

For humans and gods to become kings and gain sovereignty

the three sets of pure precepts act as a good condition;

And for [obtaining] the bodies of kings of the other four destinies

the pure precepts serve as a condition for obtaining a superior result.

Therefore, if you are able to cultivate the causes of sovereignty,

you will succeed in becoming a king and receiving honor.

You should first pay homage to buddhas in the ten directions

and further cultivate the pure precepts day and night.

The buddhas will think protectively of you and always support you,

and your precepts, like a *vajra*, will be indestructible.

Gods and good deities in the three realms  
will guard the king's person and his dependents;  
All foes, every one, will submit,  
and all people will be happy and feel the king's transformative  
influence.  
Therefore, if you observe the bodhisattva precepts,  
you will experience unconditioned results, mundane and supra-  
mundane.  
The Three Jewels, eternal, convert the world,  
their qualities of beneficence vast and inconceivable;  
In the oceanlike eons of past, future, and present  
their merits benefit beings without cease.  
The thousand light-rays of the Buddha, like the sun, shine constantly  
on the world,  
benefiting all beings and delivering those with the right conditions;  
Those without the right conditions do not see the Buddha's compassionate  
light,  
just as the blind do not see anything.  
The Dharma Jewel is of one taste, unchanging,  
and what earlier buddhas and later buddhas preach is all the same,  
Just as rain, of one taste, moistens everything everywhere,  
and yet there are differences of degree in the luxuriant growth of  
grasses and trees.  
Beings each gain an understanding according to their capacity,  
and there are differences, too, in the way in which grasses and trees  
receive nourishment.  
Bodhisattvas and *śrāvakas* convert beings  
just as the waters of a large river never dry up.  
If beings have no faith, they are not converted,  
just as it is difficult for the sun to shine on the netherworld.  
The light of the Tathāgata, like the moon, is very cooling  
and is likewise able to dispel darkness;  
Just as the moon does not shine [underneath] an overturned basin,  
so too is it for bewildered beings.

The nectar of the Dharma Jewel is a wonderfully good medicine,  
 able to cure all illnesses due to mental afflictions;  
 Those with faith take the medicine and realize *bodhi*,  
 and those without faith fall into evil paths according to their  
 conditions.

Bodhisattvas and *śrāvakas* are always in the world,  
 delivering beings with innumerable expedient means.  
 Those beings with believing minds  
 each enter the stage of happiness of the three vehicles.

If the Tathāgata does not appear in the world,  
 all beings enter wicked paths,  
 Are forever separated from the nectar [of the Dharma], imbibe poison,  
 and are long submerged in the sea of suffering without any chance  
 of escape.

If the Buddha, like the sun, appears in the trigalactic [megagalactic  
 world-]system  
 and emits great radiance, illuminating the long night,  
 Beings, as if asleep, may not perceive it,  
 but they will receive the light and gain entry to the chamber of the  
 unconditioned.

When the Tathāgata had not yet preached the Dharma of the One Vehicle, 305a  
 lands in the ten directions were all empty,  
 But once he generated the [*bodhi*-]mind, practiced, and accomplished  
 right awakening,  
 all buddha lands were wholly purified.

The Dharma Jewel of the One Vehicle is the buddhas' mother,  
 and tathāgatas of the three ages are born therefrom.

By practicing *prajñā* and expedient means uninterruptedly  
 the path to liberation is accomplished and one ascends to wondrous  
 awakening.

If buddhas and bodhisattvas did not appear,  
 beings in the world would be without guides,  
 And there would be no way of passing through the perils of birth-and-  
 death.  
 How would one succeed in reaching the treasure site (i.e., nirvana)?

Through the power of their great vow they become good friends,  
always preaching the wondrous Dharma to make people practice,  
Aim for the ten stages, realize *bodhi*,  
and duly enter nirvana, the place of happiness.  
Because bodhisattvas of great compassion, when converting the world,  
guide beings with expedient means,  
Within they conceal the true practice of the One Vehicle  
and without they take the appearance of *pratyekabuddhas* and  
*śrāvakas*.  
Someone of dull faculties and petty wisdom, hearing of the One Vehicle,  
fears that, on generating the [*bodhi*-]mind, it will take many eons;  
Not knowing that his own person possesses the Tathāgata's matrix  
(*tathāgatagarbha*),  
he merely delights in quiescence and loathes sensory troubles.  
Beings originally possess the seeds of *bodhi*,  
which are all within the [*ā*]*laya* (storehouse) consciousness.  
If one encounters a good friend, generates the great aspiration,  
trains in three ways, and cultivates wondrous practices,  
One will forever cut off afflictive and cognitive hindrances  
and realize the Tathāgata's eternal body.  
The wondrous fruit of *bodhi* is not difficult to accomplish,  
but a genuine good mentor is truly difficult to encounter.  
When cultivating the superior path, all bodhisattvas  
must know four kinds of essential methods:  
Associating with good friends is the first,  
listening to the right Dharma is the second,  
Pondering in accordance with reason is the third,  
and practicing and realizing in accordance with the Dharma is the  
fourth.  
All great sage-rulers in the ten directions  
cultivated these four methods and realized *bodhi*.  
Eminent householders, great assembly,  
and men of pure faith in future ages,  
These four methods, the [causal] stage of the bodhisattva,  
you must practice to accomplish the path to buddhahood.

Good sirs, listen attentively!

Among the four debts of gratitude taught by the Tathāgata,  
The debt of gratitude to the Buddha Jewel is the greatest.

In order to deliver beings [the Buddha] generated the great aspiration,  
And during three [*a*] *saṃkhyeya* great eons

he practiced in full hundreds of thousands of austerities;  
His merits were perfected and pervaded the Dharma realm,  
and at the culmination of the ten stages he realized the three bodies.

The essence of the Dharma body permeates all beings,  
its myriad virtues motionless and its nature eternal;  
It is not born, not extinguished, without coming or going,  
not identical, not different, and not eternal or annihilated;

It pervades the Dharma realm like empty space,  
and all tathāgatas have jointly cultivated and realized it.

All merits, conditioned and unconditioned,

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being based on the Dharma body, are permanent and pure.  
The original nature of the Dharma body is like empty space,  
far removed from the six sense objects and without taint.

The Dharma body is formless and removed from [distinguishing]  
characteristics;

the characterizing and the characterized are all empty.

Thus, in the buddhas' wondrous Dharma body  
the characteristics of frivolous arguments and language have  
become quiescent;

It is far removed from all differentiation,  
the workings of the mind are extinguished, and its essence is all  
thusness.

Out of a desire to realize the Tathāgata's body  
the bodhisattva properly cultivates the myriad practices.

The essence of knowledge, unconditioned, is true Dharma-nature;  
all of matter and mind is the same as the buddhas.

For example, when a flying bird reaches a golden mountain,  
it turns the bird's body into the same color [as the mountain].

All bodhisattvas are like the flying bird,

and the essence of the Dharma-body Buddha is similar to the golden mountain.

The [thirty-two] major marks and [eighty] minor signs of the body of self-enjoyment

each pervade [buddha] lands in the ten directions.

The four knowledges perfectly bright, it experiences Dharma bliss; earlier buddhas and later buddhas are all the same in essence.

Although it pervades the Dharma realm, it is unimpeded; this wondrous state is inconceivable.

This body permanently resides in the land of the buddha of recompense, experiencing Dharma bliss for itself without interruption.

The [thirty-two] major marks and [eighty] minor signs of the body of other-enjoyment

manifest without increase or decrease according to [people's] capacities.

In order to convert bodhisattvas in the [ten] stages, a single buddha manifests ten bodies;

Everywhere the manifestations are each different, and they progressively increase without limit.

They preach the essentials of the Dharma according to the [bodhisattvas'] capacities,

enabling them to experience Dharma bliss and enter the One Vehicle;

They acquire supernormal faculties, which gradually increase, and so too do the Dharma discourses that they understand.

Bodhisattvas of a lower stage may arouse wisdom,

but they are unable to fully comprehend that of the upper stages.

The converting and the converted rise stage by stage,

the affiliation of each according with their original conditions.

One bodhisattva may be converted by many buddhas,

or many bodhisattvas may be converted by one buddha.

In this manner the ten buddhas accomplish right awakening,

each seated [beneath] a seven-jeweled *bodhi* tree.

An earlier buddha having died, a later buddha accomplishes [awakening]; it is not the same as a metamorphic buddha appearing after eons.

The lotus-flower pericarps on which the ten buddhas are seated  
 each have around them hundreds and thousands of petals,  
 And on every single petal there is a single buddha land,  
 corresponding to a trigalactic megagalactic [world-]system.  
 In every single [world-]system there are a hundred million  
 suns, moons, stars, four great continents,  
 Six heavens [of the realm] of desire, four *dhyānas* [of the realm of form],  
 and stations of [unlimited] space, stations of [unlimited] cons-  
 ciousness, [stations of] neither perception [nor nonperception], and  
 so on [of the realm of nonform].  
 Jambū[dvīpa] in the south among those four continents,  
 each single one, has an adamantine seat  
 And a great king of trees.  
 The metamorphosed buddha bodies  
 Realize the path to *bodhi* at one time  
 and turn the wheel of the wondrous Dharma in a [trigalactic]  
 megagalactic [world-system];  
 Bodhisattvas, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *śrāvakas*  
 accomplish the holy fruit in accordance with what is suited to their  
 capacities.  
 The buddhas of the three bodies thus explained,  
 supreme and peerless, are called the [Buddha] Jewel.  
 The Dharma preached by the two bodies of response and transformation,  
 with its teaching, principle, practice, and fruit, is the Dharma Jewel.  
 Buddhas regard the Dharma as a great teacher  
 whereby they realize the path to *bodhi* by cultivating the mind.  
 The Dharma Jewel is unchanging through the three ages,  
 and all buddhas take refuge in it and study it, [saying,]  
 “I now bow down to the Sarvajña (Omniscient One).”  
 Therefore, the Dharma Jewel is said to be a buddha’s teacher.  
 If one enters a raging fire [to seek the Dharma] one will not be burned,  
 but will immediately gain true liberation.  
 The Dharma Jewel can smash the prison of birth-and-death,  
 just as a *vajra* crushes the myriad things;

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The Dharma Jewel can illuminate the minds of beings,  
just as the sun god looks over the realm of space;<sup>28</sup>  
The Dharma Jewel can serve as a sturdy ship,  
able to cross the river of craving over to the further shore;  
The Dharma Jewel can give beings pleasure,  
just as the heavenly drum responds to the minds of gods;  
The Dharma Jewel can relieve the poverty of beings,  
just as a *maṇi* gem rains down jewels;  
The Dharma Jewel can serve as a triple jeweled staircase,  
for by listening to the Dharma and cultivating the [proper] causes,  
one is born in the upper realms;  
The Dharma Jewel is a great sage-king with a golden wheel,  
who with the great power of the Dharma destroys the four demons;  
The Dharma Jewel can serve as a great jeweled carriage,  
able to carry beings out of the house on fire;  
The Dharma Jewel can serve as a great guide,  
able to lead beings to the treasure site (i.e., nirvana);  
The Dharma Jewel can blow the great Dharma conch,  
waking beings to accomplish the path to buddhahood;  
The Dharma Jewel can serve as a great Dharma lamp,  
able to illuminate the darkness of birth-and-death;  
The Dharma Jewel can serve as an adamant arrow,  
able to pacify state borders and subjugate foes.  
The Dharma preached by tathāgatas of the three ages  
can benefit beings so that they escape the bonds of suffering  
And lead them to nirvana, the citadel of happiness:  
this is what is meant by the debt of gratitude to the Dharma Jewel  
being difficult to repay.  
Eminent householder Jñānaprabha, listen attentively!  
There are three kinds of mundane and supramundane sanghas:  
Multitudes of holy ones—bodhisattvas and *śrāvakas*—and ordinary  
people,  
able to benefit beings and become fields of merit.  
The great holy honored one, Mañjuśrī,  
is regarded as their mother by buddhas of the three ages;

The initial generation of the [*bodhi*-]mind by tathāgatas in the ten directions

was all due to the power of Mañjuśrī's instruction.

Sentient beings in all world-systems

hear his name, see his person and radiance,

Also see his metamorphic manifestations that accord with different kinds of beings,

and all accomplish the path to buddhahood, which is difficult to conceive.

Maitreya, a bodhisattva and Dharma prince,

has since his initial generation of the [*bodhi*-]mind never eaten meat,

And for this reason he is called Compassionate One.

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Out of a desire to bring beings to maturation

He is in Tuṣita Heaven, fourth [of the six heavens in the realm of desire], in the forty-ninefold pavilions of wish-fulfilling [gems].

Day and night he constantly teaches the practice of nonretrogression and delivers humans and gods with innumerable expedient means.

In a pond with water of eight special qualities and exquisite flowers those with the right conditions are all born together.

I entrust my present disciples to Maitreya,

and they will gain liberation in his assemblies under the dragon-flower [tree].

If, in the final age of the Dharma, any gentleman

gives a single morsel of food to someone,

He will on account of this root of goodness see Maitreya

and gain the path to the attainment of *bodhi*.

Śāriputra and other great *śrāvakas*

convert all beings by means of their wisdom and supernormal faculties.

If someone can accomplish the precepts of [the differentiated rules for] liberation,

he is truly a person who practices right views.

If he preaches the Dharma for others and spreads the Mahayana,

such a person is foremost among fields of merit.

There is also a type of sangha of ordinary people:  
while [their observing of] the set of precepts is incomplete, they  
arouse the right view,  
Extol the subtle Dharma of the One Vehicle,  
and whenever they violate [a precept] they repent, whereupon  
[karmic] hindrances disappear;  
They become a cause of buddhahood for beings—  
Such ordinary people are also the Sangha Jewel.  
Just as a saffron flower, though wilted,  
is still superior to all fine flowers,  
So too is a monk with right views,  
and the four kinds of wheel[-turning] kings cannot match him.  
These four kinds of sanghas of holy ones and ordinary people  
bring benefit and happiness to sentient beings without resting for a  
moment.  
They are known as good fields of merit for the world,  
and this is called the Sangha Jewel's great quality of beneficence.  
The meaning of the four debts of gratitude as I have explained them  
is called the cause that creates the world.  
All myriad things are born from this,  
and without the four debts of gratitude nothing is achieved.  
For example, just as material objects in the world  
are born on account of the four elements, the creators,  
So too is the world of sentient beings  
established by these four debts of gratitude.

Thereupon the eminent householder Jñānaprabha and his son and others,  
having heard the four kinds of great debts of gratitude explained by the  
Buddha and having experienced something unprecedented, rejoiced and,  
pressing their palms together, said to the Buddha:

Excellent, excellent! Great and Compassionate World-honored One, for  
the sake of beings with wrong views in a defiled and wicked age who do  
not believe in cause and result and are not filial toward their parents you  
have explained the true and wondrous Dharma, bringing benefit and hap-  
piness to the world. We but beseech you, World-honored One, to explain

the meaning of repaying debts of gratitude. We have already understood the most profound four debts of gratitude, but now we still do not know which good deeds to practice to repay these debts of gratitude.

The Buddha addressed the eminent householder:

Good sirs, I earlier explained it in detail for the five hundred eminent householders, and now I shall explain a small portion of it in brief for you. If any gentleman or lady diligently practices the ten *pāramitās* in order to gain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, and if something is apprehended, this is not yet called repaying a debt of gratitude. If someone is able to practice for a moment a single good [deed] without anything being apprehended by his mind, only then is it called repaying a debt of gratitude. Why is this? All tathāgatas came in contact with nonapprehension, and only then did they accomplish the path to buddhahood and convert beings. If any gentleman of pure faith, having heard this scripture, believes, upholds, expounds, and copies it, and with the inapprehensible essential emptiness of the three wheels (i.e., giver, recipient, and gift) explains privately the Dharma in a four-line [verse] for a single person, eliminating his thoughts characterized by wrong views and directing him toward *bodhi*, this is called repaying the four debts of gratitude. Why? This person will gain unsurpassed *bodhi* and will in turn instruct immeasurable beings and make them enter the path to buddhahood to ensure that the seeds of the Three Jewels never come to an end.

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Thereupon the eminent householder Jñānaprabha, having heard these verses, gained the *samādhi* of patient acceptance, eschewed the world, and gained nonretrogression. Then eight thousand people, including his son, together gained this *samādhi*, and they all generated the aspiration for unequalled *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. Forty-eight thousand people also realized *samādhi*, distanced themselves from impurity, rid themselves of defilement, and gained the purity of the Dharma eye.

[Here ends] Fascicle Three of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*



## Fascicle Four

### Chapter III Renunciation

Then the eminent householder Jñānaprabha, moved by the Buddha's awesome supernormal [power], rose from his seat, bowed his head at the Buddha's feet, pressed his palms together in reverence, and said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, I have now heard from the Buddha this most profound and wondrous Dharma about repaying debts of gratitude. My heart leaps for joy at having experienced something unprecedented, just like a hungry and thirsty person encountering nectarlike food. I now wish to repay the four debts of gratitude, throw myself upon the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, leave home and practice the path, always apply myself diligently, and strive to realize *bodhi*.

Once when the Buddha, with his great compassion, was residing in the city of Vaiśālī, he preached the most profound Dharma for Vimalakīrti, [saying,] “Vimalakīrti, a pure mind is the root of good deeds, an unwholesome mind the root of evil deeds. When the mind is pure, the world is pure; when the mind is defiled, the world is defiled. In my Buddhist Dharma the mind is foremost. Among all dharmas there is none that does not derive from the mind. You are now a householder possessing great blessings: you have no shortage of jewels and necklaces; your male and female dependents are at ease and happy; you have accomplished the right view and do not slander the Three Jewels; you respect your honorable parents with thoughts of filial care; you give to orphaned children and the lonely elderly with great compassion; you do not harm even mole-crickets or ants; forbearance is your robe and compassion your house; you venerate the virtuous, your mind without arrogance; you take pity on all as if they were children; you do not hanker for material wealth and always cultivate liberality; you make offerings to the Three Jewels, your mind never tiring; and unstintingly you forsake your body for the sake of the Dharma. A

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white-robed [layman] such as this, though he has not left home [to become a renunciant], already possesses innumerable and infinite meritorious qualities. In future lives your myriad practices will be perfected, and you will transcend the three realms and realize great *bodhi*. The mind you have cultivated is that of a true *śramaṇa* or brahman. This is a true monk, a true renunciant. Such a person is called a householder renunciant.”<sup>29</sup>

World-honored One, again, once in the hermitage in Kalanda[ka]’s bamboo grove you preached admonitory teachings for the group of six wicked-natured monks and addressed them, saying, “You monks, listen attentively, listen attentively! For entering the ocean of the Buddhist Dharma, faith is the root; for crossing the river of birth-and-death, the precepts are a ferryboat. If someone leaves home [to become a renunciant] but does not observe the prohibitory precepts, is greedily attached to worldly pleasures, slanders the jewellike Buddha’s precepts, or loses the right view, enters the forest of wrong views, and leads immeasurable people down into a large deep pit, such a monk is not called a renunciant, is not a *śramaṇa*, and is not a brahman. In [outward] form he resembles a *śramaṇa* but his mind is always that of a householder. Such a *śramaṇa* is without the practice of detachment. In the practice of detachment there are two kinds: first, physical detachment, and second, mental detachment. As for physical detachment, if someone leaves home, physically resides in a desolate place, and is not tainted by objects of desire, it is called physical detachment. If someone leaves home, cultivates a pure mind, and is not tainted by objects of desire, it is called mental detachment. Though the body may have left home,<sup>30</sup> if the mind covets objects of desire, such a person is not called detached. If any man of pure faith or woman of pure faith, physically residing in a hamlet, generates the aspiration for unsurpassed [*bodhi*] and brings benefit to all with great compassion, such practice is called true detachment.” At this the group of six wicked-natured monks, having heard this sound of the Dharma, gained the acceptance of compliance.<sup>31</sup>

But now, although we believe what the Buddha has said, each of us harbors doubt and we are undecided in our minds. Indeed, World-honored One! O you who are able to cut off all doubts in the world, you who have gained mastery over all dharmas, you who speak the truth, you who speak of the nondual, you who know the path, you who have opened up the

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path! I but beseech you, O Tathāgata, for us and all sentient beings in future ages, to abandon expedient means and teach the true Dharma and to forever rid us of doubts and make us enter the path to buddhahood.

There are now in this assembly two [kinds of] bodhisattvas, one renunciants and the other householders. These two [kinds of] bodhisattvas ably bring benefit and happiness to all sentient beings without cease. In my surmise, the renunciant bodhisattva cannot match a householder who cultivates bodhisattva practices. Why is this? Once there was a wheel-turning sage-king with a golden wheel who generated the aspiration for *amuttarā samyak-saṃbodhi*, eschewed the impermanence, suffering, and emptiness of the world, abandoned the position of wheel[-turning] king as if he were disposing of snivel and spittle, left home in a pure manner [to become a renunciant], and entered the path to buddhahood. At that time, the wives and handmaidens in the harem, eighty-four thousand [in number], saw the king leave home [to become a renunciant] and, each harboring a pining [for the king], beat their chests, wailed loudly, were greatly tormented, and felt the suffering, like that of hell, of being separated from one whom they loved. The precious woman, as well as the king's thousand sons, ministers, and attendants with whom a sage-king with a golden wheel is endowed when he first receives his position, were all saddened by the separation, abandoned their positions, and left home [to become renunciants]. The cries of wailing filled the four [continents] beneath the heavens, and these dependents each spoke these words: "The merit and knowledge of our king are immeasurable and infinite. Why was I forsaken? [Why] did he abandon me and become a renunciant? Alas and alack! The world is empty, and henceforth I will have nothing on which to depend and nothing on which to rely!"

If any gentleman or lady of pure faith takes refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, generates the *bodhi*-mind, forsakes their parents, and leaves home to enter the path, the parents' feelings of pity and affection will be profound, and their grief over their separation will move heaven and earth. Just as a fish in a dry wheel rut writhes on the ground, so too is the suffering of being separated from those whom one loves, just like the hearts of the dependents of that wheel[-turning] king.

If a renunciant bodhisattva brings benefit to beings, how can he distress his parents, wife, and children and cause immeasurable people to experience

great hardship? For these reasons, the renunciant bodhisattva has no kindness and no compassion and does not benefit beings. Therefore, he is not as good as a householder bodhisattva, who is endowed with great kindness and compassion, takes pity on beings, and benefits all.

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the eminent householder Jñānaprabha:

307b Excellent, excellent! Out of great kindness and compassion you have requested me to explain the relative merits of the two, renunciants and householders. In what you asked just now [you said that] the renunciant bodhisattva is not as good as a householder, but this is not so. Why? The renunciant bodhisattva is immeasurably and infinitely superior to the householder, and they cannot be compared. Why? With the power of right intelligence the renunciant bodhisattva minutely observes all the various faults of the householder. That is to say, all houses in the world accumulate [things] inside without [their owners] knowing satisfaction, just as the ocean takes in the waters of all rivers, large and small, without ever being satisfied.

Good sir, to the south of the Fragrant Mountains and to the north of the Snowy Mountains there is Lake Anava[tapta], where four great *nāga* kings each reside in one corner. The *nāga* king in the southeast has the head of a white elephant, the *nāga* king in the southwest has the head of a [water] buffalo, the *nāga* king in the northwest has the head of a lion, and the *nāga* king in the northeast has the head of a large horse. From each of the four corners there gushes forth a large river: first, the Gaṅgā (Ganges) River, the watercourse of which debouches from the white elephant; second, the Sindhu River, the watercourse of which debouches from the water buffalo; third, the Vākṣu River, the watercourse of which debouches from the lion; and fourth, the Sītā River, the watercourse of which debouches from the large horse. Each of these large rivers has five hundred medium [tributary] rivers, and the medium rivers each have immeasurable small [tributary] rivers. All the waters of these large, medium, and small [rivers] all enter the ocean, but this ocean is never satisfied.

All the residences and dwellings owned by beings in the world are also like this, gathering rare treasures that come from the four quarters and all enter the houses without [their owners] ever being satisfied. Acquisitive and accumulating [things], they commit various sins, but impermanence

suddenly arrives and they abandon their former homes. At this point the master of the house receives retribution according to his deeds, and for immeasurable eons there is in the end no refuge for him.

Good sir, that which corresponds to the house is the body of the five aggregates, and the master of that house is your original consciousness. Who, possessing wisdom, would take pleasure in a house of the conditioned? There is only the jeweled palace of the happiness of *bodhi* that is free from the distress and hardship of old age, sickness, and death. If any gentlemen with keen faculties, pure faith, and sincerity wish to deliver their parents, wife, children, and dependents and make them enter the house of unconditioned nectar, they should take refuge in the Three Jewels and leave home to study the path.

Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

The renunciant bodhisattva is superior to the householder,  
 and by computation or analogy they cannot be compared.  
 The householder is confined, as if in a prison,  
 and should he wish to seek liberation, it is extremely difficult.  
 The renunciant is out in the open, as if in empty space,  
 free, unconditioned, and rid of binding attachments.  
 He clearly sees that the householder has many faults,  
 performs sinful deeds ad infinitum,  
 And, to make a living, is covetous without ever being contented,  
 just like the ocean, which is difficult to fill.  
 The *nāga* kings of Lake Anavatapta  
 pour forth from its four corners four large rivers;  
 All the waters of the large, medium, and small rivers  
 flow day and night without stopping for a moment,  
 And yet the ocean has never been filled;  
 the coveted dwelling is also like this.  
 The householder perpetrates many evil deeds  
 and has yet to make a cleansing confession to expiate them.  
 In vain he knows how to think lovingly of his fragile body  
 and does not realize that his life will end like the morning dew.  
 The emissaries of Yama coerce him,

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and he is not accompanied [to the netherworld] by his wife, children,  
or house.

During the long night of shadowy darkness

he goes alone through death's gate and receives [his due] according  
to his deeds.

The buddhas appear and feel pity,

wishing to make beings loathe the world.

You, having now already obtained a [human] body difficult to get,  
should make diligent effort and must not be negligent.

The home of the householder is to be deeply loathed;

a precious abode, empty and quiet, is difficult to conceive.

Long rid of the suffering of illness and anxieties,

those possessing wisdom duly observe.

Gentlemen and ladies of pure faith in the future,

should they wish to deliver their parents and dependents

And make them enter the citadel of unconditioned nectar,

may they seek to leave home and cultivate the wondrous path,

And gradually practicing, accomplish right awakening

and turn the unsurpassed great Dharma wheel.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva views dwellings in the world as being just like a spark struck from a stone and arouses a deep disgust. Why? For example, just as a tiny fire can burn all grasses and trees, so too are dwellings in the world like this. The covetous mind, seeking and searching, dashes about in the four directions: if it gets something, it enjoys it insatiably and pursues it tirelessly at all times; if it does not get something, the mind arouses an ardent passion and pursues it day and night. Therefore, all dwellings in the world produce the fire of immeasurable mental afflictions. Having given rise to covetous thoughts, one is never contented. Worldly riches are just like grasses and trees, and thoughts of avarice are like a worldly home. For these reasons all buddhas refer to the three realms as a house on fire. Good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, able to make these observations and eschewing the world, is called a true renunciant.

[Then the Tathāgata] restated [this] in verse, saying:

The renunciant bodhisattva views the worldly home  
 as being just like a tiny fire in the realm of humans,  
 Able to gradually burn all grasses and trees:  
 the worldly home should be known to be also like this.  
 All riches beings  
 pursue in turn, forever unsatiated.  
 The suffering of seeking and not getting is always on their minds,  
 and the fire of old age, sickness, and death is never extinguished.  
 For these reasons, the world-honored ones  
 speak of the three realms as a house on fire.  
 If you wish to transcend the suffering of the three realms,  
 you should cultivate chaste conduct and become a *śramaṇa*.  
*Samādhi* and supernormal faculties will manifest,  
 and self-benefit and benefiting others will all be perfected.

Next, good sir, he who delights in renunciation should view the house as 308a  
 being like a large treasure trove inside a cave deep in the mountains. Suppose, for example, that an eminent householder only had one son. The family was extremely wealthy, with immeasurable riches and innumerable slaves, servants, elephants, and horses. Later the father suddenly fell gravely ill, and neither famous physicians nor good medicines were able to cure him. The eminent householder himself knew that it would not be long before he died, and so he commanded his son, informing him, “I entrust to you all the riches I possess. Endeavor to preserve them and do not let them be frittered away.” Having entrusted [his affairs to his son,] he then died. The eminent householder’s son did not obey his command. Acting self-indulgently and being negligent, he damaged the family business. Their wealth and property were dispersed and lost, the servants absconded, and there was no one on whom he could depend. At the time, his elderly mother became anxious and then caught a serious illness, whereupon she died. Her son, destitute and having no one on whom to rely, then sought shelter in mountain valleys, where he gathered firewood and picked fruit, which he sold to support himself. Happening to encounter snow, he entered a cave to rest for a while. Now, in this cave a king had once hidden the seven precious things. No one knew about it, and several

hundreds of thousands of years having passed, it was far removed from the haunts of men. Then the poor man, having on account of karmic causes and conditions happened to enter the cave and seeing immeasurable gold, rejoiced greatly in his heart at having experienced something unprecedented. He accordingly divided up [the gold, thinking to himself,] “I shall allocate some of the gold to building a house, I shall allocate some of the gold to a dower for taking a wife, and likewise slaves, likewise elephants and horses.” Everything was as he wished, in accordance with his heart’s desires. When he was forming these plans there was a group of bandits who, chasing a deer, arrived in front of the cave. Seeing this poor man dividing the gold, they then abandoned the deer, killed the man, and took the gold.

The foolish ordinary person is also like this. Deeply attached to worldly pleasures, he does not delight in leaving behind [birth-and-death]. The cave deep in the mountains is like his worldly home, the hidden treasure of gold and jewels is just like roots of goodness, and the group of bandits corresponds to the emissaries of Yama. He receives retribution according to his actions and falls into the three evil paths, where he will not hear the names of his parents or the Three Jewels and will forfeit his roots of goodness. For these reasons you should eschew [the world], generate the aspiration for unsurpassed great *bodhi*, leave home to cultivate the path, and strive to accomplish wondrous awakening.

Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

Bodhisattvas who delight in [the life of] the householder

view the dwelling as being like a treasure trove.

Suppose, for example, that an eminent householder had a single son.

The family was extremely wealthy and had abundant riches;

Slaves, servants, elephants, and horses—

for all their needs nothing was un plentiful.

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Later the eminent householder became sick,

and good physicians throughout the world all folded their arms  
[in resignation].

When he was about to die, he issued a command to his kinsmen,  
entrusting the family riches to his son,

Whom he instructed to maintain thoughts of filial care  
and be diligent in making sacrifices [to the gods], not discontinuing  
them.

At this time, his son disobeyed his father's command,  
indulging extensively in foolishness and being very negligent.

His elderly mother became worried and her body diseased,  
and on account of the wicked son she subsequently died.

Kinsmen departed, there was no one on whom he could depend,  
and gathering firewood to sell became his norm.

[Once] when he had gone into the mountains, he encountered a snowstorm  
and entered a cave to rest briefly.

In former times wondrous treasures had been hidden in the cave,  
and a very long time having passed, there was no one who knew  
about it.

The woodcutter having found a hoard of pure gold,  
his heart danced for joy, amazed.

He then divided up the hoard of pure gold,  
using it all in accordance with his mind's desires,

[Thinking that] he would use it either to build a house or for a dowry  
for a wife,

or for slaves, elephants, horses, and carriages.

He made plans for the future, unable to abandon any [of the gold].

On account of a deer, a group of bandits arrived before him;

When these hateful people came across him,

they then killed the poor man, took the gold, and left.

Foolish beings are also like this:

the cave is just like a worldly home,

The hidden treasure of pure gold is comparable to roots of goodness,  
and the demon emissaries of Yama are like the pillaging bandits.

For these reasons, O Buddha sons,

hasten to leave home and cultivate wholesome kinds [of deeds].

You should observe how life and limb resemble a bubble

and diligently cultivate the *pāramitās* of morality and forbearance.

You should betake yourselves to a seven-jeweled *bodhi* tree,

on an adamant seat realize thusness,

Eternal, imperishable, and difficult to conceive,  
turn the wheel of the right Dharma, and convert all kinds [of beings].

308c Next, good sir, all dwellings in the world are just like sweet-tasting food and drink mixed with poison. Suppose, for example, that an eminent householder only had one son, who was clever, had keen faculties, and had mastered the skillful methods for differentiating poison in the Gāruḍic secret visualization method, and his parents' affection and love were without compare.<sup>32</sup> On one occasion the eminent householder's son had gone to the shops on some business and had not yet returned home. At the time, the parents were happily merrymaking with kinsmen and had laid out a full array of tasty dishes. Then a certain old enemy stealthily put poison into the food and drink without anyone noticing. Thereupon the parents, not knowing that there was poison mixed in the food, then had young and old partake of the food mixed with poison. When the son later came back, the parents rejoiced and gave him some of the food and drink that had been kept. Thereupon the son, not yet wanting any food or drink, mentally practiced the Gāruḍic secret visualization method and realized that there was poison mixed in the food. Although the son knew that his parents had taken poison, he did not tell them that they had taken poison by mistake. Why was this? If they had realized that they had taken poison, they would have suffered even greater agony and the poison would have quickly taken effect and most certainly caused them to die. He accordingly devised an expedient and said to his parents, "I will not partake of this food and drink for the time being. I shall go briefly to the market and eat when I come back, for just before I purchased a priceless precious gem and left it in a case, forgetting to close it." At this his parents, hearing him mention a precious gem, rejoiced in their hearts and let the son go. The son then ran to the house of the king of physicians and asked for *agada*, a marvelous antidote for poison. Having obtained this medicine, he quickly ran back home. He boiled the three ingredients of milk, ghee, and sugar together and mixed them with the *agada*. Having prepared this medicine, he said to his parents, "I but beseech you, mother and father, to take this nectar. It is *agada* medicine from the Snowy Mountains. The reason is that earlier you took poison by mistake, and I briefly left really to get for you and the

others this marvelous medicine for immortality.” At this the parents and other people greatly rejoiced in their hearts at having experienced something unprecedented. They immediately took the marvelous medicine and threw up the poison, and they managed not to die and further extended their life spans.

The renunciant bodhisattva is also like this. His past parents are submerged in birth-and-death, and his present parents are unable to leave it behind; future births and deaths are difficult to terminate, and present mental afflictions are difficult to overcome. For these reasons, in order to deliver his parents and all beings, he arouses the great compassionate mind of co-essence, seeks great *bodhi*, leaves home, and enters the path. Good sir, this is called [the analogy of] the house being like tasty food mixed with poison.

Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

All dwellings in the world  
 are described as tasty food mixed with poison.  
 Suppose, for example, that an eminent householder had a single son,  
 who was intelligent, sharp-witted, and also multitalented,  
 And he was adept in the Gāruḍic secret methods,  
 in their skillful means for differentiating poison.  
 The son went on some business to the shops,  
 where he traded for a while, and he had not yet returned home.  
 His parents were merrymaking and had gathered together their relatives,  
 and exotic dishes of a hundred flavors were all provided.  
 There was a wicked person who had some poison,  
 and he stealthily came and put it into the food and drink.  
 Their son not being home at this time,  
 the parents kept a portion for their child.  
 Everyone partook by mistake of what had been mixed with poison,  
 and the son, mentally practicing a method of visualization, realized  
 that it had poison.  
 He immediately rushed to the doctor’s  
 and acquired some [*a*]gada medicine for immortality.

309a He cooked together three ingredients, and the medicine having been prepared,  
he then told the relatives and quickly had them take it.  
“This what you are taking is like nectar  
and will act as a remedy for the mixed-in poisons.” All were relieved.  
All gentlemen with faith,  
leaving home to cultivate the path is also like this.  
In order to help one’s parents and beings,  
who on account of the poisons of mental afflictions that they have ingested,  
Crazed, with inverted views, commit sins  
and are forever submerged in the ocean of distress of birth-and-death,  
One parts with those whom one loves, leaves one’s kinsmen, enters the path to buddhahood,  
and approaches the Tamer [of Men], the Great King of Physicians.  
With the uncontaminated *agada* that one cultivates  
one is reborn in one’s parents’ home in the three realms  
And makes them take the medicine of the Dharma and cut off the three hindrances;  
they will realize the fruit of unsurpassed *bodhi*,  
Forever indestructible until the end of time,  
be able to deliver beings, become a refuge,  
And ultimately dwell in great nirvana  
and the perfect mirrorlike wisdom of the Buddha’s *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva always views all dwellings in the world as being just like a strong wind that is unable to remain still for even a moment. Why? Good sir, the mind of the householder constantly gives rise to deluded thinking, clings to external objects, is unable to comprehend what is true, is ignorant and befuddled, has inverted views about objects of touch, and never remains still. Evil perceptions arise easily and good thoughts are born with difficulty. On account of the condition of deluded thinking he gives rise to mental afflictions, because of mental afflictions he commits good and evil deeds, and on the basis of good and evil deeds he experiences the fruits of the five destinies. Thus, oh thus, is

birth-and-death unceasing. There is only the uninverted mind of the right view that performs good deeds, makes the uncontaminated seeds that exist by the nature of things [in the storehouse consciousness] grow on account of the three roots of goodness as well as faith and so on, and is able to give rise to uncontaminated *samādhi* and supernormal faculties. Thus, oh thus, does he realize the [mental] continuum of the holy one. If you overcome deluded thinking and practice right observation, all mental afflictions will be forever extinguished without remainder.

Thereupon the eminent householder Jñānaprabha said to the Buddha: World-honored One, there are immeasurable methods for practicing right observation. What kind of observation does one practice to be able to overcome deluded thinking?

Then the World-honored One addressed the eminent householder, saying:

Good sir, you should practice right observation without characteristics. Observation without characteristics is able to overcome deluded thinking. You only observe the nature of reality and do not see the ten [distinguishing] characteristics.<sup>33</sup> All dharmas are in essence originally empty and quiescent, with nothing to see and nothing to know. This is called right observation. If there is a Buddha son who dwells at ease in right mindfulness, observes in this manner, and practices for a long time that which is without characteristics and unconditioned, the violent wind of deluded thinking will grow quiet and not move, the knowledge of a holy one will be intuited, and realization of the principle will be completed. Good sir, this is called a worthy and a holy one, this is called a bodhisattva, this is called the Tathāgata's *anuttarā samyakṣambodhi*. For this reason all bodhisattvas, in order to overcome deluded thinking so that it never arises [again], and in order to repay the four debts of gratitude and accomplish the four virtues, leave home to practice and study, stop thoughts of deluded thinking, and after immeasurable eons accomplish the path to buddhahood.

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Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

The renunciant bodhisattva views the householder  
as being just like a raging wind that does not stay still even briefly

And like being deludedly attached to a moon [reflected] in water:  
discrimination and speculation regard it as real,  
But the moon's reflection is originally nonexistent in the water,  
and the clear water acts as a condition for seeing the original moon.  
Dharmas, born of conditions, are all provisional;  
the ordinary foolish person, deludedly speculating, regards them as self.  
These are dependent on conditions, and dharmas are not the true;  
with deluded thinking and discrimination he speculates that they  
are existent.  
If he is able to eliminate the two attachments [to self and dharmas],  
he will realize unsurpassed great *bodhi*.  
The deluded thinking of ordinary feelings, like a black wind,  
blows through the forest of birth-and-death, arising from moment  
to moment.  
The demons of the four inverted views are always in pursuit,  
making him create the causes of the five kinds of [sins that bring]  
immediate [retribution].  
The three roots of unwholesomeness manifest as entanglements,  
and transmigration in birth-and-death long continues.  
If someone hears the scriptures and deeply believes and understands  
them,  
the right view will be able to remove his inverted thoughts,  
The seeds of *bodhi* will be born from moment to moment,  
and great wisdom, supernatural faculties, and *samādhi* will arise.  
If he is able to practice profound and wondrous observation,  
there is nothing from which the results of confusion, action, and  
suffering may arise.  
If he only observes reality and the thusness of true nature,  
subject and object both vanish and he is free from [wrong] views.  
The [inner] nature and [distinguishing] characteristics of men and  
women are originally empty;  
deluded attachment produces, according to conditions, the two  
aspects [of men and women].  
The Tathāgata has forever cut off the causes of deluded thinking;  
true nature originally has no male or female aspects.

The wondrous fruit of *bodhi*, once realized, is the same for all,  
 but the ordinary person, with his deluded speculation, produces  
 differing aspects.

The thirty-two major marks [of a buddha] are originally not marks;  
 understanding that marks are not marks is regarded as reality.

If someone leaves home, cultivates chaste conduct,  
 composes his mind, is tranquil, and resides in a desolate [place],  
 This is regarded as the true and pure mind of the bodhisattva,  
 and before long he will realize the fruit of *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva day and night constantly views dwellings in the world as being all places where mental afflictions arise. Why? Suppose that someone constructs a house and decorates it himself with precious articles. Having built this house, he forms this thought: “This house is now mine and does not belong to anyone else. My house alone is the most auspicious, and the houses of others are no match for it.” Attached to it in this way, he produces mental afflictions. Being due to mental afflictions, attachment to “me” and “mine” is regarded as the root [attachment], and eighty-four thousand gateways to sensory troubles arise, vying with each other, and fill the house. Why is this? The ordinary householder is deeply attached to the five desires and is fully provided with everything—a wife and children, kinsmen, slaves, and servants. For this reason the distress and hardship of birth, old age, sickness, and death and sufferings such as meeting with those whom one hates, parting with those whom one loves, impoverishment and all kinds of decay, and the suffering of not getting what one seeks, like a shadow accompanying a shape and like an echo responding to a sound, continue from life to life without ever ceasing. These sufferings are not without cause: major and minor mental afflictions are their root. All riches are obtained by pursuing them. If there were no prior cause one would not seek to acquire them, and even if one sought to acquire them nothing would be obtained. Good sir, for this reason all mental afflictions have acquisitiveness as their basis. If one extinguishes acquisitiveness, immeasurable mental afflictions will all be terminated. But now this body is a support for sufferings. Those who possess wisdom should engender eschewal. The likes of the past Tathāgata Kāśyapa spoke some verses for birds and beasts, saying:

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This body is the root of suffering, and other sufferings are branches and leaves.

If you are able to cut off the root of suffering, sufferings will all be eliminated.

With deeds in former lives you committed sins, not repenting in your minds,

And you have incurred the undesirable bodies of sundry kinds [of beings], liable to suffering.

If you give rise to thoughts of respect and singlemindedly seek repentance,

As a fire burns mountains and valleys, all your sins will be extinguished.

This body is characterized by suffering, impurity, no-self, and impermanence.

You should all engender deep thoughts of eschewal.

Then immeasurable birds and beasts, having heard these verses, in a single moment of thought repented with utmost sincerity, whereupon they abandoned the evil paths [of rebirth], were born in the fourth heaven [of the six heavens in the realm of desire (i.e., Tuṣṭita Heaven)], had an audience with the bodhisattva bound to one more life (i.e., Maitreya), heard the Dharma conducive to nonretrogression, and attained nirvana.

Good sirs, for this reason this present suffering body is just like a house, and all mental afflictions are the master of the house. Therefore, if gentlemen of pure faith generate the *bodhi*-mind, leave home, and enter the path, they will most certainly gain liberation from all sufferings and will all accomplish *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

The renunciant bodhisattva always views  
a dwelling as a place where mental afflictions are born.

Suppose that someone builds a house,  
decorates it with all kinds of rare treasures,  
And thinks to himself, “It is magnificent and incomparable,  
does not belong to anyone else, and is mine alone.

What has been constructed by the craftsmen is most wonderful,  
 and [other] houses in the world are no match for it.”  
 Such discrimination produces attachments,  
 which have as their root [thoughts of] “me” and “mine.”  
 Eighty-four thousand mental afflictions  
 fill the house and so cause troubles.  
 All men and women in the world  
 have a full complement of six relations and kinsmen.  
 For this reason, they produce sufferings,  
 namely, birth, old age, sickness, and death.  
 Distress and hardship constantly pursue them,  
 just as a shadow accompanies a shape without leaving it even briefly.  
 That by which sufferings are caused is born of greed,  
 and if one cuts off acquisitiveness one will bring an end to suffering.  
 This body can act as the root of suffering;  
 diligently cultivate eschewal and aim for *bodhi*.  
 Body and mind in the three realms are like a house,  
 and mental afflictions, the master of the house, reside in their midst.  
 You should generate the *bodhi*-mind,  
 forsake [the life of] the ordinary person, and leave the three realms.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva always views the householder as being just like a certain eminent householder in a large country. His family was rich and his wealth immeasurable. For many eons fathers and sons, like causes and conditions, had carried on from one to another without interruption. They had practiced good deeds and their renown was known far and wide. The riches possessed by this great eminent householder were all divided into four: one portion of the riches always earned interest so as to support the family business; one portion of the riches was allocated to providing for their daily needs; one portion of the riches was given to orphaned children and the lonely elderly so as to cultivate merit for the future; and one portion of the riches provided assistance to kinsmen and visiting guests and travelers. These four portions had never been discontinued and had been passed down from father to son as a hereditary family practice. Later there was a son who was foolish and wicked, was deeply

attached to the five desires, acted self-indulgently, and was negligent. He disobeyed his parents' instructions and did not abide by the four deeds.<sup>34</sup> He erected houses and seven-storied mansions that were twice the norm. They were adorned with jewels, beryl formed the ground, jeweled windows reflected each other, there were no [decorations such as] dragon's heads and fish forms that they did not have, exquisite music never ceased day or night, and his enjoyment of the pleasures of the five desires was like that in Trāyastriṃśa Heaven. Demons and spirits abhorred him, and humans and gods kept their distance. Then a fire suddenly broke out in a neighboring house. The raging flames, blazing fiercely, spread with the wind and burned down his storehouses and towering buildings. Then the eminent householder's son, seeing this raging fire, brought forth thoughts of great anger and quickly ordered his wife and children, slaves, and dependents to go inside the multistoried house and shut the gates of the pavilion. Because of his foolishness, they died at once all together.

310b The ordinary householder is also like this. Foolish people of the world are like the eminent householder's son, and buddhas and tathāgatas are just like the eminent householder. [Foolish worldlings,] not obeying the Buddha's teachings, commit evil deeds, fall into the three evil paths, and experience great hardship. For this reason, the renunciant bodhisattva should view the householder as being like the eminent householder's son, who, disobeying his parents, was burned by fire and died together with his wife and children. Good sirs, you should engender eschewal of the worldly pleasures of humans and gods and practice pure conduct, whereupon you will realize *bodhi*.

Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

The renunciant bodhisattva views the householder  
as being just like a foolish son begotten by an eminent householder.  
The family was rich, and its riches  
had been handed down for a very long time, with nothing wanting.  
The family business of previous generations had been passed down to  
descendants,  
with all the assets being divided into four.

They always practiced superior conduct faultlessly,  
 and their renown had spread to all lands.  
 Their gold, silver, and rare jewels were limitless in quantity,  
 and their incoming and outgoing interest extended to other countries.  
 They were untiring in their thoughts of kindness, compassion, joy,  
 and equanimity,  
 and their charity toward the orphaned and poor never ceased.  
 The eminent householder lastly begot a son,  
 who was foolish, unfilial, and without wisdom.  
 Already advanced in years and declining in physical strength,  
 [the eminent householder] entrusted the family assets, both at home  
 and abroad, to his son.  
 The son, contrary to his father's command, acted negligently,  
 and, not carrying on the four deeds, he brought the family to ruin.  
 He built a seven-storied mansion with rare jewels,  
 using dark blue glass to make the windows.  
 Singing and the music of wind and string instruments never stopped,  
 and he always took what was unwholesome as a model for his mind.  
 His enjoyment of the pleasures of the five desires was like that in a  
 heavenly palace,  
 and all *nāgas* and spirits kept their distance.  
 In a neighboring house there suddenly broke out a calamitous fire,  
 the raging flames of which, following the wind, were difficult to  
 contain.  
 The rare goods in the storehouses, his wife and children,  
 and his storied mansion and houses were all consumed by the fire.  
 Having accumulated evil [karma], he incurred a disaster and eventually  
 destroyed his own person,  
 and his wife, children, and dependents similarly died.  
 The buddhas of the three ages are like the eminent householder,  
 and all ordinary people are the foolish son.  
 Not practicing the right way, they give rise to wrong thoughts,  
 and when their life ends they fall into evil destinies.  
 For long eons they undergo fiery suffering alone,  
 and thus it goes on and on without any chance of it coming to an end.

Householder Buddha sons, know

not to hanker for worldly pleasures but to diligently cultivate realization.

Eschew the world, leave home, cultivate chaste conduct,  
dissociate yourselves from [external] objects in the tranquility of mountain groves,

And cultivate superior merits in order to repay the four debts of gratitude.

You will become Dharma kings in the three realms,

Deliver beings until the end of time,

become uninvited friends, always preach the Dharma,

Forever cleave the current of craving, cross over to the further shore,  
and dwell in the pure citadel of nirvana.

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Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva views all dwellings in the world as being just like a grand dream. Suppose, for example, that an eminent householder had a young daughter. She was fifteen years old, upright and wonderful. At the time her parents were living in a three-storied building, and together with their beloved daughter they enjoyed every happiness. At night the mother and daughter would stay together, sleeping peacefully together on a jeweled bed. Then the daughter had a dream in which her parents gave her in marriage to her husband's family. Many years passed, and she eventually gave birth to a son, who was upright and wonderful and possessed the marks of intelligence. Day by day she lovingly cared for him. When he was able to walk about by himself, he [once] found himself on top of a high building. Because of his precariousness he fell, and before he reached the ground she saw that there was a starving tiger that caught and ate him. Then the daughter was doubly frightened and cried out loud, finally awaking from her dream. Thereupon her parents questioned her, saying, "Why did you suddenly become frightened?" Then the daughter, ashamed, would not tell them. Her mother earnestly asked her the reason in secret, whereupon the daughter told her mother in private what she had seen in the above dream.

Good sir, the world is a dwelling of birth-and-death and the conditioned, and one remains for a long time in transmigration without obtaining true awakening. One's situation is such that one is constantly in a dream. The

dwelling of the three realms, [characterized by] birth, old age, sickness, and death, is like that girl finding herself in a dream. False discrimination too is also like this. The sudden arrival of Yama's demon emissaries is like that starving tiger catching the infant in midair and devouring it. The suffering of old age, sickness, and death of all beings too, impermanent from one moment to the next, is also like this. Who, possessing wisdom, would cherish this body? For this reason, view birth-and-death as a long night's dream, generate the *bodhi*-mind, and eschew the world so that you may obtain the wondrous fruit of the Tathāgata's eternity.

Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

Once a Buddha son comes to seek the unsurpassed path,  
 he should view his dwelling as being like a dream.  
 Suppose, for example, that a great eminent householder of wealth  
 had a young daughter who was wonderfully good-looking.  
 Following her parents, she ascended a high building,  
 where she enjoyed herself immensely, looking around and playing.  
 She went inside the building and had the following dream.  
 She clearly dreamed that she married someone  
 And later in her husband's home gave birth to a son,  
 whom the mother loved and pitied in her heart.  
 The son climbed up onto a high platform where, absorbed in his fun,  
 he fell down because of his precariousness into the mouth of a tiger,  
 Whereupon she involuntarily cried out and awoke from her dream,  
 and realized that dreams are originally not true.  
 The hindrances of the darkness of ignorance are like a long night,  
 and not yet having accomplished right awakening is like being in  
 a dream.  
 The world of birth-and-death is always unreal,  
 and so too is the discrimination of deluded thinking.  
 There are only the four wisdoms whose great perfect clarity  
 destroys the darkness, which is called true wondrous awakening.  
 Impermanence is from moment to moment like the starving tiger,  
 and the conditioned, empty and provisional, is difficult to keep in  
 check for long.

- 311a      Birds that have overnighted [together] each fly their separate ways in  
            the early dawn,  
            and separation at life's end is also like this.  
            Coming and going [in transmigration], people receive retribution  
            according to their actions  
            without being mutually cognizant of their [former] affection as  
            fathers or mothers.  
            Alas for the ordinary person's body, subject to birth and death,  
            which transmigrates in the three [evil] paths and long experiences  
            suffering!  
            If you realize that good and evil are experienced according to your  
            actions,  
            you should repent and cause them to be absolved.  
            The fruit of wondrous bliss for all humans and gods  
            has repentance and right view as its causes.  
            You should generate a firm *bodhi*-mind,  
            don the armor of effort, and strive in practice and study.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva views the dwelling as being like the sea at Mare's Mouth,<sup>35</sup> which emits raging flames and swallows up the four great rivers, with none of the waters of the hundred rivers not being consumed by fire. Suppose, for example, that in former times there was in the land of Lāḍha a bodhisattva named Supāraga.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, this bodhisattva had a compassionate mind and was always thinking of bringing benefit [to others]. There were some merchants who would go to sea to acquire treasure, and if they took this bodhisattva with them on board their ships, they would all arrive at the treasure continent, passing through dangers, and would reach the further shore without any obstacles. Later the bodhisattva gradually grew old and infirm with the years. When he passed one hundred years of age, he relied on a walking stick for getting up and sitting down and did not have the strength to move about.

A certain merchant leader paid a visit to the bodhisattva, and having made obeisance and offered some gifts, he said to the bodhisattva, "I wish to go to sea in search of rare treasures so as to be forever free from poverty and to gain great wealth. I now ask you to go with me."

Thereupon the bodhisattva addressed the merchant leader, saying, “I am now old and infirm, feeble in physical strength, and I am unable to go to sea.”

The merchant leader again said, “I but beseech you, great sir, not to forsake your compassion and to accept my request out of pity. On my ship you may simply sit at your ease. This is my request.”

Thereupon the bodhisattva accepted the merchant’s request and boarded a large ship. They went out on the ocean and, heading in a southeasterly direction, they set out for that treasure site. They happened to encounter a wind from the north and drifted into the southern seas. The raging wind was swift and did not abate day or night. After seven days had passed they saw the water of the ocean turn golden in color, just like molten gold.

Thereupon the merchants said to the bodhisattva, “Why has the water turned golden in color to have this appearance?”

The bodhisattva addressed them, saying, “Know that we have now entered the Ocean of Gold. Immeasurable and infinite reddish polished pure gold fills the ocean, and the golden treasure is reflected so that it has this appearance. You have gone past the right route and have ended up in this sea. Let each of you endeavor to devise ways to return northward.”

Again, several days passed, and they saw the water of the ocean turn white in color, just like white snow. The bodhisattva addressed them, saying, “Know that we have now entered the Ocean of Pearls. Pearls like white jade fill the sea, and the pearls are reflected in the color of the water so that it has this appearance. You should do your utmost to devise ways to return northward.”

311b

Again, several days passed, and the water of the ocean turned blue in color, like blue beryl. The bodhisattva addressed them, saying, “You and I have entered the Sea of Blue Crystal. Immeasurable and infinite jewels of blue crystal fill the ocean, and the color of the crystals is reflected in this way.”

Again, some days passed, and the water of the ocean turned red in color, just as if blood had appeared. The bodhisattva addressed them, saying, “You and I have entered the Sea of Red Crystal. Immeasurable and infinite jewels of red crystal fill the ocean, and the color of the jewels, which are red, is reflected in this way.”

Again, several days passed, and the water turned black in color, just like liquid ink. From afar they heard the sound of a raging fire crackling, just as if a great fire were burning a dry bamboo grove, blazing fiercely with billowing smoke and extremely terrifying. Such a sight they had never seen or heard of. They also saw a great fire rising up in the south, just like massed peaks and more than six hundred feet high. The flames leaped up in the air, either converging or scattering, and the light gave forth lightning. Such a sight they had never seen or heard of. [They said,] “It will be truly difficult for us to preserve life and limb.”

At this, the bodhisattva addressed them all, saying, “You should now be extremely afraid, for we have entered the sea at Mare’s Mouth. The four oceans and rivers, large and small, in the four [continents] beneath the heavens enter the sea at Mare’s Mouth,<sup>37</sup> where they are all consumed by fire. Why is this? Because of the overwhelming power of the karma of beings a natural celestial fire is able to burn up the seawater. If this celestial fire did not burn up the seawater, within a single day and night all land would turn into ocean and all beings would all drift and founder. But now, having encountered a great black wind, we have drifted in this manner to the sea at Mare’s Mouth. I and all of you now have not much longer to live.”

There were at the time more than one thousand people on board the ship, and they all simultaneously cried out aloud in grief, weeping and wailing. Some pulled out their hair while others threw themselves [overboard], and they spoke these words: “Having gone out on the ocean to seek rare treasures, we have now met with this danger. Alas and alack! By what means can we escape this predicament?”

Then the thousand-odd people took refuge with utmost sincerity, either calling out to their compassionate mother or calling out to their kind father or calling out to the god Brahmā or calling out to the heavenly king Maheśvara or calling out to the very powerful god Nārāyaṇa, and there were some who took refuge in the bodhisattva Supāraga, paying reverence to the great being and speaking these words: “We but beseech you, O bodhisattva, to save us.”

Then the bodhisattva spoke these verses so that these people would be free from fear:

The best great man in the world  
 Does not feel fear even when entering death's gate.  
 If you are distraught and bereft of wisdom,  
 You should singlemindedly devise some means.  
 If you gain the gateway to skillful means,  
 You will be free from the eight perils and cross over to the further  
 shore.  
 Therefore, set your minds at ease and do not be worried and afraid;  
 You should earnestly think of the Honored One of Great Kindness.

At this, having spoken these verses, the bodhisattva burned some fine incense, made obeisance and offerings to the buddhas in the ten directions, and uttered this vow:

Homage to the buddhas in the ten directions! Homage to the buddhas in the ten directions, to the hosts of great bodhisattvas and *mahāsattvas*, to all worthies and holy ones of the four approaches and four fruits, to those with divine vision, to those with divine hearing, to those who know the minds of others, and those who are free! For the sake of beings may I exercise thoughts of great compassion, forsake life and limb, and relieve [people's] tribulations! But I myself now have one root of goodness, [namely,] that I have observed the Tathāgata's precept of not speaking falsely and during immeasurable lives have not once violated it. If I have spoken falsely during one life, may this foul wind now become even fiercer. If the merit of the precepts is thus not false, I pray that this good be directed to all and that I and [all] beings may accomplish the path to buddhahood. If it is true and not false, I pray that this foul wind abate immediately and that a favorable wind arrive at will in accordance with our wishes. Moreover, all beings are identical to my person, and beings are the same as me and no different.

As soon as this great bodhisattva had made this great vow of the non-obstruction of co-essential great compassion, in the space of a moment the foul wind stopped, whereupon they gained a fair wind, broke free from their difficulties, reached the treasure site, and obtained rare treasures. Then the bodhisattva addressed the merchants, saying:

Such rare treasures are difficult to encounter and difficult to come upon. In previous lives you widely made gifts of charity and have been able to come across such wondrous rare treasures. When formerly practicing charity there was in your minds some miserliness, and for this reason you met with this foul wind. You merchants must recognize some limits regarding the rare treasures that you have obtained and not allow too many to be taken. By giving free rein to thoughts of greed you will later incur great troubles. Know that among all treasures the treasure of life is best. If one preserves one's life, that is a priceless treasure.

Then the merchants, receiving the bodhisattva's teachings, engendered thoughts of contentment and did not dare to take too much. At that time they gained escape from a calamity, acquired great rare treasures, left poverty behind, and reached the further shore.

312a Good sirs, the renunciant bodhisattva is also like this. His serving buddhas, good friends, and mentors is like those merchants encountering the bodhisattva, and his being forever free from birth-and-death and reaching the further shore is just like the merchant leader acquiring great wealth. All dwellings of the conditioned in the world are like the sea at Mare's Mouth that burns all rivers. The renunciant bodhisattva, too, carefully observes in this manner the faults of the householder. If you, good sirs, are not defiled by the worldly pleasures of the five desires and eschew the tribulations of birth-and-death in the three realms, you will be able to enter the great citadel of happiness, clear and cool.

Then the Tathāgata restated [this] in verse, saying:

The renunciant bodhisattva views a dwelling  
as being like the sea at Mare's [Mouth], which burns all rivers.  
Suppose, for example, that in former times in the land of Lāḍha  
there was a bodhisattva named Supāraga,  
Who was endowed with the skillful means of great merit and knowledge,  
and his unconditional compassion embraced [all] sentient beings.  
If they were able to get this bodhisattva to board their ships,  
merchants would obtain treasure and cross over to the further shore.  
But this great being was advanced in years and infirm,

and he did not enjoy benefiting others and preferred the quietude of meditation.

There was a merchant leader who entreated the bodhisattva,  
wishing to go out on the ocean to seek rare treasures.

“I but beseech you, great sir, to accept my request  
and make me rich, with nothing wanting.”

At this the bodhisattva, exercising great compassion,  
straightaway accepted the request and boarded the ship.

They then set the large sails and, encountering a fair wind,  
went directly southeast toward the treasure site.

Suddenly they encountered a violent wind that blew the ship,  
and they drifted down to the southern seas and lost their bearings.

Seven days passed, and the ocean’s water  
all turned golden in color.

Reddish polished gold filled the sea,  
and the treasure reflecting the light, it manifested the color of pure  
gold.

Again, several days passed, and the ocean’s water  
turned white in color, like white snow.

Rare treasures in the form of pearls filled the sea,  
which was why the sea water had become white in color.

Again, several days passed, and the ocean’s water  
turned dark blue, like beryl.

Blue crystal gems filled the ocean,  
which was why the water had turned dark blue in color.

Again, several days passed, and the ocean’s water  
all turned red in color.

Red crystal gems filled the sea,  
and so they had changed the water’s color, making it the same as them.

Again, several days passed, and the ocean’s water  
turned black in color, like liquid ink.

Where it had thus been burned by the celestial fire  
the seawater was all like the color black.

This sea is called Mare’s Mouth,  
and it swallows up the four seas and all rivers.

If any ships pass by  
and people arrive here, many of them die.  
The celestial fire blazes intensely and is like mountains massed,  
and the sound of its crackling is like rolls of thunder.  
312b Seeing it from afar, the people were frightened in their hearts,  
and they cried out, beat their breasts, and spoke to the great master.  
At this, the bodhisattva engendered compassion  
and, unbegrudging of life and limb, extended his protection.  
The violent wind abated, a fair wind rose,  
and they passed through the danger and reached the treasure site.  
Each obtained rarities, reached the further shore,  
was forever freed from poverty, and experienced happiness.  
The renunciant bodhisattva is also like this:  
his serving buddhas is like the merchant leader,  
And his forever leaving the house on fire and aiming for true awakening  
is just like the merchants' returning home.  
All dwellings in the world  
are like the sea at Mare's Great Mouth.  
The renunciant always eschews the householder,  
is not defiled by the world, is free from the five desires,  
Enjoys living in a desolate [place], his mind unmoving,  
and well attains the most profound, true, and wondrous principle.  
Or if he resides in a human settlement,  
he is like a bee that takes [honey from] flowers without their being  
damaged.  
In the four modes of deportment he constantly benefits others  
and does not covet worldly pleasures and renown.  
With his mouth he always utters gentle sounds,  
and vulgarity and foul language have ceased to be.  
He is cognizant of his debts of gratitude, repays his debts of gratitude,  
and practices good deeds,  
and he himself and others together gain entry into what is true and  
permanent.

Thereupon Jñānaprabha together with the eminent householders, ten thousand of them, said in unison to the Buddha:

Excellent, World-honored One! Remarkable, Sugata! So it is, so it is! What has been spoken by the World-honored One is foremost in subtlety. Your skillful means bring benefit to sentient beings. We now know everything as spoken by the Buddha. The worldly dwelling is just like a prison, and all evil dharmas arise from that dwelling. The renunciant person truly has immeasurable and infinite superior benefits. Therefore, we are deeply desirous of leaving home so as to constantly experience Dharma bliss in the present and in the future.

Thereupon the World-honored One addressed the eminent householders:

Excellent, excellent! You have generated the [*bodhi*-]mind and desire to leave home. If any gentleman or lady generates the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* and leaves home and practices the path for [even] one day and one night, they will not fall into an evil destiny for two million eons and they will always be born in a good place, experience supreme and wondrous pleasures, encounter good mentors, never turn back, be able to meet the buddhas, receive a prediction of *bodhi*, sit on an adamant seat, and accomplish the path to right awakening. But for the renunciant keeping the precepts is the most difficult, and he who is able to keep the precepts is a true renunciant.

Then the eminent householders said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, we will keep the precepts and cultivate chaste conduct. May we quickly leave the sea of suffering of birth-and-death! May we quickly enter the jeweled palace of permanence and bliss! May we extensively save all beings! May we swiftly realize knowledge of nonbirth!

Thereupon the World-honored One addressed the bodhisattva Maitreya and Mañjuśrī: “I hereby entrust the eminent householders to you. See to it that they leave home and observe the pure precepts.” 312c

Then nine thousand people left home, practiced the path, and observed the Buddha’s precepts in the presence of Maitreya, and seven thousand people together left home, practiced the path, and received the Buddha’s prohibitory precepts in the presence of Mañjuśrī. These people, having already left home, achieved acceptance of the Dharma and entered the Tathāgata’s state of mystery, never to turn back again. Immeasurable myriads of people generated

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the *bodhi*-mind and reached the stage of nonretrogression, and innumerable humans and gods distanced themselves from dust, rid themselves of defilement, and attained the purity of the Dharma eye.

[Here ends] Fascicle Four of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives  
and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*

## Fascicle Five

### Chapter IV Nondefilement

Then Jñānaprabha and the eminent householders, having already left home [to become renunciants], straightened their robes, placed their knees, elbows, and heads on the ground, made obeisance at the Tathāgata's feet, pressed their palms together in reverence, and said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, we have heard from the Buddha the various faults of the householder, which we had not previously heard, and we have generated the *bodhi*-mind, eschewed the secular world, shaved off our hair and beards, and become monks. We but beseech the Tathāgata, Worthy and Perfectly Awakened, to explain for the likes of us and all beings the outstanding merits of the renunciant so that those who hear them will engender pure thoughts, delight in the practice of detachment, and not cut off the Buddha's lineage. The World-honored One, with his great kindness and unconditional compassion, takes pity on beings as if they were [his son,] Rāhula. How should the renunciant bodhisattva live? How should he practice undefiled action? And how should he discipline his contaminated mind?

Thereupon the World-honored One praised Jñānaprabha and the monks:

Excellent, excellent! You are true Buddha sons. You have done well to ask the Tathāgata about this important matter for the sake of all beings in the future. So it is, so it is, just as you say! The Tathāgata and World-honored One takes pity on beings equally and without distinction, just as if they were his only son. Now listen attentively and consider carefully as I analyze and explain for you how a renunciant bodhisattva should live, how he should practice undefiled action, and how he should discipline his contaminated mind.

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“Very well, World-honored One. We are eager to listen.”

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the monk Jñānaprabha:

The renunciant bodhisattva dwells in this state of mind and always forms this view: “I have gained a human body fully endowed with the sense organs, but where did I die to come and be born here? In which realm will I be born among the three realms? Where will I be reborn in the four main continents? In which path will I receive birth among the six paths? For what reason have I been separated from my parents, wife, children, and kinsmen, left home to practice the path, and escaped a body susceptible to the eight difficulties? The one thousand buddhas of the past during the Eon of Adornment have all entered nirvana, the one thousand buddhas of the future during the Eon of Constellations have not yet come into the world, and among the one thousand buddhas of the present during the Good Eon how many buddhas and tathāgatas have appeared in the world and, the occasion for their conversion [of sentient beings] about to come to an end, have entered *parinirvāṇa*, and how many buddhas and world-honored ones have yet to come into the world? If people’s capacities and conditions have not yet matured and they have not yet heard the right Dharma, then when will the future Maitreya descend from Tuṣita Heaven to be born among humans and actually accomplish the path to buddhahood? What good deeds are there in my person? What merits will the disciplines of morality, meditation, and wisdom have? Having not encountered any buddhas of the past, will I be able to see a world-honored one in the future or not? I am now presently in the stage of ordinary people. What is the most serious of the mental afflictions of the three activities [of body, speech, and mind]? Ever since having been born, what sinful deeds have I committed, and in the presence of which buddhas have I formerly planted roots of goodness? How long do this life and limb of mine have? When this day has passed, my life will be proportionately shortened, just as a sheep being led to its place of slaughter gradually approaches death with nowhere to escape. When my body perishes and my life ends, where will I be born? How can I evade the suffering of the three evil paths? Although I cherish and nurture this body of mine, it grows old and infirm moment by moment without stopping for even a short time. Does anyone possessing wisdom cherish this body?”

Jñānaprabha, know that the renunciant bodhisattva always observes in this manner day and night. Do not hanker for the secular world and enjoy the pleasures of the five desires, but practice with diligence without desisting even briefly, as if you were removing a stone from the top of your head or saving yourself when your head is on fire. Always repenting in your mind of former sins of the past, thus dwell at ease in fourfold nondefilement, singlemindedly practice the twelve *dhūtas*, and discipline your mind like a *caṇḍāla* (outcaste). Such a Buddha son is called a renunciant.

Monk Jñānaprabha, in what sense is it said that truly cultivating the practices of a *śramaṇa* is like a *caṇḍāla*? Whenever he travels, the *caṇḍāla* holds a staff in his hand and does not presume to block the way, and if someone draws near he shakes his staff and makes his presence known. In a large crowd he practices humility in his mind and does not presume to be disdainful. When scolded, there is no hatred in his mind and he never retaliates. Insults and whippings he accepts silently. Why? Because he himself knows that a lowly caste does not rank with other classes. For this reason, he is without anger and without retaliation.

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Jñānaprabha, know that the renunciant bodhisattva is also like this. He shaves off his hair and beard and is in appearance the same as an infant. He carries a begging bowl and relies on others to keep himself alive. He wears the *kāśā[ya]* (monastic robe) on his person as if he had donned armor. He goes along with a staff as if he were holding a spear or lance. He grasps the sword of wisdom and defeats the bandits that are mental afflictions. He practices childlike conduct<sup>38</sup> and brings benefit to all. Therefore, none of the sharp arrows of the three poisons enter the body of the true *śramaṇa*.

The renunciant bodhisattva is called a true renunciant for cultivating the practice of forbearance by means of three methods of observation: he views beings as metamorphic bodies of the Buddha and views himself as a truly foolish man; when observing sentient beings he forms thoughts of their respectability, and when viewing himself he has thoughts of his servility; and when observing beings he forms thoughts of their being his parents, and he views his own person with thoughts of his being their male or female [child]. The renunciant bodhisattva always makes these

observations, and even if he is beaten or insulted he never retaliates and disciplines his mind with skillful means.

Monk Jñānaprabha, listen attentively! What is called fourfold nondefilement? Clothes, bedding, food and drink, and medicine.<sup>39</sup> Whatever you get of these four items, be it coarse or fine, you are satisfied and far removed from covetousness: this is nondefilement.

O monks, for what reason are these four practices called “nondefilement”? Jñānaprabha, know that the buddhas’ and tathāgatas’ thirty-seven factors of *bodhi* are all born from these, and [because of them] the [Three] Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are never cut off. Therefore, they are called fourfold nondefilement.

Then the World-honored One spoke these verses:

Monk Jñānaprabha, listen attentively

to what the renunciant bodhisattva should do.

With unconditional great compassion he embraces beings,  
who are all equal, just like an only child.

He generates the *bodhi*-mind, seeks right awakening,  
and should perform three kinds of methods for becoming a buddha:

His mind always dwells in fourfold nondefilement,  
he should cultivate the twelve *dhūta* practices,

And his submissive mind is just like that of a *caṇḍāla*.

In the four modes of deportment he forms these thoughts:

“Immeasurable bodhisattvas in the ten directions  
are from moment to moment proceeding along the path of holy ones;  
They have already cultivated realization, and so will I.

How is it that I transmigrate in the three realms

And am constantly in the immeasurable suffering of birth-and-death?

In which realm does this body of mine now dwell?

Transmigrating in the six paths, in which path am I?

Among viviparous, oviparous, moisture-born, and metamorphic  
[modes of birth], which birth will I have?

What am I to cultivate in the activities of body, speech, and mind?

Among the sins I have committed, which are serious?

Among thoughts [with one] of three characteristics,<sup>40</sup> which thoughts are [the most] numerous?”

When he has observed minutely in this way,  
Great kindness and great compassion constantly succeed one another,  
and great joy and great equanimity take precedence in his mind.  
For those with the right conditions he preaches the wondrous Dharma,  
and day and night he cultivates his mind without stopping even briefly.  
As if he were removing a stone from the top of his head or saving  
himself when his head is on fire,  
he thinks on the three methods of observation, never separated  
from them.

“I view sentient beings as buddha bodies,  
and only I alone am in the category of ordinary people.

All beings are respectable,  
and I am a slave and among the lowly.

Beings of the world are the same as parents,  
and I, like a male or female [child], practice filial piety.”

Even if he is beaten or insulted by others, he is neither angry nor hateful,  
and he diligently cultivates forbearance without hatred or jealousy.

His mind is not attached to offerings of the four items:  
this is called nondefilement.

The thirty-seven factors of *bodhi*  
and the Tathāgata’s body of recompense—

These special uncontaminated dharmas  
have as their basis fourfold nondefilement.

To always practice nonnegligent conduct:  
this is called a renunciant true Buddha son.

The seeds of the knowledge of *bodhi* increase from moment to moment,  
and the uncontaminated path of holy ones is completely accomplished.

He is quickly able to pass over immeasurable eons  
and sits upright in the Flower King Dharma realm.<sup>41</sup>

Having completely perfected the two adornments of merit and knowledge,  
he benefits all beings in infinite oceanlike eons.

On account of nondefilement having been completely accomplished,  
he realizes the fruit of the Tathāgata’s eternity.

Next, Monk Jñānaprabha, the renunciant bodhisattva should not be greedily attached to the robes he wears. Whether they are fine or coarse, whatever he gets is only for the sake of producing a field of merit for the donor. Do not object to coarseness. He must not for the sake of robes explain in detail the essentials of the Dharma or devise means consistent with greed. The ordinary person in the secular world, for the sake of clothes, is, contrary to the Dharma, covetous, commits unwholesome deeds, and falls into evil paths for immeasurable eons, not encountering buddhas and not hearing the right Dharma; after having experienced suffering he is reborn among humans, in poverty and hardship, and the suffering of not getting what he seeks presses upon him day and night, his clothes do not cover his person, and his food does not sustain his life. These sufferings are all due to the fact that in former lives he took many lives and committed various sins for the sake of clothes.

314a The renunciant bodhisattva is not like this. Whatever he gets, he does not object to its coarseness. It is merely out of a sense of shame that he puts on the monastic robe, and he gains [thereby] ten superior benefits. First, it can cover his body and ward off embarrassment so that, endowed with modesty, he practices good dharmas. Second, it keeps away cold, heat, mosquitoes, gnats, wicked beasts, and poisonous insects so that he cultivates the path safely. Third, it displays the appearance of a *śramaṇa* and renunciant so that whoever sees him rejoices and distances himself from wicked thoughts. Fourth, the *kāṣā[ya]* is the mark of a jeweled banner for humans and gods, and if they venerate it and pay their respects to it, they will gain birth in Brahmā's heaven. Fifth, when donning a *kāṣā[ya]* one thinks of it as a precious stupa, able to extinguish sins and beget merits. Sixth, the *kāṣā[ya]* was originally instituted, dyed in a neutral color, so that one would be free from thoughts of the five desires and not arouse craving. Seventh, the *kāṣā[ya]* is the pure robe of a buddha, for one will forever cut off mental afflictions and become a good field [of merit]. Eighth, if one wears the *kāṣā[ya]* on one's person, sinful deeds will be expiated and the path of the ten good deeds will further develop from moment to moment. Ninth, the *kāṣā[ya]* is like a good field, for it is well able to further develop the bodhisattva path. Tenth, the *kāṣā[ya]* is just like armor, for the poisonous arrows of mental afflictions are unable to harm it.

Jñānaprabha, know that for these reasons buddhas, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *śrāvakas* of the three ages have left home in a pure manner and worn a *kāṣā[ya]* on their person. The three [kinds of] holy ones<sup>42</sup> have similarly sat on the jeweled couch of liberation, grasped the sword of wisdom, defeated the demon of mental afflictions, and together entered the realms of nirvana, [all] of one taste.

Then the World-honored One spoke these verses:

Monk Jñānaprabha, you should listen carefully  
to the ten superior benefits of the robe, a great field of merit.  
Worldly clothes increase the taint of desire,  
but the Tathāgata's monastic robes are not like this.  
The monastic robe can prevent shame in the world,  
and, with modesty achieved, it produces a field of merit.  
It keeps away cold, heat, and poisonous insects,  
and, with thoughts of the path firm, one attains the ultimate goal.  
It displays [the appearance of] a renunciant, and free from greed,  
one eliminates the five [wrong] views and practices correctly.  
Looking up respectfully at a *kāṣā[ya]*, the mark<sup>43</sup> of a jeweled banner,  
one will, if one reveres it, be born with the merits of King Brahmā.  
If a Buddha son, when putting on the robe, thinks of it as a stupa,  
he will beget merit, extinguish sins, and experience [rebirth among]  
humans and gods.  
For a true *śramaṇa*, solemn-looking and respectful,  
his deeds are not tainted by worldly impurities.  
Buddhas extol it as a good field,  
and for bringing benefit and happiness to all beings this is the best.  
The divine power of the *kāṣā[ya]* is inconceivable,  
and it can make one cultivate *bodhi* practices.  
The sprouts of the path grow like seedlings in spring,  
and the wondrous fruit of *bodhi* resembles crops in autumn.  
True armor, solid and adamant,ine,  
cannot be harmed by the poisonous arrows of mental afflictions.  
I have now praised in brief its ten superior benefits;  
were I to spend eons explaining them in detail, there would be no end.

If any *nāga* wears a single thread on his person,  
he will be able to escape being eaten by the king of golden-winged  
birds (*garuḍas*).

If someone crosses the sea bearing this robe,  
he will not fear troubles caused by *nāgas*, fish, or demons.

The wrath of the heavens in the form of bolts of thunder and flashes  
of lightning  
holds no fear for someone wearing the *kāṣā[ya]*.

If [a layperson in] white robes is able to personally hold up [a *kāṣāya*  
in offering],

he cannot be approached by any wicked demons.

314b If someone is able to generate the [*bodhi*-]mind, seek renunciation,  
eschew the secular world, and cultivate the path to buddhahood,  
Māra's palaces in the ten directions will all shake,  
and this person will quickly realize the body of a Dharma king.

Next, Bodhisattva Jñānaprabha, the renunciant Buddha son always practices begging for food, and even if he is about to forsake life and limb, he does not renounce this thought. Why is this? All sentient beings all live in dependence on food, and therefore the benefits of begging for food are limitless. Know that if the renunciant bodhisattva always practices begging for food, there are ten superior benefits. What are the ten? First, by always practicing begging for food and thereby keeping himself alive, he is free to come and go because he is not subject to others. Second, when practicing begging for food, he first preaches the wondrous Dharma, making [the donor] engender good thoughts, and only then does he himself eat. Third, for those who do not give [alms] he generates thoughts of great compassion and preaches the right Dharma for them, making them engender thoughts of liberality and beget superior merit. Fourth, relying on the Buddha's teachings and practices, he furthers [his observance of] the set of precepts so that his merit is perfected and his knowledge limitless. Fifth, by always practicing begging for food, the seven and nine [kinds of] pride disappear naturally and he is revered by all as a good field of merit. Sixth, when begging for food, he will obtain the Tathāgata's mark of the invisible [protuberance on the] crown of the head and will receive vast offerings from

the world at large. Seventh, if you Buddha sons study this Dharma accordingly, you will maintain the Three Jewels and bring benefit to sentient beings. Eighth, when begging for food, you must not on account of seeking food engender expectant thoughts and praise all men and women. Ninth, when practicing begging for food, you must follow the order [of houses] and should not differentiate between rich and poor households. Tenth, if you always practice begging for food the buddhas rejoice, and it is the best condition for attaining omniscience.

Bodhisattva Jñānaprabha, I have explained in brief for you these ten kinds of benefits. Were I to analyze them in detail, they would be immeasurable and infinite. You monks and those who will seek the path to buddhahood in future ages should study in this manner.

Then the World-honored One spoke these verses:

Bodhisattva Jñānaprabha, listen attentively!

The renunciant great being should be free from greed.  
 He should generate thoughts of supramundane practice,  
 of which the *dhūta* of begging for food is the basis.  
 The ordinary person lives on contaminated food;  
 the holy ones all depend on uncontaminated food.  
 Holy and ordinary people, contaminated and uncontaminated—  
 there are none at all who do not live in dependence on food.  
 For you Buddha sons  
 I shall expound the supramundane practice with twin benefits [for  
 self and others].  
 Extolled by tathāgatas of the three ages,  
 the merits of begging for food have ten benefits.  
 That this practice is specially praised as supreme  
 is because one is free to come and go without any ties.  
 First one makes the donor generate the initial aspiration,  
 making him turn toward *bodhi*, and only then does one eat.  
 In order to remove miserliness [in the donor], one preaches the wondrous  
 Dharma  
 so that he is able to engender immeasurable thoughts of great liberality.

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Practicing begging for food in accordance with the Great Master's teaching,

one further develops immeasurable chaste practices.

Seven and nine kinds of pride are eliminated of their own accord, and one is revered by humans and gods.

The Tathāgata's mark of [the protuberance on] the crown of the head being invisible,

one turns the wondrous Dharma wheel and converts [beings in] the ten directions.

One transmits this Dharma until the end of time,

ensuring that the seeds of the Three Jewels are not cut off.

[Even] if one gives rise to deluded thoughts for the sake of food and drink,

one should not praise men and women.

Arousing a mind of great compassion and equality,

one does not engender differentiation between rich and poor.

Pure begging for food is praised by the Buddha,

and all-faceted knowledge is born from this.

Tathāgatas of the three ages come into the world

and teach beings the four foods:

Morsels [of edible food], sensations, thought, and consciousness are those four,

and they are all contaminated mundane foods.

It is only the food of joy in the Dharma and delight in meditation that is eaten by holy ones and worthies.

Eschewing mundane flavors,

you should seek uncontaminated supramundane food.

Next, Bodhisattva Jñānaprabha, the renunciant Buddha son should not be greedily attached to medicines. Should he fall ill, he gathers medicines such as medicine that has been discarded after others have decocted some medicine, *harī[takī]*, *vibhī[taka]*, and *āmalaka*<sup>44</sup> and should then take these. Furthermore, throughout his life he takes discarded medicine and is always contented with [such] medicines. Such a one is called a true *śramaṇa*. If a renunciant Buddha son always takes discarded medicine,

he obtains ten kinds of superior benefits. What are the ten? First, in order to seek out medicinal herbs he does not approach other people, forever puts a stop to covetousness, and dwells at ease in right thinking. Second, he easily gains accomplishment in the method for observing the impurity [of the body] and his aspirations for the supramundane gain firmness. Third, he is not constantly greedily attached to delicacies, quickly realizes right knowledge, and dines on the food of delight in meditation. Fourth, he always knows when he has had enough of all worldly wealth and soon gains liberation. Fifth, he does not approach any worldly ordinary people and associates with pure good friends who are beyond worldliness. Sixth, because he does not loathe discarded medicines, he also gains liberation in plain food and drink. Seventh, he never wishes for prized medicine, for there is nothing in the world that he does not value. Eighth, he is quickly able to vanquish the illness of mental afflictions and realize the Tathāgata's eternal Dharma body. Ninth, he forever cuts off all mental afflictions of the three realms and is able to treat the serious illnesses of body and mind of sentient beings. Tenth, he is able to follow the Buddha's teaching, cultivates bodhisattva practices, and, merit and knowledge perfected, attains great *bodhi*.

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Jñānaprabha, know that I have explained for you in brief the ten kinds of superior benefits of discarded medicine. Such a wondrous practice renunciant bodhisattvas of the past, future, and present all cultivate and study together. You should expound and disseminate it for beings to ensure that it does not come to an end. This constitutes an extensive provision of offerings to the Tathāgata, and offerings of all the riches and veneration in the world cannot match it. You will never again turn back from bodhisattva practices, and you will quickly realize unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Then the World-honored One restated [this] in verse, saying:

Monk Jñānaprabha, listen carefully!

The undefiled medicine taken by the renunciant  
 Comes first in the bodhisattva's wondrous practices:  
 if a being has an illness, it is like his own illness.  
 He relieves sufferings by means of great compassion  
 and bestows happiness with thoughts of kindness.

He gives the very best of wondrous medicines to others,  
and he himself takes medicine previously discarded by someone.  
The bodhisattva does not choose between prized and lowly medicines  
and simply treats illnesses, bringing peace and comfort.  
Obtaining leftover medicine discarded by others,  
he drinks or takes it, employing it to treat ailments.  
There are ten benefits in obtaining medicine discarded by others,  
which have been jointly extolled by tathāgatas of the three ages.  
Although he may seek medication, he does not approach others,  
forever puts a stop to acquisitiveness, and abides in right thinking.  
He easily masters the method for observing the impurity [of the body]  
and is able to produce from afar a cause of *bodhi*.  
He is not attached to delicacies, is free from greediness,  
and should seek the food of joy in the Dharma and delight in  
meditation.  
He knows when he has had enough of worldly riches  
and obtains the seven riches of holy ones, which are uncontaminated.  
Abandoning ordinary foolish people, he does not live with them,  
and serving holy ones and worthies, he makes them his good friends.  
On this account he does not loathe discarded medicines  
and cuts off covetousness for food and drink.  
He does not wish for rare dishes or wondrous medicines,  
prized by all in the world at large.  
Able to treat the illness of mental afflictions in body and mind,  
he realizes the body of thusness and Dharma-nature.  
He forever cuts off the habit energies of the three realms  
and realizes unsurpassed true liberation.  
He is able to follow the Buddha's teaching, aim for *bodhi*,  
and, merit and knowledge perfected, accomplish the fruit of the  
recompense body.  
You Buddha sons, all practicing and studying,  
will sit in the adamant true place of practice.  
Next, Jñānaprabha, the renunciant bodhisattva detaches himself from  
noisy clamor, resides in an *araṇya*, concentrates his mind, and thereby

seeks the path to buddhahood for immeasurable thousands of years. Tathāgatas of the three ages dissociate themselves from noisy clamor, live in quiet seclusion, further cultivate myriad practices, and realize the fruit of *bodhi*. *Pratyekabuddhas*, *śrāvakas*, and all worthies and holy ones also realize the holy fruit in this way.

The *aranya* has ten kinds of virtues that enable one to realize the fruit of *sambodhi*. What are the ten kinds of superior virtues called? First, in order to gain freedom, one resides in an *aranya* because one is not subject to others in the four modes of deportment. Second, dissociation from “me” and “mine” is called *aranya* because when one is beneath a tree one has no attachments. Third, one is not attached to bedding and so on, and consequently will recline on the couch of the four fearlessnesses. Fourth, at an *aranya* site the three poisons are negligible because it is free from objects of greed, anger, and ignorance. Fifth, one delights in the *aranya* and cultivates the practice of detachment because one does not seek the pleasures of the five desires of humans and gods. Sixth, able to renounce noisy clamor and reside in a quiet place, one practices the path to buddhahood, unbegrudging of life and limb. Seventh, one delights in tranquility and dissociates oneself from worldly speech in order to avoid ordinary foolish people and be without distractions. Eighth, it is easy to gain success in all mundane and supramundane deeds because there are no obstacles.<sup>45</sup> Ninth, an *aranya* site is a *samādhi* chamber because one can gain hundreds of thousands of great *samādhis*. Tenth, pure like the sky, it serves as one’s dwelling so that, one’s mind unimpeded, one gains great knowledge.

Jñānaprabha, know that an *aranya* site has immeasurable virtues such as these. For this reason, the renunciant Buddha son vows to forsake life and limb and not leave his mountain grove. If he leaves the *aranya* and enters a hamlet in order to listen to the Dharma or serve the sick, his teacher, or his parents, he should quickly return [afterward] to the [*a*] *aranya* site, and if there are circumstances wherefore he is unable to return he should form this thought: “Now this hamlet is just like a mountain grove, and any goods that I acquire are vacuous and ephemeral like a dream.” If he acquires anything, he should not become greedily attached to it. Such a Buddha son is a *mahāsattva*.

Then the World-honored One restated [this] in verse, saying:

Jñānaprabha and you others, listen attentively!

The dwelling place of a person without mental afflictions<sup>46</sup>  
Is far removed from noisy clamor and located in tranquility:  
this is where divine seers reside.

Bodhisattvas of the three ages, seeking *bodhi*,  
accomplish right awakening in an [*a*]*ranya*;  
*Pratyekabuddhas*, *śrāvakas*, and multitudes of holy ones  
also realize *bodhi* here.

Living in an *aranya*, one gains ten benefits  
that enable one to realize the fruits of the three vehicles.

Wandering freely like a lion,  
one has no ties in the four modes of deportment.

Being beneath a tree in a mountain grove is what a holy one delights in;  
absence of “me” and “mine” is called [*a*]*ranya*.

Having no attachments to clothes and bedding,  
one sits on the lion’s throne of the four fearlessnesses.

315c Being free from mental afflictions is called [*a*]*ranya*;  
there is nothing to be attached to in any cravings.

Constantly dwelling outside the realm of objects, one eschews sensory  
troubles

and does not delight in the worldly pleasures of the five desires.

He who is tranquil, having distanced himself from confused clamor,  
forsakes life and limb to seek the path to buddhahood.

Able to live in tranquility without human voices,  
the mind does not rise to distractions.

Mundane and supramundane good deeds  
are all successful, the mind being unimpeded.

Hence the [*a*]*ranya* is the basis,  
able to produce hundreds of thousands of *samādhis*.

With great solitude as his empty chamber,  
the practitioner is without hindrance in body or mind.

[The *aranya*] is endowed with these ten superior benefits,  
and therefore holy ones always reside there.

O Jñānaprabha and you other Buddha sons,  
 if you wish to quickly accomplish omniscience,  
 Then even in a dream do not abandon  
 the path to *bodhi* at an *arāṇya* site.  
 He who generates the [*bodhi*-]mind after I have died  
 and is able to live in an [*a*]rāṇya site  
 Will before long sit on a jeweled king of flowers  
 and realize the fruits of the Dharma body's permanence and bliss.

At that time, when the World-honored One preached this Dharma, immeasurable hundreds of thousands of those who had generated the [*bodhi*-]mind for the first time attained nonretrogression on the unsurpassed path. Then Jñānaprabha and the multitude of bodhisattvas attained *dhāraṇīs* and were endowed with great supernormal faculties, and hundreds of myriads of humans and gods generated the *bodhi*-mind and realized the three liberations.

Thereupon the Tathāgata addressed the great assembly:

If any gentleman or lady of pure faith is able to hear this most profound Dharma discourse on fourfold nondefilement and upholds, recites, expounds, and copies it, then wherever such people are born they will encounter good mentors, will cultivate bodhisattva practices, will never turn back, will not be disturbed by any karmic mental afflictions, and will in their present life obtain great merit and knowledge, maintain the Three Jewels, gain masterful powers, and continue the Buddha's lineage to ensure that it does not come to an end; once their life ends, they will most certainly be born in the palace in Tuṣita Heaven, where they will behold Maitreya and realize the stage of nonretrogression, and at [Maitreya's] first assembly under the dragonflower [tree] they will be able to hear the right Dharma, receive a prediction of *bodhi*, and quickly accomplish the path to buddhahood. If they wish to be [re]born by a vow in a buddha land in [one of] the ten directions, they will gain rebirth in accordance with their vow, see the Buddha and hear the Dharma, and ultimately not turn back from *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.



## Chapter V

### The *Aranya*

At that time there was in the assembly a bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* named Nityodyukta. Moved by the Buddha’s awesome supernormal [power], he rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, touched his right knee to the ground, pressed his palms together in reverence, and said to the Buddha:

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World-honored One, as the Buddha has taught, the site of an *aranya* is a place of practice for *bodhi*. If someone generates the [*bodhi*-]mind and seeks *bodhi*, he must not forsake the *aranya* site. There are in an [*a*] *aranya* many beings—tigers, leopards, jackals, wolves, poisonous insects, and wicked beasts through to birds of the wing and hunters. They do not know about the Tathāgata, have not heard the right Dharma, and do not respect the Sangha. Nor do these sentient beings have roots of goodness and they are far removed from liberation. Why does the Tathāgata make practitioners live in an *aranya* to quickly attain buddhahood? I but beseech you, World-honored One, to analyze and explain this for beings, resolve their doubts, and make them rejoice and generate the *bodhi*-mind so that they do not turn back.

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the bodhisattva Nityodyukta:

Excellent, excellent! Good sir, you have out of great compassion asked the Tathāgata about pure liberation. Your merit for bringing benefit to future practitioners is immeasurable. Listen attentively, listen attentively, and consider it carefully as I now analyze and explain for you the various merits of an *aranya* site.

“Very well, World-honored One. We are eager to listen.”

Then the Buddha addressed the bodhisattva Nityodyukta:

According to what you have said, in an *aranya* site one is able to attain [the state of] a holy one, and yet why is it that many beings in mountain groves do not attain buddhahood? But that is not so. Why? Those beings do not know about the Three Jewels, do not know contentment, do not

know about good and evil, and although there are all kinds of mundane rare treasures in mountain groves, they do not know the location of the hidden treasure troves.

The bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* is not like this. Good sir, the bodhisattva knows that the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Jewels are supramundane treasures and that hidden treasure troves of the seven precious things are mundane treasures. They are entirely capable of differentiating their various colors and know their whereabouts, but they do not covet them, nor do they wish to see them, much less take them in their hands.

The bodhisattva renunciant generates a firm aspiration and, unbegrudging of life and limb, forsakes his parents, six relations, and kinsmen, delights in living in mountain groves, and constantly forms this thought: “Even in a trigalactic megagalactic world-system, at the time of the end of an eon seven suns appear together, the calamity of fire [among the three calamities at the end of an eon] blazes fiercely and consumes the myriad things, and the sun, the moon, constellations, the king of mountains Sumeru, and the Seven Golden Mountains, Iron-ring Mountains, and so on, when the time comes, all scatter; [the denizens of] the heaven of [neither perception] nor nonperception at the pinnacle of the three realms are at the end of eighty thousand eons reborn in the lower regions [of the nine regions of the three realms]; and a wheel-turning sage-king, even if he is surrounded by a thousand sons, has the seven precious things and attendants, and the four continents all submit, when his recompensative life span comes to an end, he does not stay put for even a moment. I too am now like that. Even if the years of my life were to reach a full hundred years and I were to be endowed with the seven precious things and experience many pleasures, once Yama’s emissaries arrived, I would not escape impermanence.”

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He [then] forms this thought: “Now it would be best for me to cultivate bodhisattva practices on behalf of my parents and all beings. May I obtain an adamantine indestructible body, come back to the three realms, and save my parents!” Having made this vow, he lives in an *aranya* and he makes a vast vow for all beings.

A bodhisattva of superior capacity makes the following vow: “I vow that, so long as I do not attain buddhahood, I will always sit at length out

in the open without lying down.” A bodhisattva of middling capacity makes the following vow: “I vow that, so long as I do not attain buddhahood, I will always sit among the foliage of trees without lying down.” A bodhisattva of inferior capacity makes the following vow: “I vow that, so long as I do not attain buddhahood, I will always sit inside a stone chamber without lying down.”

Thus renunciant bodhisattvas of three capacities sit on three kinds of seats, and they each form this thought: “Bodhisattvas of the past sat on this seat and were able to realize the *dhāraṇī* methods, masterful in merit. Bodhisattvas of the past, present, and future all attain *dhāraṇīs* and realize self-mastery on this seat. I too now thus sit here and will most certainly accomplish *dhāraṇīs* and attain self-mastery. So long as I do not accomplish the attainment of self-mastery, I will never forsake the *araṇya* site.”

Alternatively, there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in the four immeasurable thoughts. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in the divine powers of the five [supernormal] faculties. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in the six *pāramitās*. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in skillful means. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they are unable to discipline all sentient beings. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in the four methods of conversion. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they are unable to practice the methods for the six recollections. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they are unable to accomplish much learning and wisdom. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they are unable to achieve the firm power of faith. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they are unable to eliminate the sixty-two [wrong] views. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as they are unable to practice the eightfold right path. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *araṇya* site so long as

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they are unable to forever cut off the habit energy of the two hindrances. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to perfect the subtle wisdom of dispensing medicine in accordance with the illness. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to perfect the great *bodhi*-mind. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to perfect *samādhis* [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to accomplish immeasurable supernormal faculties. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to accomplish an important matter such as seeing the eighteen emptinesses by means of the supernormal power of meditation without being astonished. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to perfect the knowledge of an Omniscient One. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in all-faceted knowledge. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to practice the methods of the thirty-seven factors of *bodhi*. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in the myriad practices of the ten stages. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to practice during one hundred eons the deeds [for acquiring] the [thirty-two] major marks and [eighty] minor signs [of a buddha]. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they do not gain perfection in the four wisdoms of a tathāgata. Or there may be bodhisattvas who will never forsake the *arāṇya* site so long as they are unable to perfect the realization of great nirvana. Or there may be bodhisattvas who, seated on an adamantine seat, will forever sit without rising so long as they are unable to realize *anuttarā samyak sambodhi*. These are called the *arāṇya* practices of a bodhisattva.

Good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva generates the *bodhi*-mind, enters a mountain grove, sits on three kinds of seats, trains his body and mind, cultivates myriad practices for three great eons, and realizes unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Then the World-honored One restated [this] in verse, saying:

When tathāgatas of yore were in the causal stage  
 they dwelt in an *araṇya*, a place free from impurities,  
 Overcame afflictive and cognitive hindrances,  
 transcended the three realms, and realized *bodhi*.  
 Bodhisattvas of the past, cultivating practices and vows,  
 made the *araṇya* their abode,  
 And having cultivated merit and knowledge for *asaṃkhyā* eons,  
 at the culmination of the ten stages they realized the three bodies.  
 Bodhisattvas of the future, seeking the fruit of buddhahood,  
 will enter deep into the mountains, cultivate wondrous practices,  
 Eliminate the two hindrances, the causes of birth-and-death,  
 and always realize true liberation through the three emptinesses.  
 Bodhisattvas of the present in the ten directions  
 cultivate myriad practices, live in desolate [places],  
 Seek *bodhi* without begrudging life and limb,  
 and from moment to moment realize the knowledge of nonbirth.  
 If you wish to quickly realize deep *samādhi*  
 and bring forth supernormal faculties by cultivating wondrous  
 meditation,  
 In an *araṇya* site, your mind without strife,  
 you will be able to transform the earth into the seven precious things.  
 If you wish to disport in lands in the ten directions,  
 go back and forth freely, exercising supernormal faculties,  
 Honor buddhas, and benefit all beings,  
 live in an *araṇya*, a place without fear.  
 If you wish to realize the knowledge that being and nonbeing are like  
 illusions  
 and fully understand that all things are originally empty,  
 Live in an *araṇya*, a *bodhi*-site,  
 and also cause others to enter true liberation.  
 If you wish to quickly obtain the knowledge of thusness,  
 realize the nature of thusness in all things,  
 And benefit all beings to the end of a great oceanlike eon,  
 you should live in an [*a*] *raṇya*, an empty and quiet place.

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If someone wishes to obtain knowledge difficult to conceive—  
how Sumeru, the king of mountains, is contained in a mustard seed  
With neither the king of mountains nor the mustard seed distorting  
their appearance—  
enter an [*a*]ranya, a chamber of supernormal faculties.  
If someone wishes to obtain unimpeded knowledge  
and expound the Dharma with a single wondrous sound  
So that beings, each according to their kind, gain understanding,  
he should live in an [*a*]ranya and cultivate wondrous insight.  
If you wish for nonbirth and nonextinction  
and to appear in response [to beings] in lands in the ten directions,  
Emit light rays, preach the Dharma, and benefit all beings,  
do not leave the [*a*]ranya, an empty and quiet chamber.  
If, with your toes pressing down on the earth,  
you [wish to] cause realms in the ten directions all to shake  
And [cause people], seeing [this] sign, to generate the [*bodhi*]-mind  
and eliminate wrong views,  
you should live in an [*a*]ranya and observe your own mind.  
If you wish at the time of the appearance of buddhas  
to be the first to present exquisite offerings,  
Completely perfecting the *dāna-pāramitā* (perfection of giving),  
live in an aranya and cultivate wondrous practices.  
If someone [wishes] at the time of a buddha's nirvana  
to be the last to make offerings and so accomplish the meaning of  
*dāna* (giving),  
Forever cutting off poverty and the eight difficulties,  
he [should] make a vow to live in an [*a*]ranya.  
If you wish to completely perfect merit and knowledge  
and, when future buddhas are about to enter nirvana,  
Receive a buddha's entrustment to widely propagate [the teachings],  
live in an aranya and cultivate the six recollections.  
If, after the nirvana of buddhas,  
[you wish to] gather together the Dharma they have left behind,  
deliver beings,

Assist the buddhas, and extol the true vehicle,  
 live in an *araṇya*, an empty and quiet abode.  
 The Bhagavān, the great teacher of humans and gods,  
 is more difficult to see and more difficult to encounter than an  
*uḍum[bara flower]*;  
 If you wish to behold him and perform worship,  
 you should live in an [*a*]*raṇya* and spread his vow of compassion.  
 The most honored of all treasures is the Dharma,  
 And becoming a buddha and converting and benefiting [others] are  
 all due to this;  
 If someone wishes to always be able to listen to the Dharma,  
 he [should] live in an *araṇya* and cultivate chaste conduct. 317b  
 Starting from your present body and until you reach a buddha's body,  
 always vow to generate the [*bodhi*-]mind and spread the right teaching,  
 And so long as you do not attain great *bodhi*  
 never for a moment forsake the *araṇya*.  
 If someone wishes to repay his debt of gratitude to his parents,  
 he [should] make a vow on behalf of his parents,  
 Enter an *araṇya*, a *bodhi*-site,  
 and always cultivate the wondrous path, day and night.  
 If someone wishes to increase his merit and knowledge in his present life  
 and not fall into the eight difficulties in the future,  
 Such a sentient being [should] generate good thoughts,  
 live in an *araṇya*, and cultivate the vow of compassion.  
 Bodhisattvas of the three ages seek true awakening  
 and attain the path and nirvana in an [*a*]*raṇya*;  
 Therefore, it is called the great place of practice,  
 and multitudes of holy ones of the three vehicles all [live in] the  
 same place.  
 The bodhisattva, eschewing suffering, enters a mountain grove  
 and seeks the path of holy ones in order to deliver all beings;  
 Before having himself become a buddha, he first delivers others,  
 taking pity on all [who are born by] the four modes of birth in the  
 six paths.

A bodhisattva of superior capacity resides out in the open,  
a bodhisattva of middling capacity resides among leaves,  
And a bodhisattva of inferior capacity resides in a stone chamber,  
and they never lie down so long as they have not accomplished  
the path to buddhahood.

“Bodhisattvas of the three ages, living in an [*a*]ranya, obtain the  
masterful powers of *dhāraṇīs*;

I now vow that, identifying with the bodhisattva’s mind, I will  
always remain here so long as I do not attain the *dhāraṇīs*.”

Great *bodhi* is attained in an [*a*]ranya,

and one enters great perfect quiescence on account of [this] abode;  
[There] the bodhisattva produces adamantine knowledge,  
cuts off delusions, realizes the truth, and accomplishes wondrous  
awakening.

Widely converting beings, he wanders through hamlets,  
and in order to seek quiescent extinction (i.e., nirvana) he delights  
in mountain groves;

The myriad practices, the cause, having been fulfilled, the result is also  
perfected,  
delivering all kinds of beings until the end of time.

At that time, when the World-honored One had explained these *aranya*  
practices of the renunciant bodhisattva, innumerable bodhisattvas realized  
the [first] stage of utmost joy, innumerable bodhisattvas equal [in number]  
to the sands of the Ganges were forever freed from the subtle mental afflictions  
associated with [external] characteristics and functions and realized the  
[eighth] stage of immovability, indescribably indescribably [numerous] bodhi-  
sattvas and *mahāsattvas* cut off all hindrances and entered the stage of won-  
drous awakening, infinite sentient beings generated the aspiration for *anuttarā*  
*samyaksambodhi*, and ninety-seven thousand beings distanced themselves  
from impurity, rid themselves of defilement, and gained the purity of the  
Dharma eye.

[Here ends] Fascicle Five of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives*  
*and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*

## Fascicle Six

### Chapter VI Detachment from the World

At that time there was in the assembly a bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* called Vivekacārin,<sup>47</sup> Moved by the Buddha’s awesome power, he rose from his seat and in the great assembly explained the *arāṇya* practices for the bodhisattvas. He addressed all the bodhisattvas, saying: 317c

A renunciant bodhisattva living in an *arāṇya* should form this thought: “Why have I distanced myself from the world to cultivate the pure and wondrous practices of the *arāṇya*?” Buddha sons, listen with singleminded attention as I now, moved by the Buddha’s power, analyze and explain for you the *arāṇya* practices.

The bodhisattvas said, “Excellent, Great One! We but beseech you to explain it for the likes of us and those who will seek *bodhi* in future ages. We are eager to listen.”

Thereupon the bodhisattva Vivekacārin addressed the great assembly:

There are many fears in all worlds. Because he loathes the various fears of the world, the renunciant bodhisattva forsakes his parents and dependents, lives in an *arāṇya*, and cultivates the practice of detachment. What are the various fears called? There may be a bodhisattva who forms this thought: “I have fear because all mental afflictions arise from [the notion of] ‘me.’” Or there may be a bodhisattva who says that [the notion of] “mine” is a fear because all mental afflictions arise from [the notion of] “mine.” Or there may be a bodhisattva who says that the seven [kinds of] pride are a fear because, giving rise to manifold pride, one does not respect good people. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the three poisons because, committing immeasurable sins, one will fall into evil paths. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the five desires because, addicted to worldly pleasures, one will fall into the eight difficulties.

318a Suppose, for example, that there is in the world a seven-step snake. When it wounds someone, its toxicity is so potent that if he goes more than seven steps his life will immediately come to an end. The toxicity of even one snake can harm someone; how much more so that of five snakes, which will together kill him, their toxicity intensifying and making it difficult for his life to be preserved. The five desires of the secular world are also like this. The pleasures of each single desire can give rise to eighty-four thousand subtle sensory troubles that delude the foolish person and cause him to fall into [the realms of] hell, hungry ghosts, and animals and other places of tribulation where he will experience great hardship; how much more so if he is greedily attached to all sense objects! The way in which innumerable buddhas like the sands of the Ganges [in number] appear in the world, preach the Dharma, and teach and convert [people] is fleeting, like light showing through a crack, and [the foolish person] can never see them, for he is always in evil paths as if he were in his own home and resides in inopportune [places] as if he were frolicking in a garden. In the past there was a buddha who, wishing to make beings renounce the five desires, spoke these verses:

Suppose, for example, that some flying moths, seeing the light of a fire,  
vie to enter it because of their love of fire,  
And not realizing the combustive power of a burning candlewick,  
they entrust their life to the fire and willingly accept self-  
immolation—

So too are ordinary worldlings like this:

they crave for attractive appearances and pursue them,  
And not realizing that desire for [outward] appearances defiles the  
person,  
they are burned by the fire [of desire] and bring about sufferings.

Suppose, for example, that a herd of deer is in a stand of trees  
feeding on lush grass to nourish themselves,

And when a hunter feigns the cry of a mother deer,  
they follow the sound, are struck by arrows, and are all brought  
to their deaths—

So too are ordinary worldlings like this:

they are greedily attached to all kinds of pleasant sounds,

And not realizing that sounds can defile a person,  
 they then experience the retribution of suffering in the three  
 [evil] paths.

Suppose, for example, that some honeybees fly some distance,  
 roving about spring forests to gather [nectar from] flowers,  
 And because they love the smell on the cheek of an elephant in must,  
 the elephant's ears for this reason crush them to death—

So too are ordinary worldlings like this:  
 they lust after all the smells that they enjoy,  
 And not realizing that smells can defile the mind,  
 they transmigrate in birth-and-death in a long night of suffering.

Suppose, for example, that *nāgas* and fish are living in water,  
 swimming about and submersing themselves or floating as they  
 please,  
 And because they crave for tasty bait, they eventually swallow hooks,  
 their love of taste making them forget life, and are all brought to  
 their deaths—

So too are ordinary worldlings like this:  
 their tongue organ addicted to taste, whereby they sustain their  
 bodies,  
 They kill others to keep themselves alive, and uneasy in mind,  
 they incur the most grievous suffering of the three [evil] paths.

Suppose, for example, that a white elephant is living in a mountain  
 wilderness,  
 free like a king of lions,  
 But when intoxicated and confused by thoughts of desire, in a stupor  
 it chases after a mother elephant and gives rise to lust—

So too are all ordinary people like this:  
 they go after fine touch just like a frenzied elephant,  
 Their bonds of affection take no respite,  
 and on dying, they enter hell, where the suffering is difficult to  
 measure.

Men and women in the world lust after one another,  
 all because they cling to sexual desires;

Humans and gods are bound because of this  
and fall into the darkness of the three [evil] paths.  
If one is able to forsake thoughts of avarice,  
live in an *aranya*, and cultivate chaste practices,  
One will most certainly be able to transcend the suffering of birth-  
and-death  
and quickly enter the unconditioned palace of permanence and  
bliss.

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Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of coveting great wealth. One constantly seeks to accumulate one's own riches without enjoying them, let alone giving them to impoverished beings. One engenders deep attachment to one's own riches while wishing to reduce the riches of others. For this reason, after one's life has ended one falls into a great hell, where one experiences immeasurable suffering. This retribution of suffering is called the first result of proper incurrence [of retribution]. Leaving hell, one receives the body of an animal, its body always toiling and wanting for water and herbage, and over a long period of time one repays for having reduced the wealth of others. These sufferings are called the second result of proper incurrence [of retribution]. Having received this punishment, one is born among hungry ghosts, where one is afflicted by the suffering of thirst and hunger and for immeasurable thousands of eons does not hear the words "broth" or "food and drink"; one's throat is like a needle and one's belly like a mountain, and even if one does obtain food and drink, it promptly turns into fire. This body of suffering is called the third result of proper incurrence [of retribution]. Having completed this punishment, one is born among human beings, where one is poverty-stricken, lowly, and employed by others; it is difficult to obtain what one seeks of riches, and one is never one's own master. This residual retribution is called the analogous result. Having clear insight into these causes and results, all bodhisattvas always engender fear and wish to seek liberation, and on account of this fear they distance themselves from dependents and live in an *aranya*.

Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of thoughts of craving because day and night one seeks after all riches yet unobtained and engenders craving for them. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the [wrong] views of "me" and "mine" because they provide a basis for

mental afflictions. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the [wrong] view of dharmas because it provides a basis for cognitive hindrances. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the sixty-two [wrong] views because one enters the forest of wrong views from which it is difficult to escape. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of doubt because it produces misgivings about the genuine Dharma. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the [wrong] view of annihilation because one adheres to [the view that there is] no afterlife and repudiates [the law of] cause and result, giving rise to a great wrong view and entering hell. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the [wrong] view of permanence because one adheres to [the view that] the body in the five destinies is permanently fixed and does not change in accordance with good and evil deeds. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of jealousy because one cannot tolerate the prosperity of others and harbors evil thoughts. Or there may be a bodhisattva who always has a fear of restlessness because the mind is unquiet and distracted. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of unbelieving thoughts because just as someone with no hands will, even if he reaches a treasure mountain, in the end not obtain anything, without the hands of belief even if one encounters the Three Jewels, one will not obtain anything. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of shamelessness because, having no modesty within, one always commits wrongs and the ignorance due to karmic hindrances makes it difficult to see a buddha. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of an absence of thoughts of embarrassment because, having no modesty without, one rejects indebtedness, turns one's back on virtue, transmigrates in birth-and-death, and falls into the three [evil] paths. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of anger, hatred, and so on because they can harm self and others, cause mutual ill will, and obstruct the path to buddhahood for many eons. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of forgetfulness because one is unable to retain the Dharma one has heard, forgets the meaning of phrases, and increases one's foolishness. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of all unwholesome black deeds. Why? All unwholesome [deeds] are causes of birth-and-death, and transmigrating in the three realms one is unable to escape; in this case immeasurable and infinite fears can all impede the supramundane supreme Dharma.

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Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the five kinds of obscuration because [these] five kinds of mental afflictions obscure the bodhisattva's *bodhi*-mind. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of thoughts of animosity because one has no thoughts of pity for beings, and even if one cultivates *bodhi* practices, there is much retrogression. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the taint of violating the precepts because if one besmirches the holy Dharma, the result [of buddhahood] is difficult to obtain. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of distress because deluded thoughts flare up and good deeds are forfeited. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of thoughts of remorse because one engenders regret for good cultivated [in the past]. Or there may be a bodhisattva who says that intoxication is a fear because one does not recognize good and evil and there is no [distinction between] honorable and base. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of untimely death because one does not dwell in right mindfulness [when dying] and returns to impermanence. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the act of lying because from birth to birth, life after life, no beings believe or accept anything one says. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the four inverted views because owing to the four inverted views one transmigrates in birth-and-death, giving rise to afflicted deeds and not seeking the Buddha. Or there may be a bodhisattva who says that a wicked friend is a fear because by following an unwholesome friend one commits evil deeds. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the demon of the five aggregates: this body of the five aggregates is born from mental afflictions; as soon as it has been born, it gives rise to immeasurable mental afflictions; because of mental afflictions one commits unwholesome deeds; on account of deluded actions one falls into a large deep pit—for these reasons one engenders fear. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the demon of mental afflictions because major and minor mental afflictions can cause the continuation of birth-and-death and one turns back from the *bodhi*-mind and falls into evil paths. Or there may be a bodhisattva who, loathing the demon of death, has fear because, having generated the *bodhi*-mind but not yet having attained nonretrogression, the body will perish, one's life will end, and one will bring about retrogression. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of heavenly

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demons because the attendants of the heavenly demon fill the realm of desire and obstruct people who cultivate the path so that they turn back from *bodhi*. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of thoughts of moral indeterminacy because one is unable to proceed in cultivating wholesome dharmas, spends a long time to no purpose, and turns back from good deeds. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the eight difficulties because someone who falls into the eight difficulties goes from darkness into darkness, and during the long night of birth-and-death it is difficult to encounter light. Or there may be a bodhisattva who, seeing hell, has fear because, once one falls into hell, for immeasurable eons one will experience great hardship from which it is difficult to be liberated. Or there may be a bodhisattva who, seeing the path of animals, has fear because in the realm of beasts one receives the retribution of foolishness and for immeasurable eons it is difficult to escape. Or there may be a bodhisattva who, seeing the path of hungry ghosts, has fear because for eons [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges one experiences the suffering of thirst and it is difficult to meet with the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Or there may be a bodhisattva who, thinking of birth in the realm of desire, has fear because mental afflictions arise confusedly and one commits evil deeds and falls into the three [evil] paths. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the realm of form because obscuring mental afflictions can impede meditation. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of the realm of nonform because, even though it is the most tranquil among the three realms, just like nirvana, and sentient beings deludedly grasp at it, regarding it as the ultimate goal, at the end of an eon [its denizens'] lives end and they fall into hell. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of repeated birth-and-death because one may be born into a household with wrong views from which it is difficult to escape. Or there may be a bodhisattva who, eschewing birth-and-death, has fear because, dying here and being [re]born there, one always experiences hardship, which impedes bodhisattva practices while seeking nirvana. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of worldly speech because the mind is always distracted, impeding good deeds. Or there may be a bodhisattva who has a fear of mind, thought, and consciousness because their objects and modes of activity are unknowable.

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If one is in a lay household, these fears continue day and night, disturbing good thoughts, and one is unable to realize the fearless dharma. Bodhisattvas of the past, living in an *arāṇya*, have all been able to realize the fearless dharma, namely, *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. Bodhisattvas of the future, living in an *arāṇya*, will all gain the fearless dharma of *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. Great bodhisattvas of the present in the ten directions, living in an *arāṇya*, cut off all hindrances and gain the fearlessness of *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. Know that, in practicing and studying as is appropriate, bodhisattvas of the three ages focus their thoughts on the body and mind, live in an *arāṇya*, subjugate deluded thoughts, are forever without fear, and ultimately attain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

Next, what deeds should a renunciant bodhisattva living in an *arāṇya* perform and what thoughts should he have? Day and night he should always engage in thinking like this: “All fears in the world arise from a self because all fears arise through attachment to a self, all fears have a self as their basis, all fears arise through love of a self, all fears arise through the notion of a self, all fears arise through the [wrong] view of a self, all fears have a self as their abode, all fears arise because of a self, all fears arise through differentiation, all fears arise through mental afflictions, and all mental afflictions arise through love of a self. If I live in an *arāṇya* site but am unable to forsake attachment to ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ I should not live in this *arāṇya*, and it would be better to go back to live in the house of a white-robed [layman]. Why? If one has the notion of a self, one should not stay at an *arāṇya* site; if one has the notion of a *pudgala* (person), one should not stay at an *arāṇya* site; if someone has attachment to ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ he should not stay at an *arāṇya* site; if one has a [wrong] view of dharmas, one should not stay at an *arāṇya* site; and if one has attachment to these four inverted views, one should not stay at an *arāṇya* site.” Listen attentively! If anyone, while practicing, forms the notion of nirvana, he should not stay at an *arāṇya* site; how much less so if he gives rise to the notion of mental afflictions!

Listen attentively! If someone is not attached to the [distinguishing] characteristics of any dharmas, he should dwell at ease in an *arāṇya* site. This is called sitting in the place of practice for nonattachment. All dharmas are inapprehensible. If one’s mind is pliant and devoid of disputation, one

should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one has no attachment to any worldly causes and conditions, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one has no dependence on the dharmas of form, sound, smell, taste, and tangibles, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one possesses the view of equality toward all dharmas, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one can control one's mind in the four modes of deportment, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one can relinquish all fears, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site.

Buddha sons, to state this in brief, he who would gain liberation from mental afflictions should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one would gain accomplishment of the cause of nirvana, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one is well able to practice fourfold nondefilement, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one has few desires and knows contentment, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. He who is endowed with much learning and possesses wisdom should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one can practice the three liberations, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. He who would forever cut off the bonds of binding mental afflictions should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. If one can carefully observe the twelve causes and conditions [of dependent coarising], one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. He who has performed what is to be done should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. He who would cast off heavy burdens should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. He who would realize the profound and wondrous principle of thusness should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. 319c

You should know that an *araṇya* has all kinds of medicinal herbs, and trees, large and small, grow in an *araṇya*, having never either had fear or [engaged in] differentiation. A bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* living in an *araṇya* is also like this. He views his own body and mind as being just like a dead tree, the same as and no different from walls and rubble, and does not differentiate any dharmas. "I view the body and mind as being just like an illusion or a dream, having no substance within. From moment to moment one grows old and infirm, and one's breath, having been exhaled, does not reenter. Because of good and bad causes, one receives retribution according to one's actions. This body is impermanent, quickly arising and quickly perishing. This body is empty and provisional and

never stays put for long. Thus, in the body there are neither ‘me’ nor ‘mine,’ no sentient being, no living being, no nourisher, no man, no *pudgala*, no doer, and no boy. Appearances such as these are originally empty and quiescent, just like empty space or like bubbles.”

You should always perform from moment to moment such observations, and you will gain liberation from all fears, just as those trees have no fear. Then bodhisattvas will attain the seat of great happiness and fearlessness. This is called the bodhisattva living in an *aranya* and seeking *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

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Next, a renunciant bodhisattva living in an *aranya* should day and night continuously observe in this manner: this *aranya* is a place of happiness where one is well able to practice fourfold nondefilement; this *aranya* is a place where one is well able to practice contentment; this *aranya* is a place where one gains liberation from mental afflictions; this *aranya* is a place where one is endowed with much learning and wisdom; this *aranya* is a place where one overcomes afflictive and cognitive hindrances; this *aranya* is a place where one can enter the gateway to threefold liberation; this *aranya* is a place where one is well able to realize the eight liberations; this *aranya* is a place where one is well able to observe the twelve conditions [of dependent coarising]; this *aranya* is a place where one is well able to eliminate karmic hindrances; this *aranya* is a place where one can gain the first fruit of the stream-enterer; this *aranya* is a place where one can gain the second fruit of the once-returner; this *aranya* is a place where one can gain the third fruit of the nonreturner; this *aranya* is a place where one gains the fourth fruit of the arhat; this *aranya* is a place where one realizes the fruit of the *pratyekabuddha*; this *aranya* is a place where, having performed what is to be done, one gains self-mastery; this *aranya* is a place where one casts off heavy burdens and gains lightness of spirit; this *aranya* is a place where one realizes the thusness of the two emptinesses; this *aranya* is a place where one can cultivate and realize the immeasurable thought of great kindness; this *aranya* is a place where one cultivates and realizes the immeasurable thought of great compassion; this *aranya* is a place where one is well able to practice the immeasurable station of joy; this *aranya* is a place where one is well able to practice the immeasurable station of equanimity; this *aranya* is a place where one can

generate the *bodhi*-mind; this *araṇya* is a place where a bodhisattva, while practicing, reaches [the stages of] the ten faiths; this *araṇya* is a place where one then, advancing in practice, reaches [the stages of] the ten abodes; this *araṇya* is a place where, progressively increasing in practice, one reaches [the stages of] the ten practices; this *araṇya* is a place where one progressively practices [the stages of] the ten transferences of merit; this *araṇya* is a place where one is well able to practice the four roots of goodness; this *araṇya* is a place where one practices the six perfections or *pāramitās*; this *araṇya* is a place where one practices from the first stage to the tenth stage [of the bodhisattva]; this *araṇya* is a place where one realizes purity of the six sense organs; this *araṇya* is a place where one is well able to realize the faculty of divine vision; this *araṇya* is a place where one gains faculties such as the faculty of divine hearing, knowledge of past lives, knowledge of birth-and-death, supernormal powers over the objective world, and [knowledge of] others' minds; this *araṇya* is a place where there are shame and modesty; this *araṇya* is a place where one is not negligent; this *araṇya* is a place where one cultivates the five faculties; this *araṇya* is a place where one realizes immeasurable and infinite *samādhis*; this *araṇya* is a place where one can gain gateways to *dhāraṇīs* [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges and realize self-mastery; this *araṇya* is where one comprehends acceptance of the nonbirth [of dharmas]; this *araṇya* is a place where one forever leaves the three realms and cuts off birth-and-death; this *araṇya* is where one gains non-retrogression; this *araṇya* is a place such as where one subjugates all demons and foes, eradicates karmic hindrances, sees the Buddha, and listens to the Dharma; this *araṇya* is where one gains the Buddha's unshared supreme Dharma discourse; this *araṇya* is a place where one practices purity of the aggregate of morality; this *araṇya* is a place where one brings forth uncontaminated *samādhi*; this *araṇya* is a place where one can produce *prajñā* and realize liberation; this *araṇya* is a place where one can produce knowledge and insight of liberation; this *araṇya* is where one gains the thirty-seven factors of *bodhi*; this *araṇya* is where one is well able to embrace the twelve *dhūtas*; this *araṇya* is an abode where with knowledge one can differentiate the principle of the [four noble] truths; this *araṇya* is a place where one is forever free from the arising of the

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contaminated five aggregates;<sup>48</sup> this *araṇya* is a place where one can gain liberation from the twelve sense fields; this *araṇya* is a place where one is forever free from the contaminated eighteen elements; this *araṇya* is a place where one minutely observes the eighteen emptinesses; this *araṇya* is a place where one accepts the emptiness of all dharmas; this *araṇya* is a place where one furthers the arising of the ten wholesome dharmas; this *araṇya* is a place where one further develops the firm *bodhi*-mind; this *araṇya* is a place extolled by buddhas of the three ages; this *araṇya* is a place such as is revered and extolled by all bodhisattvas; this *araṇya* is where the Buddha Vipaśyin accomplished the path beneath a *nyagrodha* tree; this *araṇya* is where the Tathāgata Śikhin accomplished the path beneath a *śirīṣa* tree; this *araṇya* is where the Tathāgata Viśva[bhū] accomplished the path beneath an *aśvattha* tree; this *araṇya* is where the Buddha Krakucchanda accomplished perfect awakening beneath an *aśoka* tree; this *araṇya* is where the Tathāgata Kanakamuni accomplished perfect awakening beneath an *uḍum[bara]* tree; this *araṇya* is where the Tathāgata Kāśyapa accomplished right awakening beneath a *vaṭa* tree; this *araṇya* is the place where the Tathāgata Śākya[muni] accomplished the path beneath a *pippala* tree. Know that an *araṇya* site has immeasurable and infinite virtues and superior benefits such as these.

Then the bodhisattva Vivekacārin spoke these verses for the great multitude:

A renunciant bodhisattva living in an [*a*]ranya—

what thoughts [should he have] and what deeds should he perform?

All worldly fears

all arise from a [wrong] view of the self and from [the notion of]  
“mine.”

If one can eliminate “me” and “mine,”

all fears become baseless.

If one has thoughts that grasp at the [wrong] view of the self,

one will never accomplish the path to *bodhi*.

Nirvana, eternal, is completely devoid of [distinguishing] characteristics,

let alone mental afflictions, which have the characteristics of that  
which is contrary to the Dharma.

Unattached to dharmas and beings,  
 and the mind devoid of disputation, one cultivates right thinking.  
 Controlling the mind in the four modes of deportment,  
 one should live in the permanent tranquility of an [*a*]ranya.  
 Cutting off mental afflictions, and the mind contented, 320c  
 one lives in an [*a*]ranya, an empty and quiet abode.  
 Entering the gateway of signlessness among the three liberations,  
 one lives in an [*a*]ranya, removed from the defilement of the sense  
 organs.  
 Able to observe the dharmas of the twelve causes and conditions [of  
 dependent coarising]  
 and the true and wondrous principles of the four truths and two  
 emptinesses,  
 And unaffected by eight worldly dharmas<sup>49</sup>—  
 thus a great being lives in an [*a*]ranya.  
 Able to view one's own body as being like a dead tree  
 and like a bubble and an illusion or a dream,  
 Unattached to the two extremes, and with the characteristic of equality—  
 thus a *sattva* lives in an [*a*]ranya.  
 Sinful deeds bind the impermanent body,  
 but they are originally empty and provisional and from the beginning  
 have no substance;  
 The twin attachments to self and dharmas and the marks of sins  
 are inapprehensible throughout the three realms.  
 There is no dichotomy between one's own body and another's body,  
 and all dharmas are like this—  
 Clearly observing Dharma-nature as being without coming and going,  
 thus a bodhisattva lives in an [*a*]ranya.  
 Whether someone smears his body with sandalwood and praises him,  
 or someone butchers him with a knife and abuses him,  
 Toward these two people he has no love or hatred—  
 thus a bodhisattva lives in an [*a*]ranya.  
 The renunciant delighted to live in an *aranya*  
 should make observations such as these day and night:

An *araṇya* site is a true place of practice  
where all tathāgatas accomplish right awakening;  
An *araṇya* site is where the wondrous emptiness of dharmas  
and the supramundane right Dharma are born;  
An *araṇya* site is revered by holy ones,  
for it can produce the paths of the holy ones of the three vehicles;  
An *araṇya* site is inhabited by holy ones,  
for all holy ones and worthies permanently live [here];  
An *araṇya* site is the Tathāgata's palace,  
for it is the support of buddhas in the ten directions;  
An *araṇya* site is the adamantine seat,  
for buddhas of the three ages attain the path [here];  
An *araṇya* site is the palace of nirvana,  
for tathāgatas of the three ages [enter] perfect quiescence [here];  
An *araṇya* site is a chamber of great kindness,  
for the bodhisattva lives here, cultivating kindness;  
An *araṇya* site is a field of compassion,  
for buddhas of the three ages cultivate compassion [here];  
An *araṇya* site is a chamber of the six [supernormal] faculties,  
for the bodhisattva disports here;  
An *araṇya* site is [a place of] great fearlessness,  
for one can cut off all fears [here];  
An *araṇya* site is [a place of] *samādhi*,  
for seekers of the path attain concentration [here];  
An *araṇya* site is [a place of] *dhāraṇīs*  
because of the divine power of spell-holders;  
An *araṇya* site is the Hall of Good Dharma (Sudharmā Devasabhā),  
for it further develops all good dharmas;  
An *araṇya* site is a chamber of *bodhi*,  
for the bodhisattva cultivates the path and gains acceptance [of the  
Dharma here].  
If you wish to transcend forever the suffering of the three realms,  
realizing *bodhi* and nirvana,  
321a And pervade the Dharma realm, benefiting all beings,  
you should reside in an [*a*]ranya, a chamber of *bodhi*.

The six perfections and four methods of conversion that you have practiced

you redirect to [beings in] the three [realms of] existence and to [those to whom you owe] the four debts of gratitude

So that self and others may both enter the citadel of nectar and together realize the true Dharma realm of oneness.

Then, the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Vivekacārin having preached this Dharma for the great multitudes, the Buddha said:

Excellent, excellent! Good sir, you have for the sake of the great multitude and those who will seek the path to buddhahood in future ages analyzed and explained the outstanding merits of an *araṇya* site, benefiting and setting at ease all beings in the present and future and directing them toward the path to the genuine awakening of *bodhi*. The immeasurable merit that you have accomplished a thousand buddhas speaking together would be unable to exhaust.

At that time in the assembly the bodhisattva Jñānaprabha and a great multitude of immeasurable *asaṃkhyā* bodhisattvas, hearing the supreme merits of an *araṇya*, immediately attained the gateway to the *dhāraṇī* of hearing and retaining [the Dharma], immeasurable beings generated the aspiration for unequaled *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* and gained nonretrogression, and thousands of millions of beings distanced themselves from impurity, rid themselves of defilement, and gained the purity of the Dharma eye.



## Chapter VII

### Revulsion of the Body

Then the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, touched his right knee to the ground, pressed his palms together in reverence, and said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, we have understood how the renunciant bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* eschews the world, lives in an *aranya*, disciplines his mind, and cultivates practices of nondefilement. But what sort of observation should this bodhisattva living in a desolate place perform with regard to his body?

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the bodhisattva Maitreya:

Excellent, excellent! Good sir, you have engendered thoughts of great compassion for beings and asked the Tathāgata about the Dharma discourse on the wondrous practice for entering the knowledge and insight of a holy one. You should listen carefully as I now explain it for you.

“Very well, World-honored One. We are eager to listen.”

Good sirs, when a renunciant bodhisattva lives in an *aranya*, seeking *anut-tarā samyaksambodhi*, he minutely observes in the four modes of deportment that the contaminated body has thirty-seven kinds of impurity and filth,<sup>50</sup> is unlovable, and is not solid. He should observe how this body is just like a clay vessel that on the outside is skilfully decorated and adorned with variegated colors, gold, silver, and the seven jewels but inside is stuffed full of excrement and various [other] impurities. Both handles bear the burden as one proceeds [with it] along the way, and everyone who sees it is delighted, not knowing that inside the vessel is full of impurities. There are always six black snakes in this vessel, and when one snake moves, the vessel disintegrates, the poison so foul-smelling that it is unbearable. 321b

Worldly people adorn their persons like that painted vessel full of impurities. The threesome of greed, anger, and foolishness are called the illnesses

of the mind, and the [humors] wind, phlegm, and bile are called the illnesses of the body. The six internal and external illnesses can harm body and mind, just like those six snakes living inside the vessel. When any one of the snakes moves, the vessel disintegrates, and when any one of the illnesses breaks out, the body is impermanent. Good sirs, the renunciant bodhisattva's observing of this body in a desolate [place] is called the mark of the first observation of impurity.

Day and night, the renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body. It is fetid and impure, just like a dead dog. Why? Because his body has the impurity of his parents as the condition for its birth.

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body. It is like an anthill in which ants live in peace. Then a white elephant comes up beside the anthill and rubs against it with its body, whereupon it collapses. Good sirs, this anthill is, so to speak, the body of the five aggregates, the white elephant is the emissary of Yamarā[ja], and the body returns to the afterlife in the same way that the elephant destroyed the anthill.

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body and forms this thought: "This present body of mine, from head to foot, has been formed through the commingling of skin, flesh, bones, and marrow and is just like the plantain, for it has no substance within."

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: "It has no strength. Skin and flesh cover it thinly, like a fence coated [with mud], the billions of hairs are like grass growing in the ground, and the subtle wind element passes in and out through the pores. Who, possessing wisdom, would delight in this body, for from moment to moment it decays?"

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: "It is like nurturing a poisonous snake and taking in its harm. Even though I am now helping this body to live by means of food, drink, and clothes, it does not know gratitude, and in the end it will cause me to fall into evil paths."

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: "It is, for example, like a foe who pretends to be a close friend, watches for an opportunity, and uses poison to cut off one's life force. My body is likewise originally not real, for in the end it will turn out to be impermanent and is not loved by holy ones."

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “It is like a bubble on the surface of water: even though it is the color of an exquisite beryl gem, it arises and disappears because of momentary causes and conditions and is not constant, for it is conditioned, ephemeral, and does not last for long.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Just as an [imaginary] *gandharva* city does not really exist even though it manifests an apparent form, so too is my present body also like this.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Just like a reflection, so too is my body: although it exists, it is not real.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “For example, just like powerful foreign enemies, so too is my present body also like this, with mental afflictions, like enemies, making raids on the roots of goodness.” 321c

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Just as a decaying house will most certainly collapse even though one may make repairs to it, so too is my body: even though one may apply thoughts of affection, it will most certainly be impermanent.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Just as people in cities close to an enemy country always harbor fear, so too is my present body also like this, fearing from moment to moment the foe of impermanence.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Just as immeasurable firewood burns to make a fire and yet the raging fire is never satiated, so too is my body: with the fire of craving it burns the firewood of the five desires, and the way in which thoughts [of craving] increase is also like this.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Just as a compassionate mother takes pity on a newborn child and constantly provides protection, so too is my body: if I do not protect the sickly body and mind, then there cannot be anything realized.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Its original nature is impure. Suppose, for example, that someone loathes the color of charcoal and, devising various expedients, washes it with water, but after an immeasurable period of time the black color is as of old, until there is nothing left of the charcoal, and in the end it is of no avail. So too is my body: it

is contaminated and impure, and even if one were to wash it with seawater until the end of time, there would again be likewise of no avail.”

The renunciant bodhisattva again observes his body: “Just as one may pour oil onto firewood so that a fire burns and, on encountering a strong wind, its vigor is unstoppable, so too is this body: onto the firewood called the five aggregates the oil of craving is poured, setting alight the fire of anger, and the force of the wind of foolishness never abates.”

The renunciant bodhisattva observes his body: “It is just like a malignant illness, for it is a place inhabited by four hundred and four illnesses. Again, it is like the large intestine, for it is inhabited by eighty-four thousand worms. It is a place of impermanence, for exhaled breath does not return and so it is impermanent. Again, it is like a nonsentient being, for consciousness easily escapes and [the body] is the same as a tile or a stone. Again, it is like the water in a river, for it does not stay still even briefly before or after [that] instant. Again, it is like pressing oil, for it experiences hardship in all things. It has no support, for it is just like an infant who has lost its parents. It has no savior, for it is just like a toad that has been swallowed by a snake. It is like a bottomless hole, for the mind and mental attributes are unknowable. It is never contented, for the mind never tires of the pleasures of the five desires. It is never free, for it is bound by the two [wrong] views of annihilation and permanence. It does not feel shame or modesty, for even though it receives nurturance it forsakes its master. Again, it is like a dead corpse, for by day and night it draws closer to annihilation. It merely experiences sufferings, for nowhere does it have true happiness. It acts as a support for suffering, for all sufferings abide in dependence on the body. It is like an empty hamlet, for in this body there is no overlord. It is ultimately empty and quiescent, for attachment through pervasive imagination deludedly composes pictures [of external objects]. It is like an echo in a valley, for this has all been manifested deludedly. Again, it is like a ship, for if there is no captain it will drift and sink. Again, it is like a large carriage transporting riches. Why? Because it rides the Mahayana to *bodhi*.”

322a

Good sirs, the renunciant bodhisattva observes [thus] day and night not because he does not care for this body, but because he wishes to make beings leave the sea of birth-and-death and reach the further shore.

Then the World-honored One, having preached this Dharma, addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya:

Good sir, cultivating practices such as these is called the essentials of the Dharma of what is observed by a renunciant Buddha son. If any Buddha son generates the *bodhi*-mind, lives in an *araṇya* in order to seek *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, practices these thirty-seven observations, also has others cultivate these essentials of the Dharma, and expounds, copies, upholds, and recites them, he will distance himself from all attachments to “me” and “mine,” will forever cut off greedy attachment to the worldly pleasures of the five desires, will quickly accomplish indestructible faith, and will seek great *bodhi* without begrudging life and limb, not to mention all rare treasures in the world. With his present body he will most certainly be able to ultimately fulfill the adamant knowledge seal of all tathāgatas, will never turn back on the unsurpassed path, will quickly gain perfection in the myriad practices of the six perfections, and will swiftly accomplish *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

At that time in the assembly eighty-four thousand bodhisattvas who had newly generated the [bodhi-]mind deeply loathed the world, obtained the power of great forbearance, and never again turned back on the unsurpassed path; hundreds of thousands of brahmins generated the bodhi-mind, ripened the faculty of faith, and gained nonretrogression; and thirty-six thousand gentlemen and ladies distanced themselves from impurity and defilement and gained the purity of the Dharma eye.

[Here ends] Fascicle Six of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*



## Fascicle Seven

### Chapter VIII The *Pāramitās*

Then the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya said to the Buddha:

322b

Why do you earnestly extol the cultivation of bodhisattva practices while living in an *araṇya* and yet do not extol the cultivation of bodhisattva practices while living in other places? Once the Tathāgata, residing on Vulture Peak, explained in detail the essentials of the Dharma for bodhisattvas and spoke these words, “The bodhisattva may at times stay in a prostitute’s house or associate with butchers and, by revealing and instructing, bring benefit and joy to them. With innumerable expedient means he brings benefit to beings and, preaching the wondrous Dharma for them, makes them enter the path to buddhahood.” The wondrous Dharma that the World-honored One has preached today for those who have newly generated the [*bodhi*-]mind is not like this. Nonetheless, the likes of us who have been able to hear the profound Dharma personally in the presence of the Buddha do not have any doubts. We but beseech the Tathāgata to expound for those who will seek the path to buddhahood in future ages the most profound and subtle truth and ensure that there is no retrogression in their bodhisattva practices.

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya:

Good sir, there are two [kinds of] bodhisattvas who generate the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* and seek the path to *bodhi*. One is the householder and the other is the renunciant. The householder bodhisattva, because he wishes to convert and guide [people in] brothels and butcheries, may associate with them all. The renunciant bodhisattva is not like this. Furthermore, there are nine grades for each of these [two kinds of] bodhisattvas. The three grades of those of superior capacity all live in an [*a*] *raṇya*, ceaselessly exert themselves, and benefit sentient beings. In the case of

bodhisattvas of both middling and inferior capacity, the places where they live as appropriate are not fixed. They may live in an [*a*]ranya or they may reside in a hamlet and bring benefit and comfort to beings according to their circumstances. You should observe these gateways to practice.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva practices the path to buddhahood and, having gained the Dharma of uncontaminated truth, benefits and delights all sentient beings according to their circumstances. If any Buddha son, not yet having gained true knowledge, lives in an [*a*]ranya, he should serve buddhas and bodhisattvas. If he encounters a true good mentor, he will most certainly never turn back in his bodhisattva practices. For this reason, Buddha sons should wholeheartedly strive to see a buddha and a bodhisattva. Good sir, this is called the supramundane essentials of the Dharma. You should all practice and study them singlemindedly.

322c

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, loathing the world, lives in an *aranya*, uses the power of his merit sparingly, gains perfection in the eighty-four thousand *pāramitā* practices, and quickly realizes *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. Why is this? If he renounces fame and profit and lives in a mountain grove, he will most certainly be unstinting with life, limb, and possessions and will be forever without any ties, and it will naturally be easy for him to perfect the three kinds of *pāramitās*.<sup>51</sup>

The bodhisattva Maitreya said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, the renunciant bodhisattva who lives in an *aranya* does not accumulate any riches. How can he achieve perfection of the *pāramitā* of *dāna* (giving)?

The Buddha addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya:

Good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva who lives in an *aranya* first gives to beings a small portion of the food that he has begged for on entering a hamlet and gives the leftovers [after he has eaten] to whoever wants them. This is designated the *pāramitā* of *dāna*. He offers his own life and limb to the Three Jewels and gives his head, eyes, marrow, and brain to whoever comes seeking them. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. For those who seek the Dharma he preaches the supramundane Dharma in order to make them generate the aspiration for unsurpassed *bodhi*. This is designated

the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of giving.

Next, good sir, because the renunciant bodhisattva lives in an *araṇya*, he cultivates the practices of the twelve *dhūtas*. When he walks about, he looks at the ground two cubits [in front of him] and does not harm any beings. This is designated the *pāramitā* of keeping the precepts. He firmly keeps the prohibitory precepts, unbegrudging of life and limb. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. In order to seek the supramundane, he preaches the Dharma and instructs people, making them generate the aspiration for unsurpassed *bodhi*. This is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of keeping the precepts.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, living in an *araṇya*, is able to extinguish anger and gain the *samādhi* of kind thoughts, and there is no disparaging of any beings. This is designated the *pāramitā* of forbearance. If one preaches a single phrase of the Dharma for a single person and makes him generate the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, this is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of forbearance.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva cultivates the practices of effort in order to make beings attain buddhahood. Not yet having attained buddhahood, his merit and knowledge are weak, he does not crave for happiness and does not commit any sins, and he feels a deep joy for the past bodhisattva's practicing of austerities and always reveres and looks up to him unceasingly. For this reason, this is designated the *pāramitā* of effort. He forsakes life and limb as if he were disposing of snivel and spittle, and at all times he is never idle. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. On meeting someone with the right conditions he preaches the supreme path and makes him aim for unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*. This is designated the true *pāramitā*. On account of thoughts of effort, he has not turned back from these ten [*pāramitā*] practices in the past, is steadfast in the present, and will quickly complete them in the future. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva and *mahāsattva*'s accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of effort.

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Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, living in an *araṇya*, practices *samādhi* in order to collect good dharmas and prevent them from being

dispersed and lost; he enters the [three] liberations and forever cuts off extreme views; he manifests supernormal faculties, converts beings, and makes them obtain right knowledge; he cuts off the root of mental afflictions and enters the true Dharma realm; and he realizes the path of reality and aims for *bodhi*. For this reason, it is designated the *pāramitā* of meditation. Wishing to make beings no different from himself and have them all gain fulfillment, he disciplines sentient beings without abandoning *samādhi*. Unbegrudging of life and limb, he cultivates this *samādhi*. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. He preaches the profound and wondrous Dharma for beings and makes them all aim for unsurpassed *bodhi*. This is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of meditation.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, living in a desolate [place], attends and honors buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the omniscient; he is always desirous of listening to the most profound and wondrous Dharma; his mind engenders a longing that is never satisfied; he is well able to analyze the verity of the two truths; he eliminates the two hindrances and masters the five sciences; and he explains the essentials of the Dharma and is able to resolve doubts. For this reason, it is designated the *pāramitā* of *prajñā*. He forsakes life and limb in order to seek a half-verse and, undeterred by suffering, aspires to *bodhi* and so succeeds in accomplishing the proximate *pāramitā*. In great assemblies he preaches the Dharma for people, and there is nothing that he keeps secret in its profound and wondrous meaning; he is able to make [people] give rise to the great *bodhi*-mind and gain nonretrogression in bodhisattva practices; and he constantly observes his own person, the [*a*]raṇya, the *bodhi*-mind, and the true Dharma body and how there are no distinctions between these four. In this way, because he observes the wondrous principle in this way, it is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of *prajñā*.

323b Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, residing in a desolate place, is always able to practice the *pāramitā* of superior knowledge of expedient means. With the knowledge of others' minds he understands the distinctions in the wishes, mental afflictions, and workings of the minds of sentient beings; he dispenses medicine according to the illness, curing them all;

he disports freely in the *samādhi* of supernormal faculties; he makes a vow of great compassion and brings beings to maturation; and there is nothing in the buddhas' Dharma that he has not mastered. For this reason, it is designated the *pāramitā* of skillfulness in expedient means. Because he wishes to bring benefit to beings, he is not at all sparing with life, limb, or possessions. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. For beings, friend and foe equally, he preaches the subtle Dharma and makes them enter the wisdom of a buddha. This is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of skillfulness in expedient means.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, entering a mountain grove, is always able to practice for beings the *pāramitā* of the vow. In his mind he constantly observes the true nature of things, the wondrous principle of the middle way of neither existence nor emptiness; he fully understands secular matters and constantly cultivates compassion in order to convert sentient beings. For this reason, it is designated the *pāramitā* of the vow. With the four vast vows he embraces beings and does not violate his vow of compassion, even going so far as to forsake his own body. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. He preaches the subtle Dharma, his eloquence unimpeded, and whoever hears it will never turn back. This is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of the vow.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, living in an *araṇya*, well understands with the power of right knowledge the rights and wrongs of the workings of the minds of sentient beings, and he is able to preach the appropriate Dharma for beings and make them enter the most profound and wondrous meanings of the Mahayana, whereupon they are able to dwell at ease in ultimate nirvana. For this reason, it is designated the *pāramitā* of strength. With the eye of right knowledge he illuminates the principle of the emptiness and quiescence of the five aggregates and is able to forsake life and limb in order to benefit beings. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. With the power of wondrous knowledge he converts multitudes of those with wrong views and makes them cut off evil karma [conducive to] transmigration in birth-and-death and aim for eternal and blissful ultimate nirvana. This is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good

sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of strength.

323c Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva, living in an *araṇya*, knows good and bad in all things, distances himself from wrong views, embraces the right Dharma, and neither loathes birth-and-death nor desires nirvana. This is designated the *pāramitā* of knowledge. He does not love his own person and takes pity on beings, and he always cultivates great liberality with regard to his life, limb, and possessions. This is designated the proximate *pāramitā*. With subtle knowledge he preaches the Dharma of the One Vehicle for beings and makes them enter *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*. For this reason, it is designated the true *pāramitā*. Good sir, this is called the renunciant bodhisattva's accomplishing of the *pāramitā* of knowledge.

Good sir, for what reason is it said that these *pāramitās* have eighty-four thousand distinctions? Know that two thousand one hundred *pāramitās* are differentiated and explained for those who are very avaricious, two thousand one hundred *pāramitās* are differentiated and explained for those who are very irascible, two thousand one hundred *pāramitās* are differentiated and explained for those who are very foolish, and two thousand one hundred *pāramitās* are differentiated and explained for those who are [avaricious, irascible, and foolish] in equal measure. Good sir, these [four sets of] two thousand one hundred *pāramitās* are the basis, and by increasing them tenfold they then become eighty-four thousand *pāramitās*. Such Dharmas are all practices for benefiting others.

Good sir, if there is a being who is by nature difficult to discipline and, having heard this Dharma, his mind is still undisciplined, then eighty-four thousand *samādhi* gateways are expounded for him. Such wondrous Dharmas are all practices for one's own benefit. If there is a being who is by nature difficult to discipline and, having heard this Dharma, his mind is still undisciplined, then eighty-four thousand *dhāraṇī* gateways are expounded for him. Such wondrous Dharmas are all practices for benefiting others.

Good sir, in order to discipline all sentient beings I have taught such Dharmas and innumerable skillful means, manifested various forms, and instructed beings. Good sir, for this reason all humans and gods universally praise the Tathāgata and call him a guide. Good sir, buddhas and world-honored ones of the future and the present all practice the

eighty-four thousand *pāramitā* gateways, the eighty-four thousand *samādhi* gateways, and the eighty-four thousand *dhāraṇī* gateways and forever cut off the eighty-four thousand subtle afflictive hindrances and the eighty-four thousand subtle cognitive hindrances. They all betake themselves to the king of *bodhi* trees in an [*a*]ranya, sit on an adamantine seat, enter an adamantine *samādhi*, and, having vanquished all foes in the form of the heavenly demon, realize *anuttarā samyakṣambodhi*.

Then the World-honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke [these] verses:

The great Dharma king, who transcends the three realms, 324a  
 appears in the world and converts all kinds of beings.  
 Bodhisattvas equal [in number] to the sands of the Ganges  
 enter the gateway to the Buddha's nectarlike wisdom.  
 The Honored Kind One (Maitreya), who after eons attained the path,  
 posed a question with thoughts of great compassion.  
 "Excellent, unsullied Dharma Prince!  
 With your wisdom you do well to ask about the true buddha vehicle.  
 With the fearless eloquence of a lion  
 I shall explain the path in the Mahayana that leads to awakening.  
 Listen singlemindedly and attentively  
 and transmit it in turn to those in the future to whom it should be  
 transmitted.  
 Even if world-systems in the ten directions should be made empty,  
 do not allow the supramundane path to be terminated.  
 Those who would seek the supramundane path to liberation  
 do not go beyond beings of three capacities in nine grades.  
 Those of the three grades of superior capacity reside in an [*a*]ranya,  
 and those of middling and inferior [capacities] convert the world  
 according to [people's] circumstances.  
 The sought-after fruits of the path are the same, with no differences,  
 and they similarly realize the oceanlike buddha-nature of thusness.  
 After having attained [the state of] a true great man, uncontaminated,  
 they appear in response as appropriate and save all beings.

They reveal the gateway to the nonduality of existence and emptiness,  
and they benefit themselves and benefit others without interruption.  
The Buddha sons who have not yet gained uncontaminatedness  
should cultivate the three kinds of learning with proper diligence,  
Direct their roots of goodness to beings,  
and singlemindedly think devotedly of the Buddha and bodhisattvas.  
'I pray that I may always see the Buddha and bodhisattvas,  
their bodies infinitely adorned with merits.  
If I may constantly hear the sound of the rain of the Dharma,  
may everyone share in this boon and their minds not turn back!  
Even if my person is always in hell,  
may it not be the case that I do not serve the Honored One of Great  
Kindness!  
Even if my person is always in transmigration,  
may it not be the case that I do not personally hear the subtle Dharma!'  
For this reason, O Buddha sons,  
focus your minds and always think of the Teacher of Gods and  
Humans.  
If any Buddha son cultivates the path of holy ones,  
brings forth the aspiration for unsurpassed *bodhi*,  
Loathes the world, and lives in an [*a*]ranya,  
this too is called cultivating three kinds of perfection.  
Every day, before you yourself eat, give alms  
and also give the Dharma Jewel to beings.  
Purity of the threesome [of giver, recipient, and gift] is *dāna*;  
by cultivating the cause by this [means] virtues are perfected.  
Know that realizing the *pāramitās*  
is due only to purity of the mind and is not due to possessions.  
If you give rare goods with tainted thoughts,  
it is not the same as giving a small amount with pure thoughts.  
Gifts of possessions are [nonetheless] called the perfection of *dāna*;  
this is [the first kind of] *pāramitā*, not the second [proximate  
*pāramitā*] or the third [true *pāramitā*].  
To give your life and limb, wife and children—  
this is called the proximate perfection.

If there is a gentleman seeking the Dharma  
 and you preach all the Mahayana scriptures for him  
 And make him generate the aspiration for unsurpassed *bodhi*,  
 this is called the true *pāramitā*.

To have compassion and pure faith, possess shame,  
 embrace beings, be free from greed, 324b  
 And hope to accomplish the Tathāgata's unsurpassed knowledge:  
 the two gifts of wealth and the Dharma are called the first perfection.

To firmly keep the bodhisattva's threefold precepts,  
 open up *bodhi*, be free from birth-and-death,  
 Defend the Buddha's Dharma, live in the world,  
 and admonish transgressions is the true keeping of the precepts.

Suppressing thoughts of anger and observing with compassion,  
 you should think of past causes when dealing with harm from foes  
 And, unbegrudging of life and limb, save beings:  
 this is called the *pāramitā* of forbearance.

One practices difficult practices without abandoning them even briefly,  
 always advancing further during three [*a*]*saṃkhyā* eons,  
 Is not associated with defilement, and constantly trains the mind  
 in order to deliver sentient beings and seek liberation.

One gains mastery in entering and leaving *samādhi*,  
 roams in the ten directions with the supernormal faculty of magical  
 transformations,

And in order to cut off the causes of the mental afflictions of beings  
 seeks liberation through the gateway of *samādhi*.

If you wish to accomplish true wisdom,  
 [then] serve bodhisattvas and tathāgatas,

Be desirous of listening to the supramundane gateway to the wondrous  
 principle,  
 master the three sciences, and cut off the two hindrances.

Well cognizant of distinctions in the minds of beings,  
 dispense medicine according to their illness, making them take it  
 and act [on the instructions];

Your skillfulness in compassion accords with what is appropriate for  
 their capacity,

and with expedient means you benefit the living and save all beings.  
If you observe the true meaning of all dharmas,  
unattached to the middle and the extremes and free from being and  
nonbeing,  
Your pure knowledge will immediately understand thusness,  
and the two benefits [to self and others] will pervade equally the  
Dharma realm.  
The power of knowledge well understands the nature of beings  
and explains for them various appropriate Dharmas;  
The power of knowledge well enters the minds of beings  
and makes them cut off the root of transmigration in birth-and-death.  
The power of knowledge well differentiates between right and wrong  
things,  
selecting or rejecting them as appropriate and understanding each;  
Birth-and-death and nirvana being originally the same,  
one brings sentient beings to accomplishment and frees them from  
discrimination.  
These ten kinds of outstanding practices  
are incorporated in eighty-four thousand [practices],  
And [these] superior Dharma discourses, corresponding to the categories  
[of beings],  
are called the bodhisattva's *pāramitās*.  
Eighty-four thousand *samādhis*  
are able to extinguish the distracted thoughts of beings;  
Eighty-four thousand *dhāraṇī* gateways  
are able to eliminate delusional hindrances and shackle demonic hosts.  
The power of expedient means of the Great Sage and Dharma King  
converts beings with three kinds of Dharma essentials;  
The net of the teachings is lowered into the sea of birth-and-death  
and sets humans and gods in a place of happiness.”

Then, when the World-honored One had preached this Dharma, eighty-four thousand gods of Trāyastriṃśa [Heaven] cut off the hindrances of the three realms and realized the [first] stage of joy, innumerable hundreds of thousands of gods of the six [heavens in the realm of] desire comprehended

acceptance of nonbirth [of dharmas] and attained *dhāraṇīs*, and the kings of sixteen great countries attained the *dhāraṇī* of hearing and retaining [the Dharma]. Immeasurable [numbers of the] four groups [of practitioners], on hearing the bodhisattva practices, either attained the state of nonretrogression, or attained the *samādhi* gateway, or attained *dhāraṇīs* or obtained great supernatural faculties. Or there were bodhisattvas who realized the second and third stages through to the tenth stage and danced for joy. Immeasurable hundreds of thousands of humans and gods generated the aspiration for *anuttarā samyakṣambodhi*, never to turn back again, and eight thousand humans and gods distanced themselves from dust, rid themselves of defilement, and attained the purity of the Dharma eye. 324c



## Chapter IX Adornment with Merits

Then the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, if, as you, the Buddha, have taught, merits are accomplished and one will attain buddhahood by living in an *araṇya*, how is the bodhisattva to cultivate merits while living in an *araṇya*? I but beseech you, World-honored One, to explain it for me.

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya:

Good sir, for one who would practice and study there is only one virtue for which he should live in an *araṇya* site, seeking the unsurpassed path. What is that one [virtue]? It is, namely, to see that the root source of all mental afflictions is one's own mind. If one fully understands this Dharma, one will be fit to stay at an *araṇya* site.

Why is this? Suppose, for example, that a frenzied dog, chased and beaten by someone, merely goes after the clods and stones and does not go after that person. The person who has newly generated the [*bodhi*-]mind and will in future ages live in an *araṇya* is also like this. If he sees form, sound, smell, taste, tangibles, and dharmas, his mind becomes attached to them. This person does not know the root origin of mental afflictions and does not know that the five sense objects arise from his own mind. This is called not yet being well able to live in an *araṇya* site.

For this reason, all bodhisattvas and *mahāsattvas* desirous of living in tranquility to seek the unsurpassed path, when objects of the five desires appear in front of them, observe their own mind and should form this thought: "From beginningless time to the present day I have transmigrated in the six destinies with no chance of escape, and it is all because I have brought forth confusion out of deluded thoughts and have craved for and been attached to objects of the five desires." Such a bodhisattva is called one who is fit to live in an *araṇya* site.

If someone asks, "Which sentient beings will attain buddhahood in a future age?", you should point to this person. In a future age he will leave

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the suffering of the three realms, defeat the armies of the four demons, quickly accomplish *bodhi*, and enter into the wisdom of a buddha, and all worlds with their gods, *nāgas* [and others] of the eight classes [of non-human beings], *asuras*, and so on should all honor him. If any gentleman or lady honors with pure thoughts such a truly good Buddha son living in an *araṇya*, the merits gained will be immeasurable and infinite. If, again, someone were to make offerings of many rare treasures to his compassionate mother, the merits gained would again be no different. Why? Because this person will gain *anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*, turn the wheel of the right Dharma, deliver multitudes of humans and gods, continue the lineage of the Three Jewels to ensure that it does not come to an end, and become a refuge for beings.

Next, good sir, there are two kinds of dharmas that shackle the practitioner and make him unsuitable for living in an *araṇya*. One is cherishing the [wrong] view of annihilation and false teachings, and the other is cherishing riches and comforts.

Again, good sir, there are two kinds of people who are not fit to reside in an *araṇya* site. One is those who are possessed of arrogance, and the other is those who loathe the Mahayana Dharma.

Again, good sir, there are two kinds of people who should not reside in an *araṇya* site. One is those of wrong views who do not believe the words of the Buddha, and the other is those who themselves violate the precepts and harry those who keep the precepts. Such people should not reside in an *araṇya* site to seek the unsurpassed path.

Next, good sir, if one possesses four kinds of virtues, one should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site. What are the four? First, much learning and a memory that forgets nothing; second, the ability to clearly comprehend wondrous meanings; third, right thinking that is never negligent; fourth, obeying the Tathāgata's teaching and practice. Good sir, if there is a Buddha son who has accomplished these four kinds of superior virtues, he should dwell at ease in an *araṇya* site, cultivate bodhisattva practices, and seek the unsurpassed path.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva again has four virtues with which he adorns his person and lives in an *araṇya* to seek the wisdom of a buddha. What are the four? First, great kindness; second, great compassion;

third, great joy; fourth, great equanimity. Good sir, these four dharmas can give rise to all merits and knowledge and bring benefit and happiness to immeasurable beings so that they quickly realize the dharma of unsurpassed great *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva again has four virtues whereby he is pure in keeping the precepts and is able to reach *bodhi*. What are the four? First, he constantly lives in fourfold nondefilement. Second, he always practices the twelve *dhūtas*. Third, he distances himself from householders and renunciants. Fourth, he is forever free from deceitfulness and jealousy. Good sir, all bodhisattvas rely on these four dharmas to forever leave birth-and-death and gain great *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva again has four dharmas that encompass all good. What are the four? First, he keeps the prohibitory precepts with purity and also has much learning. Second, he enters *samādhis* and is well endowed with wisdom. Third, he gains the six supernormal faculties and also cultivates [all-]faceted knowledge. Fourth, [he acts with] skillful means and also is not negligent. Good sir, these four dharmas are cultivated and studied by all bodhisattvas in the three ages. You Buddha sons should also practice them to swiftly realize vast unsurpassed *bodhi*.

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Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva possesses four kinds of dharmas whereby he gains nonretrogression in bodhisattva practices. What are the four? First, giving; second, loving speech; third, beneficial action; fourth, cooperation. Good sir, these four practices are the path leading to *bodhi* and the basis for benefiting beings, and all bodhisattvas should all cultivate and study them.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva again possesses four virtues whereby he lives in an [*a*]ranya and, pure in keeping the precepts, adorns his person. What are the four? First, he observes that he has no original nature, for he overcomes the two attachments [to self and dharmas] and realizes no-self. Second, [he observes that] other persons also have no original nature, for he is free from love and hate toward friend and foe. Third, he is joyful in body and mind, for there is no differentiating between mind and mental attributes. Fourth, he gains knowledge of equality, for there is no distinction between birth-and-death and nirvana. These four dharmas should be practiced by all bodhisattvas, and you Buddha sons

should also practice them and quickly proceed toward unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, all bodhisattvas again have four vows with which they bring sentient beings to maturation, abide by the Three Jewels, and never turn back while passing through great oceanlike eons. What are the four? First, they vow to deliver all beings. Second, they vow to cut off all mental afflictions. Third, they vow to study all Dharma discourses. Fourth, they vow to realize all fruits of buddhahood. Good sir, these four dharmas bodhisattvas, great and small, should all cultivate and study, for they are what is studied by bodhisattvas of the three ages.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva again has four dharmas whereby he lives in an *arāṇya* and is pure in keeping the precepts. What are the four? First, he cherishes emptiness, for he is a manifestation of empti[ness]. Second, he gains fearlessness, for he realizes *samādhi*. Third, he makes for beings a vow of great compassion. Fourth, he has no thoughts of aversion for the two [kinds of] no-self. Good sir, these four dharmas are the essential gateway whereby all bodhisattvas enter [the state of] a holy one, for by relying on these four dharmas they cut off the two hindrances.

325c Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva again has four dharmas whereby he lives in an *arāṇya* and, properly keeping the prohibitory precepts, adorns his person. What are the four? First, he forever abandons the [wrong] view of “me.” Second, he abandons the [wrong] view of “mine.” Third, he is free from the [wrong] views of annihilation and permanence. Fourth, he is able to deeply comprehend the twelve causes and conditions [of dependent coarising]. Good sir, with these four dharmas he is able to prevent violation of the prohibitions, guard the pure precepts, and adorn his person.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva living in an *arāṇya* again observes four dharmas whereby he is able to observe the prohibitory precepts, further cultivate wondrous practices, and seek the wisdom of a buddha. What are the four? First, he observes the birth and cessation of the five aggregates. Second, he sees that the twelve sense fields are like an empty hamlet. Third, he sees that the eighteen realms are the same in nature as the Dharma realm. Fourth, he is without rejection and without attachment regarding dharmas [recognized by] mundane truth. Good sir, these four

dharmas should be cultivated and studied by all bodhisattvas. Therefore, a Buddha son lives in an *arāṇya* and practices singlemindedly, seeking the unsurpassed path.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva living in an *arāṇya* is endowed with four kinds [of purity] with which, pure in keeping the precepts, he adorns his person. What are the four? First, he accomplishes the viewpoint of not seeing the body. Second, he accomplishes the viewpoint of not seeing speech. Third, he accomplishes the viewpoint of not seeing the mind. Fourth, he distances himself from the sixty-two [wrong] views and is well able to accomplish the viewpoint of an Omniscient One. Good sir, should a Buddha son accomplish these four kinds of purity, he will with his present body realize right nature free from arising [of mental afflictions] and go on to quickly realize unsurpassed *bodhi*. For this reason, you Buddha sons [should] observe these four kinds of Dharma discourses, cut off the four evil paths, realize the four [kinds of] nirvana,<sup>52</sup> and until the end of time deliver sentient beings and make them realize *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva living in an *arāṇya* is endowed with eight kinds of purity of *samādhi* with which he adorns his person.<sup>53</sup> What are the eight? First, the purity of *samādhi* of sitting alone in an [*a*]rāṇya; second, the purity of *samādhi* of distancing oneself from idle talk; third, the purity of *samādhi* of distancing oneself from the five desires; fourth, the purity of *samādhi* of disciplining the body and mind; fifth, the purity of *samādhi* of knowing satiety in food and drink; sixth, the purity of *samādhi* of distancing oneself from wrongful seeking; seventh, the purity of *samādhi* of distancing oneself from the arousal of craving due to a [pleasant] voice; eighth, the purity of *samādhi* of preaching the Dharma for multitudes without seeking any profit. Good sir, these eight kinds of purity of *samādhi* can produce hundreds of thousands of *samādhi* gateways. You Buddha sons should practice them and quickly realize unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva living in an *arāṇya* also has eight kinds of purity of wisdom. What are the eight? First, purity of wisdom of skillfulness regarding the five aggregates; second, purity of wisdom of skillfulness regarding the twelve sense fields; third, purity of wisdom of

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skillfulness regarding the eighteen realms; fourth, purity of wisdom of skillful means regarding the twenty-two faculties;<sup>54</sup> fifth, purity of wisdom of skillful means regarding the gateway to the three liberations; sixth, purity of wisdom of skillful means regarding the annihilation of all mental afflictions; seventh, purity of wisdom of skillful means regarding the annihilation of secondary mental afflictions; eighth, purity of wisdom of skillful means regarding the annihilation of the sixty-two [wrong] views. Good sir, these eight kinds of purity of wisdom you bodhisattvas should diligently practice and quickly realize unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva living in an *aranya* also has eight kinds of purity of supernormal faculties with which he adorns his person. What are the eight? First, purity of the supernormal faculty of the skillful means of divine vision whereby he gains unimpededness in material phenomena; second, purity of the supernormal faculty of the skillful means of divine hearing whereby he gains unimpededness in aural objects; third, purity of the supernormal faculty of the skillful means of knowledge of others' minds whereby he gains unimpededness in the minds and mental attributes of beings; fourth, purity of the supernormal faculty of the skillful means of knowledge of past lives whereby he gains unimpededness in recalling where he was born and where he died in the past; fifth, purity of the supernormal faculty of the skillful means of supernormal knowledge of the objective world whereby he gains unimpededness in being able to visit innumerable buddha lands in the ten directions; sixth, purity of the supernormal faculty of the skillful means of knowledge of the exhaustion of contaminants whereby he gains unimpededness in being able to know whether the contaminants of beings have been exhausted or not exhausted; seventh, purity of the supernormal faculty of the skillful means of uncontaminated knowledge whereby he gains unimpededness in being able to extinguish all mental afflictions; eighth, purity of the supernormal faculty of skillful means whereby he directs all the roots of goodness of his present self to [all] beings. Good sir, these eight kinds of purity of supernormal faculties are likewise cultivated and studied by bodhisattvas in the ten directions, and you bodhisattvas should also practice them and quickly realize unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva living in an *aranya* acquires eight kinds of purity in his present person. What are the eight? First, purity

of physical action; second, purity of verbal action; third, purity of mental action; fourth, purity of rightness; fifth, purity of right livelihood; sixth, purity of *dhūtas*; seventh, purity of guilelessness; eighth, purity of not forgetting for a single moment the *bodhi*-mind. Good sir, if there is a Buddha son living in an *araṇya* and endowed with these eight kinds of purity, he will in his present body accomplish infinite roots of goodness and never turn back from *anuttarā samyakṣambodhi*. 326b

Next, good sir, the renunciant bodhisattva also has eight kinds of purity of much learning with which he adorns his person. What are the eight? First, the purity of much learning whereby he respects the *upādhyāya* and *ācārya*; second, the purity of much learning whereby he distances himself from arrogance and brings forth thoughts of humility; third, the purity of much learning of effort and valor; fourth, the purity of much learning whereby he dwells at ease in right thinking; fifth, the purity of much learning whereby he expounds the most profound meaning for those who seek the Dharma; sixth, the purity of much learning whereby he does not like praising himself and disparaging others; seventh, the purity of much learning whereby he is always able to observe all good dharmas; eighth, the purity of much learning whereby he listens to the right Dharma and practices as taught. Good sir, these eight kinds of purity of much learning you bodhisattvas should all practice and quickly realize unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Then, when the World-honored One had finished expounding these bodhisattva practices, he addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Maitreya:

Good sir, after my nirvana, during the following five hundred years when the Dharma is about to be destroyed, immeasurable beings will have aversion toward the world, look up yearningly to the Tathāgata, generate the aspiration for *anuttarā samyakṣambodhi*, enter an *araṇya*, practice these bodhisattva vows and practices for the sake of [cultivating] the unsurpassed path, and gain nonretrogression in great *bodhi*. The immeasurable beings who have thus generated the [*bodhi*-]mind will, when their life ends, be reborn up in the palace of Tuṣi[ta] Heaven, gain a glimpse of your body adorned with infinite merits and knowledge, transcend birth-and-death, realize nonretrogression, and in a future age gain *anuttarā samyakṣambodhi* under a great jeweled dragonflower *bodhi* tree.

Then, when the World-honored One preached this Dharma, twenty-five thousand bodhisattvas who had newly generated the [*bodhi*-]mind and were about to turn back from *bodhi* practices, on hearing this Dharma generated a firm aspiration, transcended the ten stages of faith, and reached the sixth abode; thirty-eight thousand brahmans of pure conduct forever cut off wrong views and gained great acceptance of the Dharma and *dhāraṇīs*; and seventy-six thousand people all generated the aspiration for unequaled *anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*.

[Here ends] Fascicle Seven of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*

## Fascicle Eight

### Chapter X Contemplation of the Mind

Then the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Mañjuśrī rose from his seat, straightened his garments, bared his right shoulder, touched his right knee to the ground, inclined his body, pressed his palms together, and said to the Buddha: 326c

World-honored One, as you, the Buddha, said when addressing Wondrous Virtue and the other five hundred eminent householders, “I shall elaborate for you on the subtle Dharma discourse on the mind-ground,” and [now] at this place of practice everyone in the great multitude of immeasurable and infinite humans and gods has engendered a yearning. I shall now on this account pose some questions to the Tathāgata. What is “mind”? What is “ground”? I but beseech you, World-honored One, to analyze and explain it for beings with unconditional great kindness and unimpeded great compassion, causing those who are not yet free from suffering to gain freedom from suffering, those who are not yet happy to gain happiness, those who have not yet generated the [*bodhi*-]mind to gain the generation of the [*bodhi*-]mind, and those who have not yet realized the fruit to gain realization of the fruit so that they may together attain nirvana on the one path.

Thereupon the Bhagavān, with the seal of the great wondrous knowledge of the pure and definitive superior Dharma acquired through merit and knowledge cultivated during immeasurable eons, put his seal of approval on Mañjuśrī, saying:

Excellent, excellent! You are now truly the mother of buddhas of the three ages. All tathāgatas in the stage of practice all formerly under your guidance first engendered faith. For this reason, those who have accomplished right awakening in lands in the ten directions all have Mañjuśrī as their mother. But now your body, through the power of your original vow, has manifested the appearance of a bodhisattva and you ask questions about the Tathāgata’s

inconceivable Dharma. Listen attentively, listen attentively, and consider it carefully as I analyze and explain it for all.

“Very well, World-honored One. We are eager to listen.”

Thereupon the Bhagavān, who had well accomplished the various rare and subtle merits of the knowledge of equality, the supreme abode of all tathāgatas; who had been well able to obtain the seal of the knowledge of the Mahayana, the definitive superior Dharma of all buddhas; who had well and perfectly realized the adamant, secret, excellent and wondrous knowledge of all tathāgatas; who was already dwelling at ease in unimpeded great compassion and spontaneously saving sentient beings in the ten directions; and who had already well perfected the knowledge of wondrous observation, not seeing and yet seeing, not speaking and yet speaking—this Bhagavān addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Mañjuśrī, mother of buddhas and unsullied great sage:

- 327a Great good [sir], this teaching is called the Dharma discourse on the mind-ground, the supreme secret of tathāgatas in the ten directions; this teaching is called the Dharma discourse on sudden awakening whereby all ordinary people enter the stage of a tathāgata; this teaching is called the right way of truth whereby all bodhisattvas proceed toward great *bodhi*; this teaching is called the exquisite jeweled palace where buddhas of the three ages themselves enjoy Dharma bliss; this teaching is called an inexhaustible treasure trove that brings benefit to all sentient beings; this teaching is able to lead multitudes of bodhisattvas to the place of masterful knowledge in [the heaven] Limit of Form (Akaniṣṭha); this teaching is the true guide of the bodhisattva in his final life which leads him to the *bodhi* tree; this teaching is able to rain down mundane and supramundane wealth and, like a *maṇi* jewel, fulfill the wishes of beings; this teaching is able to give rise to the original source of the merits of all buddhas in the ten directions and three ages; this teaching is able to end the fruition of the evil deeds of all beings; this teaching is able to grant the seal for the wishes of all beings; this teaching is able to deliver all beings from the perils of birth-and-death; this teaching is able to calm the waves of the sea of suffering for all beings; this teaching is able to rescue suffering beings who find themselves in imminent danger; this teaching is able to drain the sea of

old age, sickness, and death for all beings; this teaching is well able to produce the seeds of the causes and conditions of buddhas; this teaching is able to serve as a great torch of knowledge in the long night of birth-and-death; this teaching is able to defeat the hosts of the four demons and serve as armor; this teaching is the ensign of victory of a righteous valiant army; this teaching is the unsurpassed Dharma wheel of all buddhas; this teaching is the supreme Dharma banner; this teaching is the beating of the great Dharma drum; this teaching is the blowing of the great Dharma conch; this teaching is the great king of lions; this teaching is the great lion's roar; and this teaching is just as when a country's great sage-king is well able to rule rightly one gains great happiness if one complies with the king's transformative influence and is punished with death if one acts contrary to the king's transformative influence.

Good sir, mind is master in the three realms. He who is able to observe the mind will ultimately be liberated, and he who is unable to observe it will ultimately sink. The mind of beings is just like the earth. The five grains and five fruits are born from the earth, and likewise the mind produces the mundane and the supramundane, the good and evil five destinies, [*śrāvakas*] who are still learning and those who are no longer learning, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas through to tathāgatas. For this reason, the three realms are mind-only. The mind is called "ground." All ordinary people, if they approach a good friend, hear the teaching of the mind-ground, observe in accordance with reason, practice as taught, themselves act and teach others, encourage them, and make them happy, such people will be able to cut off the three hindrances,<sup>55</sup> quickly perfect the practices, and swiftly gain *anuttarā samyakṣambodhi*.

Thereupon the great sage, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, said to the Buddha: 327b

World-honored One, if, as you, the Buddha, have said, only mind is master of the three realms and the mind is originally nonexistent and not tainted by impurities, how is the mind tainted by greed, anger, and foolishness? Among dharmas in the three ages, which is said to be the mind? The past mind has already been extinguished, the future mind has not yet arrived, and the present mind does not stay still. The inner nature of dharmas is inapprehensible, the outer appearance of dharmas is inapprehensible, and

everything in between dharmas is inapprehensible. The mind originally does not have any form, and the mind originally does not have any abode. Even all tathāgatas do not see the mind; how much less so can others see the mind? All dharmas are born from deluded thoughts. For this reason, the World-honored One has just now said to the great multitude that the three realms are mind-only. I beseech you, O Buddha, to take pity and explain it as it really is.

Thereupon the Buddha addressed the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī:

So it is, so it is! Good sir, as you said in your question, the mind and mental attributes are by their original nature empty and quiescent. I shall give some analogies to clarify the meaning.

Good sir, the mind is like an illusionary phenomenon, for it produces various mental ideas through pervasive imagination and experiences suffering and happiness. The mind is like flowing water, for it arises and disappears from moment to moment without staying still even briefly in the period before or after. The mind is like a great wind, for in a single instant it passes through [many] places. The mind is like the flame of a lamp, for it arises when many conditions come together. The mind is like a flash of lightning, for it does not stay still long, not even for a moment. The mind is like empty space, for it is obstructed by adventitious mental afflictions. The mind is like a monkey, for it roams in the trees of the five desires without staying still even briefly. The mind is like a painter, for it can paint the various colors of the world. The mind is like a servant, for it is harried by mental afflictions. The mind is like someone who acts alone, for there is no second. The mind is like the king of a country, for it brings about all kinds of things and has sovereign power. The mind is like an enemy, for it can cause one to experience great suffering. The mind is like soil, for it dirties one's person and creates a mess. The mind is like a reflection, for it clings to impermanent dharmas, regarding them as permanent. The mind is like an illusionary dream, for it clings to dharmas that have no self, regarding them as [having] a self. The mind is like a *yakṣa*, for it can devour all kinds of meritorious dharmas. The mind is like a greenbottle fly, for it likes filth. The mind is like a murderer, for it harms one's person. The mind is like someone hostile, for it is always watching for faults. The mind is like a brigand, for it steals

merits. The mind is like a large drum, for it gives rise to fighting. The mind is like a moth, for it loves the color of lamps. The mind is like a wild deer, for it chases after feigned cries. The mind is like swine, for it enjoys messiness. The mind is like bees, for it gathers around the taste of honey. The mind is like an elephant in must, for it is infatuated with the touch of females.

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Good sir, the mind and mental attributes thus explained are neither within, nor without, nor in between. When sought in dharmas, they are inapprehensible. They are also inapprehensible in the past, future, and present. They transcend the three ages and are neither existent nor nonexistent. Manifesting from delusory objects, they always harbor defilements, and objects have no intrinsic nature because the mind is by nature empty. This empty nature is not born, not extinguished, without coming, without going, not identical, not different, not annihilated, and not eternal; it originally has no place of birth nor does it have any place of extinction; it is not something from which to distance oneself nor is it something from which not to distance oneself. This mind and so on are no different from the unconditioned, and the essence of the unconditioned is no different from the mind and so on. The essence of the mind is originally ineffable, and that which is not the mind is also ineffable. Why? If the unconditioned were the mind it would be called annihilationism, and if it were separate from the mind it would be called eternalism. Forever free from dualism and not attached to the two extremes—if one understands thus, it is called seeing absolute truth. He who understands absolute truth is called a worthy and a holy one. All worthies and holy ones are by nature originally empty and quiescent. In unconditioned dharmas there is no keeping or violating of precepts, nor are there great and small; there is no existence of the mind-king and mental attributes, and there is neither suffering nor pleasure.

Thus the Dharma realm is by its own nature undefiled and there are no distinguishing characteristics of upper, middle, and lower. Why? Because unconditioned dharmas are by nature equal, for they are like the waters of rivers that flow into the sea and have all a single taste with no difference. This undefiled nature is unequaled, far removed from “me” and removed from “mine.”<sup>56</sup> This undefiled nature is neither real nor false. This undefiled nature is the primary objective, has no characteristic of extinction, and in its essence is originally unborn. This undefiled nature

is eternal and unchanging supreme nirvana, for it is [characterized by] self, bliss, and purity. This undefiled nature is far removed from all equality and nonequality, for there are no differences in its essence. If any gentleman or lady wishes to seek *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, they should singlemindedly practice this teaching of contemplating the mind-ground.

Then the World-honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke [these] verses:

Mañjuśrī, mother of awakened ones throughout the three ages,  
questioned the Tathāgata about the teaching of the mind-ground.

In this great assembly I shall now  
expound the method of contemplative practice for becoming a  
buddha.

This teaching is more difficult to encounter than an *uḍum*[*bara* flower],  
and all worlds should yearn for it.

Among the buddhas in the ten directions who have realized great  
awakening  
there is none who did not practice and become [a buddha] by means  
of this teaching.

328a I am the unsurpassed tamer [of people]  
who turns the wheel of the right Dharma throughout world-systems  
And converts and delivers immeasurable beings:  
know that this is due to my having understood contemplation of the  
mind-ground.

All sentient beings, hearing this teaching,  
joyfully aim for *bodhi* and obtain a prediction [of their future  
awakening];

All people with the right conditions who have obtained a prediction,  
practicing this method of contemplation, will become buddhas.

Buddhas themselves experience great Dharma bliss,  
dwelling in the wondrous jeweled palace of contemplation of the  
mind-ground.

Bodhisattvas who have been consecrated understand nonbirth  
and with the method of contemplating the mind-ground pervade the  
Dharma realm.

Bodhisattvas in their final life sit by the tree of awakening,  
enter this contemplative practice, and realize *bodhi*.  
This teaching is able to rain down the seven holy riches,  
a *mani* jewel that fulfills the wishes of beings.  
This teaching, called the original mother of buddhas,  
gives birth to the three buddha bodies in the three ages.  
This teaching, called adamantine armor,  
is able to resist the armies of the four groups of demons.  
This teaching is able to serve as a great ship,  
taking [people] across the current in between to the treasure site  
(i.e., nirvana).  
This teaching is the supreme great Dharma drum;  
this teaching is a great Dharma banner, raised high.  
This teaching is an adamantine great Dharma conch;  
this teaching is a great Dharma torch that illuminates the world.  
This teaching is just like a great sage-ruler,  
rewarding achievements and punishing faults in conformity with  
people's minds.  
This teaching is like a fertile field,  
growing and nurturing in accordance with the seasons.  
I have with analogies clarified the meaning of emptiness:  
know hereby that the three realms are only the one mind.  
The mind has great power whereby world-systems are born;  
masterful, it can become a master of transformation.  
Evil thinking and good thoughts are further created and gathered,  
and it is the cause of birth-and-death in the past, present, and future.  
The world exists in dependence on deluded actions,  
and results, pleasant and unpleasant, long continue.  
The mind is like flowing water, never staying still even briefly;  
the mind is like a gale passing over the land.  
Again, it is like a monkey frolicking in trees;  
it is also like an illusionary thing created on the basis of illusions.  
It is like a bird flying through the sky without any hindrance;  
it is like an empty hamlet in which people rush about.

Thus the mind is originally not existent,  
but ordinary people, clinging to their delusions, say it is not  
nonexistent.

If one is able to see that the mind's essence is by nature empty,  
delusional hindrances will not arise and then one will be liberated.

Thereupon the Tathāgata brought forth thoughts of great compassion toward beings, just like parents thinking lovingly of an only child, and in order to extinguish very powerful wrong views in the world and bring benefit and happiness to all sentient beings he uttered the *dhāraṇī* for contemplating the mind:<sup>57</sup>

*oṃ cittapravedhaṃ karomi* (*Oṃ*, I penetrate the mind.)

328b Then, having spoken [this] mantra, the Tathāgata addressed the bodhisattva  
and *mahāsattva* Mañjuśrī:

This divine spell possesses great awesome power. If any gentleman or lady, when reciting this spell, raises their clean hands, interlocks the ten fingers of the left and right [hands], the right pressing against the left,<sup>58</sup> and clasps them tightly together, like a knot in shape, this is called the *mudrā* of the adamantine bind. If, having formed this *mudrā*, they practice the previous mantra for a full one time, it will be better than reciting the scriptures of the twelve divisions [of the Buddhist canon], the merits gained will be without limit, and they will reach *bodhi* without ever turning back.

## Chapter XI

### Generating the *Bodhi*-mind

At that time the Bhagavān had been well able to obtain the jeweled crown of initiation by all tathāgatas and transcend the three realms, had gained perfect mastery of *dhāraṇīs*, had perfectly realized mastery of *samādhi* and well accomplished the knowledge of an Omniscient One and all-faceted knowledge, and was able to make various distinctions between sentient beings. Then the Bhagavān, having proclaimed the wondrous Dharma discourse on contemplation of the mind, addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Mañjuśrī:

Great good sir, I have already explained the mind-ground for beings. Next, I shall explain the great *dhāraṇī* for generating the *bodhi*-mind so as to make sentient beings engender the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* and quickly perfect the wondrous fruit [of awakening].

Thereupon the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, as you, the Buddha, have said, the past has already been extinguished, the future has not yet arrived, the present does not stay still, and all mental attributes throughout the three ages are all empty in their original nature. What do you mean when you say to “generate” the *bodhi*-mind? Indeed, World-honored One, I beseech you to explain and cut through the web of doubts so as to make [people] aim for *bodhi*.

The Buddha addressed Mañjuśrī:

Good sir, one gives rise to wrong views from among mental attributes. Wishing to eradicate the various [wrong] views of the sixty-two [wrong] views, I say that the mind and mental attributes are empty, for these [wrong] views are baseless. Suppose, for example, that there is a jungle, dense and luxuriant, where wicked beasts such as lions, white elephants, tigers, and wolves lie concealed, poison[ous vapors] are emitted and harm people, and tracks have completely disappeared; then someone possessing wisdom burns down the forest with fire, and because the forest is empty the great

wicked beasts no longer remain. When the mind is empty and [wrong] views disappear, it is also like this.

328c Again, good sir, for what reasons does one posit the thesis of emptiness? It is in order to extinguish the arising of mental afflictions from deluded thoughts that this emptiness is taught. Good sir, if one clings to the principle of emptiness and makes it the ultimate goal, emptiness also being empty, clinging to emptiness creates an illness that should also be eliminated. Why? If one clings to the thesis of emptiness and makes it the ultimate goal, all dharmas will be empty and without cause and result. What difference would there be with the [materialistic] Lokāyatas?

Good sir, it is like *agada* medicine, which can cure all illnesses: if someone with an illness takes it, he will most certainly be cured, and having recovered from the illness he dispenses with the medicine in accordance with [the state of] the illness. If one takes medicine in the absence of any illness, the medicine will then [itself] cause an illness. Good sir, the medicine of emptiness was originally provided in order to eradicate the illness of being. Clinging to being causes illness, and so does clinging to emptiness. Who, possessing wisdom, would take medicine to contract an illness? Good sir, it is better to give rise to the view of being than to give rise to the view of emptiness, for emptiness treats the illness of being but there is no medicine to treat emptiness.

Good sir, for these reasons, having taken the medicine of emptiness and eliminated wrong views, one awakens to the mind by oneself and is able to generate *bodhi*. This mind of awakening is the *bodhi*-mind—there are not two aspects [to the mind]. Good sir, the mind of self-awakening has four meanings. What are the four? Ordinary people have two kinds of minds, and buddhas and bodhisattvas have two kinds of minds. Good sir, what are the aspects of the two minds of the ordinary person? First, eye consciousness through to mind consciousness cognizing in the same way their own objects is called the mind of self-awakening. Second, the mind and mental attributes, free from the five sense organs, combining to cognize objects is called the mind of self-awakening. Good sir, these two minds are able to generate *bodhi*. Good sir, what are the aspects of the two minds of worthies and holy ones? First, wisdom that observes the principle of

truth; second, wisdom that observes all objects. Good sir, these four kinds [of minds] are called the mind of self-awakening.

Thereupon the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, the mind has no form and no abode. When the ordinary practitioner first generates the [*bodhi*-]mind, on what does he rely to visualize what form?

The Buddha said:

Good sir, the form of the *bodhi*-mind visualized by the ordinary person is just like a clear and perfectly full lunar disc resting luminously in his chest. If you wish to quickly attain nonretrogression, in an *araṇya* or an empty and quiet chamber, your body erect and your thoughts proper, form the previous *mudrā* of the Tathāgata's adamantine bind, close your eyes, visualize a bright moon in your chest, and form this thought: "This full lunar disc is fifty *yojanas* [in diameter], unsullied, bright and clear, pellucid within and without, and most refreshingly cool. The moon is the mind, and the mind is the moon. It is not tainted by soiled obscurations, and deluded thoughts do not arise. It is able to purify the body and mind of beings. The great *bodhi*-mind is firm and does not turn back." Forming this hand-*mudrā*, recite and contemplate the subtle phrases of the great *bodhi*-mind, the pure mantra of the initial generation of the [*bodhi*-]mind by all bodhisattvas:

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*oṃ bodhicittam utpādayāmi.* (*Oṃ*, I generate the mind of awakening.)

This *dhāraṇī* possesses great awesome virtue and is able to make the practitioner never turn back. All bodhisattvas, past, future, and present, when they first generated the [*bodhi*-]mind in the causal stage, all recited this mantra devotedly, entered the stage of nonretrogression, and quickly perfected right awakening.

Good sir, then when the practitioner, his body erect and his thoughts proper, completely unmoving, and his mind concentrated on the lunar disc, becomes proficient in observation, this is called the *samādhi* whereby the bodhisattva contemplates the *bodhi*-mind and becomes a buddha. If any ordinary person practices this visualization, the sins he has committed,

such as the five heinous [crimes], the four grievous [sins], the ten evil [deeds], and [those of] the *icchāntika*, will all be extinguished, whereupon he will obtain five gateways to *samādhi*. What are the five? First, the momentary *samādhi*; second, the minuscule *samādhi*; third, the *samādhi* of the white thread; fourth, the uneven *samādhi*; fifth, the *samādhi* of peaceful rest.<sup>59</sup>

What is called the momentary *samādhi*? It is to remain for a short time thinking of the full moon. Suppose, for example, that a monkey, his body tethered, is unable to go far and unable to stay nearby and stays still for a moment only because of hunger and thirst—so too is the ordinary person contemplating his mind, and his gaining of *samādhi* for a short time is called “momentary.”

What is called the minuscule *samādhi*? It is to be in union for a little in *samādhi*. Suppose, for example, that someone who has always eaten bitter things and has never eaten anything sweet on one occasion obtains a trace of honey, and when it reaches his tongue he becomes increasingly delighted, dances doubly for joy, and seeks more honey—so too is the practitioner: he has spent long eons experiencing much bitterness, and now he has gained a little union with sweet *samādhi*, and this is called “minuscule.”

What is called the *samādhi* of the white thread? The ordinary person, from beginningless time through to the end of time, has now obtained this meditation. Suppose, for example, that one sees a single white thread in the midst of much black-dyed black color—so too is the practitioner: during the dark night of many births-and-deaths he has now gained the *samādhi* of white purity, and this is called a “thread.”

What is called the uneven *samādhi*? The practitioner, not yet proficient in contemplating the mind, may be either well established or not yet well established [in *samādhi*]. This *samādhi*, like the highs and lows of weighing scales, is called “uneven.”

329b What is called the *samādhi* of peaceful rest? Practicing the previous four meditations, the mind gains peaceful rest and, well maintaining [this state], one is not tainted by sense objects. For example, it is like someone who, going far across a desert in summer, may suffer from both heat and poison[ous vapors] and his mind may find the thirst almost unbearable,

when he suddenly obtains some sweet water from the Snowy Mountains, heavenly *sudhā* (nectar), and so on, which immediately remove his anguish caused by heat and he becomes composed in body and mind. Therefore, [this] *samādhi* is called “peaceful rest.” Having entered this meditation, one will be far removed from delusional hindrances, will generate the sprout of unsurpassed *bodhi*, and will quickly realize the ten stages of a bodhisattva with their merits.

At that time, immeasurable humans and gods in the assembly having heard this most profound mother of bodhisattvas, the inconceivable great *dhāraṇī*, ninety-eight thousand bodhisattvas and so on realized the [first] stage of joy, and immeasurable beings generated the aspiration for *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.



## Chapter XII

### Becoming a Buddha

At that time the Bhagavān was well established in the pure Dharma realm, equal throughout the three ages, without beginning and without end, unmoving and motionless, eternal and unceasing; the radiance of his great wisdom universally illuminated [this] world-system, with skillful means he manifested supernormal faculties, converting lands in the ten directions, and there was nowhere he did not pervade.

This Bhagavān addressed the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Mañjuśrī:

Having visualized the lunar disc, the yoga practitioner should contemplate the methods of the three great mysteries. What are the three? First, the mystery of the mind; second, the mystery of speech; third, the mystery of the body.

What is called the method of the mystery of the mind? The yoga practitioner visualizes a golden-colored five-pronged *vajra* that has emerged in the full moon, its radiance bright like molten gold and emitting innumerable great white rays of light. This visualization is called the mystery of the mind.

What is called the mystery of speech?

*oṃ tiṣṭha vajra (Oṃ, stand, O vajra!)*

This *dhāraṇī* possesses great awesome power whereby all bodhisattvas accomplish the mantras of the Buddha.<sup>60</sup> Therefore it is called the mystery of speech.

What is called the method of the mystery of the body? It is to form with your hands in a place of practice, your body erect and thoughts proper, the foremost *mudrā* for drawing in unsurpassed *bodhi* and to place it in the mental lunar disc in your chest.

Good sir, I shall now explain for you the appearance of this *mudrā*. First, insert the left and right thumbs inside the left and right palms and with the left and right forefingers, middle fingers, and fourth fingers firmly

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grasp the thumbs to form fists. This is the *mudrā* of the firm *vajra* fist. Then, without altering the fists, extend the left forefinger<sup>61</sup> straight up into the air, place the left fist against the heart, and with the little finger of the right fist firmly grasp the first phalanx of the forefinger of the left fist. Then, with the tip of the forefinger of the right fist point against the first phalanx of the thumb of the right fist<sup>62</sup> and again place it in front of the heart. This is called the foremost knowledge-*mudrā* for drawing in unsurpassed *bodhi*, and it is also called the *mudrā* of great radiance that is able to destroy the darkness of ignorance. Through the power of empowerment from forming this *mudrā* the buddhas of the ten directions rub the crown of the practitioner's head and confer [on him] a superior definitive prediction of great *bodhi*. This is the *mudrā* of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana's immeasurable mass of merit and great wondrous knowledge.

Then the practitioner, having formed this *mudrā*, performs this visualization:

May all sentient beings together form this *mudrā* and recite the mantra; may world-systems in the ten directions be free from the painful effects of the three evil destinies and the eight difficulties; and may [everyone] similarly enjoy foremost pure Dharma bliss. I now have on my head a great jeweled crown, and in this heavenly crown the five buddhas and tathāgatas are seated cross-legged. I am the Tathāgata Vairocana, perfectly endowed with the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor signs, emitting great radiance that illuminates [world-]systems in the ten directions, and bringing benefit and happiness to all beings.

Visualizing in this way is called entering the supreme *samādhi* of the Tathāgata Vairocana.

Suppose, for example, that someone understands the Gāruḍic subtle visualization method and himself performs this visualization: "My body is that of the king of golden-winged birds (*garuḍas*), and so too are my mind and speech." By the power of this visualization he is able to eliminate poisons and no vile poisons can do harm to him. The ordinary practitioner is also like this: when he enters this visualization, performing the sitting posture for subjugation [of demons],<sup>63</sup> his body unmoving, his hands forming the knowledge-*mudrā*, and silently reciting the mantra, he is able to

extinguish the three poisons, eliminate karmic hindrances, and increase merit and knowledge; his mundane and supramundane wishes will quickly gain fulfillment; the eighty-four thousand afflictive hindrances will be unable to manifest; the grievous cognitive hindrances, equal [in number] to the sands of the Ganges, will be gradually extinguished; uncontaminated great wisdom and *prajñāpāramitā*, the well-cutting *vajra*, will manifest perfectly; and he will quickly attain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

Then the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha:

More rare, World-honored One, more rare, Sugata, is the appearance of the Tathāgata in the world than [the flowering of] the *uḍum[bara]* flower, and even if he does appear in the world, it is difficult for this Dharma to be preached. This unsurpassed Dharma wheel of the three mysteries of the mind-ground can truly bring benefit and happiness to all beings and is the true and right path for entering the stage of the Tathāgata and the stage of the bodhisattva. If any being practices this teaching without begrudging life and limb, he will quickly realize *bodhi*.

Then the Buddha addressed the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī:

If any gentleman or lady wishes to be able to practice the wondrous methods of the three mysteries for becoming a buddha and quickly obtain the body of a tathāgata with its merits, they should don the bodhisattva's thirty-two kinds of great adamantine armor and practice this wondrous visualization, whereupon they will most certainly realize the Tathāgata's pure Dharma body. What are called the thirty-two [kinds of] armor? First, the great armor of not loathing to experience suffering in birth-and-death for the sake of beings during immeasurable eons. Second, the great armor of vowing to deliver immeasurable sentient beings, right down to mole-crickets and ants, without forsaking them. Third, the great armor of awakening beings from the long dream of birth-and-death and installing them in the three mysteries. Fourth, the great armor for protecting the Dharma, defending the Buddhist Dharma at all times just like the response of an echo. Fifth, the adamantine great armor of forever extinguishing all mental afflictions able to give rise to the two [wrong] views of being and nonbeing. Sixth, the great armor of relinquishing one's head, eyes, marrow, brain,

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wife, children, and rare treasures should someone come seeking them. Seventh, the great armor of not clinging to any of the comforts enjoyed in the home and giving them away. Eighth, the great armor of keeping the bodhisattva's three sets of pure precepts and never abandoning the *dhūtas*. Ninth, the great armor of donning the robes of forbearance and not retaliating when encountering adverse conditions, disparagement, insults, whippings, and beatings. Tenth, the great armor of instructing all *pratyekabuddhas* and *śrāvakas* and making them have a change of heart so that they aim for the One Vehicle. Eleventh, the great armor of effort which, just like a strong wind that never abates day and night, delivers sentient beings [to the further shore]. Twelfth, the great armor of practicing the *samādhi* of liberation, one's body and mind quiescent and one's mouth without transgression. Thirteenth, the great armor of equality which, there being no two views [differentiating between] birth-and-death and nirvana, brings benefit to beings. Fourteenth, the great armor of giving happiness which, with unconditional great kindness, brings benefit to all kinds of beings without ever forsaking them. Fifteenth, the great armor of removing suffering which, with unimpeded great compassion, saves all without any limits. Sixteenth, the great armor of great joy which has no ill will toward beings and constantly brings benefit to them. Seventeenth, the great armor of great equanimity, undeterred by grievous toil even when practicing austerities and forever unresiling. Eighteenth, the great armor which, when a suffering being comes to where the bodhisattva is, accepts his suffering in his stead without loathing. Nineteenth, the great armor which sees liberation just as if one were looking at the fruit of the *āmalaka* (emblic myrobalan) in one's palm. Twentieth, the great armor of nonattachment which views the body of the five aggregates as a *caṇḍāla* harmful to good deeds. Twenty-first, the great armor of renunciation which views the twelve sense fields as an empty hamlet and is always fearful of them. Twenty-second, the great armor of great wisdom which views the eighteen elements as illusionary transformations that have no reality. Twenty-third, the great armor of realization of the truth which views all dharmas as identical to the Dharma realm and does not see their [distinguishing] characteristics. Twenty-fourth, the great armor of supramundaneness which conceals the evil of others, does not conceal one's own faults, and

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renounces the three realms. Twenty-fifth, the great armor whereby the bodhisattva, like the great king of physicians who dispenses medicine according to the illness, preaches as appropriate to those to be converted. Twenty-sixth, the great armor which views the three vehicles as being originally no different in essence, ultimately has a change of heart, and returns to the One [Vehicle]. Twenty-seventh, the great armor which continues the lineage of the Three Jewels to ensure that it does not come to an end, turns the wondrous Dharma wheel, and delivers people. Twenty-eighth, the great armor which, the Buddha having a great quality of beneficence toward beings, cultivates the path in order to repay one's debt of gratitude to the Buddha. Twenty-ninth, the great armor of nondefilement which views all dharmas as being originally empty and quiescent by nature, neither arising nor perishing. Thirtieth, the great armor of loquacious eloquence unimpeded which has comprehended acceptance of nonbirth [of dharmas] and gained the *dhāraṇīs*. Thirty-first, the great armor of one taste which widely converts sentient beings, sits beneath the *bodhi* tree, and makes them realize the fruit of buddhahood. Thirty-second, the great armor whereby, the mind of a single instant in union with *prajñā*, one comprehends the dharmas of the three ages without remainder. These are called the thirty-two kinds of adamantine great armor of the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva*.

Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, if any gentleman or lady dons this adamantine armor on their person, they should diligently practice the three mysteries, whereupon they will in this life be endowed with great merit and knowledge and quickly realize unsurpassed perfect *bodhi*.

Then the great sage, the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Mañjuśrī, and the great multitudes, on hearing what the Buddha had taught—the three mysteries, which are the wondrous method of the mind-ground, and the thirty-two [kinds of] adamantine armor, which are to be studied by all bodhisattvas—each took off priceless necklaces and jeweled robes and offered them to the Tathāgata Vairocana and honored ones in the ten directions, and extolled the Buddha, saying:

Excellent, excellent, O Buddha, O Bhagavān! You have expounded infinite bodhisattva practices and vows and brought benefit and happiness to all beings, making them abandon the body of an ordinary person and enter

the stage of a buddha. Now we, the great multitude in [this] oceanlike assembly, in order to repay our debt of gratitude to the Buddha, will, un begrudging of life and limb, for the sake of beings pervade buddha lands, analyze and expound this subtle Dharma, and uphold, recite, copy, and disseminate it to ensure that it does not come to an end. We but beseech you, O Tathāgata, to confer protective thoughts from afar.

330c At this time the great assembly, on hearing this wondrous Dharma, gained great benefits. Incalculable and innumerable bodhisattvas each gained realization of the stage of nonretrogression, all humans and gods all obtained superior benefits, all sentient beings in the five destinies cut off grievous hindrances and gained immeasurable happiness, and all would attain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

## Chapter XIII

### The Entrustment

Then the Tathāgata Śākyamuni addressed the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and others in the *asamkhyā* great multitudes in the oceanlike assembly:

For immeasurable *nayutas* of hundreds of thousands of great eons, un begrudging of life and limb, I have given everything—my head, eyes, hands, feet, blood, flesh, bones, marrow, wife and children, country and cities, and all rare treasures—to whoever came seeking, and I have practiced hundreds of thousands of difficult practices and ascetic practices and gained realization of the Mahayana method of contemplation of the mind-ground. I now entrust this teaching to you. Know that this most profound scripture was proclaimed by the unsurpassed ones with ten powers in the ten directions and three ages.

This scriptural jewel is supremely subtle and can bring all benefits and happiness to sentient beings. In buddha lands in the ten directions in this trigalactic megagalactic world-system all infinite kinds of sentient beings and beings [in the realms] of animals, hungry ghosts, and hell have by the power of the most excellent merits and awesome supernormal power of this *Mahayana Sutra of Contemplation of the Mind-ground* distanced themselves from sufferings and gained experience of happiness. These merits of the scripture's power are difficult to imagine, and they render the country where it is found prosperous and free from enemies.

Suppose, for example, that someone obtains a wish-fulfilling gem and, placing it inside his house, is able to produce all wonderful comforts. This wondrous scriptural jewel is also like this, able to bestow inexhaustible happiness throughout the realm. Again, it is like the heavenly drum [made] of *maṇi* in the Heaven of the Thirty-three [Gods], which is able to emit all kinds of hundreds of thousands of sounds and make the heavenly hosts experience pleasures. The Dharma drum of this scripture is also like this, able to effect supreme happiness throughout the realm. For this reason, all of you in [this] great multitude, abide in the power of great forbearance and spread this scripture!

Thereupon the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha:

World-honored One, it is remarkable, O Tathāgata, it is remarkable, O Sugata, that you should preach the most profound *Mahayana Sutra of Subtle Contemplation of the Mind-ground*, widely benefiting practitioners of the Mahayana. Indeed, World-honored One, it is truly profound and wondrous. If any gentleman or lady is able to retain even a single four-line verse of this scripture, how much merit will this person obtain?

Then the Bhagavān addressed the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī:

331a If any gentleman or lady were to fill with the seven precious things tri-galactic megagalactic world-systems [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges, make offerings therewith to buddhas in the ten directions, construct for each buddha a hermitage adorned with the seven precious things, and install and honor buddhas and bodhisattvas for eons [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges; again, if they were to make offerings of all necessities to the immeasurable *śrāvaka* disciples of those tathāgatas in the same way as they made offerings to the buddhas, without any difference; and if, after the *parinirvāna* of these buddhas and *śrāvakas*, they erected great jeweled stupas and worshiped their relics—[or] if any gentleman or lady were to briefly hear and believe a single four-line verse of this *Mind-ground Scripture*, generate the *bodhi*-mind, uphold, recite, explain, and copy it, and preach it for even only one person, the merits from these various offerings would be fewer than one-sixteenth of the merits gained by this preaching of the scripture and not within the scope of computation or analogy. How much more so if they are able to completely uphold, recite, and widely preach it for people: the merits and benefits obtained will be unlimited.

If any woman generates the *bodhi*-mind and upholds, recites, copies, and explains this *Mind-ground Scripture*, this woman will be in her last incarnation and will not be reborn, nor will she fall into evil paths or places of the eight difficulties, and she will experience in this present life the merits of ten kinds of superior benefits. First, she will increase her life span. Second, she will be rid of the anguishes of illness. Third, she will be able to extinguish karmic hindrances. Fourth, her merit and knowledge

will all increase. Fifth, she will not want for wealth. Sixth, her skin will be lustrous. Seventh, she will be loved and respected by people. Eighth, she will have filial children. Ninth, her kinsmen will be friendly toward one another. Tenth, her good thoughts will be steadfast.

Mañjuśrī, wheresoever [this scripture] is read or recited or explained or copied and wherever scrolls of the scripture are located, that is the stupa of a buddha, and all gods, *nāgas*, humans, and nonhumans should make offerings to it of treasures exquisite and rare among humans and in the heavens above. Why is this? Wherever this scriptural text is found, there buddhas, bodhisattvas, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *śrāvakas* are deemed to be. Why? Because all tathāgatas practiced this scripture and, having abandoned [the state of] an ordinary person, attained *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*, and all worthies and holy ones all gained liberation through this scripture.

Mañjuśrī, after my nirvana, during the following five hundred years when the Dharma is about to be destroyed, should there be a Dharma master who upholds, recites, explains, and copies this *Mind-ground Scripture*, king among all scriptures, this Dharma master will be no different from me. If any gentleman or lady honors and venerates this Dharma master, then it is deemed that they honor all buddhas in the ten directions and three ages, and the merit gained will be the same and no different. This is called honoring the Tathāgata with the true Dharma; this is called honoring with right conduct. Why is this? This great Dharma master, at a time when there is no buddha, will expound the most profound *Mind-ground Scripture King* for sentient beings with wrong views in a corrupt and evil age, freeing them from wicked views and directing them along the path to *bodhi*, and will spread it extensively to ensure that the Dharma will long perdure. Such [a person] is called a buddha without the [thirty-two] major marks and [eighty] minor signs, and he should be honored by all humans and gods. If any gentleman or lady presses their palms together in reverence to this Dharma master, I will grant a prediction of unsurpassed great *bodhi*, [namely,] that this person will attain *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*.

If someone is able to hear this *Mind-ground Scripture*, generates the *bodhi*-mind in order to repay the four debts of gratitude, either copies it himself or makes others copy it, or recites and masters it, the merits gained

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by such people are such that an approximation could not be obtained even if the amount were calculated with the intellectual powers of a buddha. Such a person is called a true son of the buddhas. All gods, King Brahmā, Śakra, the Four Great Heavenly Kings, the mother Hārītī and her five hundred dependents, the great king of demons and spirits \*Nīlabhadra, and *nāga* gods [and others] of the eight classes [of nonhuman beings] all hear the Dharma, and demons, spirits, and so on do not leave him day and night and will always protect him. Such a Buddha son will increase his mindfulness and wisdom, be granted unimpeded eloquence, instruct beings, and cause them to plant the causes of buddhahood.

Mañjuśrī, such a gentleman or lady will, when their life is about to end, gain before them a vision of the buddhas of the ten directions and their three [kinds of] action will not become confused. They will first obtain ten kinds of purity of physical action. What are the ten? First, their body does not experience suffering. Second, the pupils of their eyes are not [fully] exposed. Third, their hands do not shake. Fourth, their legs are not stretched out or drawn in. Fifth, they are not incontinent with loose bowels. Sixth, their body does not perspire. Seventh, they do not grope about outwardly. Eighth, their fists are open. Ninth, their countenance is not that of a dying person. Tenth, they turn on their side with perfect composure. On account of the power of the scripture there are these signs.

Next, they will obtain ten kinds of purity of verbal action. What are the ten? First, they utter subtle words. Second, they utter gentle words. Third, they utter auspicious words. Fourth, they utter words pleasant to hear. Fifth, they utter compliant words. Sixth, they utter beneficial words. Seventh, they utter awe-inspiring words. Eighth, they do not contradict their kinsmen. Ninth, people and gods love and respect them. Tenth, they extol the Buddha's teachings. This good speech is all due to this scripture.

Next, they will obtain ten kinds of purity of mental action. What are the ten? First, they do not engender anger. Second, they do not harbor grudges. Third, they do not engender stingy thoughts. Fourth, they do not engender jealous thoughts. Fifth, they do not advocate transgressions. Sixth, they do not engender enmity. Seventh, they have no inverted thoughts. Eighth, they do not crave for things. Ninth, they have distanced

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themselves from the seven [kinds of] pride. Tenth, they are desirous of realizing all the Buddhist Dharma and perfecting *samādhi*.

Mañjuśrī, these merits are all due to the inconceivable power of upholding, reciting, mastering, explaining, and copying [this] profound and wondrous scriptural text. In immeasurable places and at immeasurable times this *Mind-ground Scripture* cannot be heard, let alone gaining sight of it and fully practicing it. All of you in [this] great assembly, uphold it single-mindedly and quickly abandon [the state of] ordinary people, and you will accomplish the path to buddhahood.

Thereupon the Dharma prince Mañjuśrī and other immeasurable great bodhisattvas, the bodhisattva Jñānaprabha and other bodhisattvas who had newly generated the [*bodhi*-]mind, Ājñātakauṇḍinya and other great *śrāvakas*, gods, *nāgas* [and others] of the eight classes [of nonhuman beings], and multitudes of humans and nonhumans each singlemindedly accepted and kept the words of the Buddha, and they all rejoiced greatly and believed, accepted, upheld, and practiced them.

[Here ends] Fascicle Eight of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This is the only instance in the Taishō canon of the Chinese transliteration Zhenina 眞提那, and the Sanskrit equivalent is uncertain. Judging from other similar lists of monks, it may possibly be an error for Cunda.
- <sup>2</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “eliminated . . . ten directions.” (Here and below “variants” refers to the Song, Yuan, and Ming editions, while “*Commentary*” refers to Yunzhong Laizhou’s *Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing qianzhu*. Only the more striking differences with the base text have been noted.)
- <sup>3</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* have “there was no vast Dharma bliss that they had not experienced.”
- <sup>4</sup> Many of the Sanskrit equivalents of the names of the bodhisattvas, gods, etc., in this and the following paragraphs are unclear. When the names have been translated (rather than transliterated) in the Chinese, they have therefore been translated here too, with the Sanskrit equivalent (which may in some cases appear to deviate somewhat from the English rendering) given in parentheses whenever possible (sometimes preceded by an asterisk to indicate that the Sanskrit equivalent is purely tentative). For convenience’s sake, when the same name reappears later in the text, the Sanskrit equivalent has been used.
- <sup>5</sup> Sixteen great countries (*mahājanapada*) are said to have flourished in ancient India at the time of the Buddha, but some of those named here are problematic. Kapilavastu was the capital city of the Śākya tribe and is not included in the standard list of sixteen countries. Kāśi was, strictly speaking, not the name of a king but the name of one of the sixteen countries, with its capital at Vārāṇasī (Benares). The Sanskrit equivalent of Yuyutuo is uncertain, but Udayana was the king of Vatsa, one of the sixteen countries. Sāla (Ch. Saluo) is also uncertain; it could be an abbreviation of Kosala/Kośala, one of the most important of the sixteen countries, with its capital at Śrāvastī, but this would be inconsistent with the subsequent mention of Prasenajit of Śrāvastī.
- <sup>6</sup> Candraprabha is the name of a king who, as one of the Buddha’s former incarnations, was a paragon of generosity.
- <sup>7</sup> The text seems to read Lokāyatikani. “Lokāyatika” is a follower of Lokāyata, i.e., a materialist.
- <sup>8</sup> The miracle of the Buddha’s ascent to Trāyastriṃśa Heaven is usually associated with Sāṃkāśya, to the west of Kanyakubja (also Kanyākubja, present-day Kannauj) in northern India. Andhra, on the other hand, lies in the south, and so the identity of the intended location of this miracle is uncertain.

- <sup>9</sup> It is not clear how “One Vehicle” here should be construed. It would perhaps be most natural to read it with *Lotus [Sutra]* (*One Vehicle of the Lotus [Sutra]*); alternatively, it could be read with *Mind-ground* (*Mind-ground of the One Vehicle*). If it is intended as a separate title, it could refer to the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, the Chinese title of which includes the words “One Vehicle.”
- <sup>10</sup> The stupa (or *caitya*) at Rājagṛha is usually said to commemorate either the Buddha’s reconciliation of a split in the sangha occasioned by his cousin Devadatta, or his subjugation of a fierce elephant.
- <sup>11</sup> The stupa at Vaiśālī is usually said to commemorate either the Buddha’s promise to prolong his life by three months or a gift of honey offered to him by a monkey.
- <sup>12</sup> *Abhiṣeka-bhūmi*. In the *Mahāvastu* this is identified with the final lifetime of the bodhisattva, when he becomes a buddha. In the Mahayana it is placed at the start of the tenth of the bodhisattva’s ten stages.
- <sup>13</sup> Possibly a reference to the first assembly described in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, said to have taken place two weeks after the Buddha’s enlightenment.
- <sup>14</sup> The *Commentary* has “he aimed for *bodhi*,” which would seem more appropriate.
- <sup>15</sup> I.e., those who erect stupas and those who make reverence to them and keep them in mind.
- <sup>16</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “Making them . . . deeply rejoice.”
- <sup>17</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit the remaining verses of this chapter.
- <sup>18</sup> A unit of capacity, usually translated as “bushel” and equivalent to 10 *dou*, or pecks. One *dou* is in turn equivalent to 10 *sheng*, or pints. During the Tang period, one *sheng* was equal to approximately 20 fluid ounces, which means that 180 *hu* would have been equivalent to about 2,812.5 U.S. liquid gallons or 10,646 liters. This figure of 180 *hu* is given in the *Antarābhava-sūtra*, translated by Zhu Fonian in the late fourth to early fifth centuries, as the amount of breast milk consumed by an infant born in Jambūdvīpa from birth to the age of three.
- <sup>19</sup> This story appears in chapter 2 of the Mahayana *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*.
- <sup>20</sup> These three kinds of ten *pāramitās* are explained in Chapter VIII.
- <sup>21</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “Each spread . . . the world.”
- <sup>22</sup> “Six relations” generally refers to one’s father, mother, older and younger brothers, wife, and children, but the *Commentary* mentions three different sets of six relations.
- <sup>23</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “Therefore . . . their meaning.”
- <sup>24</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “Do not say. . . the king.”
- <sup>25</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “If someone . . . his sins.”
- <sup>26</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “He will . . . middle grade.”
- <sup>27</sup> A reference to Mañjuśrī. A similar ordination ceremony is described in the *Guan Puxian pusa xingfa jing* (Taishō no. 277).
- <sup>28</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “The Dharma Jewel can illuminate . . . realm of space.”

- <sup>29</sup> The above passage is not a direct quotation from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, but a summarization of parts of Chapters I and II.
- <sup>30</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “If someone leaves home, cultivates a pure mind, . . . mental detachment” and have “Though the body may be detached. . .” for “Though the body may have left home. . .”
- <sup>31</sup> The six monks mentioned here were a “group of six” (*ṣaḍvārgika*) whose misbehavior led to the promulgation of many of the rules of conduct for the Buddhist order.
- <sup>32</sup> There exists a manual of Gāruḍic medicine, dealing primarily with the treatment of snakebites, that was translated, or perhaps compiled, by \*Prajñābala (Taishō no. 1278), and it has been suggested that this \*Prajñābala was the same person as the Prajña who translated the *Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*.
- <sup>33</sup> Several enumerations of ten marks or characteristics are found in various texts, but the meaning of “ten characteristics” here is uncertain. The Ming edition and the *Commentary* have “[external] characteristics of reality,” as opposed to “[inner] nature of reality,” for “ten characteristics.”
- <sup>34</sup> This presumably refers to the fourfold division of the family’s wealth.
- <sup>35</sup> *Vaḍabāmukha*; an entrance under the sea to the lower regions of the earth from which a fire emerges.
- <sup>36</sup> The following tale is based on the *Suppāraka Jātaka* (*Jātaka* no. 463), in which the country in question is called Bharu. The reconstruction Lāḍha (the name of a former country in western Bengal) is tentative; alternatively, it may be Rāḍhā, a district in western Bengal. The same story is also retold in the *Jātakamālā* (no. 14).
- <sup>37</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “The four oceans . . . at Mare’s Mouth.”
- <sup>38</sup> One of a set of five practices described in the Mahayana *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. However, it is uncertain whether this is what is here meant by “childlike conduct.”
- <sup>39</sup> These correspond to a set of practices known as the four “noble traditions” (*āryavaṃśa*). Contentment with clothing, bedding (or lodging), and (alms)food is common to all enumerations of the four items making up these “noble traditions,” but sources differ regarding the fourth, here given as medicine. In the detailed explanations below, however, bedding is omitted and dwelling in an *araṇya* is added instead. Hereafter, through to Chapter IX, there are many parallels with the *Ugraparipṛcchā*, but these have not been individually noted.
- <sup>40</sup> That is, thoughts that are either wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral.
- <sup>41</sup> A reference to the Padmagarbha-lokadhātu or Kusumatalagarbha-vyūhālamkāra-lokadhātu-samudra, the world where the Buddha Vairocana is said to reside.
- <sup>42</sup> According to the *Commentary*, this refers to holy ones of the three vehicles.
- <sup>43</sup> The base text has “thought(s) of a jeweled banner,” but the variants and the *Commentary* have “mark” for “thought(s),” which is consistent with the prose section.
- <sup>44</sup> Three kinds of myrobalan, i.e., chebulic, belliric, and emblic.

- <sup>45</sup> There is some textual confusion in the variants and the *Commentary* regarding the seventh and eighth virtues.
- <sup>46</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “Jñānaprabha . . . mental afflictions.”
- <sup>47</sup> Or Pravivekacārin? The Chinese translation has “He Who Delights in the Practice of Detachment.”
- <sup>48</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit “this *araṇya* is where one is well able to embrace the twelve *dhūtas*; . . . five aggregates.”
- <sup>49</sup> The “eight worldly dharmas” are eight concerns that govern the actions of worldlings, i.e., gain, loss, fame, infamy, praise, censure, happiness, and suffering.
- <sup>50</sup> Rather than referring to thirty-seven kinds of physical impurity, this would seem to refer to the thirty-seven observations about the body that are described below and are called the “thirty-seven observations” near the end of the chapter. These thirty-seven ways of observing the body may be compared with forty-four ways of observing the body described in the *Vīradattagr̥hapatipariṣcchā*.
- <sup>51</sup> For each of the ten *pāramitās* three levels of practice are explained (except that the second is missing in the section on the *pāramitā* of forbearance). Similar explanations of the *pāramitās* are found in several Yogācāra texts, such as the *Yogācārabhūmi* and the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra*, in which the third level is referred to as “great *pāramitā*.”
- <sup>52</sup> The *Commentary* takes this in the sense of the four attributes of nirvana, i.e., permanence, bliss, self, and purity, but it probably refers to four kinds of nirvana explained in the *Cheng weishi lun*: (1) nirvana that is originally pure by nature (\**anādikālikapraṅṅtiśuddha-nirvāṇa*), (2) nirvana with remaining support (*sopadhiśeṣa-nirvāṇa*), (3) nirvana without remaining support (*nirupadhiśeṣa-nirvāṇa*), and (4) nirvana with no fixed abode (*apraṅṅṅhita-nirvāṇa*).
- <sup>53</sup> Similar sets of eight kinds of purity of *samādhi*, etc., are found in the *Acintyabuddha-viṣayanirdeśa*.
- <sup>54</sup> The twenty-two faculties (*dvāviṃśatīndriyāṇi*) are the six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind), the female organ, the male organ, the life organ, the five sensations of pleasure, suffering, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and indifference, the five faculties of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom, and the three uncontaminated faculties of resolving to understand that which one does not understand, having understood, and perfecting one’s understanding.
- <sup>55</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* have “two hindrances.”
- <sup>56</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* omit this sentence.
- <sup>57</sup> This mantra and the two mantras in the following chapter correspond to the first three mantras in the five-stage process (*pañcākārābhisambodhikrama*) whereby Sarvārthasiddhi attains enlightenment near the start of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*.
- <sup>58</sup> Variants and the *Commentary* have “the left pressing against the right.” In esoteric texts the right usually has dominance over the left, which is the opposite of non-esoteric Buddhism.

- <sup>59</sup> These five *samādhis* are also mentioned (with minor differences in their names) in Taishō nos. 868 and 997, both of which were (co-)translated by Prajñā; the latter also includes explanations of each *samādhi* similar to those given below. Note that these five *samādhis* differ from the better-known five kinds of *samādhi* mentioned in the Mahayana *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*.
- <sup>60</sup> The base text has “true traces of the Buddha,” but I have followed the variants and the *Commentary*.
- <sup>61</sup> The base text has “right forefinger,” but since this passage describes the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, formed by grasping the tip of the raised forefinger of the otherwise clenched left hand with the clenched right hand, it has been emended to “left forefinger.”
- <sup>62</sup> The base text has “left fist,” but this has been emended to “right fist,” which is supported by the variants and the *Commentary*.
- <sup>63</sup> A form of the lotus position, with the left leg over the right thigh.



## Glossary

*ācārya*: Teacher.

*aranya*: Wilderness or forest, regarded as the ideal place to engage in the practices of a renunciant.

arhat: A saint who has freed himself from the cycle of birth and death by completely eradicating all passions; arhatship is the highest of the four stages of spiritual attainment in the Theravāda and other Mainstream schools of Buddhism.

*asaṃkhyā/asaṃkhyeya*: “Incalculable”; a very high number.

*asura*: A demigod, in perpetual conflict with the gods (*devas*).

*bodhi*: Awakening or enlightenment.

*bodhi*-mind (Skt. *bodhicitta*): Lit., the mind (*citta*) of awakening or enlightenment (*bodhi*). The aspiration for enlightenment.

bodhisattva (“enlightenment being”): In the Mahayana, a being who has engendered the aspiration to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all beings. *See also* *bodhi*-mind; Mahayana.

*caṇḍāla*: An untouchable, below the lowest of the four castes, born of a *śūdra* father and a brahman mother; also used as a generic term for any untouchable or outcaste.

*devaputra*: Lit., “son (*putra*) of a god (*deva*),” but often used synonymously with *deva* (god).

*dhāraṇī*: Mnemonic device or formula; also, spell or incantation.

*dhūta* (also *dhuta*): Ascetic practices, of which generally twelve are listed in the Mahayana.

*dhyāna*: Meditation or contemplation.

eight difficulties (Skt. *aṣṭākṣaṇa*): Eight places or circumstances where one is unable to see the Buddha or listen to the Dharma—(1) hell, (2) the realm of hungry ghosts, (3) the realm of animals, (4) the heavens of long life, (5) the border regions, (6) the state of having impaired sense organs, (7) the state of having erroneous views, and (8) the land where a tathāgata has not appeared.

eight great fears (Skt. *aṣṭamahābhaya*): Usually, (1) lions, (2) elephants, (3) fire, (4) snakes, (5) thieves, (6) violent waters, (7) imprisonment, and (8) demons.

eight liberations (Skt. *aṣṭavimokṣa*): Eight kinds of meditation for attaining liberation from mental afflictions.

eight perils: *See* eight great fears.

## Glossary

eight sufferings (Skt. *aṣṭaduḥkha*): (1) birth, (2) old age, (3) sickness, (4) death, (5) the suffering of being separated from those whom one loves, (6) the suffering of associating with those whom one dislikes, (7) the suffering of not getting what one wants, and (8) the suffering inherent in the five aggregates. See also five aggregates.

five aggregates (Skt. *pañcaskandha*): The five constituent elements of individual existence—(1) form (or matter), (2) perception (or sensation), (3) ideation, (4) volition, and (5) consciousness.

five destinies: An alternative term for the five paths. See also five paths.

five paths (Skt. *pañcagati*): Five states of transmigratory existence—(1) hell, (2) hungry ghosts (*pretas*), (3) animals, (4) humans, and (5) gods (*devas*). See also six paths.

five supernormal faculties (Skt. *pañcābhijñā*): Five supernormal powers—(1) supernormal vision, (2) supernormal hearing, (3) the ability to know others' thoughts, (4) the ability to know former lives, and (5) the ability to perform miracles such as appearing anywhere at will.

four demons (Skt. *caturmāra*): Four causes of suffering and obstacles to practice—(1) mental afflictions, (2) the five aggregates, (3) death, and (4) the king of demons (*Pāpīyas*) in Paranirmitavaśavartin Heaven.

four groups of practitioners (Skt. *catuspariṣad*): Four categories of Buddhist followers—(1) monks, (2) nuns, (3) laymen, and (4) laywomen.

four immeasurables (Skt. *catvāry apramāṇāni*): Four virtuous states of mind, regarded as immeasurable because they focus on all beings and can produce infinite merits—(1) loving-kindness, (2) compassion, (3) sympathetic joy, and (4) equanimity.

*gandharva*: A class of heavenly beings, famed for their musical skills.

*garuḍa*: A type of mythical bird.

*kiṃnara*: A class of heavenly beings, often associated with music.

*koṭi*: A high number, a crore.

*kṣatriya*: A member of the military or ruling class, the second of the four castes.

*mahāsattva* (“great being”): An epithet for a bodhisattva. See also bodhisattva.

Mahayana (“Great Vehicle”): A form of Buddhism that developed in India around 100 B.C.E. and exalts as its religious ideal the bodhisattva. See also bodhisattva.

*mahoraga*: A type of mythical snake.

*mudrā*: A ritual hand gesture.

*nāga*: A class of serpentlike beings; usually rendered in Chinese as “dragon.”

*pāramitā*: See six perfections.

*piśāca*: A class of flesh-eating demons.

*pratyekabuddha* (“individually enlightened one”): A sage who has attained enlightenment without the guidance of a teacher and who intends neither to guide nor to teach others.

*rākṣasa*: A class of malignant demons.

- samādhi*: A state of focused concentration or mental composure.
- seven precious things: Seven kinds of precious metals and gems, variously listed in different sources. Also, seven precious things said to be possessed by a wheel-turning king (*cakravartin*)—(1) a wheel, (2) a precious jewel, (3) a queen, (4) a minister, (5) an elephant, (6) a general, and (7) a horse.
- six destinies: An alternative term for the six paths. *See also* six paths.
- six paths (Skt. *ṣaḍgati*): Six states of transmigratory existence—(1) hell, (2) hungry ghosts (*pretas*), (3) animals, (4) demigods (*asuras*), (5) humans, and (6) gods (*devas*). *See also* five paths.
- six perfections (Skt. *ṣaṭpāramitā*): The perfection (*pāramitā*) of six qualities practiced by the bodhisattva on the way to complete enlightenment—(1) giving or generosity (*dāna*), (2) morality or keeping the precepts (*śīla*), (3) forbearance or patience (*kṣānti*), (4) effort (*vīrya*), (5) meditation (*dhyāna*), and (6) wisdom (*prajñā*). *See also* bodhisattva.
- six recollections (Skt. *ṣaḍānusmṛti*): Six kinds of mindfulness directed at (1) the Buddha, (2) the Dharma, (3) the Sangha, (4) morality, (5) charity, and (6) divinities.
- six supernormal faculties (Skt. *ṣaḍabhijñā*): Six supernormal powers consisting of the five supernormal faculties plus the ability to eradicate defilements. *See also* five supernormal faculties.
- śrāvaka* (“listener”): Originally, a disciple of the historical Buddha, one who directly heard his teachings. Later used as a general term for followers of early Buddhism, to distinguish them from adherents of Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism.
- śūdra*: A member of the serf class, the lowest of the four castes.
- Sugata: Literally, “he who has attained happiness” (or “he who has gone well”); a designation for a buddha.
- Tathāgata: Literally, “he who has thus gone (or come)”; a designation for a buddha.
- thirty-seven factors of *bodhi* (Skt. *saptatṛiṃśad bodhipakṣikā dharmāḥ*): A scheme of thirty-seven practices conducive to enlightenment divided into seven groups—(1) four fields of mindfulness, (2) four right exertions, (3) four bases of supernormal power, (4) five faculties, (5) five powers, (6) seven limbs of enlightenment, and (7) the noble eightfold path.
- three attainments: A reference to three of the six supernormal faculties—(1) the ability to know former lives; (2) supernormal vision, especially insight into the future destiny of all beings; and (3) the ability to eradicate defilements in the present. *See also* six supernormal faculties.
- three emptinesses: *See* three liberations.
- three evil destinies (Skt. *tryapāya*): Three of the six states of transmigratory existence in which sentient beings transmigrate in retribution for evil deeds—(1) hell, (2) hungry ghosts, and (3) animals. *See also* six paths.
- three hindrances (Skt. *āvaraṇatraya*): Three obstacles to practice caused by (1) karma, (2) mental afflictions, and (3) retribution for past deeds.

## Glossary

three liberations (Skt. *vimokṣatraya*): Three kinds of meditation regarded as gateways to liberation and known also as the three emptinesses: (1) meditation on emptiness, (2) meditation on signlessness, and (3) meditation on wishlessness.

three poisons (Skt. *tridoṣa*): Three basic mental afflictions—(1) desire or greed, (2) hatred or anger, and (3) ignorance or delusion.

three realms (Skt. *tridhātu*): Three spheres of transmigratory existence—(1) the realm of desire, i.e., the world of everyday consciousness accompanied by desires; (2) the realm of form, in which desires have been eliminated but the physical body remains; and (3) the realm of nonform, in which the physical body no longer exists.

three sets of pure precepts (Skt. *trividhāni śīlāni*): A threefold categorization of moral behavior—(1) precepts of restraint, pertaining to discipline and deportment; (2) precepts for accumulating wholesome qualities; and (3) precepts for bringing benefit to beings.

two hindrances (Skt. *āvāraṇadvaya*): Two kinds of obstructions to practice—(1) afflictive hindrances caused by mental afflictions and (2) cognitive hindrances due to fundamental misapprehensions about the nature of reality.

*upādhyāya*: Religious instructor or preceptor.

*vaiśya*: A member of the class of peasants, merchants, and artisans, the third of the four castes.

*vajra*: A diamond and, by extension, anything hard and indestructible; a ritual implement shaped like a bolt and having one, three, or five prongs at each end.

wheel-turning sage-king (Skt. *cakravartin*): An ideal universal monarch whose power derives from a wheel obtained at the time of his enthronement; four kinds of *cakravartins* are distinguished according to the basic element from which his wheel is made (gold, silver, copper, or iron).

*yakṣa*: A class of semidivine beings originally regarded as possessing a generally benevolent disposition, although they are sometimes classed with more malignant spirits.

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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. <i>The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation                of the Mind-ground</i> (2021)	159
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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. Miaofa lianhua jing youbotishe (妙法蓮華經憂波提舍)	1519
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Ch. Shizha biposha lun (十住毘婆沙論)	1521
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Ch. Fodijing lun (佛地經論)	1530
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Ch. Apidamojushe lun (阿毘達磨俱舍論)	1558
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Ch. Zhonglun (中論) Skt. Madhyamaka-śāstra	1564
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Ch. Weishi sanshilun song (唯識三十論頌) Skt. Triṃśikā Eng. <i>The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only</i> (in <i>Three Texts on Consciousness Only</i> , 1999)	1586
Ch. Weishi ershi lun (唯識二十論) Skt. Viṃśatikā Eng. <i>The Treatise in Twenty Verses on Consciousness Only</i> (in <i>Three Texts on Consciousness Only</i> , 1999)	1590
Ch. She dasheng lun (攝大乘論) Skt. Mahāyānasamgraha Eng. <i>The Summary of the Great Vehicle</i> (Revised Second Edition, 2003)	1593
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Ch. Dasheng zhuangyanjing lun (大乘莊嚴經論) Skt. Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra	1604
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Ch. Jiuqing yisheng baoxing lun (究竟一乘寶性論) Skt. Ratnagotravibhāga-mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra	1611
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Ch. Dasheng ji pusa xue lun (大乘集菩薩學論) Skt. Śikṣāsamuccaya	1636
Ch. Jingangzhen lun (金剛針論) Skt. Vajrasūcī	1642

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Ch. Zhang suozhi lun (彰所知論) Eng. <i>The Treatise on the Elucidation of the Knowable</i> (2004)	1645
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
Ch. Dasheng qixin lun (大乘起信論) Skt. *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-śāstra Eng. <i>The Awakening of Faith</i> (2005)	1666
Ch. Shimoheyan lun (釋摩訶衍論)	1668
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Ch. Wumen guan (無門關) Eng. <i>Wumen's Gate</i> (in <i>Three Chan Classics</i> , 1999)	2005
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Ch. Xinxin ming (信心銘) Eng. <i>The Faith-Mind Maxim</i> (in <i>Three Chan Classics</i> , 1999)	2010
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Ch. Ayuwang jing (阿育王經) Skt. Aśokāvadāna Eng. <i>The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka</i> (1993)	2043
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Ch. Hongming ji (弘明集)	2102
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Jp. Senchaku hongan nembutsu shū (選擇本願念佛集)	2608
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Jp. Ōjōyōshū (往生要集)	2682
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Ch. Fumu enzhong jing (父母恩重經)	2887
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Jp. Hasshūkōyō (八宗綱要)	extracanonical
Eng. <i>The Essentials of the Eight Traditions</i> (1994)	
Jp. Sangō shiki (三教指帰)	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