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The Questions of Pūrṇa

Pūrṇaparipṛcchā

Translated into Tibetan by

འཕགས་པ་གང་གང་པོས་ལྷུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa gang pos zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Questions of Pūrṇa”

Āryapūrṇapariṣcchānāmamahāyānasūtra



Toh 61

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SUMMARY

- s.1 In Veṇuvana, outside Rājagṛha, Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asks the Buddha about the conduct of bodhisattvas practicing on the path to awakening. The Buddha replies by describing the attitudes that bodhisattvas must possess as well as their benefits. Then, at the request of Maudgalyāyana, the Buddha recounts several of his past lives in which he himself practiced bodhisattva conduct. At the end of the teaching, the Buddha instructs the assembly about how to deal with specific objections to his teachings that outsiders might raise after he himself has passed into nirvāṇa.

ac.

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i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Questions of Pūrṇa is the seventeenth sūtra among the forty-nine titles included in *The Heap of Jewels* collection in the Degé Kangyur. Although traditional scholars have quoted this sūtra in a number of Tibetan writings,¹ the text has to our knowledge received very little attention in modern scholarship.² Only a few of the texts contained in *The Heap of Jewels* are extant in Sanskrit, and *The Questions of Pūrṇa* is unfortunately not among them. There is only one Chinese translation (Taishō 310–17), produced by the renowned translator Kumārajīva, (344–413 CE) who completed the translation toward the end of his life in 405 CE, while residing in the then Chinese capital of Chang’an (today’s Xi’an). The Tibetan translation was completed in the early translation period and is listed in both early ninth-century catalogs, the Denkarma (Tib. *ldan dkar ma*) and the Phangthangma (Tib. *’phang thang ma*). This English translation is based on the Degé block print, the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*), and the Stok Palace manuscript, comparing these line by line with Kumārajīva’s Chinese translation.

i.2

The Tibetan text has no translators’ colophon, but evidence suggests that, unlike most of the discourses translated into Tibetan during the early translation period, this text was most likely translated from Chinese, rather than from Sanskrit: Kumārajīva’s translation and the Tibetan are nearly identical in content and structure,³ and a number of apparently erroneous readings in the Tibetan text can be understood and resolved clearly when they are compared with the Chinese. Moreover, the Tibetan includes several transliterated names and terms that seem to be derived from the Chinese; and a few terms⁴ that appear in some of the Tibetan versions of this text are present almost exclusively in other discourses that are known explicitly to have been translated from the Chinese.⁵

i.3

The Buddha’s main interlocutor in the sūtra is the monk Pūrṇa, as the title suggests. This is Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, a brahmin from Kapilavastu, ordained by his uncle Ājñātakauṇḍinya when the latter returned to

Kapilavastu soon after the Buddha's first teaching; he is one of six or more figures with the name Pūrṇa in the Buddhist discourses⁶ and is described as the foremost in explaining the doctrine. He is also regarded as one of the ten main disciples of the Buddha, especially noted for his eloquence. Pūrṇa sets the scene by asking questions related to bodhisattva conduct. Following his inquiry, the sūtra unfolds in eight chapters that address a variety of topics related to bodhisattva conduct, the first three at least being direct answers to Pūrṇa's initial questions. It is noteworthy that throughout the text the Buddha's only interlocutors as he teaches the bodhisattva path—Pūrṇa, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Ānanda, and Elephant Trunk—are all hearer disciples and not bodhisattvas. While, throughout the text, great emphasis is placed on the importance of realizing the emptiness of phenomena and the view that does not dwell on anything, the conduct the Buddha teaches remains firmly anchored in renunciation, a monastic lifestyle, and difficult ascetic practices.

i.4 Chapter 1 presents a teaching by the Buddha on the way that bodhisattvas can accomplish immeasurable awakened qualities after giving rise to the mind set on awakening. The Buddha lists several sets of spiritual qualities that bodhisattvas must accomplish in order to reach the awakened state. Chapter 2 is devoted to the question of developing a high level of erudition, which allows bodhisattvas to comprehend the definitive meaning of the Dharma. Chapter 3 describes how bodhisattvas can make their progress toward awakening irreversible if they can study, contemplate, and practice previously unknown Dharma teachings with an open mind, rather than automatically discarding them as non-Dharma. Chapter 4 presents further sets of spiritual qualities that bodhisattvas must cultivate in order to obtain sufficient roots of virtue, emphasizing in particular the practice of patience in the face of adversity and hostility. Here the Buddha also narrates a story from one of his previous lives as inspiration for practice, and the narrative includes a pointed description of how biased attitudes can cause sectarian distrust even between followers of the very same lineage taught to different generations.

i.5 In Chapter 5 the Buddha displays his miraculous powers to the assembly by projecting light from his body; all those who witness this miraculous display become attracted to the Dharma and aspire to achieve perfect awakening. The Buddha entrusts this teaching to Ānanda, emphasizing its importance for the future and seeming to put it on a parallel, as a text of the Bodhisattva Collection, to his very first teaching in Sarnath. Chapter 6 begins with Mahāmaudgalyāyana, another of the Buddha's closest disciples, requesting a teaching on how the Buddha practiced bodhisattva conduct in the past. The Buddha recounts several stories from his past lives, describing

in detail the hardships he had to undergo for the sake of beings. Chapter 7 introduces advice by the Buddha on how to deal with particular controversies the monks might be faced with after he himself has passed away. Using various arguments to counter the accusations of future adversaries, the Buddha explains how to respond to such controversies. This entire chapter is devoted to the defense of the thought and practice of the Great Vehicle against the objections of orthodox Buddhists, who argued that texts like this one were not authentic Buddhist scriptures. That this text addresses such issues directly suggests that it may have first appeared in writing at a time when the Bodhisattva Vehicle was still controversial and had not yet been widely adopted. Lastly, in Chapter 8 Pūrṇa praises the Buddha's teaching and makes a commitment to follow the path of the Great Vehicle himself, in order to liberate all beings from suffering.

The Translation

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

The Questions of Pūrṇa

1.

Chapter One

THE CONDUCT OF BODHISATTVAS

[F.168.b] [B1]

1.1 Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time: The Blessed One was residing at the Veṇuvana in Rājagṛha, together with a great saṅgha of many monks and with countless bodhisattva great beings. At that time, the venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra arose, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms joined together in the direction of the Blessed One he said, “Blessed One, I have a few questions to ask you. Thus-Gone One, please consider me with love and grant me this request.”

1.3 “Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra,” replied the Blessed One, “ask me whatever you wish. I will instruct you genuinely and satisfy your mind.”

1.4 “Blessed One,” said the venerable Pūrṇa, “I have questions about the bodhisattva great beings who have accomplished the highest qualities and attained superior and far-reaching renown, and who pursue the happiness of sentient beings at all times.” And the venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra then put his questions in these verses:

1.5 “I have questions about those
Who have accomplished the highest qualities,
Who have attained superior and far-reaching renown,
And who observe pure discipline and conduct devoted to the Dharma.

1.6 “How do they train their minds?
How do they practice generosity on a vast scale?
How do they liberate sentient beings?
How do they constantly cultivate the path with a joyful mind?

- 1.7 “Blessed One,” continued Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, [F.169.a] “I have questions about these holy beings. How do bodhisattvas amass great knowledge, such that it will not be exhausted, like the ocean? Having amassed a precious treasure of erudition, how is it that, by comprehending the meaning that is definitive with regard to all phenomena, they correctly penetrate the meaning of words?” He then spoke again in verse:
- 1.8 “How do bodhisattvas seek
A level of erudition like a vast ocean,
And having comprehended the meaning that is definitive with regard to
phenomena,
How do they gain an understanding of the path to awakening?”
- 1.9 “How do they understand boundless meanings
Through a single word,
So that, through the power of such insight,
They can comprehend all phenomena?”
- 1.10 “Since their erudition is infinite,
Their minds do not waver, even when faced with opponents.
Teaching the Dharma out of compassion,
They eliminate the doubts of sentient beings.
- 1.11 “Blessed One,” continued the venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “I have another question for the Thus-Gone One about the force of the wisdom that follows from the attainment of the bodhisattva levels. How is it that bodhisattva great beings’ progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening will be irreversible?” He then went on in verse:
- 1.12 “Having abandoned the states without freedom,
How do they encounter many buddhas?
And having seen many buddhas,
How do they swiftly develop sincere faith?”
- 1.13 “Having developed that unsurpassed type of faith,
How do they give away that which is extremely difficult to give away?
Having completely given everything away,
How with that force do they practice unhindered on the path?”
- 1.14 “Having developed the aspiration to go forth,
How do they cultivate the wisdom of emptiness in isolated places?
How do they act in ways that do not contradict the Dharma?
Please elucidate these matters.

- 1.15 “Blessed One,” continued the venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “the thus-gone ones have reached perfect omniscience. They have mastered all miraculous powers and are the supreme beings within the three realms. [F.169.b] Having achieved incomparable, sublime wisdom, they know how to put the Dharma into action in an unhindered manner. These are the reasons why I ask you these questions.” He again spoke in verse:
- 1.16 “Blessed One, since you possess the most sublime qualities,
Since you master the miraculous displays,
And since you have reached unimpeded wisdom,
I ask these questions of you, great hero.
- 1.17 “Since you are perfectly trained in all Dharma teachings,
Since your qualities are superior and outstanding,
And since you radiate the light of wisdom that dispels darkness,
You bring delight to the multitudes who attend you.
- 1.18 “You are free from attachment and aversion to friends and enemies;
You are free from sorrow and deception.
You have conquered the Lord of Death,
And defeated the armies of Māra.
- 1.19 “Without brandishing any weapon,
You have defeated all your enemies.
With a mind always filled with love,
You firmly maintain pure discipline.
- 1.20 “Blessed One, you are free of deceit and guile,
Free of pride, and free of arrogance.
Since you have attained the knowledge of liberation,
You possess the highest of all qualities.
- 1.21 “How did you, in the past, reach supreme knowledge
By means of practicing on the path?
How did you awaken through practice?
Please explain this to me!”
- 1.22 In response, the Blessed One said to the venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra,
“These questions you ask of the Thus-Gone One are excellent, excellent!
Listen carefully and pay attention. I will now teach you how bodhisattvas
give rise to their intention and then accomplish the immeasurable qualities
of a buddha.” The Blessed One then uttered these verses:
- 1.23 “I will explain to you now

- How bodhisattvas first give rise to the mind set on awakening,
And then practice on the path to awakening,
Through the power of their intensive diligence.
- 1.24 “There are many kinds of good intentions
That bodhisattvas apply in their activity;
And those factors, which the buddhas have explained
In detail, I will briefly teach you.
- 1.25 “The devotion to the Dharma to which they give rise [F.170.a]
Through these extraordinary attitudes is immeasurable—it is infinite.
That they display their many kinds of activities
Is not brought about through one thing alone.
- 1.26 “It is joy blossoming in their minds
That makes bodhisattvas perform acts of generosity,
And since they practice generosity without having regrets,
Their minds become more joyful.
- 1.27 “Bodhisattvas think,
‘Since sentient beings are always impoverished,
They do not possess the wealth of erudition.
So I must pursue such wealth!
- 1.28 “ ‘Sentient beings, though always impoverished,
Fall under the influence of laziness.
I must therefore develop my diligence
And reach the state of awakening!
- 1.29 “ ‘With the thought that it is for the sake of sentient beings,
I shall cultivate patience.
Even if I am insulted or beaten,
I will not say anything in return.
- 1.30 “ ‘Who is abusing me?
Since an abuser cannot be perceived,
All those abusers
And those who are angry are empty!’
- 1.31 “It is because they think in that way
That their minds are devoid of aggression and resentment.
Since they always cultivate patience,
They will become perfect buddhas.
- 1.32 “Acting as lamps within the world,

- They provide protection and refuge
 To sentient beings whose minds are not inclined toward virtue,
 And they cause the impoverished to become wealthy.
- 1.33 “They think, ‘Since sentient beings who follow mistaken paths
 Are the objects of my compassion,
 I shall liberate them
 And establish them in nirvāṇa!’
- 1.34 “They think, ‘Since all sentient beings are impoverished,
 They do not possess the wealth of insight.
 After reaching the state of omniscience,
 I shall bring them satiation.’
- 1.35 “It is in such ways that bodhisattvas,
 In order to liberate sentient beings,
 Keep persevering on the path
 As they engender the mind set on awakening and strive for it.”
- 1.36 The Blessed One then said to the venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra,
 “Through these different causes and conditions, bodhisattva great beings
 teach the Dharma to sentient beings; yet they do not dwell on just some
 Dharma teachings. Why is that? Because it is after having correctly trained in
 all Dharma teachings [F.170.b] that bodhisattvas will later become perfect
 buddhas.
- 1.37 “Bodhisattvas have four amazing and marvelous attitudes, compared to
 which they see no other Dharma teaching as more important. What are the
 four? (1) That which makes bodhisattvas cultivate diligence with regard to
 lazy beings; this is the first amazing and marvelous attitude. (2) That which
 makes them cultivate patience while they are among obstinate sentient
 beings full of aggression; this is the second amazing and marvelous attitude.
 (3) That which makes them persevere on the correct path themselves, seeing
 sentient beings practicing on mistaken paths; this is the third amazing and
 marvelous attitude. (4) That which makes them give rise to the mind set on
 unsurpassed and perfect awakening with the extraordinary resolve to
 liberate sentient beings from saṃsāra; this is the fourth amazing and
 marvelous attitude. Pūrṇa, these four amazing and marvelous attitudes are
 known as the *supreme, amazing, and marvelous attitudes of bodhisattvas*.” At that
 moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:
- 1.38 “When bodhisattvas see lazy beings,
 It incites them to develop their diligence.
 The thought never occurs to them

Of showing them anything contrary to the Dharma.

- 1.39 “They think, ‘I will not show anger;
Aggression is not the path of the buddhas.’
Because they consistently cultivate love,
The awakened state is born from that attitude.
- 1.40 “Sentient beings follow mistaken paths
Because they are attracted to them.
Bodhisattvas pursue the correct path
And establish sentient beings on that path.
- 1.41 “Since they perceive the defects of saṃsāra,
They one-pointedly pursue the wisdom of the buddhas.
They think, ‘I shall obtain the unsurpassed treasure
And then liberate sentient beings.’
- 1.42 “There is nothing greater
Than these marvelous attitudes.
You should know that these bodhisattvas
Will thereby develop qualities without impediment. [F.171.a]
- 1.43 “If laziness should arise in their minds,
They swiftly clear it away,
As if the clothes on their body were burning
Or their hair had caught fire.
- 1.44 “Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “if bodhisattvas possess four qualities, joy will be born in their minds. What are the four? (1) When bodhisattvas see that sentient beings remain in saṃsāra and do not cultivate diligence, but see that they themselves remain on the path of the buddhas and do cultivate diligence, joy will be born in their minds. (2) When bodhisattvas see that sentient beings are constantly overwhelmed by laziness, but they see that they themselves diligently follow the teachings of the buddhas, joy will be born in their minds. (3) When bodhisattvas see that sentient beings are aggressive, resentful, and jealous, yet they see that they themselves are free from aggression, resentment, and jealousy and always manifest an attitude of love, joy will be born in their minds. (4) When bodhisattvas see that no one matches their diligence in accomplishing the qualities of the buddhas, joy will be born in their minds.”
At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:
- 1.45 “Bodhisattvas develop their diligence
When they see lazy beings.

- As a consequence,
Joy will be born in their minds.
- 1.46 “Since bodhisattvas perceive the defects of saṃsāra,
Weariness has arisen in their minds.
Fearing the prison of the three realms,
They reject it with great efforts.
- 1.47 “Sentient beings are fond of aggression and resentment,
But bodhisattvas are loving.
Therefore, joy and happiness
Will be born in their minds.
- 1.48 “Because of not engaging in any of the activities
Performed by ordinary beings,
They think, ‘I shall pursue
The path of the unsurpassed buddhas.’
- 1.49 “They think, ‘I shall train
In the authentic wisdom
Praised by the buddhas [F.171.b]
And become a refuge for all beings.’
- 1.50 “Therefore, since joy always arises
In the minds of bodhisattvas,
From untrue, conditioned phenomena
They develop genuine qualities.
- 1.51 “Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “if bodhisattvas possess four qualities, they will be free from the unfree states, and having obtained the complete freedom to do so they will attain the qualities of a buddha without wasting that opportunity. What are the four? (1) Since the minds of bodhisattvas are humble and gentle, they always express the wish for sentient beings to be happy when they see them, and they always speak sincerely and smile while engaging in conversation with someone. (2) Since bodhisattvas pursue the Dharma one-pointedly and are always strongly dedicated to investigating it, they insatiably pursue virtue and exert themselves toward it. (3) Bodhisattvas are attracted to isolated places and enjoy remaining in solitude. (4) Bodhisattvas follow the path of awakening and encourage others to follow the same path. If bodhisattvas possess these four qualities, they will be free from the states that lack freedom, and having obtained the complete freedom to do so they will attain the qualities of a buddha without wasting that opportunity.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:

- 1.52 “Since their minds are flexible,
And since they always cultivate love,
Bodhisattvas remain humble and speak honestly
In conversing with sentient beings.
- 1.53 “They always pursue the profound and sublime Dharma
Praised by the buddhas.
They always maintain pure discipline,
And are always inclined to engage in spiritual trainings.
- 1.54 “While observing the virtues of ascetic practice,
They also practice with profound insight.
Therefore, bodhisattvas will leave behind
The unfree states, and obtain the freedoms.
- 1.55 “Since they always request the buddhas
To teach the profound Dharma,
Their insight will increase,
And they will never again be born into unfree states.
- 1.56 “Always attracted to solitary places,
They engage in pure trainings. [F.172.a]
Thus, bodhisattvas will leave behind
The unfree states and obtain the freedoms.
- 1.57 “If intelligent and wise persons
Rely on these four qualities,
They will leave the unfree states behind
And encounter many buddhas.
- 1.58 “In the presence of those many buddhas,
They will be filled with incorruptible faith.⁷
Developing the highest form of diligence,
They will pursue the wisdom of the buddhas.
- 1.59 “Therefore, those who pursue wisdom
Should train in the authentic Dharma.
If they do so, it will not be hard for them
To reach the path of awakening.”
- 1.60 *This was the first chapter, The Conduct of Bodhisattvas.*

2.

Chapter Two

ERUDITION

2.1 “Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “if bodhisattvas possess four qualities, they will amass great knowledge, such that it will not be exhausted, like the ocean. Constantly amassing a precious treasure of erudition, they will—by comprehending the meaning that is definitive with regard to phenomena—correctly penetrate the meaning of words. What are the four?”

2.2 “(1) Since bodhisattvas pursue the Dharma, they pursue the twelve branches of the scriptures. These are the discourses, hymns and praises, prophecies, verses, aphorisms, narratives, former events, former births, extensive teachings, marvels, biographies, and profound doctrines. Upon receiving these teachings, bodhisattvas read them, recite them, and properly recollect them. After that, they practice these teachings in accordance with the way they are taught. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas possess this first quality, they will amass great knowledge, such that it will not be exhausted, like the ocean. Constantly amassing a precious treasure of erudition, [F.172.b] they will—by comprehending the meaning that is definitive with regard to phenomena—correctly penetrate the meaning of words.

2.3 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (2) bodhisattvas do not dwell on any phenomenon, so there will be nothing for them to fixate upon, even while resting in concentration or absorption. Free from fixation, they will attain the wisdom that does not dwell on any phenomenon, thereby reaching unimpeded wisdom vision⁸ with respect to phenomena. Why is it so? Because, Pūrṇa, these bodhisattvas are free from desire and from any other form of impediment. If bodhisattvas possess this second quality, they will amass great knowledge, such that it will not be exhausted, like the ocean. Constantly amassing a precious treasure of erudition, they will—by comprehending the meaning that is definitive with regard to phenomena—correctly penetrate the meaning of words.

2.4 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (3) bodhisattvas recollect the Buddha in terms of the causes and conditions of pursuing the Dharma, and they recollect the Buddha’s teachings as well. When bodhisattvas thus recollect the Buddha in terms of the causes and conditions of pursuing the Dharma, and they recollect the Buddha’s teachings as well, they do not perceive any phenomenon to which they could be attached. Because they are free from attachment, their minds do not cling to any phenomenon. Hence, because they are free of clinging to any phenomenon, they will be able to answer questions without any hindrances. If bodhisattvas possess this third quality, they will amass great knowledge, such that it will not be exhausted, like the ocean. Constantly amassing a precious treasure of erudition, they will—by comprehending the meaning that is definitive with regard to phenomena—correctly penetrate the meaning of words.

2.5 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (4) bodhisattvas who have perfected the attitude of love free of apprehending will not be hindered in their actions, since love free of apprehending does not hold on to anything. [F.173.a] Why is it so? Because, Pūrṇa, dwelling on marks generates attachment, anger, and ignorance. Dwelling on the marks of entities, the marks of material substances, the marks of the aggregates, the marks of the sense sources, the marks of the elements, the marks of the Dharma, or the marks of the non-Dharma also generates attachment, anger, and ignorance. Therefore, Pūrṇa, all those views that involve clinging to marks are known as *wrong views*. Bodhisattvas cultivate love in order to be at peace from all those marks. They think, ‘Since sentient beings and marks will perish, entities will also perish. Since entities will perish, views will also perish.’ In this way, bodhisattvas then cultivate love as everything perishes. This love is known as *love free of apprehending*. This love free of apprehending is known as *love of the Dharma*. This love of the Dharma is known as *love of the Buddha*. Pūrṇa, what is the love of the Buddha? The absence of formation and disintegration is what is implied by the words *love of the Buddha*. Furthermore, Pūrṇa, the complete realization of all phenomena as they really are is also what is meant by the words *love of the Buddha*.”

2.6 “Blessed One,” asked Pūrṇa, “what is meant by *the complete realization of all phenomena as they really are*?”

“Pūrṇa,” replied the Blessed One, “this complete realization does not involve conceptualization such as, ‘this is the Dharma’ or ‘this is not the Dharma.’ Why is that so? Because, Pūrṇa, if someone says, ‘the Dharma exists,’ that would be non-Dharma, [F.173.b] and if that person says ‘the Dharma is nonexistent,’ the non-Dharma would not exist either. Therefore,

- this realization is free from conceptual constructs. This absence of conceptual constructs is called *nirvāṇa*. Once you have investigated in that way, do you find that it is something very far away, or instead something very close?”
- 2.7 “It is neither far nor close,” answered Pūrṇa. “Why is it so? Blessed One, because it has no sides, it does not abide anywhere, and it has no inside or outside.”
- “Pūrṇa,” said the Blessed One, “that is how you should regard phenomena.”
- 2.8 “Blessed One,” asked Pūrṇa, “what kind of phenomenon should I regard in that way?”
- “Pūrṇa, it is said that the thus-gone ones do not apprehend, create, or manifest those phenomena that immature ordinary beings so strongly cling to. So not conceptualizing⁹ such phenomena is called *assessing* them. Pūrṇa, since such assessments of phenomena are free from differentiation, I will now explain to you the sublime, supreme Dharma of disengagement, which subsumes the path to buddhahood.
- 2.9 “Pūrṇa, in the future, if those who cling to worldly gains hear this discourse, they will not be motivated to listen to its teachings or to adopt it. Pūrṇa, when I say, ‘I am awakened,’ you understand these words only partially, from the mere perspective of words and concepts, but you are unable to grasp their actual meaning. This meaning is extremely profound; it cannot be expressed by words. Instead, it is known only by the wise ones themselves.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:
- 2.10 “Those who do not understand this point
Will be troubled about the Buddha and the Dharma.
Those who know this point
Will be instructed by the buddhas.
- 2.11 “Those who conceive of the Buddha as the teacher
Pursue nirvāṇa.
Avoiding quarrels and fights, [F.174.a]
They think only about the authentic Dharma.
- 2.12 “Phenomena are unborn
And unceasing.
The absence of birth and cessation
Is the true characteristic of phenomena.
- 2.13 “Unborn phenomena
Are beyond actions and manifestations.
They transcend distinctions such as
‘It is,’ ‘it is not,’ ‘it is different,’ and ‘it is the same.’

- 2.14 “This is nirvāṇa.
In it, there is nothing that ceases.
The expressions *close* and *far*
Are both empty.
- 2.15 “Someone who realizes emptiness
Understands nirvāṇa.
Someone who understands nirvāṇa
Is known to be my disciple.
- 2.16 “Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas possess this fourth quality, they will amass great knowledge, such that it will not be exhausted, like the ocean. Constantly amassing a precious treasure of erudition, they will—by comprehending the meaning that is definitive with regard to phenomena—correctly penetrate the meaning of words.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:
- 2.17 “Those who constantly wish to pursue erudition
Will be praised by the buddhas.
Realizing the true, definitive meaning,
Their knowledge will become oceanic.
- 2.18 “Even if others were to praise these beings
For a trillion eons, this task would never come to an end—
They could not complete the expression
Of the meaning of a phrase or even of a single letter of that praise.
- 2.19 “Therefore, one should pursue the authentic Dharma
And then contemplate it genuinely.
One should not hold on to the characteristics of phenomena,
Nor cling to the praises of the buddhas.
- 2.20 “One should instead recollect the thus-gone ones
As well as the authentic Dharma,
And search for guidance
With a mind free from attachment and conflict.
- 2.21 “Toward sentient beings
One should always cultivate love,
But without clinging to a sentient being,
Bring peace from all phenomena.
- 2.22 “If you practice the Dharma, just as did
The bodhisattvas of great renown,

- You will swiftly attain perfect recall,
And from that will grow erudition.
- 2.23 “Just as the essential nature of space
Does not increase or decrease, [F.174.b]
The true nature of phenomena
Is beyond increase and decrease.
- 2.24 “Even if, through the powers of insight,
I were to explain the Dharma
For countless eons,
No one could say that it was fully explained.
- 2.25 “Imagine that all sentient beings
Obtained a human body,
Went forth as monks,
And became as erudite as Ānanda;
- 2.26 “Even if the bodhisattvas
Who have the attainment of perfect recall
Explained the Dharma to them for ten million eons,
Their wisdom would not be exhausted.
- 2.27 “The wisdom of the buddhas is incomparable:
It is limitless, like space.
Just like space, this wisdom
Transcends origination.
- 2.28 “The nāgas cause great rainfalls
Without drawing any water.
Although they do not dwell in that water,
The rainfall is endless.
- 2.29 “Similarly, when bodhisattvas
Have the attainment of perfect recall,
Although they do not dwell on the teachings,
Through that circumstance what they teach is inexhaustible.
- 2.30 “Therefore, one should pursue erudition
And then contemplate thoroughly.
When one focuses on the Dharma and recollects the Buddha,
Erudition is born from that.¹⁰
- 2.31 “The bodhisattvas’ love pervades all beings.
It pacifies the marks of sentient beings,

And also the marks of phenomena;
Erudition is born from that.”

2.32 *This was the second chapter, Erudition.*

3.

Chapter Three

IRREVERSIBLE PROGRESS

3.1 “Pūrṇa,” said the Blessed One, “if bodhisattvas possess four qualities, their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening will be irreversible. What are the four?”

3.2 “(1) If bodhisattvas hear a Dharma teaching they have not heard before, rather than saying, ‘This is not the Dharma’ they should reflect on it in terms of its meaning. If bodhisattvas possess this first quality, their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening will be irreversible.”

At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:

3.3 “When bodhisattvas hear a Dharma teaching they have not heard before
That does not contradict my intent,
They reflect upon its meaning, [F.175.a]
Rather than saying, ‘This is not the Dharma.’

3.4 “When they hear about empty phenomena,
They always pursue what that means,
And their insight thereby increases;
It is from there that the path to awakening arises.

3.5 “When they hear a previously unheard Dharma teaching,
They pursue what it means.
Their progress to awakening will therefore not be reversed,
And their insight will increase.

3.6 “When they hear a Dharma teaching they have not heard before,
They do not succumb to the negative attitude of pride,
Nor do they give rise to deceit and guile.
Giving rise to deceit is not the way to pursue awakening.

3.7 “When they hear a Dharma teaching they have not heard before,

- They pursue what it means.
Even if they have never previously heard it,
They reflect on it one-pointedly.
- 3.8 “When those persons hear the Dharma,
They hear the authentic Dharma.
They will always encounter many buddhas,
And never regress from awakening.
- 3.9 “Upon meeting those many buddhas,
They will ask them proper questions,
And all those who hear such questions, even the hearers,
Will become utterly pleased.
- 3.10 “Since this is amazing and marvelous,
One should ask such questions!
Unless the thought to ask occurs,
How will we ever hear about these matters?
- 3.11 “Since the hearers express their amazement,
All the gods and nāgas will be pleased,
And the buddhas will proclaim their praises.
These are the results of erudition.
- 3.12 “The buddhas will answer
All the questions presented to them,
And this will bring immense benefits
To all the countless assemblies.
- 3.13 “Upon hearing the erudite answers
Given to the bodhisattvas,
All the countless assemblies will attain
The unsurpassed Dharma eye.
- 3.14 “Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “for those reasons, when bodhisattvas
hear a Dharma teaching they have not heard before, they eagerly accept it
out of sincere trust, and contemplate it genuinely without contradicting it.
They never say, ‘This is not the Dharma.’ You should know that this attitude
will benefit countless sentient beings.
- 3.15 “Pūrṇa, in the past, countless eons ago—so long ago that the length of
time cannot be measured, fathomed, or conceived—a thus-gone one, a
worthy one, a perfect buddha [F.175.b] appeared in the world. He was
endowed with perfect knowledge and conduct. He was a bliss-gone one, a
knower of the world, a tamer of beings, an unsurpassed guide, a teacher of

both gods and men. This blessed buddha was named King of All Qualities' Light Rays. Pūrṇa, the blessed one King of All Qualities' Light Rays lived for eight hundred million years. In each assembly of this blessed one, the saṅgha of hearers consisted of an indescribable number of worthy ones, as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges river. Free of any appropriation regarding phenomena and having exhausted their defilements, their minds were completely liberated, and they were all free from the twofold notion of individuality. The bodhisattvas were similar in number to them. Pūrṇa, after the blessed one passed into nirvāṇa, his sublime Dharma remained for sixty thousand years.

3.16 "When he was about to pass into nirvāṇa, all the many billions of bodhisattvas used their miraculous powers to pervade many billions of worlds, in order to protect the sacred Dharma. In this way, a bodhisattva remained in each world. Pūrṇa, after the blessed one King of All Qualities' Light Rays passed into nirvāṇa, his hearers slowly became lazy and indolent. They did not recite or remember his profound discourses anymore. As a consequence, all his profound discourses related to the emptiness of phenomena, as well as all the discourses related to pure discipline and the ascetic practices, gradually vanished. These Dharma teachings consisted of eighty-four thousand vast and detailed sections. Each of the sections included sixty-eight trillion discourses. Each discourse contained thirty thousand six hundred aphorisms, and each aphorism was composed of six hundred seven billion verses. Pūrṇa, [F.176.a] since they did not read, recite, or expound those teachings, at the time when the sublime Dharma was about to vanish during the final age, only the discourses and the aphorisms remained from among the many sections of this buddha's teachings." At that time, there was a Dharma-preaching monk called Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta had developed great powers and his erudition was vast. He was an excellent Dharma teacher, he was eloquent, and he had clearly realized the meaning of the Dharma. Through the miraculous power of the Thus-Gone One, he always devoted himself to spreading previously unheard Dharma teachings in order to protect the sublime Dharma within the world. While he was spreading the Dharma, most beings would deprecate and oppose him.

3.17 The Dharma-preaching monk Mahāsthāmaprāpta therefore thought, 'When such beings hear these Dharma teachings that they have never heard before, they do not believe in them, so they also show no interest in listening to them or adopting them. Even when they hear these teachings, they do not comprehend their meaning, and therefore they do not follow them. Instead, they oppose and deprecate these teachings. Many monks say, "These are not the words of the Buddha; these are not the teachings of the Great

Teacher! How do we know? Because we have never heard such discourses from any teacher or preceptor before. Furthermore, no elder monks from older generations have ever said that they received such a transmission from any teacher or preceptor.” So since no other teachings now remain besides those of the discourses and those of the aphorisms, should I perhaps leave for a solitary place and remain there alone?’

3.18 “Pūrṇa, after having reflected in that way, the Dharma-preaching monk Mahāsthāmaprāpta left for a mountain cave, where he remained in solitude.

3.19 At that time, within the world, during the formative eon, there were sixty-eight thousand great cities that were twelve leagues long and seven leagues wide. They were built beautifully, their roads were straight, they were filled with many beings, their harvests were good, and everyone was happy. Later on, eight hundred forty million smaller cities were built. Some measured seven leagues [F.176.b] and others were six, five, four, three, or two leagues. The smallest of them measured a single league. Pūrṇa, at that time, within the world, in a great city called Total Isolation, there was a householder named Śani who had a son named Mahāśumata. While the son of that householder was residing in a solitary place, he received the visit of a god who spoke these verses to him:

3.20 “ ‘Search for Dharma teachings persistently
And reflect on them genuinely.
The thus-gone one King of All Qualities
Prophesied that you will become awakened.’

3.21 “Pūrṇa, after having spoken those verses, the god disappeared. Then the householder’s son approached his father, paid homage to him by touching his feet with his head, and said, ‘I want to go forth as a monk and live the holy life under the teachings of the blessed one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays.’ At that moment Śani, the householder, spoke these verses:

“ ‘In my home there are many precious gems,
And an immeasurable amount of silver and gold.
You will find in my home
All the things that cannot be found within the world.

3.22 “ ‘Son, I have accumulated precious gems
To be able to fulfill all your desires.
Why would you go forth as a monk
And take pleasure in deprecating the world?’

3.23 “The son of the householder answered his father with these verses:

“ ‘I only aspire to pursue the Dharma

- And contemplate it genuinely.
I do not experience pleasure while indulging in wealth.
Instead, I wish to become a guide for the world.
- 3.24 “ I do not need this home’s precious gems.
I aspire to have few desires.
I aspire to go forth as a monk,
To discover the treasure of the Dharma.
- 3.25 “ ‘It is extremely rare for a buddha to appear.
It is extremely rare for the Dharma to be taught.
Now that I have encountered the teachings of the Buddha,
Why would I abandon them?’
- 3.26 “Pūrṇa, the householder’s son then prostrated to the feet of his father,
circumambulated him, and left the house. In leaving he spoke these verses to
him:
- 3.27 “ ‘Even if I had one trillion fathers
And one billion mothers,
None of them could prevent me
From going forth as a monk. [F.177.a]
- 3.28 “ ‘Now I will completely relinquish
My body, my life force, my parents, and my relatives.
Without ever abandoning the Dharma of the Buddha,
I will pursue the conduct of one who goes forth.’
- 3.29 “Pūrṇa, after the householder’s son had uttered those verses, he went forth
as a monk. He then went to the place where the Dharma-preaching monk
Mahāsthāmaprāpta was residing and he applied himself to studying the
Dharma with him. During that time, the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta
taught him genuinely and in great detail discourses that he had never heard
before. When he heard those discourses, the monk Mahāśumata asked the
Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, ‘I have never heard such discourses
before. Who is reading them? Who is interested in them? Who is adopting
them and memorizing them? In which places are they heard?’
- 3.30 “The monk Mahāsthāmaprāpta replied, ‘Due to the roots of virtue created
by recollecting my previous lives, and through the power of the blessings of
the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays, these profound
discourses have naturally remained within my mind.’
- 3.31 “Pūrṇa, upon hearing those words, the monk Mahāśumata generated an
extraordinary resolve, and by keeping this resolve in mind, the strength of
insight arose. Because of this, through the power of his great insight and

- skillful means, he asked a question of the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, who answered his question, and then said to him, ‘In the past, a monk asked the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays about the same matter that you have now asked me about, and when that monk heard the perfect answer of the Thus-Gone One, he was overjoyed.’
- 3.32 “Pūrṇa, the monk Mahāśumata again asked a question of the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, who again told him, ‘In the past, a monk asked the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays about the same matter that you now ask me about, and when that monk heard the perfect answer of the Thus-Gone One, he was overjoyed.’
- 3.33 “Pūrṇa, [F.177.b] the monk Mahāśumata then asked the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, ‘O sublime being, how many times have you heard questions and answers on such matters from the Thus-Gone One?’
- “Mahāsthāmaprāpta replied, ‘That is something it would be extremely difficult to believe, so do not ask me about it! Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to believe for those who have not actualized extraordinary physical qualities.’
- 3.34 “But Mahāśumata repeated the same question a second and a third time: ‘O sublime being, how many times have you heard questions and answers on such matters from the Thus-Gone One? Mahāsthāmaprāpta simply answered, ‘Do not ask me about that!’
- 3.35 “ ‘If you have not understood, I will now illustrate this for you through an analogy, for when something is illustrated with an analogy, intelligent people understand. Monk, the dispositions of sentient beings whom I heard about from the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays are far more numerous than the atoms in the earth. Monk, imagine that all the kinds of sentient beings present throughout the trichiliocosm—those that have a form, those that have no form, those that have perception, those that have no perception, and those that have neither perception nor nonperception—obtained a human body and possessed the power of insight. [F.178.a] Imagine that each of them repeatedly asked—as quickly as a snap of the fingers—as many questions as the grains of sand in the Ganges river, and that all those sentient beings present in the universes of the ten directions asked those many questions for an eon or even longer. Furthermore, imagine that in every moment—as quickly as a snap of the fingers—each single person asked all the other persons’ different questions, and that each person asked all those infinite, various questions of other sentient beings for an eon or even longer. If this were the case, what do you think—how numerous would those questions be?’
- 3.36 “ ‘There would be so many questions that their number could hardly be illustrated,’ answered Mahāśumata.

“Mahāsthāmaprāpta continued, ‘I am now telling you the truth, so do not entertain any doubts. Compared to all the doubts and questions expressed by all those sentient beings for an eon or even longer, the answers related to a single Dharma teaching that I heard from the Thus-Gone One were much more numerous. The same logic applies with respect to two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or a hundred thousand Dharma teachings. Monk, to explain this in summary, the names and letters of that number would be uncountable, infinite, and inconceivable. Nevertheless, I recited and embraced all of them. And yet, monk, I clearly understand that all those questions are contained within a single Dharma teaching. This consists of [F.178.b] the words of the path, the words of the gateways, the words of the seals, the fundamental words, the vajra-like words, the important words, the unshakable words, and the unfathomable words spoken by the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays. Monk, all the Dharma teachings are included within a single gateway. Since all the Dharma teachings and all their words are gateways free of formations, that gateway acts as the basis for them and therefore everything will be accessed through that gateway. All the discourses and aphorisms, moreover, are accessed through that gateway, just as a single syllable, by being grammatically inflected, can form many different words. Monk, similarly, this teaching accesses all the seventy-eight thousand gateways of the dhāraṇīs. In this regard, there are also ninety-two thousand different types of faculties. From the perspective of the conduct of sentient beings there are also eighty thousand types of physical complexion.¹¹ I know the names of all those physical complexions, differentiated in terms of the particularities of the path. Each of those physical complexions has one hundred names. They have two hundred, three hundred, and up to one hundred thousand different names, and I know all of them. I also know all the different references and names, from those found within the world to those found beyond the buddhafiels of the ten directions. In short, through the power of the Thus-Gone One, through the power of the blessings of the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays, I clearly know all the particularities of the different Dharma teachings, as well as all the particular questions and answers related to them.’

3.37

“Pūrṇa, the monk Mahāśumata then requested of the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, ‘Sublime being, later, when you go to villages, cities, and towns, please turn the Dharma wheel that the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays taught. Please grant me my request! I will guard that Dharma and study it.’ [F.179.a]

3.38 “Mahāsthāmaprāpta replied, ‘All the monks living today have become lazy and indolent. They are not motivated by virtue, so do not ask for such a thing!’

“Mahāśumata then said, ‘From now on, I will give rise to the extraordinary resolve of engaging in virtue and pursuing that Dharma. I will not be lazy!’

3.39 “Pūrṇa, accordingly, when Mahāsthāmaprāpta entered villages, cities, and towns, the monk Mahāśumata supplicated him to expound the authentic Dharma. Then he guarded that Dharma that he had never heard before and studied it attentively. Pūrṇa, at that time, the monk Mahāśumata was venerated and served by many beings. They all said that he was guarding his discipline, that he was wise, and that he possessed the infinite and supreme qualities of erudition. At that time, when the monk Mahāśumata went to villages, cities, and towns, he led many sentient beings to the authentic Dharma. Furthermore, in order to propagate the teachings of the Buddha, he proclaimed the praises of the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Pūrṇa, the monk Mahāśumata inspired many beings and caused them to serve, venerate, and protect the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, in order that they would worship and listen to the sublime Dharma.

3.40 “Pūrṇa, the monk Mahāśumata also looked after the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Later, when he went to villages, cities, and towns, he explained extensively and through various methods the awakening that the thus-gone one King of All Qualities’ Light Rays had accomplished over the course of countless eons. This teaching was thereby propagated on a vast scale. Pūrṇa, the monk Mahāśumata followed the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta for one hundred years. He constantly asked him questions about the Dharma, and he always received new and different teachings that were never repeated. [F.179.b] Pūrṇa, since the monk Mahāśumata carefully looked after the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, innumerable sentient beings were introduced to the noble teachings, and all of them were established in the awakening of the buddhas.

3.41 “Pūrṇa, the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta who guarded and expounded the sublime Dharma at that time was the bodhisattva Maitreya himself. Do not think that this was someone else. Pūrṇa, furthermore, through the power of the merit gathered by looking after, supplicating, and accompanying the Dharma preacher, after he passed away, the monk Mahāśumata was reborn in the tenth universe in the direction of the nadir, within the field of the thus-gone one known as Supreme Assembly. There he requested that Thus-Gone One to teach the discourse known as *Eliminating the Doubts of All Beings*. At that time, the Thus-Gone One expressed his approval one hundred thousand times and then taught him the discourse

called *The Gateway to the Compendium and Source of All Dharma Teachings*. As he taught this discourse, countless sentient beings gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and genuinely engaged in that attitude.

3.42 “Pūrṇa, after that when the monk Mahāśumata passed away again, he was reborn in the presence of the thus-gone one called Sumeru, from whom he requested the discourse called *The Compendium and Source of All Dharmas*. At that time, that thus-gone one expressed his approval one hundred thousand times and taught him the discourse called *The Gateway to the Compendium and Source of All Dharmas*. As he taught this discourse, countless sentient beings became certain to attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

3.43 “Then, after he had passed away again, he was reborn in the presence of the thus-gone one called Merurāja, from whom he requested the discourse called *The Gateway of All Dharmas*. [F.180.a] At that time, that thus-gone one expressed his approval one hundred thousand times and taught him in detail the discourse called *The Gateway of All Dharmas*. As he taught this discourse, countless sentient beings became certain to attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

3.44 “Then, after he had passed away once more, he was reborn in the presence of the thus-gone one called Brahmaghoṣa, from whom he requested the discourse called *The Compendium of All Dharmas*. At that time, that thus-gone one expressed his approval one hundred thousand times and taught him in detail the discourse called *The Compendium of All Dharmas*. As he taught this discourse, countless sentient beings became certain to attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

3.45 “Pūrṇa, the monk Mahāśumata requested many discourses as he came into the presence of all those buddhas, meeting one thus-gone one after another. He saved sentient beings and established them in the state of unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Even if I were to speak for eons or even longer, it would not be enough time to mention the names of all those many buddhas, or to mention all those sentient beings who were established within the state of unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Pūrṇa, indescribable is the number of teachings preserved by the monk Mahāśumata, which were taught to him by those thus-gone ones—those buddhas as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges river—who were present in those worlds or had passed into complete nirvāṇa. Pūrṇa, you should therefore understand that bodhisattva great beings will attain such vast qualities if they contemplate the meaning of previously unheard Dharma teachings.

3.46 “Pūrṇa, the monk Mahāśumata who, at that time, received Dharma teachings that he had never heard before from the Dharma preacher Mahāsthāmaprāpta, [F.180.b] and then followed their meaning, was the bodhisattva Kauverdu himself. Do not think that this was someone else. At that time, the monk Mahāśumata guarded the authentic Dharma, received Dharma teachings that he had never heard before, followed their meaning, and did not cling to their words. As a consequence, he came into the presence of many buddhas and received many excellent and profound discourses from them. Due to those previous roots of virtue, he has now requested from me the discourse called *The Oceanic Dharma Teaching That Subsumes All Dharma Teachings*. I have taught it to him, and countless beings have thereby been greatly benefitted.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain that point:

3.47 “When bodhisattvas hear a Dharma teaching
That they have not heard before,
They should contemplate its meaning, and not object,
‘I have never heard such a teaching before.’

3.48 “When they hear a Dharma teaching that they have not heard before,
If they contemplate its meaning with genuine recollection,
Their insight will increase,
Just like a waterfall pouring into an ocean.

3.49 “Both their erudition and insight
Will increase,
And they will perform the deeds of the buddhas,
Benefitting sentient beings on a vast scale.

3.50 “Their level of erudition will become as vast as an ocean,
And their insight will never be exhausted.
Understanding clearly the meaning of the words,
They will become preeminent beings.

3.51 “Therefore, bodhisattvas should listen
To Dharma teachings that they have never heard before.
If they do so, they will experience
Such a karmic maturation. [B2]

3.52 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings should become determined to pursue erudition, and they must form the aspiration to remain in isolated places. Then, they should pursue unsurpassed and perfect awakening one-pointedly and with persistent diligence. In order to abandon anger, they should cultivate love. [F.181.a] In order to abandon desire, they should

meditate on repulsiveness. In order to abandon ignorance, they should meditate on dependent origination.

3.53 “Pūrṇa, what is the diligence of bodhisattvas? How does a bodhisattva cultivate diligence? Pūrṇa, if you think that, for an eon or for less than an eon, bodhisattvas should constantly cultivate their diligence whenever they are walking or sitting, this is not what is meant by *authentic diligence*. Even if, for an eon or for less than an eon, bodhisattvas maintain pure discipline, practice austerities, and observe ascetic practices, if they become attached to the objects that they apprehend and so are disconnected from the true nature of phenomena, this is not what is meant by *authentic diligence*.”

3.54 “Blessed One,” asked the venerable Pūrṇa, “what is the authentic diligence of bodhisattvas that is praised by the thus-gone ones and that is not criticized by the wise ones within the world?”

“Pūrṇa,” replied the Blessed One, “(1) take the case of bodhisattvas who hear for the first time a profound discourse related to emptiness, which is utterly free from conceptual marks and in harmony with the ultimate. If, in order to make its meaning clearly understood, without any conflict or contradiction, those bodhisattvas properly listen to it, accept it, read it, recite it, and teach it to others on a vast scale with persistent diligence, this is what is meant by *the authentic diligence of bodhisattvas*. If bodhisattvas possess this first quality, their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening will be irreversible.

3.55 “(2) When they hear profound discourses that they have never heard before, bodhisattvas should clearly understand their meaning. [F.181.b] Such a diligence, free from conflict or contradiction, will be praised by the buddhas and will not be criticized by the wise ones within the world. Therefore, Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas should don the armor that is expressed in these thoughts: ‘I shall reach the depths that worldly beings cannot reach. I will not sink in those places where worldly sentient beings are sinking. I will not perish in those places where worldly sentient beings are perishing. Why is it so? The armor that I wear does not accord with the mundane. I am wearing this armor in order to abandon worldly concerns. I am not wearing this armor to indulge in worldly concerns; I am instead wearing it in order to avoid indulging in worldly concerns. I am not wearing this armor to chase after worldly concerns; I am instead wearing it in order to counteract worldly concerns.’ Pūrṇa, giving rise to such an attitude is known as *the authentic diligence of the bodhisattva great beings*. If bodhisattvas possess this second quality, their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening will be irreversible.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain that point:

3.56 “Bodhisattvas who pursue the Dharma

- Always cultivate diligence
 And contemplate the true meaning,
 Rather than chasing mere terminology.
- 3.57 “Bodhisattvas do not follow mere words;
 But to understand
 That phenomena are empty,
 They still pursue virtuous statements.¹²
- 3.58 “Even if they were to sit continuously day and night,
 For many billions of countless eons,
 Cultivating the mind set on awakening
 And practicing austerities,
- 3.59 “If they were to distrust new discourses they had never heard,
 They would not be *diligent*.
 By contrast, those who reach the profound meaning
 Should never be called *lazy*.
- 3.60 “Diligence such as this[F.182.a]
 Is praised by all the buddhas.
 Bodhisattvas reach the depths
 That worldly beings cannot reach.
- 3.61 “Bodhisattvas do not fear¹³ or become disheartened
 In the way that worldly beings do.
 Instead, with a diligent mind,
 They constantly pursue void and isolated awakening.¹⁴
- 3.62 “Since they are without fear of empty phenomena,¹⁵
 They are also beyond turning back and recoiling.
 It is from dwelling on the characteristics of self and phenomena
 That fear and discouragement arise.
- 3.63 “Thus, all phenomena disintegrate and disperse.
 This knowledge is called *the path of awakening*.
 Those who give rise to persistent diligence
 Will swiftly achieve an ocean of erudition.
- 3.64 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “(3) bodhisattvas should
 also be experts in the five aggregates, twelve sense sources, eighteen
 elements, and twelve links of dependent origination. If they are experts in
 the five aggregates, twelve sense sources, eighteen elements, and twelve
 links of dependent origination, they will realize nonabiding wisdom and will

therefore no longer think about or conceptualize anything. Because they no longer think about or conceptualize anything, when they teach the Dharma to sentient beings, all views will be eliminated, and the view of the transitory collection will be overcome. If bodhisattvas possess this third quality, their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening will be irreversible.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:

- 3.65 “Bodhisattvas know that the five aggregates
And twelve sense sources are empty.
They understand the divisions of the eighteen elements
As well as the twelve links of dependent origination.
- 3.66 “They do not chase after the five aggregates,
And they know that the body has no true nature.
They understand that the nature
Of all the outer and inner sense sources is empty.
- 3.67 “By understanding these phenomena in that way
And teaching it to others,
The insight of these bodhisattvas
Will vastly increase.
- 3.68 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa,” [F.182.b] continued the Blessed One, “(4) bodhisattva great beings train properly, with discipline and in accordance with the way monastic discipline is taught, without ever letting these trainings decline. How do bodhisattvas train in discipline? Training in all Dharma teachings is referred to as *training in the discipline of a bodhisattva*. Why is that so? Because, Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas who train in all Dharma teachings will attain omniscience. By understanding Dharma teachings, they will attain nonconceptual insight, and through this nonconceptual insight, they will understand everything. How will bodhisattvas understand everything? They will clearly understand all inner and outer entities.
- 3.69 “Pūrṇa, why do we speak of *inner* entities? *Inner* refers to everything in one’s experience to which one can be attached. For example, the inner body arises on the basis of the twelve links of dependent origination, and it exists as a mere label on the relative level. ‘This is an eye,’ ‘This is an ear,’ ‘This is the nose,’ ‘This is the tongue,’ ‘This is the body,’ ‘This is the mental faculty.’ All things called as such are said to be *inner*. They are called *inner* because ordinary beings cling to these phenomena. Even though they may say, ‘I will obtain such an eye,’ the eye is devoid of formation. Similarly, even though they may say, ‘I will obtain such an ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty,’ the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are all devoid of formation. However, since karmic conditions and ripening manifest there,

they are said to be *inner*. Out of clinging to their particularities, ordinary beings will then say, 'This is an eye,' 'This is an ear,' 'This is the nose,' 'This is the tongue,' 'This is the body,' and 'This is the mental faculty.' All these are said to be *inner*.

3.70 "Furthermore, Pūrṇa, the formation of two things called *inner* is untrue¹⁶ [F.183.a] and deceptive.¹⁷ Immature ordinary beings grasp at them, which leads first to appropriation, and then to conflict. Pūrṇa, on the other hand, the thus-gone ones understand these things as they truly are from the very beginning, and therefore do not cling to them. How do the thus-gone ones understand these things as they are, and how do they not cling to them? They are not biased toward these phenomena. In what way are they not biased? They do not develop the bias of thinking, 'This eye is binding me to saṃsāra.' They are also not biased toward the absence of an eye. They are also not biased toward the ears, nose, tongue, body, or mental faculty, nor are they biased toward their absence. Why is that so? Because, Pūrṇa, the thus-gone ones do not conceive of such phenomena as being either *inner* or *outer*, and this is the reason why they are not biased toward them.

3.71 "The thus-gone ones speak the truth, so they say, 'Monks, an eye is neither self nor other. Why is it so? Because its essential nature cannot be apprehended. What is an eye? To whom does the eye belong? What are the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty? To whom do they belong? Their essential nature cannot be apprehended.'

3.72 "Pūrṇa, if you now carefully investigate the eyes as well as the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty, you will not cling to or appropriate any of them. Why not? Because, the more one appropriates phenomena, the more one generates suffering; and as a consequence, happiness will vanish. Therefore, Pūrṇa, the more there is clinging to phenomena, the more suffering will be experienced, and someone who experiences suffering will not be able to abandon it. Therefore, Pūrṇa, [F.183.b] this is known as *the investigation into the absence of a basis of engagement for the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty*. Why? Because, Pūrṇa, if there is a basis of engagement, there is also a basis of arising. Therefore, the thus-gone ones say, 'The eye is empty: it is neither *I* nor *mine*; such is naturally the case. Similarly, the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are empty: they are neither *I* nor *mine*; such being naturally the case, they are devoid of essential nature. This absence of essential nature is beyond formation and disintegration.' Pūrṇa, this natural state and essential nature always remains the same, whether the thus-gone ones appear or not.

3.73 "Even though phenomena arise, the thus-gone ones understand them to be unborn. Therefore, since they speak the truth, the thus-gone ones say, 'This essential nature always remains the same, whether the thus-gone ones

appear or not.' Pūrṇa, why is it said that phenomena are *unborn*, and why do we speak of *the wisdom of the unborn*? Pūrṇa, the sameness of all phenomena is described as the *unborn*, while the path is referred to as *the wisdom of the unborn*. The end of suffering is described as the *unborn*, while the path is referred to as *the wisdom of the unborn*. The thus-gone ones have said that there are two truths, the relative and ultimate truths. Pūrṇa, the thus-gone ones have said that when they teach about the *characteristics of suffering*, they point to an absence of characteristics. What is meant by the *characteristics of suffering*? This points to the characteristics of unconditioned phenomena. The characteristic of the unconditioned is an absence of characteristics, so the wise ones clearly understand that the unconditioned is devoid of characteristics.

3.74 "Pūrṇa, [F.184.a] how do the wise ones clearly understand that unconditioned phenomena are devoid of characteristics? They understand that unconditioned phenomena are empty and detached, that they are objects of refuge, that they bring supreme benefits, and that they are beyond torments. Although the wise ones clearly understand unconditioned phenomena in that way, their wisdom is devoid of the conceptual mark of arising. Pūrṇa, since the wise ones have abandoned all conceptual marks, they will reach the supreme, sacred goal, beyond formation and disintegration. Pūrṇa, that which is composed will disintegrate, but that which is not composed cannot disintegrate. The characteristic of that which cannot disintegrate is emptiness. The characteristic of that which cannot disintegrate is signlessness. The characteristic of that which cannot disintegrate is wishlessness. Pūrṇa, the inseparability of being neither composed nor destroyed by anything is known as *the characteristic of the indestructible, unsurpassed, and perfect awakening of the thus-gone ones*. What is the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the thus-gone ones? It is the thus-gone ones' nonapprehension."

3.75 "Blessed One," asked the venerable Pūrṇa, "what is the thus-gone ones' nonapprehension?"

"Pūrṇa," replied the Blessed One, "all phenomena are the thus-gone ones' nonapprehension."

3.76 "Blessed One, if this were the case, all phenomena would be the awakening of the buddhas!"

"Thus it is, Pūrṇa," continued the Blessed One. "All phenomena are the awakening of the buddhas, but this awakening itself is not referred to as *all phenomena*. When it is said that *all phenomena are the awakening of the buddhas*, [F.184.b] this is a mere designation, expressed on the relative level. It is difficult for lazy people to understand and see this. Why is it so? Because lazy people do not actualize the sameness of phenomena, and those for

whom things are not the same are in conflict with the buddhas. Pūrṇa, who are they who do not actualize the sameness of phenomena? Pūrṇa, no worldly beings actualize the sameness of phenomena. The awakening of the buddhas is beyond both sameness and difference. Pūrṇa, I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood through this path. Therefore, I have taught in these discourses that all phenomena, from the perspective of true reality, entirely partake of the definitive mode; they are therefore said to have definitely entered the gateway of awakening. Pūrṇa, for this reason, all Dharma teachings¹⁸ are said to be *awakening*."

3.77 "Blessed One," said the venerable Pūrṇa, "the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the thus-gone ones is both definite and indefinite. It both relates to and does not relate to letters, words, and phrases. This is truly amazing! Why is it so? Because, Blessed One, by receiving this discourse from you, I have now reached the light of certainty with respect to all Dharma teachings. Blessed One, by reaching the light of certainty with respect to Dharma teachings, I now understand all matters based on a single one, and I also understand each individual matter based on the entirety."

3.78 "Pūrṇa," said the Blessed One, "the fact that you have penetrated the meaning of all the Dharma teachings of the Buddha in such a swift manner is excellent, excellent! [F.185.a] You should know that this is the consequence of your having attended many buddhas in the past by worshipping them, venerating them, and creating roots of virtue in relation to them, as well as by asking them questions. Pūrṇa, I remember that in the past, in the heavens here in this world, you have heard this discourse from sixty-eight thousand buddhas. Through the power of the causes and conditions formed by the qualities of the roots of virtue of hearing this teaching, you have reached the light of certainty with respect to the Dharma."

3.79 "Blessed One," asked Pūrṇa, "if it is the case that I have heard this discourse from many buddhas in the past, why is it that I do not have the slightest recollection of unsurpassed and perfect awakening?"

3.80 "Pūrṇa," replied the Blessed One, "I remember that in the past, you gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening for an eon, but you later turned away from it and let your motivation deteriorate. Nevertheless, through the causes and conditions generated by that merit, I now proclaim you to be the best among all Dharma preachers here."

3.81 "Blessed One," Pūrṇa continued, "what kind of nonvirtuous actions did I commit in the past to have turned away from the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and to have let my motivation deteriorate after having given rise to it for an eon?"

- 3.82 “Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “you turned away from unsurpassed and perfect awakening and let your motivation deteriorate because you relied on nonvirtuous friends and because you did not disseminate the sublime Dharma on a vast scale.
- 3.83 “Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas adopt four attitudes, they will become followers of the Hearers’ Vehicle after having turned away from unsurpassed and perfect awakening and having let their motivation deteriorate. What are the four?
- 3.84 “(1) When bodhisattvas rely on evil, nonvirtuous friends, they will abandon the roots of virtue. Those nonvirtuous friends will tell them, ‘What need is there to give rise to the mind set on awakening? [F.185.b] The end of saṃsāra is so far away! Since beings are born in a continuous succession as one of the five types of migrators and experience immeasurable suffering, it is extremely rare to experience the states in which there is freedom. It is extremely rare for buddhas to have appeared, and rare to encounter them. It is extremely rare to develop sincere faith. Even if one has encountered a buddha, it is exceedingly difficult to renounce one’s household and go forth as a monk. For these reasons, do not waste the freedom that you have now! The thus-gone ones have not prophesied that you will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Your roots of virtue are also uncertain, so you will not reach complete nirvāṇa, and you will continue to circle as one of the five types of migrators.’ Upon hearing those words, these bodhisattvas will become disheartened. They will then turn away from the path of awakening and lose interest in it, out of laziness. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas adopt this first attitude, they will become followers of the Hearers’ Vehicle after having turned away from unsurpassed awakening.
- 3.85 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (2) if bodhisattvas have not heard the discourses that conform with the bodhisattva approach, such as the discourses of the Bodhisattva Collection, the discourses on giving rise to the mind set on awakening, the discourses that are compendia on the activities of bodhisattvas, and the discourses that conform with the six pāramitās, they will not practice in accordance with these teachings. Because these bodhisattvas will not train in accordance with such teachings, they will also not understand what is to be followed, what is to be abandoned, what is to be adopted, what is not to be adopted, what is the Dharma of the bodhisattvas, and what is the Dharma of the hearers. Because these bodhisattvas will not be able to understand and discriminate in that way, they will not follow what is proper, [F.186.a] but instead will follow what is improper. Because they will disregard what is proper and follow what is improper, they will turn away from the mind set on the awakening of the buddhas, and they will let their motivation deteriorate. As a consequence, they will become disheartened and lazy, and they will abandon their

previous aspirations. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas adopt this second attitude, they will become followers of the Hearers' Vehicle after having turned away from unsurpassed awakening.

3.86 "Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (3) take the case of bodhisattvas who cling to the existence of phenomena, grasp at the self, entertain wrong views, fall into views that hold on to extremes, sink into inappropriate, negative behaviors, and have difficulties correcting these faults. Even if these bodhisattvas hear the profound discourses that conform with the profound ultimate meaning, they will not develop even the slightest sign of trust in those teachings. Instead, they will oppose them and fail to develop a clear understanding of them. If these bodhisattvas then commit wrongdoings that undermine the authentic Dharma, this will create the causes and conditions for them to be reborn within the states where there is no freedom. As a consequence, they will not encounter any buddhas, they will not hear the sublime Dharma, they will not receive instructions from the buddhas, and they will not meet virtuous friends. Because these bodhisattvas will not meet any buddhas, they will not hear the authentic Dharma and will therefore not receive instructions from the buddhas. Because they will not receive instructions from the buddhas, they will not meet virtuous friends and will therefore be disconnected from the states in which there is freedom and instead will take rebirth within the states where there is no freedom. Because these bodhisattvas will be reborn within the states where there is no freedom, they will not connect with virtuous friends but instead will encounter nonvirtuous friends. By following those nonvirtuous friends, they will forget and cast aside their previous commitments, [F.186.b] thereby abandoning the mind set on awakening. By abandoning the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, they will turn away from it. Then, having completely lost the mind directed toward awakening, they will exclusively engage in saṃsāric affairs, and will not accomplish the Dharma related to the conduct of the Great Vehicle. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas adopt this third attitude, they will become followers of the Hearers' Vehicle after having turned away from unsurpassed awakening.

3.87 "Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (4) even if bodhisattvas have heard such discourses, some of them may fail to teach them altruistically to others. Instead they are timid, prefer their own company, or feel miserliness regarding the Dharma, without a wish to teach others. Consequently, they do not attract other beings on a vast scale through the Dharma. Such bodhisattvas will, through the causes and conditions of these nonvirtuous roots, allow their insight and recollection to completely deteriorate. Due to the deterioration of their insight and recollection, they will not read or recite those discourses with others, and they will not be in harmony with others through the Dharma. As

a consequence, as soon as they take on new bodies, they will cast aside the mind set on awakening and forget about the bodhisattva attitude. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas adopt this fourth attitude, they will become followers of the Hearers' Vehicle after having turned away from unsurpassed awakening." At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:

- 3.88 "If bodhisattvas rely on nonvirtuous friends
And do not strive to reach awakening,
Then, through such causes and conditions,
The mind set on unsurpassed awakening will be lost.
- 3.89 "By developing the harmful belief in a self,
They will fall into extremes and other types of wrong views.
By committing negative actions that undermine the Dharma,
They will be reborn within the states with no freedom.
- 3.90 "Once born within those states with no freedom,
They will discontinue the mind set on awakening
And cast aside their previous commitments.
As a consequence, they will let the mind set on awakening weaken.
- 3.91 "Thus they will not hear Dharma teachings
Related to the arising of the mind set on awakening. [F.187.a]
If such an attitude develops in them,
Even if they have practiced the mind set on awakening
- 3.92 "And heard the sacred Dharma extensively,
They will not be inclined to teach it to others, out of miserliness.
Through such causes and conditions,
They will turn away from the path of awakening.
- 3.93 "Bodhisattvas who pursue the Great Vehicle
Should understand these four attitudes.
If they understand these four attitudes,
The mind set on awakening will be born in them.
- 3.94 "Therefore, if they meditate on emptiness
After having resolutely abandoned
Those four evil attitudes,
They will follow virtuous friends.
- 3.95 "Those who have heard such discourses
Should resolutely teach them to others,
Without any sense of miserliness.

Awakening will manifest on that basis.

- 3.96 “Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “if bodhisattvas possess four qualities, they will not turn away from the mind set on awakening and will not let their roots of virtue deteriorate, in accordance with their dedication prayers. What are the four? (1) Bodhisattvas accomplish their aims by carefully observing pure discipline, (2) they are mindful and possess insight, (3) they strive with a diligent attitude and do not succumb to laziness, and (4) they acquire an excellent wealth of erudition and develop their insight. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas possess these four qualities, they will not turn away from the mind set on awakening and will not let their roots of virtue deteriorate, in accordance with their dedication prayers.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain those points clearly:
- 3.97 “Guarding one’s discipline,
Possessing deep and far-reaching recollection,
Striving with a diligent attitude,
And being adorned by erudition and insight—
- 3.98 “If bodhisattvas continuously rely
On these four qualities,
They will fully achieve
Everything they wish for.
- 3.99 “Therefore, bodhisattvas should always guard their discipline
And maintain a persistent diligence.
They should never interrupt their recollection of the Dharma, [F.187.b]
And always pursue erudition.
- 3.100 “By guarding their discipline, they will be reborn within pure abodes.
Through recollection, they will refine their insight.
Through diligence, they will train in the Dharma of the Buddha.
Through erudition, great insight will be born in them.
- 3.101 “Bodhisattvas should therefore
Train in these qualities.
If they train in these qualities,
They will turn the unsurpassed wheel.
- 3.102 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas possess four qualities, this will help them reach awakening. What are the four? (1) Guarding their discipline is a quality that helps them reach awakening, (2) cultivating patience is a quality that helps them reach awakening, (3) developing their diligence is a quality that helps them reach awakening, and (4) erudition is a quality that helps

them reach awakening. Pūrṇa, these four qualities are known as *aids for reaching awakening*." At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain those points clearly:

- 3.103 "Guarding their discipline will help bodhisattvas
To reach awakening.
The same goes for diligence,
Patience, and erudition.
- 3.104 "Those who guard the purity of their discipline
Will see all their aspirations fulfilled.
Since a pure discipline brings so many benefits,
Reaching awakening will not be difficult.
- 3.105 "Bodhisattvas who cultivate patience
Will achieve the physical marks and develop insight.
Therefore, those who cultivate patience intensively
Will achieve the marks of the buddhas and accumulate a treasure of insight.
- 3.106 "Similarly, diligence is a great help
On the path toward awakening;
Reaching awakening will not be difficult
For those who constantly develop their diligence.
- 3.107 "Erudition is also a great help;
Reaching awakening will not be difficult
For those who strictly rely on the Dharma after hearing it,
And abandon that which conflicts with it.
- 3.108 "These four qualities are like seeds,
And awakening will grow from them.
Therefore, bodhisattvas should rely
On these factors that support the Dharma.
- 3.109 "Furthermore, Pūrṇa, if bodhisattva great beings possess another four
qualities, they will obtain a perfect physical appearance, perfect enjoyments,
and a perfect retinue. [F.188.a] They will never be born within the evil,
nonvirtuous states in which there is no freedom. They will always encounter
the buddhas and will always be highly praised by them. What are the four
qualities?
- 3.110 "(1) Bodhisattvas do not manifest any aggression and do not harm any
sentient being, because they cultivate love. Pūrṇa, how is it that bodhisattvas
do not manifest any aggression and do not harm any sentient being because
they cultivate love? When bodhisattvas cultivate love, they do so with the

intention of protecting sentient beings. Therefore, when they perceive the physical or mental suffering of sentient beings, they think, 'Through persistent diligence, I will liberate these beings from their saṃsāric sufferings and bring them happiness. Through my guidance, I will free them from their sufferings in saṃsāra!' Having given rise to such an attitude, they then diligently train in the six perfections—the perfections of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight. Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas gain mastery over the six perfections through the perfection of insight. What is the perfection of insight of bodhisattvas? How do they develop persistent diligence through the perfection of insight?

3.111 "Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas reflect and investigate in this way: 'What are the phenomena called *I* and *mine*?' When they reflect and investigate in that way, they realize, 'I cannot find any phenomenon that could be called *I* or *mine*.' In this way they conclude that there is neither *I* nor *mine* to be found within phenomena. Since bodhisattvas are free from clinging to *I* and *mine*, they clearly understand that bodies are empty; and therefore they conclude that, since bodies are empty, [F.188.b] sentient beings are also empty. Why? Because they think that, if even the phenomena they had believed to be *I* and *mine* are empty, then it goes without saying that the same applies to sentient beings. Since bodhisattvas are free from clinging to *I* and *mine*, they will therefore know that sentient beings are empty. Since sentient beings are empty, bodhisattvas will know that the aggregate of form is also empty. Since the aggregate of form is empty, they will know that the aggregates of feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness are also empty. Since bodhisattvas are free from clinging to *I* and *mine*, they will know that bodies are empty. Since bodies are empty, they will know that sentient beings are also empty. Since sentient beings are empty, they will know that the aggregates are also empty. Since the aggregates are empty, they will know that the elements of earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness are also empty. They will conclude that the earth element is empty of the characteristics of the earth element, and that the elements of water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness are also empty of their respective characteristics. Thus they will understand that the elements are devoid of agent and action, that there is also no awakening, and that something devoid of agent must be empty.

3.112 "Pūrṇa, since these bodhisattvas have abandoned clinging to *I* and *mine*, they will know that bodies are emptiness. Since bodies are empty, they will know that sentient beings are also emptiness. Since sentient beings are empty, they will know that the aggregates are also emptiness. Since the aggregates are empty, they will know that the elements are also emptiness. Since the elements are empty, they will know that the sense sources are also

emptiness. Since the sense sources are empty, they will know that the characteristics of the sense sources are also empty, and that the sense sources are devoid of agent and action. They will then conclude that something devoid of agent and action is empty.

3.113 “Pūrṇa, in that manner, bodhisattvas perceive all phenomena as being emptiness. [F.189.a] When they perceive all phenomena as being empty, they do not view any phenomenon as essentially being a basis for developing anger. Pūrṇa, this is known as *the great love of the bodhisattva great beings, the love that knows that bodies are empty, the love that knows that sentient beings are empty, and the love that knows that the aggregates, sense sources, and elements are empty.* Such a cultivation of love is known as *the cultivation of love that understands the emptiness of all phenomena.* Pūrṇa, it is also known as *the cultivation of the great love of bodhisattvas.*

3.114 “With a mind free from clinging to *I* and *mine*, bodhisattvas give rise to a resolute aspiration to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Since they have developed great compassion for sentient beings, they don the great armor in order to induce an understanding of the true characteristics of phenomena in those who do not understand them. This is known as *the great compassionate conduct of bodhisattvas.* Since they think, ‘I will protect them,’ this is known as *love.* Since they think, ‘I will guide them,’ this is known as *compassion.* Bodhisattvas who possess such a great love are the protectors, refuges, supports, havens, and saviors of sentient beings. Therefore, bodhisattvas should cultivate such great love. This freedom from attachment and aggression toward sentient beings is known as *the bodhisattvas’ angerless love for empty sentient beings.*

3.115 “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattvas are introduced to the absence of arising and ceasing of phenomena by means of love, freedom, and emptiness, that is known as *the bodhisattvas’ cultivation of great love.* Bodhisattvas who completely realize phenomena in this way will never be harmed by Māra [F.189.b] or by his entourage. Bodhisattvas who possess this first quality sever the fetters that obscure all excellent qualities. Because they sever the fetters that obscure such qualities, they will attain all the perfections of sameness.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:

3.116 “Continuously understanding
That the aggregates, elements,
And sense sources are devoid of self,
Bodhisattvas cultivate love and the view of emptiness.

3.117 “Decidedly, neither an *I* nor a *mine*
Can be apprehended as phenomena.
Since no phenomena can be apprehended,

- Bodhisattvas cultivate the attitude of love.
- 3.118 “They do not dwell on phenomena,
Yet that is not a non-dwelling.
This is the path of the buddhas.
It is known as *not dwelling on phenomena*.
- 3.119 “Those who have developed unsurpassed patience
Accept the true characteristics of phenomena.
They completely realize their meaning—
The absence of arising and ceasing of phenomena.
- 3.120 “If those endowed with great intelligence
Rely on this Dharma teaching,
They will permanently reach the excellent attainments
Of recall and eloquence.
- 3.121 “They will always encounter the buddhas
And understand the meaning of all Dharma teachings.
As a consequence, these bodhisattvas
Will attain unsurpassed awakening.
- 3.122 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (2) bodhisattva great beings worship the reliquaries of
the thus-gone ones with persistent diligence. They respectfully offer them
flowers, perfumes, garlands, ointments, fragrant powders, parasols, flags,
and music, as well as various other kinds of excellent offerings. Bodhisattvas
who possess this second quality will achieve all excellent qualities.” At that
moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:
- 3.123 “Bodhisattvas should pursue supreme insight,
While worshiping the reliquaries
Of those who possess a supreme mind,
By offering them the finest flowers, perfumes, flags, and parasols. [F.190.a]
- 3.124 “Through this merit,
Their bodies will always be handsome.
They will be wealthy, affluent,
And surrounded by excellent retinues.
- 3.125 “They are certain to reach the state of awakening,
And will always observe the Dharma.
Throughout all their lives,
Their qualities will expand and become supreme.
- 3.126 “They will be revered by kings,

- They will always be remembered by gods and nāgas,
And they will be respected
By all sentient beings.
- 3.127 “Since they worship
The past and present buddhas,
They will themselves be worshiped throughout all their lives,
And they will never be reborn within the states that lack freedom.
- 3.128 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (3) bodhisattva great beings always diligently worship the Dharma. What is meant by *Dharma*? And how do they worship the Dharma? *Dharma* refers to the four applications of mindfulness, four relinquishments, four bases of miraculous displays, five faculties, five powers, seven limbs of awakening, eight limbs of the noble path, four concentrations, tranquility, insight, knowledge, liberation, three doors of liberation, wisdom of exhaustion, and unborn wisdom. How do they worship the Dharma? *Worshipping the Dharma* consists in aspiring for the Dharma without contradicting it, by practicing and following the teachings in accordance with the way they are taught, and perfectly accomplishing them with diligence. Furthermore, Pūrṇa, when we say, ‘worshipping the Dharma,’ *Dharma* refers to such discourses, and *worshipping the Dharma* consists in trusting them, contemplating them, analyzing them, following them, and not contradicting them. Bodhisattvas who possess this third quality will achieve all excellent qualities.” At that moment, [F.190.b] the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:
- 3.129 “Bodhisattvas should diligently worship the Dharma,
Follow it in the way it is taught,
And avoid mentally opposing the teachings
On profound emptiness when they hear them.
- 3.130 “Then their bodies will always be handsome,
And they will attain eloquence as well.
They will propagate far and wide
The Dharma teachings that I extol.
- 3.131 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (4) bodhisattva great beings worship the noble assemblies of thus-gone ones with intense diligence by offering them flowers, perfumes, garlands, fragrant powders, ointments, parasols, victory banners, flags, clothing, food, drinks, bedding, medicines, other necessities, temples, gardens, promenades, bathing ponds, wells, and servants, as well

as various other kinds of offerings. Bodhisattvas who possess this fourth quality will achieve all excellent qualities.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:

- 3.132 “Bodhisattvas who worship the noble assemblies
With the most sublime offerings
Will, through the conditions produced by this merit,
Enjoy material possessions throughout all their lives.
- 3.133 “Their bodies will be handsome;
They will attain eloquence,
Develop excellent qualities,
And increase their insight.
- 3.134 “Because of their sincere worship
And their understanding of the absence of *I* and *mine*,
They will, as a consequence,
Be worshiped throughout all their lives.
- 3.135 “If bodhisattvas constantly rely on these four qualities,
Which the buddhas praise,
They will, in all their lives, be born into honorable families,
And their excellent qualities will vastly increase.¹⁹
- 3.136 *This was the third chapter, Irreversible Progress.* [F.191.a] [B3]

THE POSSESSION OF ROOTS OF VIRTUE

- 4.1 “Pūrṇa,” continued the Blessed One, “if bodhisattva great beings who are genuinely following the Great Vehicle constantly rely on and familiarize themselves with four qualities, they will gather all virtues in the most perfect manner, and they will possess all the roots of virtue. What are the four?”
- 4.2 “Pūrṇa, (1) noble sons and daughters who have given rise to the mind set on awakening within the Great Vehicle should rely on and cultivate the practice of patience. As they cultivate patience, if their minds are in a state of equanimity, they will attain the perfections of that profound sameness, as well as the perfection of the sameness of all beings. When such bodhisattvas are endowed with the perfection of the sameness of the mind and the perfection of the sameness of wisdom—whether they are walking, standing, sitting, lying down, sleeping, or awake—if someone comes along carrying a vessel filled with urine, poison, hot liquid, garbage, fire, ashes, excrement, or embers and pours the content of the vessel on their heads, or strikes their limbs with full force, these bodhisattvas should avoid becoming angry or resentful, thus becoming distracted and aggressive. They should not even ask, ‘What did I do wrong?’ They should also not regard the other person with hostility. Instead, they should tame their minds by one-pointedly pursuing their Dharma practice, without losing a clear focus on the aim of their practice. Such bodhisattvas will think, ‘When that person comes to me carrying a vase filled with urine, poison, ashes, or embers and tries to harm my body, my body is not hurt or injured by those substances.’ [F.191.b] Thus analyzing things in terms of their multiple causes and conditions, bodhisattvas will then contemplate this matter in accordance with the way things really are, asking themselves, ‘Who is pouring these substances on me?’ ‘On whom are these substances poured?’ ‘What are the substances poured?’ At that time, they will not find anyone who is the pourer, anyone who is the recipient of this act, or anything that is poured. Contemplating

and investigating in this way with proper mindfulness, they will not find any of these things, and they will therefore not apprehend or behold any phenomenon. Because they do not apprehend or behold any phenomenon, they will also not give rise to anger or resentment.

4.3 “Pūrṇa, despite the fact that they reflect in that way, if anger and resentment nonetheless arise in the minds of these bodhisattvas, they should think in this way, with genuine mindfulness: ‘Through the causes and conditions of what tactile objects is my body hurt? Where did those tactile objects touch me? Did they harm my body, or did they harm my mind? If it is the case that they have harmed my body, since my body is like grass, like a log, like gravel, like a stone, or like an image, it is devoid of concepts and consciousness, and it is neither self nor other. If it is the case that they have harmed my mind, since my mind has neither color nor shape, since it arises and ceases every moment, and since it does not remain the same for a single instant, it is also neither self nor other. Moreover, since it is always false conceptual imputations that express statements such as, “this is suffering,” “this is happiness,” and “this is neither suffering nor happiness,” I will no longer give rise to such false conceptual imputations. Instead, I will now perceive reality from the perspective of the genuine characteristic of sameness and perform the activities of noble beings. I will not engage in the activities of immature ordinary beings. What are the activities of noble beings? Keeping a distance from and being liberated from phenomena. [F.192.a] However, if I train in staying away from and avoiding phenomena, this will in fact connect me to all those false concepts. To what will this approach connect me? It will connect me to desire, anger, and ignorance. How will this connect me to desire, anger, and ignorance? When someone experiences physical pain, due to the delusion related to the body and to the view of the transitory collection, and due to a strong clinging to this view of the transitory collection, this person will become hostile to others. This is known as *connecting with anger*. Because of the delusion associated with the view of the transitory collection, and because of strongly clinging to this view combined with the experience of unpleasant circumstances, this person will become hostile to others. This is known as *connecting with ignorance*. Those who are bound by these three poisons and create the causes and conditions for such wrongdoing will not be protected by the thus-gone ones, so surely not by anyone else either. Hence I should think that I will now investigate these causal and circumstantial phenomena properly and view them as being emptiness.’

4.4 “When bodhisattvas investigate such phenomena in terms of their causes and conditions, by viewing them appropriately in this way, they will also not find anyone who gives, anyone who receives, or anything that is given. At

that time, these bodhisattvas should think, ‘Since all phenomena arise from a variety of causes and conditions, they are naturally empty from the very beginning. So if they are empty and without any objective status whatsoever, why would I create karmic actions in relation to such untrue phenomena that cannot be apprehended? Why would I in this way create the causes and conditions for further formations by giving rise to anger? Without any anger or resentment, [F.192.b] I must instead realize that phenomena are unconditioned, nonarising, and unborn, and view them as having the nature of emptiness. I will not follow after my mind, but instead, from now on, behold unconditioned, nonarising, and unborn phenomena, without dwelling on conditioned and manifest phenomena. I will contemplate phenomena as they really are, and from now on I will ardently avoid perceiving that which is inauthentic and nonexistent as being a phenomenon. Anger and resentment consistently form what is inauthentic. Why is that? Because anger and resentment are present whenever one dwells on phenomena having an essence. However, within emptiness—the ultimately true characteristic of phenomena—there is primordially no essence of phenomena to dwell upon.’ When bodhisattvas contemplate phenomena in this way, their minds become completely disengaged, and anger and resentment will no longer arise in them.

4.5 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, whenever bodhisattvas are walking, standing, sitting, lying down, sleeping, or awake, if someone scatters fragrant perfumes, fragrant powders, fragrant ointments, or the most sublime flowers upon their bodies; or if someone covers their bodies with perfumes, the most sublime types of flowers, necklaces, garlands of *campaka*, garlands of *varṣika*, or garlands made of many other types of flowers; or if someone covers their bodies with the most sublime, refined, and soft types of fabrics, like those from *kāśī*, *kuśaka*, *kuśapa*, *kumapa*, *kuśayaśa*, *chuma*, and *kaba*;²⁰ or if someone hoists the most sublime types of silken streamers, parasols, victory banners, and flags above them; or if someone covers their bodies with divine flowers, perfumes, [F.193.a] sublime types of fabrics, and garlands of jewels; or if someone comes to them carrying the most delectable, divine food, as delicious as nectar, and offers it to them—in all such cases these bodhisattvas should not crave any of those offerings because they are fond of such things. They should also not keep company or become intimate with such people, walking around²¹ or conversing with them. They should also not become attached to those people with a biased attitude.

4.6 “Rather, bodhisattvas should maintain an attitude of equanimity toward such people. Realizing the sameness of all phenomena, they should think, ‘I will not become angry at sentient beings or become attached to them. Why not? Because both attachment and aversion are disturbing emotions.

Therefore, I will now properly realize the actual nature of phenomena, without craving them. Why? Because, among all the disturbing emotions, those connected to craving are the heaviest of all. This disturbing emotion penetrates even to the bone and marrow, for among the things that can bind beings, craving is what causes clinging. Why is it so? Because if we are attached to something and our wishes are not fulfilled, we will also become angry. Since beings are attached to their bodies, if someone harms them, they become angry. Therefore, one should know that anger is a karmic ripening that results from craving, while clinging is a karmic ripening that results from ignorance. I will now discard this mind that is sullied by craving and stop clinging to phenomena. I will no longer perpetuate the manifestation of desire, anger, or ignorance. I will instead train intensively in realizing the suchness of phenomena, [F.193.b] thereby viewing the characteristics of phenomena as they really are. In accordance with the teachings, I will act properly and thus rely on the causes and conditions that lead to karmic ripening. Knowing that the circumstances of both veneration and hardship are conditioned by previous actions, I will delight in conducive factors and never give rise to craving. I will purify my mind without ever giving rise to anger, even toward those beings who oppose virtue. I will eliminate ill will from my mind and never follow desire, anger, or ignorance, or engage in negative actions.’ Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas who possess this first quality will achieve all excellent qualities.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:

- 4.7 “I have always praised insight,
Guarding one’s discipline,
And cultivating patience,
As well as erudition.
- 4.8 “I have always praised the practices of virtue,
Love, and speaking with pleasant words,
As well as all the various kinds of qualities
That benefit sentient beings.
- 4.9 “I have always criticized the desires of the five senses,
As well as aggression, resentment, ignorance,
Envy, pride, deceit,
Conflict, and harming sentient beings.
- 4.10 “I have never praised
Laziness, indolence,
Rejecting advice, stubbornness,²²
Ingratitude, not repaying acts of kindness,²³

- 4.11 “Becoming extremely angry at minor misfortunes,
Being attached to gains,
Exceedingly enjoying personal gain,
And disliking the fortune of others.
- 4.12 “I have never praised narrow-mindedness,
Desire for personal gain,
Intense envy toward others’ gains,
Or stinginess toward others’ households.
- 4.13 “Since it is not right livelihood,
Altering one’s deportment
For the sake of acquiring worldly gain
Is very far removed from my Dharma. [F.194.a]
- 4.14 “All these faults are present
In those who do not cultivate the path.²⁴
Since they lead to rebirths in the lower realms,
These faults are not to be praised at all.
- 4.15 “Desire and craving will multiply in the minds
Of those who do not abandon negative actions and the belief in a self.
Because desire and craving will multiply in them,
They will be attached to gains.
- 4.16 “Bodhisattvas think,
‘By cultivating patience, I will benefit sentient beings,
Completely subdue my rigid mind,
And swiftly awaken myself.
- 4.17 “ ‘I will cultivate love
And patiently care for sentient beings.
I will understand that all phenomena are empty,
Arise from conditions, and are disconnected.’
- 4.18 “Through which conditions do phenomena exist?
Phenomena emerge from the mind.
False perceptions give rise to aggression.
For the wise, everything is empty!
- 4.19 “False perceptions give rise to the three realms,
And the continuity of lifetimes will not be interrupted.
These defects will not be present
In those who do not entertain false perceptions.

- 4.20 “By always contemplating phenomena,
Bodhisattvas clearly understand that they arise from conditions.
By always viewing phenomena as being empty,
They are able to counteract all those defects.
- 4.21 “By teaching the Dharma that pacifies suffering
To suffering beings who have abandoned their discipline
And are wounded²⁵ by pride,
They bring immense benefits.
- 4.22 “If someone coming from the east, west, south, or north,
Or any of the intermediate directions,
Carries a vase filled with feces or poison
And pours its contents on their heads,
- 4.23 “Bodhisattvas diligently investigate in this way:
‘Who is giving me this? Who is receiving it?
I will not become aggressive,
Because what is the self?
- 4.24 “ ‘Understanding the faults that cause harm,
Without looking at others with a harmful intent,
And giving rise to a firm resolve,²⁶
I will benefit others with a kind attitude.
- 4.25 “ ‘I understand that the karmic ripening I experience
Is the result of my own previous actions.
I will acknowledge this, no longer do such things again,²⁷
And remain on the path of awakening.
- 4.26 “ ‘I know that any abuse and suffering I experience
Has not been created by others;
It is surely the result of my own actions.
Though time may pass, those consequences are never lost. [F.194.b]
- 4.27 “ ‘Sentient beings living in the world
Always engage in virtuous and negative actions.
Even if I now experience suffering,
I clearly understand that it is the consequence of my own actions.
- 4.28 “ ‘If, as retribution for negative actions,²⁸
I will experience suffering in the future,
Why should I harm others
By committing such actions?

- 4.29 “ ‘By pursuing the unsurpassed Dharma
And teaching it to others,
I will liberate sentient beings
From all their sufferings.
- 4.30 “ ‘Even if someone worships me by offering me
Flowers, perfumes, and garlands,
I will not become attached to that person,
But will cultivate an attitude of equanimity.’
- 4.31 “ ‘Since attachment and aversion are not the way,
I will always practice equanimity
And investigate phenomena properly with the thought,
“Who is giving this? Who is receiving it?
- 4.32 “ ‘ “Are both giver and recipient empty?”
Both outer and inner phenomena are empty,
So in emptiness, there is no one who gives and no one who receives—
Everything is devoid of self.
- 4.33 “ ‘In emptiness, there is no separation from desire;
There is no affliction
And no purification.
Therefore, everything is stainless, pure, and empty.
- 4.34 “ ‘Emptiness is beyond concepts
And devoid of essential nature.
Emptiness is permanent, empty, and signless.
This is the path of purity.
- 4.35 “ ‘Even if someone comes to me
And chops my body into pieces,
I will not be angry at that person,
Knowing that this is the consequence of my own actions.
- 4.36 “ ‘Since sentient beings engage in virtuous and negative deeds,
They experience results that accord with their actions.
This suffering that I experience is definitely
The karmic ripening of my previous negative actions.
- 4.37 “ ‘Even as I experience the ripening of my negative actions,
I observe my body to be like a reflection, a water bubble,
An illusion, and a mirage.
Being empty and nonexistent, it is ultimately empty.

- 4.38 “ ‘That some might cut off my limbs,
And others might make offerings to me
As a way to repay my kindness,
Will make me neither pleased nor unhappy.
- 4.39 “ ‘Even if I achieve some gains, I will not be pleased;
And even if someone insults me, I will not get angry in return.
Since those two attitudes are obscurations,
They are not the authentic path of the buddhas.
- 4.40 “ ‘Rather, they are desire, anger, and ignorance.’
Thinking in that way, bodhisattvas abandon all those attitudes. [F.195.a]
By continuously meditating on emptiness and disengagement,
They abandon all obscurations.
- 4.41 “Patience is the foundation of the ten strengths,
The source of the buddhas’ miraculous displays,
And the root of unimpeded wisdom
And compassion.
- 4.42 “Since patience acts as the foundation of the four truths,
The mindfulnesses, relinquishments,
Powers, strengths, and all the other factors of the path of awakening,
What kind of wise person would not cultivate it?
- 4.43 “Since patience acts as the foundation
Of even the unsurpassable wheel
That I have turned in Vārāṇasī,
Patience is always praised by the buddhas.
- 4.44 “If you meditate on emptiness—
The unsurpassed ground for patience—
You will also achieve the qualities of the buddhas,
Since emptiness is the true nature of phenomena.
- 4.45 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (2) because bodhisattva great beings have abandoned
the five sense pleasures and are continuously inclined to renounce the
world, they pursue the idea of going forth and apply themselves diligently
to that purpose. As a consequence, they do not cling to the five sense
pleasures. Once they have gone forth, they abandon all forms of distraction,
remain in remote mountains and forests, and ensure that their virtues are not
wasted. Bodhisattvas who possess this second quality will achieve all
excellent qualities.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:

- 4.46 “Because they are always inspired to going forth,
Bodhisattvas will always go forth.
Since they aspire to remain in mountains and forests,
They will expand the source of all qualities.
- 4.47 “As they rely on solitary places,
They renounce attachment to the five sense pleasures.
Because they are without any form of distraction,
The circumstances of their virtue will not decline.
- 4.48 “Since such places do not permit traveling back and forth,
Asking questions of one another, or conversation,
The buddhas highly praise
Empty, peaceful, and isolated places.
- 4.49 “Therefore, bodhisattvas
Should always remain in solitary places
And give up their attachment to cities.
If they live in cities, greed will grow in them.
- 4.50 “If they gain something, they will be utterly delighted.
If they lose something, they will feel miserable. [F.195.b]
Even if they worship the Buddha,
It cannot be said that worship was performed.
- 4.51 “Those who want to get rid of such defects
Must abandon the desire for gains,
Remain always in isolated places,
And meditate on empty phenomena.
- 4.52 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (3) because bodhisattvas constantly pursue and train
in the Dharma, they read and recite it with great dedication. They pursue a
pure discipline and the most refined forms of ascetic practices, not those that
lead to many types of desire²⁹ and discontentment. They seek to be at peace
from their attachment, not to let it grow. They seek to overcome their anger,
not to increase it. They seek to cut off their ignorance, not to cultivate it. They
seek to eliminate their arrogance, not to encourage it. They seek to overcome
pride, not to increase it. They seek to abandon clinging to *I* and *mine*, not to
let this clinging become stronger. They pursue the Dharma that teaches
selflessness, not the Dharma that bases its view on a self, a person, a sentient
being, and a life force. They always pursue the Dharma that will make them
attain great insight, not the Dharma that will make such insight decline. They
always pursue the Dharma that will make them attain incomparable insight,
not the Dharma that will make them attain minor insight. They pursue the

Dharma that will make them attain all that is excellent, not the Dharma that will prevent them from attaining excellent qualities. Pursuing the Dharma in this way, they do not look for worldly profit, even though they read the Dharma, recite it, [F.196.a] contemplate it correctly in accordance with the way it is taught, practice it, and teach it to others. Since they also do not seek to be even so much as praised by others, they establish many sentient beings in that Dharma. Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas who possess this third quality will achieve all excellent qualities.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:

- 4.53 “Bodhisattvas who go forth
Are devoted to discipline and ascetic practices;
Thereby increasing their insight,
They cause a rain of wisdom to fall.
- 4.54 “Upon hearing the pure and profound Dharma,
They contemplate its meaning with genuine mindfulness,
And practice it properly,
In accordance with the way it is taught.
- 4.55 “They always teach it to others on a vast scale,
With a completely pure attitude.
Although they benefit many sentient beings,
There is not the slightest hope of reward in their minds.
- 4.56 “Experiencing the taste of excellent qualities,
They firmly follow the Dharma
And establish others into it,
Thereby propagating the teachings of the buddhas.
- 4.57 “After having actualized all the qualities
That they have accumulated
During immeasurable eons,
They attract beings onto the path of awakening.
- 4.58 “Therefore, after seeking the profound Dharma
That is praised by the buddhas,
Bodhisattvas should teach it to sentient beings.
All excellent qualities will arise on that basis.
- 4.59 “Pūrṇa, if bodhisattva great beings carefully guard their discipline and observe ascetic practices, they will possess all the roots of virtue—the most excellent merit. Pūrṇa, in the past, countless eons ago, so long ago that the length of time cannot be measured, fathomed, or conceived, a thus-gone one,

a worthy one, a perfect buddha appeared in the world. He was endowed with perfect knowledge and conduct. [F.196.b] He was a bliss-gone one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed guide who tames beings, a teacher of both gods and men. This blessed buddha was named Merugandha. He lived for sixty years. Whenever he taught the Dharma to a gathering, eight hundred million hearers attained the fruition of a worthy one.

4.60 “Pūrṇa, after the thus-gone one Merugandha had passed into complete nirvāṇa, the sublime Dharma remained for five hundred years. Within seven days after the Thus-Gone One had passed into complete nirvāṇa, most of the great hearers followed in his footsteps and also nirvāṇa. Pūrṇa, just like me, that thus-gone one appeared in the world at a time of the five degenerations. After the great hearers had passed into complete nirvāṇa, most beings thought, ‘If the Dharma of the mendicants is so pleasant and enjoyable, shouldn’t we all go forth as monks?’ So each of them shaved their heads and beards, dressed in saffron-colored Dharma robes, and went forth from their households into homelessness. However, even though they had gone forth, they exclusively engaged in three types of wrong behaviors: they constantly visited and gathered in the houses of householders, they sustained themselves based on strong clinging to profit, and they indulged only in harmful types of livelihood, without ever accumulating merit and wisdom. In that way, they only engaged in those three types of behaviors, without accomplishing anything else.

4.61 “After one hundred years, when all the great hearers without exception had passed into complete nirvāṇa, these monks were acting like householders. Most of them had discarded the profound discourses of that buddha. They no longer observed their discipline and had abandoned the excellent and refined ascetic practices. None of them were reading and reciting the discourses. Pūrṇa, at that time, as these monks were interested in fulfilling their many desires, [F.197.a] and were thus attached to the pleasures of food and drink, there also lived an extremely kind and caring prince called Damaśrī. While staying in solitude, he began to doubt: ‘What kind of Dharma did the thus-gone one Merugandha realize? These days, his great hearers act carelessly, and it has become impossible to distinguish them from householders!’

4.62 “At that very moment, a god who had made himself invisible arrived in front of the prince and said, ‘Listen—the Dharma that the thus-gone one Merugandha realized is extremely profound, pure, and definitive!’

“ ‘Well,’ inquired the prince, ‘what is this extremely profound, pure, and definitive Dharma that the thus-gone one Merugandha realized?’

4.63 “ ‘Prince,’ answered the god, ‘this Dharma is beyond form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. It is beyond the aggregates, elements, and sense sources. It is beyond the five sense desires, and it is free from any form of attachment. What the thus-gone one Merugandha taught to sentient beings was this extremely profound, pure, and definitive Dharma, which he had realized.’

4.64 “The prince then asked, ‘Would it be possible for me to hear and comprehend this Dharma, and then to put it into practice in accordance with the way it is taught?’

“ ‘O prince,’ replied the god, ‘strive one-pointedly with persistent diligence, and it will not be hard for you to receive it!’

4.65 “Pūrṇa, at that moment, the prince made a commitment: ‘Since I have received such clear encouragement from this god, I must take it to heart, go forth as a monk, and pursue the profound Dharma.’ So he went before his parents, bowed to them, and said, ‘Father and mother, I wish to go forth under the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha and pursue his path.’ [F.197.b]

4.66 “His parents answered, ‘What is the point of abandoning us and going forth? Nowadays, there is not the slightest difference between those who have gone forth under the teachings of that buddha and householders.’ At that moment they spoke these verses:

4.67 “ ‘The many monks living today
Act carelessly and enjoy the five sense pleasures.
They plow fields and conduct business,
So there is no difference between them and householders.

4.68 “ ‘There are many people who suffer or are poor,
And others who are unable to support themselves.
Many such people
Are now going forth to sustain their bodies.

4.69 “ ‘But you were born into a household of the warrior class.
You are already rich, you enjoy the five sense pleasures,
And you are wealthy and opulent.
With such riches, what is the point of your going forth?’

4.70 “The prince Damaśrī answered his parents with these verses:

“ ‘I am not seeking power;
Even if I attained it, I would abandon it.
Rather, I pursue only the profound Dharma of the Buddha,
As well as a pure discipline.

- 4.71 “ ‘Because I heard a god
Who encouraged me to go forth,
I wish to fully realize
The profound Dharma taught by the Buddha.
- 4.72 “ ‘As I heard the words of the god,
My mind became utterly joyful.
The teachings of the Buddha might soon vanish,
So I intend to support and protect them.’
- 4.73 “Then his parents again spoke to Damaśrī in these verses:

“ ‘The profound discourses have already completely vanished;
No one recites them anymore,
So from whom will you hear
The profound Dharma of the Buddha?
- 4.74 “ ‘If there were still beings among the four retinues
Who could recite that profound meaning,
It would make sense for you to go forth,
After hearing it from them.’
- 4.75 “The prince Damaśrī again replied with this verse:

“ ‘I will now guard my discipline and engage in ascetic practices
With persistent diligence.
Far away, in mountains and forests,
I will pursue the profound and pure Dharma of the Buddha.’
- 4.76 “Pūrṇa, after Damaśrī had uttered this verse, he prostrated and supplicated
his parents for permission to go forth—which they gave, although in silence.
Next, he went directly to the monks, whereupon he shaved his head and
facial hair, [F.198.a] donned the saffron-colored Dharma robes, and went
forth. After having taken the precepts, he respectfully asked the monks,
‘What are the teachings that the thus-gone one Merugandha gave to his
disciples? If I hear those teachings, I will put them into practice in
accordance with the way they were taught.’

“Pūrṇa, after he said those words, the monks answered, ‘We have not
heard the Dharma from the Thus-Gone One. Instead, we simply emulate the
preceptors and teachers, and you should also practice this same Dharma!’
- 4.77 “The monk Damaśrī said to the other monks, ‘It is obvious that you have
gone forth after renouncing lives in poverty among the low castes. For that
reason, you now strive only for food and clothing, and there is not the

slightest difference between your behaviors and those of householders. However, from now on you must join me in pursuit of the profound and pure Dharma of the Buddha!

“At that moment, the many monks replied to the monk Damaśrī in verses:

- 4.78 “ ‘We have already received the practices
That we are engaged in,
So that we can acquire food and clothing,
Free from servitude toward the king.
- 4.79 “ ‘We are very happy and joyful,
And no one expresses contempt or arrogance toward us.
We are now totally free from
The suffering experienced by householders.
- 4.80 “ ‘Since this is nirvāṇa,
It is the most sublime form of happiness.
We do not need
Anything other than this!
- 4.81 “ ‘Since the householders always make offerings to us,
We possess many Dharma robes and alms bowls.
We also have a huge quantity of medicine, wealth, and food,
From the many homes of benefactors.’
- 4.82 “Pūrṇa, when he heard those verses spoken by the group of monks, an intense feeling of distress arose in the mind of the monk Damaśrī, and he began to shed tears. He went to other temples and asked many other monks the same question: [F.198.b] ‘What are the teachings that the thus-gone one Merugandha gave to his disciples? If I can receive those teachings, I will put them into practice in accordance with the way they were taught.’ Everywhere, the monks answered in the same manner as the first monks had done. Finally, the monk Damaśrī left the monks behind and went alone into the solitude of the mountains and forests, where he yearned to practice one-pointedly the profound Dharma.
- 4.83 “At that time, among the hearers who had previously followed the thus-gone one Merugandha, there was a great hearer called Supraṭiṣṭhita. He practiced the conduct of total seclusion, remained alone in solitary caves, had few desires, and was content. He was very enthusiastic about renunciation, his tasks were completed, and he possessed the six higher perceptions as well as the three types of knowledge. In these ways, he was a

great worthy one, similar to Mahākāśyapa who is following my teachings today. At that time, the monk Supraṭiṣṭhita wrote these verses on the rock surface in the cave where he was staying:

- 4.84 “ ‘Beings circle endlessly in saṃsāra
Because of indulging in the experience of sense pleasures.
They enter the charnel ground nurturing enmity.
Thus they experience much meaningless suffering.
- 4.85 “ ‘This body is filthy like a corpse;
Unclean substances ooze from its nine orifices.
Just like worms attracted by excrement,
Fools are craving for bodies.
- 4.86 “ ‘The root of the five sense desires
Is false conceptualization.
Since the wise do not conceptualize in that way,
The five sense desires vanish from their minds.
- 4.87 “ ‘Great desire is born from mistaken concepts,
And afflictions are born from great desire.
Since genuine mindfulness is devoid of clinging,
All remaining afflictions will be exhausted.’ [B4]
- 4.88 “Pūrṇa, after a long time had passed since he had left for isolated caves, the monk Damaśrī came across those four verses that had been written by the monk Supraṭiṣṭhita on the rock surface in the cave where he had been staying. Seeing them, he studied them in his daily recitations, [F.199.a] contemplated their meaning, and soon he developed the five higher perceptions. Then he came to the place where the thus-gone one Merugandha had previously been cremated, and he prostrated to it. He circumambulated the place three times, sat down cross-legged, and vowed not to arise from his seat until he had seen the Thus-Gone One and received the Dharma from him.
- 4.89 “Pūrṇa, Śakra, the lord of the gods, knew by heart the discourse taught by the thus-gone one Merugandha called *The Eight Hundred Thousand Gateways*. Perceiving the extraordinary resolve of the monk Damaśrī, he descended from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three to meet him and expounded to him the discourse of *The Eight Hundred Thousand Gateways*. He also offered him the dhāraṇīs known as *The Four Statements on the Basis of Erudition*, *The Seven Statements on the Various Aspects*, and *The Fourteen Statements on the Gateways*. The monk Damaśrī, having heard these dhāraṇīs, recited them in his daily recitations, and by memorizing them, obtained the illumination of insight

into phenomena. Because of this, the discourses taught by the thus-gone one Merugandha became perfectly clear, and all the discourses that were most auspicious, profound, in accord with emptiness, and in accord with freedom naturally appeared to his mind. He also saw the thus-gone one Merugandha with his saṅgha of monks, the perfumed chamber where he resided, his throne, and his fourfold retinue, as well as all the assemblies, including those of the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, demigods, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans. Since he had obtained the illumination of insight into phenomena, the monk Damaśrī arose from his seat, set out on the journey back to his homeland, and finally arrived in front of his parents. He then expounded to them those pure discourses that were in harmony with emptiness and freedom, [F.199.b] those most excellent and profound discourses. He then proclaimed praises of the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.

4.90 “Pūrṇa, upon hearing that Dharma, the parents of the monk Damaśrī, court ladies, ministers, and retinues all developed deep-felt trust, and respectfully said to the monk Damaśrī, ‘Venerable One, please protect us and let us go forth under the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha!’ Pūrṇa, at that time, eighty-four thousand beings followed the example of the king and queen and went forth at the same time. They became known collectively as the saṅgha of monks in the assembly of Damaśrī. Pūrṇa, in that way, the monk Damaśrī propagated the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha again and established a great number of sentient beings in happiness. Because of the aspirations to protect the sublime Dharma that he had formed in his past lives out of love and compassion, the monk Damaśrī now wandered from region to region, city to city, and country to country, proclaiming the praises of the thus-gone one Merugandha and his hearers. He also extensively taught beings those pure discourses that were in harmony with emptiness and freedom, those most excellent and profound discourses. During that time, the monk Damaśrī was worshiped, venerated, respected, honored, and praised by all beings, and he became highly renowned.

4.91 “Pūrṇa, after the monk Damaśrī had accomplished the benefit of so many beings on such a vast scale, he eventually passed away. At that point all his students—monks and nuns, as well as male and female lay practitioners—came together, piled up fragrant wood, and cremated him with reverence. Then they built a reliquary measuring two leagues, [F.200.a] which they respectfully worshiped, venerated, honored, and praised by offering various kinds of flowers, perfumes, ointments, fragrant powders, parasols, victory banners, and flags. Pūrṇa, just before the monk Damaśrī had passed away, he had made the aspiration to be reborn again within this world. In

accordance with his aspiration, he was reborn within the warrior class and received the name Smṛtipratilabdha. He went forth under the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha three hundred years after the latter had passed into complete nirvāṇa. Recollecting his previous life and aspirations, he once again spontaneously reached the attainment of the dhāraṇī known as *The Statements of the Gateways*. Through the power of the attainment of this dhāraṇī, he taught on a vast scale to sentient beings discourses that had never been heard before—not those that had already been expounded in previous lives.

4.92 “Pūrṇa, when, among the many monks of Damaśrī, those who had profound insight, were bright and sharp, and had created massive roots of virtue heard the discourses taught by Smṛtipratilabdha, they rejoiced, developed intense trust in them, and eagerly adopted them. They worshiped him respectfully and looked after him. When, among those monks, those with no charisma or qualities, who had dull faculties and were not bright, and had only created minor roots of virtue heard for the first time the Dharma teachings expounded by Smṛtipratilabdha, they did not develop any trust in them, and they did not eagerly adopt them. Instead, they opposed those teachings and criticized them in these words: ‘We have never heard such discourses from preceptors or teachers. We have not even heard them from the great teacher of the past, Damaśrī!’

4.93 “Pūrṇa, however, those among the disciples with profound insight who relied on the authentic meaning did not get caught up in mere words, but instead relied on their meaning. Because of this, they did not oppose these discourses, [F.200.b] but instead guarded the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha and respectfully looked after the monk Smṛtipratilabdha. Pūrṇa, at that time, eight billion monks and nuns, as well as male and female lay practitioners, became followers of the Dharma expounded in the discourses taught by the monk Smṛtipratilabdha.

4.94 “Pūrṇa, during that time, all the disciples of Damaśrī were thus split into two groups, known respectively as ‘the saṅgha of monks following Damaśrī’ and ‘the saṅgha of monks following Smṛtipratilabdha.’ However, the monk Smṛtipratilabdha never mentioned that he was in fact Damaśrī. Why not? It was because, at that time, everyone claimed that the monk Damaśrī had reached the fruition of a worthy one but not the fruition of a bodhisattva, and he would therefore have created doubts by mentioning who he was; everyone claimed that the monk Smṛtipratilabdha was a bodhisattva and not a worthy one.

4.95 “Pūrṇa, after the monk Smṛtipratilabdha had benefitted many sentient beings on a vast scale, he passed away. All his many students piled up fragrant wood and cremated him with reverence. His four retinues came

together and built a reliquary measuring one league to worship that bodhisattva, that great teacher. They then worshiped that reliquary, respected it, honored it, and praised it by offering various kinds of perfumes, flowers, fragrant powders, ointments, garlands, parasols, banners, and standards. Pūrṇa, just before the monk Smṛtipratilabdha had passed away, he had made the aspiration to be reborn again within this world. In accordance with his aspiration, he was reborn into an important family of householders, and he received the name Yaśas. Then, as he attained recollection of his past lives through the power of his previous aspirations, [F.201.a] he went forth under the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha. This happened when he was seven years old, four hundred years after the thus-gone one Merugandha had passed into complete nirvāṇa. Yaśas also reached the attainment of dhāraṇīs, and with this power he was able to teach genuinely to sentient beings discourses that they had never heard before.

4.96 “When, among all the monks following Smṛtipratilabdha and all the monks following Damaśrī, those who had created massive roots of virtue heard the teachings taught by the monk Yaśas, they became extremely pleased, and all of them experienced joy in the Dharma. Pūrṇa, since those many monks relied on the authentic meaning and were not caught up in the words, upon hearing from the monk Yaśas those extremely profound discourses that they had never heard before and that were in harmony with emptiness and the ultimate, they developed strong trust in them, adopted them eagerly, accepted them without opposition, recited them, and practiced them in accordance with the way they were taught. Pūrṇa, when, among those monks, those who had dull faculties, lacked mental brilliance, and had not previously created massive roots of virtue, heard for the first time those extremely profound discourses taught by the monk Yaśas that were in harmony with emptiness and the ultimate, they did not develop any trust in them, and they did not adopt them eagerly. Instead, they opposed them, denigrated them, and criticized them in these words: ‘We have never heard such Dharma from preceptors or teachers. We have not even heard it from the great teacher of the past, the bodhisattva Smṛtipratilabdha!’

4.97 “Pūrṇa, at that time, this latter group of monks among those who followed Damaśrī and Smṛtipratilabdha began, out of hostility and jealousy, to criticize the other monks who were utterly pleased by the teachings they had heard from the monk Yaśas and who felt strong trust in them and earnestly adopted them. They did not allow those monks to live with them, nor were they allowed to read, recite, or expound the Dharma together with them. Looking down on the other monks, [F.201.b] they said, ‘This is not the Dharma of the Buddha; these are not the teachings of the great teacher!’

Pūrṇa, at that time, the monk Yaśas propagated the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha on a vast scale. When he wandered from city to city, he taught the Dharma to sentient beings and benefitted many of them. As a consequence, eight billion beings gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

4.98 “After the monk Yaśas had benefitted many sentient beings in that way, he passed away. At that time seventy thousand of his followers built for him seventy thousand reliquaries that they worshiped, respected, honored, and praised by offering various kinds of perfumes, flowers, fragrant powders, ointments, garlands, parasols, banners, and standards. Pūrṇa, just before the monk Yaśas had passed away, he had formed the aspiration to be reborn again within this world. In accordance with his aspiration, he was reborn within the warrior class. When he was born, many gods proclaimed, ‘Hark! This newborn prince will bring great benefits to sentient beings!’ He therefore became known as Pariṇāyaka.³⁰ When he was fourteen, he went forth under the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha, five hundred years after the latter had passed into complete nirvāṇa. The monk Pariṇāyaka recited a great many discourses and treatises, engaged in extensive and profound studies, became an expert in letters, developed perfect eloquence, and mastered the skills of teaching the Dharma.

4.99 “Pūrṇa, as the monk Pariṇāyaka wandered from town to town, city to city, and country to country, he propagated the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha on a vast scale and benefitted many beings. [F.202.a] At that time, the assemblies of monks following Damaśrī, those following Smṛtipratilabdha, and those following Yaśas planned to group together and go meet Pariṇāyaka to refute and disparage his teachings. When he saw those many monks approaching, the monk Pariṇāyaka asked them, ‘What arguments are you planning to use to oppose my teachings? What are you planning to inquire about?’ When they heard those words, the monks were overcome by distress and sorrow, and they did not answer. As such they were unable to oppose the monk Pariṇāyaka.

4.100 “Pūrṇa, as long as that bodhisattva remained in the world, the teachings of the Buddha spread and flourished. However, after he passed into complete nirvāṇa, the teachings of the Buddha started to vanish. Toward the end, when the Dharma was about to disappear, the monk Pariṇāyaka wandered from town to town, from city to city, and from country to country, teaching the pure and profound discourses that are in harmony with emptiness, in order to benefit many sentient beings. As a consequence, eight hundred million beings gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. After they passed away, all those beings were reborn in the heavens within the world of the gods. Pūrṇa, after having benefitted beings

in that way, on the first day following the night when the monk Pariṇāyaka passed away, the teachings of the Buddha vanished. Pūrṇa, since the teachings of the thus-gone one Merugandha had vanished, the teachings of the profound and pure discourses that were in harmony with emptiness also vanished. Pūrṇa, that being so, bodhisattva great beings guard the teachings of the buddhas and perfect their roots of virtue and their accumulations of merit by propagating such profound discourses. [F.202.b]

4.101 “Pūrṇa, after the bodhisattva Pariṇāyaka passed away, he was reborn in the tenth universe in the direction of the zenith. The buddha residing in that realm at that time was the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha called Sunetra. He went forth under this buddha’s teachings and, due to the roots of virtue and merit he had accumulated in his previous lives, his insight was profound, brilliant, and sharp, and his eloquence was inexhaustible, swift, and unobstructed. For eighty-four thousand years, the monk Pariṇāyaka created virtue by practicing under the teachings of the thus-gone one Sunetra. After he passed away, he was born once again within that same realm, where he encountered the thus-gone one called Expanding Arm, and he subsequently went forth under his teachings. Having created roots of virtue, he pursued unsurpassed and perfect awakening. After he passed away, he was reborn yet again within the same field, only this time in the presence of the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Fruitful Conduct. He then went forth under his teachings, and for the next seventy thousand years he created roots of virtue with persistent diligence and pursued unsurpassed and perfect awakening. He was then called Śula. The thus-gone one Fruitful Conduct prophesied, ‘After I pass into complete nirvāṇa, this monk Śula will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. He will become a thus-gone one, a worthy one, a perfect buddha called Unimpeded Vision.’

4.102 “Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas who possess this third quality will achieve all excellent qualities.”

At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly: [F.203.a]

4.103 “When bodhisattvas hear the profound,
Pure, and definitive Dharma,
They follow it
And teach it to others.

4.104 “Although the world does not fathom its depths,
The bodhisattvas do not sink.
Maintaining a pure discipline,
They benefit sentient beings on a vast scale.

- 4.105 “Since the buddhas taught their retinues
That the narratives and biographies
Illustrate the path to buddhahood,
They are definitely the Dharma.
- 4.106 “Altruistic bodhisattvas
Accomplish the benefit of sentient beings.
They preserve the Dharma teachings of the buddhas
And transmit awakening to their retinues.
- 4.107 “Bodhisattvas accomplish the benefit of sentient beings
In accordance with the Dharma.
They teach the path of the buddhas to their retinues,
Who come closer to the mind set on awakening.
- 4.108 “Since they guard the path of the buddhas
And benefit sentient beings on a vast scale,
They will be revered by the gods, nāgas,
Demons, and rākṣasas, as well as the great beings.
- 4.109 “Therefore, if bodhisattvas, upon hearing
The excellent Dharma related to profound and pure emptiness,
Contemplate it and pursue it one-pointedly,
Their insight will increase.
- 4.110 “Furthermore, Pūrṇa, (4) since bodhisattva great beings engage in perfect
conduct, this sublime conduct will also perfect their roots of virtue and
develop excellent merit. What is meant by *conduct*? Pūrṇa, relying on their
virtuous friends, bodhisattvas practice generosity, guard their discipline,
cultivate patience, undertake diligence, rest in concentration, and develop
their insight as well as their skillful means. Who are the virtuous friends of
bodhisattvas? They are those from whom bodhisattvas receive the skillful
means taught in the discourses. All the buddhas, hearers, and bodhisattvas
who pursue awakening through their extraordinary resolve [F.203.b] are
referred to as *the virtuous friends of bodhisattvas*. Bodhisattvas who possess this
fourth quality will achieve all excellent qualities.”
At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:
- 4.111 “I have explained to bodhisattvas
That what should be practiced
Is generosity, accompanied by utter joy
And no feeling of regret.
- 4.112 “What is meant by *joy*?

It means that their bodies are filled with joy.
Bodhisattvas should always practice on the path of awakening
With this joyful attitude.

- 4.113 “If bodhisattvas, after practicing generosity,
Dedicate this merit to awakening
And accomplish the benefit of sentient beings,
They will themselves be benefitted in ways that cannot be fathomed.
- 4.114 “When bodhisattvas see a beggar,
They perceive him as a buddha and think,
‘This person approached me today
And offered me the path of awakening.
- 4.115 “ ‘As a consequence,
I will reach the pure fields.
This person has revealed to me the Buddha
And is teaching me the path to buddhahood.
- 4.116 “ ‘By meeting this person today,
I will receive a very great gain!’
With their bodies filled with joy,
They do not wish for anything else.
- 4.117 “If someone³¹ were to approach them,
They would greet this person from a distance
And say, ‘What do you need?
I will give you anything!’
- 4.118 “If this person answered, ‘I do not need anything,’
The bodhisattvas would be delighted and think,
‘This person simply said those words
Because he wants to guide me.
- 4.119 “ ‘What interests this noble being
Is the Dharma teaching of having few desires and contentment.
He has come here today and instructed me in it
To provide me with the circumstance leading to awakening.
- 4.120 “ ‘Thanks to this person,
I have now received the Dharma.
As you say, “I do not need anything,”
Those are excellent words!’
- 4.121 “But if this person answered,

- 'I need such and such; please give it to me!
The bodhisattvas would joyfully
Offer whatever they possess.
- 4.122 "If they do not give rise to regrets
After practicing generosity,
Their minds will always be joyful,
Since they have recollected the path of the Buddha.
- 4.123 "When they practice generosity, they dedicate the merit thus:
'Since all sentient beings are deserving, [F.204.a]
I will free them all from poverty
And satisfy them all.'
- 4.124 "Practicing the path of awakening, they make this aspiration:
'May sentient beings who hear my name
Naturally become content
And free from miserliness and attachment.
- 4.125 " 'May all beings in my country,
Who practice the path, become content,
Give up their attachment to the five sense pleasures,
And aspire to go forth.
- 4.126 " 'Through such boundless conduct
And the dedication of this generosity,
May I always be generous,
And may all beings follow in my footsteps.'
- 4.127 "When bodhisattvas practice generosity,
Their love touches all sentient beings.
Therefore, within all worlds,
There is no comparable happiness.
- 4.128 "Take the example of a rich,
Wealthy, and prosperous householder
Who has but a single son,
Who has been far away for many years.
- 4.129 "Hearing that his son is coming home,
The whole body of that householder is filled with joy.
Knowing that his son is finally returning,
He is as thrilled as when his son was born.
- 4.130 "Likewise, when bodhisattvas see beggars,

- Their minds become utterly delighted.
Yet the joy experienced by the householder
Does not match even a sixteenth fraction of their delight.
- 4.131 “When they hear about someone practicing generosity,
Their minds become utterly delighted.
Nothing can compare to the joy
That arises on the basis of love.
- 4.132 “Take the example of a king who orders
The limbs of a criminal to be cut off.
When the executioner has led him to the scaffold
And is about to strike him with his weapon,
- 4.133 “The king may pardon him and let him live.
In that case, the man will be utterly overjoyed.
Still, even that joy cannot match the delight
Of bodhisattvas who are generous toward destitute beings.
- 4.134 “When bodhisattvas cultivate the path,
They do not search for a field of merit.
Rather, if a beggar is present, they practice generosity,
Thereby reaching a state of immense joy.
- 4.135 “When bodhisattvas see buddhas,
Worthy ones, or solitary buddhas,
They will respectfully approach them and worship them,
Since they know that they are hard to meet.
- 4.136 “Because bodhisattvas are majestic, brilliant, and sharp,
And because their minds are gentle,
They aspire to develop excellent qualities, pursue the path,
And worship the Buddha and the Saṅgha. [F.204.b]
- 4.137 “They worship the blessed buddhas,
As well as their hearers,
With altruism and respect.
But they do not worship others, such as gods and spirits.³²
- 4.138 “When they see some of the solitary buddhas
Who have independently attained nirvāṇa
And who possess such qualities,³³
They worship them as well.
- 4.139 “Because bodhisattvas know the virtuous or nonvirtuous characters

- Of the fields of merit,
Those who are wise in the world
Do not worship evil extremists.
- 4.140 “They carefully maintain their discipline,
Their love pervades all sentient beings,
Their diligence is matchless,
And they are endowed with immense patience, insight, and erudition.
- 4.141 “Since they possess such qualities,
They become leaders of all worlds.
They actualize the awakening of the buddhas
And turn the unsurpassed wheel.
- 4.142 “If bodhisattvas accomplish
These four qualities,
All the roots of virtue
Will manifest.
- 4.143 “All the excellent qualities that are accomplished
Over countless millions of eons
Are included here
Within this bodhisattva path.
- 4.144 “Therefore, bodhisattvas
Should always cultivate love.
They should aspire to go forth
And remain in mountains, forests, or remote places.
- 4.145 “Constantly pursuing the pristinely pure,
Profound, and definitive Dharma,
They should develop themselves
By observing bodhisattva conduct.”
- 4.146 *This was the fourth chapter, The Possession of Roots of Virtue.*

5.

Chapter Five

THE POWER OF MIRACULOUS DISPLAYS

5.1 Then, through the power of the Blessed One's miraculous abilities, many trillions of light rays radiated from the pores of his skin. Masses of blazing fire as huge as Mount Sumeru also emerged from each of his pores; and thus-gone ones teaching the Dharma, as numerous as all the grains of sand in the Ganges river, also emerged from each pore. The entire assembly present witnessed these miraculous displays. After the Blessed One had manifested them, he asked the venerable Pūrṇa, "Pūrṇa, did you see the power of the miraculous displays coming from the pore of each body hair of the Thus-Gone One?"

"Blessed One, I saw it," replied Pūrṇa. [F.205.a]

5.2 "Pūrṇa," continued the Blessed One, "the Thus-Gone One always possesses, uninterruptedly, the power of such miraculous displays. Nevertheless, the hearers perceive only the Thus-Gone One sitting here and explaining the Dharma. But right now, he is genuinely performing the deeds of a buddha uninterruptedly, within all the universes of the ten directions, as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges river. Similarly, he is teaching the Dharma within all the universes of the ten directions. Pūrṇa, someone may say, correctly, 'That peerless and matchless being, that supreme human, that extremely profound and immeasurable field of merit, whose conduct is measureless, and of whom, even as he takes but a single step, no other being is able to fathom the motive and conduct involved in that act of lifting his foot and placing it down—who is that?' If someone were to ask that question, I would have to answer, 'I am.' Pūrṇa, no sentient being is able to assess the intent, motive, or conduct involved in the Thus-Gone One's act of lifting and setting down a single foot."

At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:

- 5.3 “Sentient beings, whether moving or unmoving,³⁴
Can never know such matters
as the intentions or behavior involved
In a single step of the Blessed One’s feet.³⁵
- 5.4 “His miracles are boundless,
And so is his conduct.
Since his qualities are also boundless,
He is supremely exalted, the chief among beings.
- 5.5 “Since his great wisdom is immeasurable,
No one can understand its full scope.
Even if all beings possessed
The powers of insight and miracles,
- 5.6 “Like Śāriputra
And Maudgalyāyana,
They could not understand
My act of lifting and placing down my foot.
- 5.7 “Even if all sentient beings
Attained the awakening of the solitary buddhas,
They would know nothing of even a single step of mine,
Let alone of my other profound qualities.
- 5.8 “Even if all the limitless suns and moons
Combined into a single sun-disk,
Its light could not match the light of a single light ray
Radiating from a pore of a hair of the Thus-Gone One.
- 5.9 “Take as an illustration [F.205.b]
All the suns in seven quadrillion universes,
Which illuminate countless realms
In a limitless manner.
- 5.10 “Imagine that all those great suns in the ten directions,
As numerous as all the grains of sand in the Ganges,
Were joined to form a single sun,
From which a single light ray was as large as Mount Sumeru.
- 5.11 “If the light of such a great sun,
Which constantly illuminates the ten directions,
Were compared to the light of the Buddha,
The sun would barely be visible, like a burning tree.

- 5.12 “The light of that great sun
Would not shine through trees and leaves;
It would be obstructed
By all the mountains, rivers, and rocks.
- 5.13 “On the other hand, the light rays emanated by the Thus-Gone One
Shine unobstructedly
Through Mount Sumeru,
As well as through all the iron and vajra mountains.
- 5.14 “Since his light, emanated by his miraculous power,
Along with his majestic presence, is immeasurable,
Except for those who lack trust,
Who would not arouse the mind set on awakening upon seeing it?
- 5.15 “When sentient beings see these light rays
And the great power of these magical displays,
Most of them give rise to the unsurpassed mind set on awakening
With the thought, ‘We must also reach that state!’ ”
- 5.16 At that moment, the Blessed One smiled,
And Ānanda asked,
“Blessed One, why are you smiling?
You who possess unimpeded wisdom, please tell us!”
- 5.17 The Blessed One answered:
“Since sentient beings have now witnessed the power of my miraculous
displays,
They have given rise to the mind set on awakening
And aspire to achieve buddhahood.
- 5.18 “Within this retinue, thirty thousand beings
Have made a commitment to preserve this Dharma teaching,
Thinking, ‘After the Buddha passes away,
We shall recite this discourse.’
- 5.19 “After I pass away,
They will hear this discourse,
And, during the intermediate and final periods,³⁶
They will practice it in accordance with the way it is taught.
- 5.20 “It is extremely difficult to give rise to the mind set on awakening.
It is extremely difficult to be inspired by the Dharma of the Buddha;
But it will be even more difficult

To uphold and recite this discourse during the final period.

- 5.21 “It is extremely rare for a buddha to appear,
Even in ten trillion eons;
But it will be even rarer for this discourse
To be expounded in the future, during the final period.”
- 5.22 Then the Blessed One said to the venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, I entrust this discourse to you. Why? Because, as long as this discourse of the Bodhisattva Collection remains within the world, [F.206.a] the entire Dharma of the Buddha will also remain. Ānanda, if such a profound discourse were to vanish, all the Dharma teachings that must be practiced as they are taught would also vanish. Because the Dharma teachings that must be practiced as they are taught would vanish, the teachings of the buddhas would also vanish. Ānanda, you should now worship me with the most sublime offerings. In what manner should the hearers worship me with the most sublime offerings? You should not think that the most sublime flowers, perfumes, fragrant powders, ointments, parasols, banners, standards, garments, and music, as well as the proclamation of the Thus-Gone One’s praises, are the most sublime types of offerings. Ānanda, they are not what is meant by *the most sublime offerings*. Rather, hearing such a profound discourse and adopting, memorizing, reading, reciting, and practicing it as it is taught—this is what is meant by ‘worshiping, venerating, respecting, honoring, and praising the Thus-Gone One with the most sublime offerings.’ Why is that? Because all the thus-gone ones also worship, venerate, and revere the Dharma, but they do not hold worldly offerings in high esteem.
- 5.23 “Therefore, Ānanda, I now insist on entrusting this discourse to you. Why? Because, Ānanda, by training in this discourse genuinely, I have awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, and I am now turning the unsurpassed Dharma wheel. When the buddhas of the past practiced bodhisattva conduct, they also trained in this discourse genuinely, and thus awoke to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and turned the unsurpassed Dharma wheel. Likewise, the buddhas of the future will also train in this discourse genuinely, and thus will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood [F.206.b] and turn the unsurpassed Dharma wheel. Also, all the buddhas who presently reside within the universes of the ten directions have also trained in this discourse genuinely, and thus they have awoken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and are now turning the Dharma wheel.
- 5.24 “Therefore, Ānanda, you should remember this discourse of the Bodhisattva Collection as *The Sūtra of Turning the Wheel of Dharma*.³⁷ It is with this teaching that I turned the wheel of Dharma for the hearers in the Deer

Park³⁸ in Vārāṇasī. Ānanda, today, within Veṇuvana, I have also turned this irreversible Dharma wheel, this discourse of the Bodhisattva Collection, and the doubts of all sentient beings have been eliminated. Ānanda, here, at the edge of space,³⁹ the thus-gone ones of the past also taught this discourse of the Bodhisattva Collection. The future thus-gone ones will also teach this discourse of the Bodhisattva Collection here, at the edge of space. After awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I have also expounded this discourse of the Bodhisattva Collection here, at the edge of space. For those reasons, you should know that this place has become a great reliquary of the thus-gone ones, which is to be worshiped by all the worlds with their gods and humans. Ānanda, this is so because this is the only place that has the unique quality of being the location where the thus-gone ones of the past have taught this profound discourse. Ānanda, any sentient being afflicted by desire, anger, and ignorance who enters Veṇuvana, will, without exception, no longer give rise to desire, anger, and ignorance.

5.25 “Ānanda, [F.207.a] thus-gone ones have certainly resided in other temples, but those places do not have the same qualities as this one. Why is it so? Because, Ānanda, when animals enter Kalandaka Forest and Veṇuvana, desire no longer arises in them; and when flocks of birds enter this forest, they no longer sing at inappropriate times. Why is it so? Because when Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha, visited his kingdom for the first time after being enthroned, he came to this forest, together with his retinue of queens, to frolic with them. However, as soon as he entered here, he felt that his desire for passionate frolicking had disappeared. Everyone in the retinue of queens also felt that any desire for passionate frolicking had disappeared. At that moment, the king became utterly delighted and thought, ‘If a buddha appears in the world and comes to my country, may I meet him face to face. Upon meeting him, may I develop sincere trust in him. Having developed sincere trust, may I worship him. I will offer this forest to that thus-gone one. May he reside in this place, and may I hear the Dharma from him. Why? Because this forest is a place for those who are to be worshiped, not for those who are bound by the five sense desires.’

5.26 “Ānanda, when King Bimbisāra entered this forest, he had such virtuous thoughts. In the past, thus-gone ones resided in this forest and taught this discourse of the Bodhisattva Collection. Therefore, none of the qualities associated with this forest are found in other places, and all the worlds with their gods, humans, and demigods are respectfully paying homage to it. Ānanda, in this forest, there are no poisonous snakes, lizards, horseflies, mosquitos, or the like. Beings who reside here do not entertain any evil thoughts: [F.207.b] this is also an extraordinary quality of Veṇuvana. Even if I attempted to express the qualities of this grove for one hundred years, this

task would never come to an end. Why is it so? Because, Ānanda, this perfumed chamber of Veṇuvana possesses all those immeasurable qualities, while other places do not.”

5.27 “Blessed One,” said the venerable Ānanda, “I did not know that Veṇuvana possessed such qualities! Blessed One, I want to confess today my previous negative attitude of not wanting to serve the Blessed One as his attendant.”

5.28 “Ānanda,” replied the Blessed One, “that negative attitude was purified the very moment you attained the pure eye of Dharma with respect to phenomena.”

5.29 *This was the fifth chapter, The Power of Miraculous Displays. [B5]*

6.

Chapter Six

GREAT COMPASSION

6.1 Then the venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana thought, “The Blessed One has perfectly taught the conduct of bodhisattvas through his great compassion. The Blessed One is therefore quite astonishing! Why? Because bodhisattvas will practice the Dharma of the Buddha in the most excellent manner and will cause sentient beings to comprehend the meaning of the absence of arising and ceasing.”

6.2 At that moment, the Blessed One knew the thought that had arisen in the mind of the venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana and he said, “Thus it is, Maudgalyāyana, thus it is! The thus-gone ones indeed possess great compassion. If my hearers heard about such great compassion, they would become perplexed and lose their inspiration. Maudgalyāyana, you would become perplexed and lose your inspiration if I were now so much as to describe fully how much compassion I had in the past when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct, let alone speak of the great compassion of the thus-gone ones.”

“Very well, Blessed One,” said the venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana, [F.208.a] “but please do tell us at least just a little about your great compassion as you practiced bodhisattva conduct in the past.”

6.3 “Maudgalyāyana,” continued the Blessed One, “listen carefully and keep my words in mind. I shall explain a little to you of my great compassion when I practiced bodhisattva conduct in the past, with some examples of it. The extent of the great compassion I had when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past would be impossible to express, indeed; but that great compassion was based on four attitudes. What were those four attitudes?⁴⁰ The point about the great compassion of bodhisattvas is this: it is the extent to which they abide by great compassion that determines the extent to which bodhisattvas accomplish the Dharma of the Buddha; that is what is called *great compassion*.

- 6.4 “Maudgalyāyana, in the past, because of the great compassion of that kind that I had for sentient beings, and the great aspirations of that kind that I made for them, however many beings were suffering within the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment, the great Black Line Hell, Crushing Hell, Reviving Hell, Wailing Hell, Great Wailing Hell, Hot Hell, and Extremely Hot Hell, for the sake of each of them I always experienced whatever sufferings they were experiencing in those great hells for as long as their negative karma was not purified, without feeling any discouragement.
- 6.5 “Maudgalyāyana, if there were any causes and conditions to bring about for the benefit of sentient beings, I would readily undertake all of them and liberate those sentient beings from the great hells. I would readily take upon myself the hellish suffering of every single sentient being until all of them had purified their negative karma, and during that time I never felt any discouragement. Maudgalyāyana, after giving rise to such an aspiration and such great diligence, I asked the wise ones, such as the buddhas and their hearers, [F.208.b] ‘Might such appropriate causes and conditions as these suffice to take on suffering and liberate beings from the hells?’ Maudgalyāyana, when the wise heard this, they praised me for my erudition⁴¹—they praised the fact that I had given rise to the mind set on awakening and was then practicing generosity, guarding my discipline, cultivating patience, engendering diligence, and attending virtuous friends. Maudgalyāyana, when I heard this, I gave rise to the extraordinary resolve of pursuing the Dharma with great diligence. I cultivated diligence in order to receive the sublime, excellent Dharma of the Buddha. I cultivated patience in order to master the perfections.
- 6.6 “Maudgalyāyana, how did I cultivate patience? In the past, when I was a bodhisattva, I gave rise to this mindset: ‘Suppose all the sentient beings living in the universes of the ten directions—whether they have form or not, whether they have perception or not, and whether they have neither perception nor nonperception—were to obtain a human life form, come to me, and say, “You have given rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening, yet we lack a great many sense pleasures as well as basic necessities. If you cannot provide these things to us, you will never attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening!”
- 6.7 “ ‘Even if those beings were to rebuke me with harsh words, criticize me with untrue accusations, or, out of hostility, harm me physically with swords, sticks, and stones, I will then never be angry or regretful. Instead I will tame my mind, thinking, “Those beings are deluded, ignorant, and devoid of insight, so they commit deluded actions. This being so, [F.209.a] if I were to become angry and resentful toward those deluded and ignorant beings, how would I be different from them? They have not yet entered the virtuous path,

but I have, so I should now earnestly take their sufferings upon myself. Without giving rise to any thought of anger, I should accommodate both the good and the bad, just like the earth does.” ’ It was with that mindset, Maudgalyāyana, that in the past I cultivated patience.

6.8 “Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, for a long time I have constantly perceived all sentient beings as if they were my only child. Take the example of a rich, wealthy, and affluent householder surrounded by male and female servants, as well as other staff. After performing hundreds of rituals, he becomes the father of a son. His son is very dear to him, so he never tires of looking at his son. Maudgalyāyana, that householder always looks for the best circumstances for his son. He always provides him with the best things as well as his support, and he never gives him anything that would harm him or disadvantage him. Similarly, Maudgalyāyana, for a long time I have constantly perceived all sentient beings as if they were my only child. Thus, for a long time I have constantly looked after what is best for them and supported them. On the other hand, I have never given them anything that would harm or disadvantage them. Maudgalyāyana, for a long time I have constantly taught the genuine path to sentient beings who have lost the way, or entered a mistaken path. By doing so, I have established them on the genuine path. Maudgalyāyana, for those reasons, you should know that for a long time the Thus-Gone One has regarded sentient beings with strong affection, perceiving them as a beloved and dear only child.

6.9 “Maudgalyāyana, in the past, a large group of merchants once set out on the path during the night. At some point, they took a wrong turn and lost their way. Because the night was very dark, none of them knew in which direction to proceed, so they started shouting: ‘We are lost! [F.209.b] We have no protectors, no refuges, and no support. Is there anyone—whether god, nāga, yakṣa, human, or nonhuman—who will show us the way, so that we can return to the right path? Who will be so kind as to help us and illuminate this wrong and fearsome path in the middle of this dark night?’

6.10 “Maudgalyāyana, at that time, a non-Buddhist sage was living in a grass hut in the middle of that isolated forest. Amidst the darkness of the night, he heard the pitiful screams of the merchants and thought, ‘Those merchants are out during this dark night; they must have lost their way and strayed into this isolated forest. If I don’t give them shelter, it would be immoral, and those merchants could be endangered or killed by tigers, lions, wolves, elephants, and jackals, or by other ferocious predators.’

6.11 “Maudgalyāyana, at that moment, the sage shouted loudly to the merchants, ‘Hey, merchants! Don’t be afraid! I will give you shelter and show you the correct path with my torch.’ When they heard the words of the

sage, the merchants were relieved. The sage then wrapped cotton cloth around both his hands, soaked them in oil, and lit them on fire. With these torches, he then showed the path to the merchants.

“Maudgalyāyana, in that instant, each of the merchants thought, ‘This sage is truly amazing! He is helping us without a care for his own body or life!’

6.12 “Maudgalyāyana, while the sage was showing the path to the merchants with the light from his burning hands, great compassion for sentient beings arose in his mind and he thought, ‘When I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, may I illuminate sentient beings who have embarked on mistaken paths with the light of the Dharma, and may I show them the correct path.’

6.13 “Maudgalyāyana, [F.210.a] during that time, the body and mind of the sage remained without wavering in the slightest, even though both his hands were on fire. How is this possible? Because bodhisattvas who observe this superior resolve do not cling to their bodies or lives when they pursue the benefit of others. As a consequence of practicing generosity with this pure attitude, the hands of the sage remained unharmed, and he did not suffer from any injury. The merchants found their way; and at dawn, when they saw that the hands of the sage were unharmed, they became amazed and thought, ‘This sage possesses great, miraculous power. During the whole night, he showed us the way by illuminating our way with his two hands burning, but now there is not even the slightest trace of burns on his hands. He must surely have achieved a high level of conduct and possess great qualities!’

6.14 “Maudgalyāyana, the merchants then said to the sage, ‘The fact that you have endured this extreme hardship is truly excellent! Now, what kind of reward would you like in return for your help?’

‘O merchants,’ replied the sage, ‘I wish to attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening, liberate beings like you from their sufferings in saṃsāra, and show the correct path to beings who are following a wrong path.’

6.15 “At that moment, the merchants became utterly delighted and asked, ‘But how may we repay your kindness?’ As an answer, the sage said, ‘Practice virtue one-pointedly, and do not be careless! Merchants, practice in accordance with the teachings!’ Overjoyed, the merchants respectfully paid homage to the sage and dispersed.

6.16 “Maudgalyāyana, I was the non-Buddhist sage who at that time [F.210.b] showed the path to the merchants by setting both his hands on fire. Do not think that this was someone else. The one thousand two hundred monks present today were those merchants. Maudgalyāyana, for a long time the Thus-Gone One has given fearlessness to sentient beings who experience

fear and terror, he has shown the correct path to sentient beings who are following a wrong path, he has helped blind persons to recover flawless vision, and he has healed sentient beings who are afflicted by severe diseases. For those reasons, you should know that for a long time the Thus-Gone One has been extremely compassionate toward sentient beings.

6.17 “Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, in the past, there was a great eon of sickness here in this world of Jambudvīpa, during which Īśvarasena appeared in the world. He ruled over eighty-four thousand cities and possessed great powers. At one point, while his principal queen was pregnant, she could cure others’ diseases merely by touching them with her hands or other body parts. Eventually, when her pregnancy came to its term, she gave birth to a son. As soon as her son was born, he proclaimed, ‘I have the power to cure all diseases.’

6.18 “The moment he was born, the gods and spirits⁴² of the world proclaimed in unison, ‘This newborn son of the king is a Healer of Men!’ Since those words were heard everywhere, he was given the name Healer of Men.

6.19 “People who were afflicted by diseases were led to the prince and shown to him. He would then touch them with his hands or with another part of his body, thereby curing all their diseases and restoring their well-being. In this way, all sick persons living in the world [F.211.a] were taken to the prince and shown to him. By merely touching them with his hands, all their diseases were cured and their well-being was totally restored. Maudgalyāyana, after Healer of Men had cured diseases in that way for a thousand years, he passed away. After he died, sick persons still came to see him but, hearing of his death, they despaired and cried out of grief, ‘Who will now liberate us from the suffering of our sicknesses?’ So they inquired where the prince Healer of Men had been cremated and, once they knew where the cremation had taken place, they went there, collected his bones, and crushed them into a powder. When they rubbed their bodies with this powder, all their diseases were cured, and they exclaimed, ‘The prince Healer of Men still has the power to cure sicknesses!’

6.20 “Maudgalyāyana, since they were used in that way to cure diseases, the bones gradually became exhausted. After all the bones had been used, sick persons would come to the cremation ground and pick up earth, ashes, or charcoal. When they rubbed those substances on their bodies, they too became healed from all their diseases. Maudgalyāyana, in that way, during the great eon of sickness, the prince Healer of Men healed those persons afflicted by sicknesses through such skillful means.

6.21 “Maudgalyāyana, at that time, I was this prince called Healer of Men who cured the diseases of those unprotected and defenseless sentient beings afflicted by the intense suffering of sickness. Do not think that this was

someone else. After I awoke to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I began healing sentient beings with the medicine of great insight, bringing their sufferings to a complete end. Maudgalyāyana, just as I benefitted sentient beings by taking birth for their sake, you should know that, as a consequence of those acts, I have now once again deliberately taken birth in order to benefit sentient beings. [F.211.b]

6.22 “Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, in the past, I was once walking alone, without any friend, when a ferocious predator wanting to kill me and eat my flesh appeared in front of me. Just before I died, I gave rise to the mind set on awakening and made this aspiration, ‘After I die, may I be reborn as a large animal in this isolated forest, and may some ferocious predators kill me and thereby become fulfilled and satisfied.’ Why did I make this aspiration? Because those ferocious predators always kill and eat the flesh of small animals, and so they repeatedly commit the wrongdoing of killing. Nevertheless, they never feel satiated and satisfied. This is the reason why I made the aspiration, ‘May I be reborn here as a large animal, and may I bring fulfillment and satisfaction to those flesh eaters and blood drinkers.’

6.23 “As soon as I died, I was miraculously reborn in that forest as a large animal, bringing fulfillment and satisfaction to the ferocious flesh-eating and blood-drinking predators. Similarly, for myriads of lifetimes I have deliberately taken birth to benefit sentient beings. Maudgalyāyana, even if I were to spend an eon or more to describe all the instances in the past when I practiced bodhisattva conduct and satisfied sentient beings suffering from hunger and thirst by offering my flesh and blood, there would be no end to those accounts. Maudgalyāyana, in the past, I thus gave rise to a compassionate attitude toward sentient beings afflicted by suffering.

6.24 “Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, I remember that in the past, I once saw some beings afflicted by suffering. Seeing them, I thought, ‘It would not be right if I were to abandon these beings without protection.’ So I approached them and asked, ‘What kind of suffering are you experiencing? [F.212.a] What do you wish for?’

“They answered, ‘We are extremely hungry and thirsty!’

“Upon hearing those words, I replied, ‘What kind of food and drink do you want?’

6.25 “They replied, ‘We are blood drinkers and flesh eaters. If you give us flesh and blood, we will become pleased and healthy.’ So I granted them what they wanted by cutting off my flesh, drawing blood from my body, and offering this to them. However, Maudgalyāyana, at that time I never felt any regret, sense of loss, sorrow, or depression. Instead, for a long time I continued my aspiration to practice such generosity with the thought, ‘The

more flesh I cut off from my body, the more suffering in saṃsāra will come to an end.' Therefore, even though I practiced generosity in that way, I always felt utterly joyful and happy. You should know that, for those reasons, the Thus-Gone One is extremely compassionate toward sentient beings.

6.26 "Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, I remember that in the past, there was a king called Mahābala who possessed the great power of excellent qualities and had accumulated many roots of virtue. At that time, King Mahābala told himself, 'I should henceforth arrange elaborate offerings and gifts and satisfy sentient beings!' So he prepared such great offerings and gifts; he gave away food to those who wished for food, and drink to those who wished for drink. Similarly, he gave away clothing, bedding, gold, silver, precious substances, chariots, mounts, and wealth; precious gems such as cat's eye, emerald, crystal, beryl, coral, and moonstone; and flowers, perfumes, garlands, ointments, fragrant powders, silken streamers, parasols, banners, boys, girls, male servants, female servants, [F.212.b] workers, horses, elephants, oxen, sheep, and fields. He joyfully gave away all those things to those who wished for them.

6.27 "Maudgalyāyana, in that way, King Mahābala practiced generosity on a vast scale. At that time, Śakra, lord of the gods, thought, 'I should create obstacles for this king, to prevent him from reaping the fruits of his offerings!' With this thought in mind, he manifested himself as a brahmin, went to the place where the king was residing, and asked, 'What kind of things are you giving away in this great offering that you have arranged?'

"The king replied, 'Brahmin, I am giving away all the wealth that I possess, without any reservations.'

6.28 "The brahmin continued, 'If such is your promise, are you able to give me what I ask for?'

" 'Haven't I already said that I am giving away everything I possess?' replied King Mahābala.

" 'Your Majesty,' said the brahmin, 'if this is so, I want the limbs of your body.'

"The king thought, 'This brahmin does not wish for wealth or food. He came here today with the wish to disrupt my great offering. If I do not give him the limbs of my body, my great offering will be disrupted.' So he said to the brahmin, 'I will give you the limbs of my body; I will cut them off and you can take them with you.'

6.29 " 'Your Majesty,' answered the brahmin, 'will you not regret the words you are pronouncing now?'

" 'I will not have any regrets,' said King Mahābala. 'Even if a horde of beggars should come here today from the four directions, I would satisfy them all.'

“The brahmin said, ‘If it is so difficult to satisfy me alone, it goes without saying that it will be difficult to satisfy all the many others!’

“Then King Mahābala took a sharp knife, cut off one of his hands, and said to the brahmin, ‘Take this hand with you.’ [F.213.a]

6.30 “Maudgalyāyana, when King Mahābala cut off his hand, his mind did not waver, and he did not feel any regret. Since he had practiced generosity one-pointedly and had given away all his possessions in that way, his hand remained unharmed. Then King Mahābala cut off the other limbs of his body with the knife and gave them to the brahmin, but they reappeared. Maudgalyāyana, as a consequence, however, the divine merit of Śakra, lord of the gods, became exhausted. Experiencing intense pain and suffering, he cried out loudly and fell into the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment in that very body.

6.31 “Maudgalyāyana, at that time, I was King Mahābala, who gave away his body. Do not think that this was someone else. And Devadatta was Śakra, lord of the gods, who wished to create obstacles to the king’s great offering. Do not think that this was someone else either. Maudgalyāyana, at that time, the foolish Devadatta wanted to create obstacles to my offering out of jealousy and anger, but he could not disrupt it. Instead, he fell into that great hell.

6.32 “Accordingly, now that I have awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, whenever I arrange an offering of the Dharma, the foolish Devadatta, who is motivated by jealousy and anger, still desires to profit so badly that he gathers many people with the wish to kill me. Once in the past, when I was descending Vulture Peak Mountain, Devadatta climbed to the top of the mountain and hurled stones at me with the use of a catapult. He thereby destroyed his roots of virtue and, because he had given rise to such malice toward me, all his gains and wealth were ruined, and he will fall into the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment. Although, Maudgalyāyana, I have never done anything bad, whether physically, verbally, or mentally, to the foolish Devadatta, [F.213.b] he has persistently perceived me as his enemy. In all my lives, he has sought to create obstacles to my virtuous practice, but he has never been able to disrupt my virtuous conduct. For a long time, I have continued to benefit him out of love and compassion, but he has always perceived me as an evil person.⁴³ Still, Maudgalyāyana, since Devadatta has never been grateful for my help during all those lifetimes, it shows that beings like Devadatta will also not be grateful toward the entire world, with its gods, humans, and demigods. Such beings have entered a state that is certainly mistaken.

- 6.33 “Maudgalyāyana, when Devadatta passes away and enters the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment, an excellent and noble attitude toward me will be born in his mind for the first time. This is the power of the Thus-Gone One’s blessings. Since the ingratitude of Devadatta is enormous, he is destined for the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment. Then, just as he is about to enter that hell, he will hear a loud voice saying, ‘Foolish Devadatta, due to your wrongdoings, getting angry at the Blessed One and persistently plotting to kill someone who should not be killed, you will now fall into the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment.’
- 6.34 “Upon hearing those words, Devadatta will be terrified and subdued for the first time. He will therefore cry, ‘I take refuge in the Blessed One one-pointedly, from the depths of my heart and from the marrow of my bones!’ Then, as he cries this out, he will find happiness. Having developed sincere trust in the Thus-Gone One, he will next hear a loud voice saying, ‘You have now entered into the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment, but you shall later be liberated from this hell, be reborn as a human, and renounce your household to go forth. Then, by practicing genuinely on the path, you shall achieve the fruition of a solitary buddha. You will be called The Determined One.’⁴⁴
- 6.35 “Maudgalyāyana, with this prophecy of Devadatta becoming a solitary buddha, I have now freed him from the sufferings of saṃsāra. Maudgalyāyana, [F.214.a] the fact that I have liberated Devadatta is in accordance with the aspirations I made in the past. Why is that? Because I took the commitment to liberate him in previous lifetimes by telling him, ‘I will liberate you, but others will not.’ Maudgalyāyana, it was only because of me that Devadatta created the causes and conditions to attain nirvāṇa. It was not thanks to others. Therefore, from now on, he will not create roots of virtue in relation to others, but instead will give rise to sincere trust toward me alone. Due to the roots of virtue created by saying, ‘I take refuge in the Buddha,’ he will later reach the path of the solitary buddhas.
- 6.36 “Maudgalyāyana, for a long time I have constantly thought of sentient beings as my parents. I have taken the affectionate commitment to personally protect and provide refuge to those who are unprotected and defenseless, to those who are weak and destitute, to those who continuously spin in saṃsāra and follow evil paths, to those who lack insight due to their delusion and ignorance, and to those who have always been blind or do not have eyes, as well as to those who ask themselves, ‘Who will be our guide, our protector, and our refuge?’ Therefore, Maudgalyāyana, because I remember my commitment, I never answer back to someone who insults me by using harsh words, or to someone who abuses me with painful words. Whether someone is furious at me or beats me, I never retaliate. Why is it so?

Because it is sensible for me to constantly provide genuine happiness to all beings and eliminate all their suffering and unhappiness, while it is not sensible for me to harm them.

6.37 “Among all sentient beings, who is able to practice patience? I am the only one able to practice patience. Therefore, I thought, ‘I will henceforth train in the Dharma of being patient with beings, the Dharma of tranquility, and the Dharma of gentleness, so that I act like a thoroughbred elephant, [F.214.b] not like a wild elephant.’

6.38 “Maudgalyāyana, take the analogy of an elephant that has been trained well. When it enters the battlefield, its mind is unshakable. It is able to bear the sounds of the great drums, the sounds of the conches, and the sounds of people screaming. Even when it hears those fearsome sounds, it does not feel any terror or fear. It is able to withstand cold, heat, mosquitoes, horseflies, wind, rain, hunger, and thirst, as well as the injuries caused by the various kinds of sharp swords, arrows, spears, and javelins, as well as the iron chains that are thrown at it and the whips that strike it. Without feeling any terror or fear, it jumps directly onto the battlefield, courageously and without any wavering. Maudgalyāyana, such a well-trained elephant never thinks, ‘I should not engage with the opposing army.’ Instead, it solely thinks, ‘I will defeat the army of the enemy!’

6.39 “Maudgalyāyana, similarly, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past I formed a vast aspiration prayer, based on which I worked to tame my mind with respect to sentient beings.⁴⁵ Even if someone insulted me with harsh words, I never harmed that person in return. Even if someone argued with me, I never answered back. Even when others harmed me with weapons, sticks, rocks, or stones, and thereby took my life, I never wavered from unsurpassed and perfect awakening. I never thought, ‘This is something to adopt,’ ‘This is not something to adopt,’ ‘This is something that should be relied upon,’ or ‘This is not something that should be relied upon.’ Therefore, I never felt sorrow, regret, aggression, or resentment with respect to those situations. I never became weary about the bodhisattva path, [F.215.a] and so I never thought, ‘Now I will no longer engage with the army of the enemy.’ Instead, I solely thought, ‘I will completely defeat the army of the enemy—negative actions—and once I attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening, I will liberate all the countless sentient beings of the three realms.’ Maudgalyāyana, even if I tried to express in words all the instances in which I practiced patience and gave rise to love and compassion toward sentient beings during the time when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, this task would never come to an end.

- 6.40 “Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, in the past, there was a non-Buddhist sage called Kṣāntibala who had vowed to never become angry at others. At that time, there lived a demon called Evil Mind who thought, ‘I will go see this sage and destroy his practice of patience! I will make him angry, so that he turns away from his resolve to earnestly cultivate patience.’ He then sent out a thousand men who were skilled in abusing others. They surrounded the sage and started to insult him and accuse him falsely. They abused him with various types of insults that do not bear repeating. They abused him when he was moving, when he traveled to cities, when he entered the cities, when he ate, after he had his meal, when he got up from his seat, when he left the cities, when he came back to his hermitage in the forest, while he was standing up, while he was sitting down, while he was lying down, while he was walking, and even when he was simply breathing. They followed him at all times, continuously abusing him with all types of insults. For eighty-four thousand years, those thousand men sent by the demon abused the sage Kṣāntibala with harsh words. [F.215.b]
- 6.41 “When the sage Kṣāntibala entered cities, the demon Evil Mind would urinate on his head and inside his alms bowl, thus soaking the sage’s robes, alms bowl, and body with his urine. He would also spread garbage on his head. Still, although those thousand obstinate men abused and slandered the sage with harsh words for eighty-four thousand years, he never gave rise to anger or resentment toward them, and his mind never became even a little bit shaken or discouraged. He also never asked, ‘What did I do wrong?’ and he never felt any resentment. For eighty-four thousand years, he never even looked at the demon Evil Mind with an angry glance, nor did he ever ask him, ‘What faults do I have?’
- 6.42 “Maudgalyāyana, even though those one thousand obstinate men abused the sage Kṣāntibala for more than eighty-four thousand years, they were never able to destroy his practice. When they realized this, they began to admire him greatly, and so they confessed their wrongdoings. They asked the sage, ‘What kind of Dharma are you pursuing through this practice? We also want to obtain such a Dharma!’ Because those one thousand obstinate men who had been abusing the sage had now developed strong admiration toward him, they started to respectfully worship him, venerate him, honor him, and praise him. However, even though the sage was honored and respected by those men, he never developed any form of clinging or attachment.
- 6.43 “Maudgalyāyana, I was that sage Kṣāntibala. Do not think that this was someone else. Because I had genuinely adopted the practice of patience at that time, my mind was never shaken and it never wavered, even though I was continuously abused and slandered with harsh words by the thousand

men who had been sent by the demon Evil Mind. Maudgalyāyana, those thousand obstinate men gave rise to a strong sense of admiration toward the sage Kṣāntibala. [F.216.a] Then they confessed their negative actions and, following in the footsteps of the sage Kṣāntibala, they gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Thus I tamed them and established them in the teaching of the Buddha. By practicing the six perfections in an excellent manner, all those thousand beings gradually became perfect buddhas and passed into the realm of nirvāṇa without any remainder. Maudgalyāyana, the demon Evil Mind, who at that time sent those one thousand men to abuse me, was Devadatta. Do not think that this was someone else. [B6]

6.44 “Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, I remember that in the past I once gave away my body to others and acted as a slave and a servant for worldly beings. During that time, those worldly beings made me do various kinds of tasks. Some made me remove excrement and urine. Some made me sweep off manure. Some made me sweep off soil; some sent me to pick up grass; and some dispatched me to bring grains, milk, curd, butter, oil, or honey. Some made me collect wood, charcoal, fire, or water. Maudgalyāyana, although they made me do all those various tasks, I do not remember ever having thought, ‘I will not follow those orders to sweep off excrement and urine.’ I do not remember ever having refused them when they sent me to collect flowers, perfumes, garlands, fragrant ointments, fragrant powders, food, drinks, or fruits. Maudgalyāyana, I do not remember ever having thought, ‘I will only follow the orders of those who make me do something pleasant, and not the orders of those who ask me to do something unpleasant.’ [F.216.b] Maudgalyāyana, I do not remember ever having thought, ‘I will follow the orders of those who belong to the warrior class, but not those of the brahmins,’ ‘I will follow the orders of the brahmins, but not the orders of those who belong to the warrior class,’ ‘I will follow the orders of those who belong to the commoner class, but not those of the outcastes,’ ‘I will follow the orders of the outcastes, but not the orders of those who belong to the commoner class,’ or ‘I will follow the orders of those who belong to the warrior class and the brahmins, but not the orders of those who belong to the commoner class and the outcastes.’ I never discriminated between people by thinking, ‘This person is greater,’ or ‘This person is inferior,’ and I never thought, ‘I will follow this person but not that one.’ Maudgalyāyana, I always joyfully followed the orders of anyone who called on me.

6.45 “Maudgalyāyana, I do not remember that in the past, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct, I ever refused to do something that anyone asked of me, as long as this task was in harmony with the Dharma and I was able to do it. Maudgalyāyana, I do not remember that in the past, when I was

practicing bodhisattva conduct, I ever failed to complete a task or perfect a virtuous action. In short, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, I never developed clinging to my body, let alone to wealth. When I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, I never thought of material wealth as my possession. Nevertheless, I simply became wealthy through the ripening of my previous actions. I thought, 'These things should be equally enjoyed by all beings. Everyone deserves to enjoy this wealth just as much as I do.' [F.217.a] Maudgalyāyana, then, as I became more familiar with the Dharma of the Buddha through my practice of bodhisattva conduct, I even stopped thinking, 'I deserve this wealth and so do others.' Instead, I solely thought, 'Others deserve to have this wealth, not me.'

6.46 "Maudgalyāyana, although I had become familiar with the Dharma of the Buddha, I never developed clinging to it. Without collecting or holding on to it, I was inspired by abandoning phenomena, not to eagerly take them up. I was inspired by all phenomena being empty, not by all phenomena existing. I was inspired by being at peace from all phenomena, not by the substantial characteristics of phenomena. I was inspired by primordial nonexistence, not by primordial existence.

6.47 "Maudgalyāyana, I clearly remember that in the past, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct, in countless hundreds of thousands of lifetimes I would set my body on fire during dark nights, to guide sentient beings who had lost their way and to illuminate their paths.

"Maudgalyāyana, I remember that in the past, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct, in countless hundreds of thousands of lifetimes I would cut off my flesh and offer it to carnivorous beings.

6.48 "Maudgalyāyana, I remember that in the past, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct, in countless hundreds of thousands of lifetimes I would draw blood from my body and offer it to blood-drinking beings to satisfy them.

"Maudgalyāyana, in short, when it comes to worldly wealth and belongings, I never experienced any sense of reservation or miserliness while giving them to sentient beings. After careful investigation to ensure that those offerings would not hurt or harm anyone and that they were sanctioned by the wise ones [F.217.b] and praised by noble beings, I would offer those things to sentient beings with a compassionate attitude.

6.49 "Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, I remember that in the past, there was once a merchant called Good Profit who had traveled across the ocean and returned home filled with joy after having found precious gems. Having reached his country, he entered his city and arrived at the doorsteps of his house. At that

- moment, the many beggars living in his city surrounded him and said, 'Good Profit, did you have a safe journey? Great benefactor, we are beggars. If you agree, we would like to request something of you.'
- 6.50 "Maudgalyāyana, Good Profit replied to the beggars, 'Please tell me what you need. I will give you what I have without reservation!'
- "The beggars said, 'Please give us the precious gems that you brought back from your journey across the ocean; that would make us extremely happy!'
- 6.51 "Maudgalyāyana, Good Profit immediately offered the beggars all his eight hundred million precious gems, each worth hundreds of thousands of ounces of gold. Maudgalyāyana, the mind of Good Profit did not waver when he offered those many gems, and he did not feel any regret.
- 6.52 "After he had offered those precious gems to the beggars, Good Profit immediately set out on the ocean once again to fetch more jewels, without even entering his house. He found many excellent precious gems, about half as many more⁴⁶ than the number he had brought back from his previous journey. After eighty years had passed, he returned to his country and entered his city. At that time, some criminals had been caught and tied up by their executioners, who were now beating their drums, which produced a terrifying sound. [F.218.a] On the way to the execution site, the executioners would play these drums at all the crossroads they passed through. Then, just as the criminals were about to be executed, they saw Good Profit from a distance and cried, 'Merchant! Please protect us! Protect us from this execution and save our lives! You are a great benefactor and a sublime being!'
- 6.53 "When he heard those words, Good Profit cried back to these men who were on the verge of being killed, 'Listen, I will protect you and save you from this execution!'
- "So he went before the executioners and gave them each a precious gem worth ten million ounces of gold. Then he told them, 'Please wait for a moment until I have met the king and returned!'
- "Good Profit then quickly went to the king. When he arrived in his presence, he said, 'Your Majesty, I would like to ransom the lives of those men with these excellent gemstones.'
- 6.54 'Good Profit,' replied the king, 'the crimes of those men are unforgivable, so they are truly not for sale! However, if you sincerely want to save them, give me all the wealth you possess, and I will revoke my decision to kill them.'
- 6.55 "Maudgalyāyana, when he heard those words, Good Profit became utterly delighted and said, 'I am so fortunate! Now my wishes have been fulfilled, since all I wanted was to protect those men.' To protect the prisoners and

save them from their execution, Good Profit then offered the king all the wealth he possessed at his home, in addition to all the countless millions of precious gems, as well as all the gold and silver that he had brought back from his journey across the ocean. He said to the king, 'Your Majesty, please release the men; here is all the wealth that I possess.'

6.56 "The king took the wealth, but then gave this order to the executioners: 'Take Good Profit with you and kill him! [F.218.b] Do as your king commands.'

"Following the order, Good Profit was tied up and led to the scaffold. However, when the executioner raised his right hand and was about to strike Good Profit with his weapon, his hand froze, and he could not follow through. Filled with terror and surprise, he brought Good Profit to the king and explained what had happened. Maudgalyāyana, when the king heard about the event, he himself drew his sword and tried to kill Good Profit. Then, just as he raised his sword and was about to strike, both the king's hands fell to the ground. Writhing in agony, the king cried out in terror and died.

6.57 "Maudgalyāyana, at that time, I was the merchant Good Profit. Do not think that this was someone else. The foolish Devadatta was that king. Maudgalyāyana, at that time, Devadatta tried to kill me but was unable to do so. Later, when I awoke to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, he also tried to kill me but was once again unable. Why was that? Because no one at all within the entire world, with all its gods, humans, and demigods—let alone the foolish Devadatta—is able to harm the thus-gone ones. Even today Devadatta has assembled a gang of accomplices, and he is still seeking to kill me. Because of his desire to kill me by various means, his wealth, fame, and strength have been ruined, and he will fall into the great Hell of Ceaseless Torment in the very body he has while alive. Maudgalyāyana, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he did not show any gratitude, since he could not perceive the way I benefited sentient beings like him. You should know that, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, I was like parents for sentient beings. Therefore, [F.219.a] you should know that the Thus-Gone One is endowed with immense compassion toward sentient beings.

6.58 "Furthermore, Maudgalyāyana, once in the past, five hundred elephants were living at the foot of a tall snow mountain. The elephants also had a leader that ruled over the herd. This bull had an attractive and pleasing appearance, and he was powerful and wise. During the night, this large herd of elephants would walk on the only path crossing the mountain, which was a dangerous and narrow path. However, some hunters had noticed the elephants, and so they spent a whole night digging a huge pit on that

dangerous path, thinking, 'When the elephants fall into this pit, they will be ours, and we can easily take possession of them.' Then, at the end of the night when they had finished digging, they drove the herd of elephants onto the fearsome path toward the pit. Although the elephants noticed the pit, it was too big for them to cross.

6.59 "So, Maudgalyāyana, the leader of the elephants lay himself on his side across the pit and served as a bridge. In this way the five hundred elephants were able to cross the pit by walking on his back, and so they continued on their way. When the herd of elephants had crossed the pit, the leader of the elephants jumped across using his own strength, and so he also proceeded. At that time, a mountain god sang this verse:

6.60 " 'Those evil men have dug this deep pit,
But since the wise elephant leader
Allowed himself and others to cross it,
Digging this deep pit was pointless.'

6.61 "Maudgalyāyana, at that time, I was the clever and powerful elephant leader. Do not think that this was someone else. The five hundred elephants are now the present group of five hundred monks that Devadatta has been plotting to destroy. The hunters at that time are now Devadatta and the rest of the five monks, namely Khaṇḍadravja, Kaṭamorakatiṣya, Samudradatta, and Kokālika.

6.62 "Maudgalyāyana, [F.219.b] for a long time, when I have seen fearful and frightened sentient beings, I have always offered them my protection from fear. When I have seen suffering sentient beings, I have always brought them happiness. I have always given material things to poor and destitute beings. I have always shown the correct path to sentient beings who are on a wrong path. I have always eliminated the pain of disease for sentient beings tormented by sicknesses. I have always offered food and drink to hungry and thirsty sentient beings. I have always brought satisfaction to flesh eaters and blood drinkers by offering them my own flesh and blood. Maudgalyāyana, since I have always acted in accordance with my aspirations, I have never fallen under the influence of laziness and indolence when it comes to following my commitments toward sentient beings. Maudgalyāyana, there is absolutely nothing different from this in all the truthful words I have spoken, from the moment I gave rise to the mind set on awakening until I awoke to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. If I had been hindered by laziness and indolence on those occasions when I practiced diligently, I would not have awoken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Maudgalyāyana, my actions have always accorded with my words, and my words have always accorded with my actions.

6.63 *This was the sixth chapter, Great Compassion.*

RESPONDING TO CONTROVERSIES

- 7.1 At that time, a monk called Elephant Trunk who was present in the assembly arose, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms joined together, he said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, to hear about those hardships undergone by the Thus-Gone One gave me goosebumps and made me shed tears. I would now like to ask a question. The Blessed One himself has said, ‘In the past, when I was a bodhisattva, my actions always accorded with my words, and my words always accorded with my actions.’ [F.220.a] When he first gave rise to the mind set on awakening, the Blessed One made the commitment to liberate all sentient beings. Given that he made such a commitment but may pass into nirvāṇa without having yet liberated all sentient beings, what should be answered, after the Blessed One has passed away, when some people argue with the monks saying, ‘In the past, your great teacher made the commitment to liberate all sentient beings, so why is it that sentient beings have not yet transcended suffering?’ ”
- 7.2 The Blessed One said to the monk Elephant Trunk, “If some people argue in that way, ask them, ‘Which phenomena do you claim to constitute a sentient being?’
- 7.3 “If they answer, ‘The aggregates, sense sources, and elements are a sentient being,’ ask them in return, ‘Do you claim that the gathering and collection of the aggregates, sense sources, and elements is a sentient being? Or do you rather claim that a sentient being is something separated and divorced from those?’
- 7.4 “They may then assert, ‘The gathering of the aggregates, sense sources, and elements is a sentient being.’ In that case, tell them, ‘You have answered yourself. Why? Because you say that the gathering is a sentient being, while the aggregates, sense sources, and elements themselves are not a sentient being. However, the Blessed One taught the Dharma as a method to part

with and be separated from those, not to gather and assemble them. While the Blessed One is pleased by any activity that leads to the partition and separation from them, he is not pleased by any activity that leads to their gathering and assembly. Therefore, there is no sentient being to be found within this gathering and assembly.' [F.220.b]

7.5 "They may then say, 'The aggregates, sense sources, and elements themselves are a sentient being.' To that, answer the following, 'If this were so, then all grass, wood, gravel, and stones would also be a sentient being. Why? Because aggregates, sense sources, and elements are present in them, and you say that aggregates, sense sources, and elements themselves are the sentient being.'

"If they reply, 'Those are not sentient beings, for they neither have a mind nor are they a product of the mind,' tell them, 'If this were so, all sentient beings would become a single sentient being. Why? Because the Thus-Gone One has never spoken of a difference between the aggregates, sense sources, and elements.'

7.6 "If they reply, 'Sentient beings exist, for the discourses of the Thus-Gone One teach that sentient beings exist,' reply, 'You have answered yourself. Why? Because, in the teachings of the Thus-Gone One, phenomena are said to transcend existence and nonexistence.'

"They may then argue, 'If this were so, the result of the path would become nonexistent.' To that, ask them, 'What do you claim to be the result?'

7.7 "If they say, 'We claim that the result is something ultimate and definitive,' you should tell them, 'The definitive ultimate is beyond language and words, and that which is beyond language and words cannot be expressed in terms of *definitive existence* or *definitive nonexistence*. You claim that the result is something definitive and ultimate, so the words you are using, *sentient beings exist*, are contradicting your own position; for neither sentient beings nor even the names of sentient beings exist from the perspective of the definitive ultimate.'

7.8 "Furthermore, Elephant Trunk, although in the Thus-Gone One's teachings it is stated that phenomena do not cease, that brings peace from suffering, for since I have fully realized the characteristics of the true nature of phenomena in that way, [F.221.a] I teach to sentient beings that phenomena, as I understand them, are not to be craved, should be disengaged from, should not be conceptualized or formed, and are without any arising.'

7.9 "Elephant Trunk, someone who understands the meaning of the Dharma that I teach does not get involved in karmic actions driven by fixation on existence or nonexistence. How could someone who does not get involved

- in karmic actions driven by fixation on existence or nonexistence perceive sentient beings in terms of existence or nonexistence? Elephant Trunk, this is known as *constantly abiding in the characteristics of the true nature of phenomena*.
- 7.10 “This realization transcends all concepts of recollection. It also transcends all concepts of impurity, purity, coming, going, the path, and the result of the path, and all characteristics such as long, short, square, and round, as well as all other notions of shape and color. Therefore, phenomena share a single mode, which is described as *the gateway of absorption*. Elephant Trunk, this is also called *seeing the gateway to the Dharma*. Whoever enters this *gateway to the Dharma vision* is known as *someone who sees the Buddha*.
- 7.11 “Elephant Trunk, what do you think: Does a phenomenon perceived to be the Buddha have the characteristic of cessation—has it ceased, is it ceasing, or will it cease?”
- “No, Blessed One, it does not.”
- “What do you think: Does a phenomenon perceived to be the Buddha have the characteristic of arising—has it arisen, is it arising, or will it arise?”
- “No, Blessed One, it does not.”
- 7.12 “Elephant Trunk, if it is so, it should not be said that the Thus-Gone One ceases.”
- “Blessed One, that is true.”
- “Elephant Trunk, if they then say that it is because I possess the physical marks that once I have entered into the complete nirvāṇa of a thus-gone one I will not return, and also if they claim that because the physical marks are seen to be irreversible, the Thus-Gone One ceases, ask them, [F.221.b] ‘Do you claim that the formation of physical marks is the Thus-Gone One?’
- 7.13 “They may answer, ‘We claim that the formation of the physical marks is the Thus-Gone One.’ In that case, you should tell them, ‘In the discourses spoken by the Thus-Gone One, the physical marks are not said to be the Thus-Gone One. If it were said that the physical marks are the Thus-Gone One, everything—gravel, stones, mountains, rivers, grass, and forests—would also be the Thus-Gone One.’
- 7.14 “They may retort, ‘All gravel, stones, mountains, rivers, grass, and forests are not the Thus-Gone One, for they do not have the thirty-two major marks of a great being.’ In that case, reply to them, ‘If you now call someone who possesses the thirty-two major marks a *thus-gone one*, it follows that a universal monarch is also a thus-gone one. Why? Because a universal monarch likewise possesses the thirty-two major marks.’
- 7.15 “They may object, ‘Since the marks of a thus-gone one can be identified due to their qualities, brahmins with knowledge of such marks can correctly predict when one will become a buddha.’ To that, you should answer, ‘If you maintain that someone who possesses the thirty-two major marks is a thus-

gone one, and if you say that a brahmin with knowledge of marks can predict that someone will become a perfect buddha based on seeing the presence of those thirty-two major marks, you should now explain what the marks of a thus-gone one consist in.'

7.16 "They may reply, 'The thus-gone ones' ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, eighteen unique qualities, undefiled powers, strengths, limbs of enlightenment, path, concentration, liberation, absorption, and so on, are taught to be the marks.' In that case, tell them, 'Since you claim that the thus-gone ones' ten strengths and so on are the marks of a thus-gone one, you should now explain what the nature of a thus-gone one consists in.' [F.222.a]

"To that, they may ask, 'Are the Buddha and his marks separate?' In that case, you should reply, 'You have already said that the marks are the Buddha, although they are not!'

7.17 "If they ask again, 'Do other shapeless and colorless phenomena, such as the ten strengths, act as the marks of the Buddha?' you should tell them in return, 'How can shapeless and colorless phenomena act as the marks of something possessing shape and color? Furthermore, if you claim that shapeless and colorless phenomena are *the Buddha*, it then follows that all the other shapeless and colorless phenomena are also the Buddha. Then, if those colorless phenomena were the Buddha, it would also be reasonable to say that the ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, eighteen unique qualities, inexhaustible powers, strengths, limbs of enlightenment, path, concentration, liberation, absorption, and so on, would also function as their marks.' Elephant Trunk, this is how my hearers thoroughly train foolish beings.

7.18 "Furthermore, Elephant Trunk, in the past I did indeed make the aspiration to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and then liberate all beings. However, when I fully awoke to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, as I sat upon the seat of awakening, I did not apprehend any sentient beings. I did not even apprehend the name *sentient beings*. Therefore, as I sat upon the seat of awakening, my understanding consisted entirely of the twelve links of dependent arising—the fact that things exist when other things exist, and they are absent when other things are absent. [F.222.b]

7.19 "What are the things that exist when other things exist, and what things are absent when other things are absent? Due to ignorance, there are formations. Due to formations, there is consciousness. Due to consciousness, name and form arise. Due to name and form, the six sense sources arise. Due to the six sense sources, contact arises. Due to contact, feeling arises. Due to feeling, craving arises. Due to craving, appropriation arises. Due to appropriation, becoming arises. Due to becoming, birth arises. Due to birth,

old age and death arise. Due to old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, despair, and anxiety arise. Thus do these great masses of pure suffering arise.

7.20 “Due to the cessation of ignorance, formations cease. Due to the cessation of formations, consciousness ceases. Due to the cessation of consciousness, name and form cease. Due to the cessation of name and form, the six sense sources cease. Due to the cessation of the six sense sources, contact ceases. Due to the cessation of contact, feeling ceases. Due to the cessation of feeling, craving ceases. Due to the cessation of craving, appropriation ceases. Due to the cessation of appropriation, becoming ceases. Due to the cessation of becoming, birth ceases. Due to the cessation of birth, old age and death cease. Due to the cessation of old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, despair, and anxiety cease. Thus do these great masses of pure suffering cease.

7.21 “Because my vision, wisdom, knowledge, and intellect have arisen on that basis, I have fully realized liberation, which is beyond center and edge and free from fear. Because the thus-gone ones have fully actualized such liberation, they only apprehend phenomena arising from causes and conditions. They have no other attainment besides that. Elephant Trunk, the thus-gone ones teach the nature of phenomena to sentient beings in the exact way they have realized it. [F.223.a] Elephant Trunk, whether or not the thus-gone ones have appeared, the nature of phenomena always remains the same—name and form are not lost, there are no mutual contradictions, and they are beyond birth and arising.

7.22 “Elephant Trunk, I am always teaching the Dharma in that way, so you too should understand it according to my intent. When I teach such a Dharma to you, you should practice it accordingly, with persistent efforts. Elephant Trunk, I have already done all the appropriate things that a great teacher should do for his disciples. Therefore, you should practice in accordance with the way I have taught, and thereby gain the light of wisdom with respect to phenomena!”

7.23 Then Venerable Elephant Trunk asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how should one answer when others raise the following concern: ‘If the authentic Dharma, which was expounded by the Thus-Gone One, vanished, who would teach the path? Without a teacher of the path, the sacred Dharma would vanish. Since the sacred Dharma would have vanished, the thus-gone ones too would disappear. Therefore, no sentient being could be liberated.’ ”

7.24 “Elephant Trunk,” answered the Blessed One, “if those arguments are raised, you should answer by saying, ‘Everyone knows and sees that the thus-gone ones are omniscient. Moreover, they always wait for the opportunity to liberate sentient beings. Therefore, they continue to benefit

others, even after they pass into nirvāṇa. Furthermore, because the thus-gone ones prophesy to future buddhas how they will fully awaken to perfect buddhahood, the lineage of the buddhas remains uninterrupted. [F.223.b] Since the Dharma of all the buddhas is also the Dharma of every single buddha, it is called *the Dharma of the Thus-Gone One*. The Dharma of the Thus-Gone One is the Dharma of the Buddha. Therefore, you should know that in the past, when the Thus-Gone One practiced bodhisattva conduct, his actions always accorded with his words, and his words always accorded with his actions.’ ”

7.25 “Blessed One,” said Venerable Elephant Trunk, “the Thus-Gone One comprehends perfectly how to investigate all phenomena. In order to comprehend perfectly all phenomena, he has guided his physical, verbal, and mental activities with insight. By following insight in that way, when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, the actions of the Blessed One always accorded with his words, and his words always accorded with his actions. This is truly amazing!”

7.26 The Blessed One exclaimed, “Thus it is, Elephant Trunk, thus it is! Elephant Trunk, as you have said, when I was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, my actions always accorded with my words, and my words always accorded with my actions. Elephant Trunk, someone who speaks sincerely might ask, ‘Who is the one who was born into this world without flaws? He benefits sentient beings and establishes the world together with its gods in a state of happiness. Acting as everyone’s great teacher, he teaches the authentic path. Since he is liberated through his genuine wisdom, he is free from conceptual elaborations. Having passed to the other shore, he liberates those who have not yet crossed over.’ To that, I would have to answer, ‘I am that one, the Buddha, the Thus-Gone One,’ and those words would be truthful. Elephant Trunk, someone who speaks sincerely might ask, ‘Who is undeceiving and repays the kindness of past actions?’ [F.224.a] To that, I would have to answer, ‘It is I,’ and those words would be truthful. Even the smallest deeds done by sentient beings for my sake will never be wasted.

7.27 “Elephant Trunk, since I first gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening, my mind has never turned away from it or wavered. I do not recall ever having clung to or longed for the vehicles of the hearers and solitary buddhas. After hearing these teachings, I only wanted, with one-pointed resolve, to guide those among my retinue who pursue the fruition of the hearers and solitary buddhas.⁴⁷

7.28 “Elephant Trunk, once in the past, I was a non-Buddhist sage. My insight was clear and sharp, I was very erudite and eloquent, and I had reached acceptance of the profound Dharma. At that time there were five hundred

young brahmins who understood the defects associated with keeping a household and the five sense desires, as well as the benefits of monastic life. Accordingly, they renounced their households, became ordained as homeless monks, and cultivated the path. They all came to see me, and I taught them the Dharma. They eventually reached the path of the solitary buddhas, developed the six higher perceptions, and obtained mental freedom. Endowed with the bases of miraculous powers, they would always miraculously rise up into the sky, and in this way enter villages, cities, and towns. After receiving their alms, they would then venerate me with them.

7.29 “At that time, I thought, ‘Since they possess pure and great wisdom, it is not suitable for me to accept their offerings.’ In fact, those sages had obtained such qualities by following my teachings, whereas I had not! Therefore, in order to realize the Dharma that I had received but not yet realized, I developed persistent diligence. [F.224.b]

7.30 “Elephant Trunk, after I gave rise to persistent diligence, I also realized that Dharma. At that time a god from the pure realms arrived in front of me and prophesied, ‘Do not cling to this wisdom! After you fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, you will liberate innumerable sentient beings.’ Elephant Trunk, after hearing those words, I obtained supreme mental joy by cultivating the path. Then, as I sat in solitude for half a month, my entire body became filled with bliss.

7.31 “Elephant Trunk, if bodhisattvas possess these four qualities, you should know that the gods will instruct them, their minds will become utterly joyful, and they will know that they themselves will attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening. What are the four? (1) Once bodhisattvas themselves have given rise to the mind set on awakening, they encourage others also to give rise to that attitude. (2) When they see followers of the Great Vehicle who have given rise to the mind set on awakening, they do not become jealous—they do not think that only they should obtain unsurpassed and perfect awakening, while others should not. (3) At appropriate times they instruct sentient beings who adopt negative forms of behavior. Conversing with them with a good heart, they protect their virtues. (4) With great efforts, they themselves constantly pursue the Dharma on a vast scale, and they teach it to others free from miserliness. Elephant Trunk, if bodhisattva great beings possess these four qualities, you should know that the gods will instruct them, and they will know that they themselves will attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening.” At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain those points clearly:

7.32 “Bodhisattvas follow the unsurpassed vehicle
With a stable mind. [F.225.a]

- Encouraging sentient beings,
They also establish them in that vehicle.
- 7.33 “When they practice bodhisattva conduct,
They are always free from jealousy and aggression.
Since they cultivate persistent diligence,
Joy will increase in their minds.
- 7.34 “When they see others performing evil deeds,
They instruct them at the appropriate time.
Always loving and compassionate,
They are free from any form of aggression.
- 7.35 “Always pursuing the Dharma persistently,
They propagate it among sentient beings.
Just as rain moistens everything,
With the Dharma they satiate everyone.
- 7.36 “The gods will instruct them with these words:
‘You who develop these four qualities
Will accomplish buddhahood;
Do not entertain any doubts about this!’
- 7.37 “After hearing those words, bodhisattvas
Cultivate persistent diligence.
Thinking, ‘This is certainly true;
I will definitely accomplish buddhahood,’
- 7.38 “These bodhisattvas
Will then train themselves extensively
In diligence, aspiration prayers,
Mindfulness, and insight.
- 7.39 “Even if the thus-gone ones
Were to appear in the world,
These bodhisattvas
Will possess such qualities
- 7.40 “That they will be venerated by great beings,
And everyone—kings, ministers, and common people—
Will rejoice, and know
That they have attained the proper path.
- 7.41 “They will genuinely understand
The treatises and sacred texts—both in word and meaning—

- As well as writing, poetry, numbers, and mathematics,
Thus becoming supreme among all beings.
- 7.42 “Endowed with sharp faculties and insight,
They will act without using force.
Through their skillful means alone,
They will be able to accomplish everything.
- 7.43 “Without using physical force,
They will subdue their enemies
And tame their own minds,
Through the power of their insight alone. [F.225.b]
- 7.44 “Because they are born into this world
Out of great love for sentient beings,
Kings, ministers, and common people
Will praise them, filled with a sense of wonder.
- 7.45 “As the gods proclaim their praises,
Everyone will know about their amazing qualities.
Why will they see them in that way?
Because they will think, ‘They know our own minds!’
- 7.46 “Since these bodhisattvas
Will always encounter buddhas,
They will approach them, request the Dharma,
And benefit sentient beings on a vast scale.
- 7.47 “Because the buddhas will answer their questions,
All their doubts will be eliminated.
Since they benefit sentient beings,
Everyone will become joyful.
- 7.48 “After displaying their miraculous powers,
The buddhas foretell their awakening.
Therefore, these bodhisattvas
Will become joyful.
- 7.49 “Since they are free from attachment to wealth
And everything inner and outer,
They understand with great joy that
They will reach the level of buddhahood.
- 7.50 “Because they have developed the excellent acceptance
That is praised by the buddhas,

- They understand with great joy that
They will reach the level of buddhahood.
- 7.51 “Since they do not dwell on any phenomenon
And know that phenomena cannot be relied upon,
Their bodies will rise up in the sky
Upon obtaining such insight.
- 7.52 “Their minds do not dwell on
Any inner or outer phenomenon.
Transcending all concepts,
They obtain unsurpassed acceptance.
- 7.53 “Because they have considered all sentient beings
With love and compassion for a long time,
They will meet innumerable buddhas
Through the power of that merit.
- 7.54 “Their bodies are in no way different from
The bodies of the buddhas.
Because they have developed such acceptance,
They train themselves by means of the Dharma.
- 7.55 “Who would not follow their example
And give rise to the mind set on awakening? [F.226.a]
Those who follow the sacred Dharma consistently
Will obtain such qualities.
- 7.56 “Therefore, those who pursue the path
Must always persistently seek the Dharma!
Having sought their personal benefit through the Dharma,
They should use it to advance toward awakening.”
- 7.57 *This was the seventh chapter, Responding to Controversies.*

8.

Chapter Eight

VENERABLE PŪRṆA

8.1 Then venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, it is a great wonder that in the past, when the Blessed One was practicing bodhisattva conduct, he observed those various types of virtuous qualities so resolutely!”

“Thus it is, Pūrṇa, thus it is,” answered the Blessed One. “For a long time, while I practiced bodhisattva conduct, I observed those virtuous principles very resolutely.” At that point, the Blessed One uttered these verses to explain this clearly:

8.2 “To pursue the Dharma and obtain it
Is the basis of the path of the buddhas.
Those who always put effort into following the Dharma
Will abandon everything that is not the Dharma.

8.3 “Always practicing the authentic path,
They will abandon mistaken paths.
Always relying on the Dharma of the Buddha,
They will follow his path.

8.4 “Therefore, after abandoning the unfree states,
They will obtain the freedoms.
If these states of freedom are obtained,
The diligence they have cultivated will not be wasted.

8.5 “They will be supremely noble within the twofold abode.⁴⁸
They will have the foremost physical appearance,
They will be surrounded by perfect servants and retinues,
And they will become the most supreme of all beings.

8.6 “They always observe discipline

And practice patience with a stable mind.
Always observing diligence,
They will cultivate their concentration and insight. [F.226.b]

- 8.7 “They will always act as the leaders
Of all sentient beings.
Endowed with the most sublime qualities,
They know the truth and are free from fear.”
- 8.8 Then Pūrṇa said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, who would not train in such an excellent Dharma? In the past, we were lazy and had no hope of developing the insight of the buddhas, nor did we believe that we could ever attain such insight. Therefore, we thought that we would be emancipated through the vehicle of the hearers.
- 8.9 “Blessed One, from now on, I will encourage and take delight in bodhisattvas, and thereby help in their efforts to establish beings in the Dharma of the Buddha. Why is that? Because the Buddha, the Blessed One, has undergone great hardships. When he practiced bodhisattva conduct in the past, he always engaged in such great hardships for the sake of sentient beings. The worthy ones and the solitary buddhas are not able to undergo such hardships, so there is no need to mention other sentient beings!
- 8.10 “Blessed One, it is only the bodhisattva great beings who, when they practice bodhisattva conduct, undergo such immeasurable, boundless, and countless great hardships out of love for all beings. Therefore, Blessed One, after having engaged in such great hardships, those bodhisattvas will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Then they will turn the Dharma wheel [F.227.a] and liberate sentient beings who are tormented by suffering.”
- 8.11 “Thus it is, Pūrṇa, thus it is!” said the Blessed One. “Just as you have said, bodhisattvas give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Then, concerned for the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings, they develop great love and compassion toward everyone. Therefore, when they practice bodhisattva conduct for the sake of all beings, bodhisattvas have such great aspirations and undergo such very intense, difficult, immeasurable, boundless, and countless great hardships.”
- 8.12 When the Blessed One had said those words, venerable Pūrṇa and the four retinues, together with all gods, humans, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, and demigods, praised the words of the Blessed One with great exhilaration and trust.
- 8.13 *This was the eighth chapter, Venerable Pūrṇa.*

8.14 *This concludes The Questions of Pūrṇa, the seventeenth of the one hundred thousand sections of the Dharma discourse known as The Noble Great Heap of Jewels.*

n.

NOTES

- n.1 See for example Deshung Rinpoche 2003 and Kilty 2010. Four verses taken directly from Kumārajīva's translation have also been incorporated into a Chan text dating from the fifth century (Greene 2012, 582).
- n.2 In his article on the *Vyākhyāyukti*, Peter Verhagen cites Vasubandhu to the effect that a "*Pūrṇasūtra*" was lost or at least incompletely transmitted by his time (Verhagen 2005, 590). Peter Skilling lists *The Questions of Pūrṇa* in a series of discourses mentioning *tathāgata caityas* (Skilling 2016, p.31). Ulrich Pagel mentions the sūtra in a few lists in two articles, once in a list of texts that include mention of *dhāraṇī* (Pagel 2007, 164, 167) and another time in a list of texts that give a sixfold typology of "skill" (Pagel 2012, 337).
- n.3 The few minor differences between them can be easily explained by the separate transmission histories of each text. Less likely, the similarity could theoretically also be due to both translations having relied on a nearly identical Sanskrit source text.
- n.4 For instance, *lha 'dre* ("gods and spirits") and *byams sdang* ("love/attachment and aversion").
- n.5 The Denkarma and Phangthangma catalogs both have separate sections for texts translated from Chinese, but that potential distinguishing feature seems to have been overridden as a classification for this text by its belonging to the section of works included in the *The Heap of Jewels* collection.
- n.6 Those mentioned in the Kangyur include: (1) Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, the interlocutor in the present text; he is mentioned in many sūtras including *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh176.html#UT22084-060-005-126>) (Toh 176); (2) the Pūrṇa who was one of the second group of five monks ordained by the Buddha, the "five friends" (*nye lnga sde*), all Vārāṇasī merchants' sons, headed by Yaśas; (3) the Pūrṇa of *The Deeds of Pūrṇa*

(*Pūrṇāvadāna*, found in Tibetan in *The Chapter on Medicines*, ch. 6 of the *Vinayavastu*, Toh 1), son of a wealthy Aparāntaka merchant and his slave girl, a successful maritime expedition leader before going forth as a monk, and almost certainly also the protagonist in *The Precious Discourse on the Blessed One's Extensive Wisdom That Leads to Infinite Certainty* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh99.html>) (Toh 99); (4) an older Pūrṇa, the “Elder Pūrṇa from Kuṇḍopadāna,” who is also mentioned in *The Deeds of Pūrṇa* as one of the monks in the Buddha's airborne entourage; (5) a very rich and generous brahmin called Pūrṇa from the Mountains of the South who invites the Buddha and receives a prediction of enlightenment, but is not ordained; he is the subject of the first story in *The Hundred Accounts of Noble Deeds, Beginning with That of Pūrṇa* (*Pūrṇapramukhāvadānaśataka*, Toh 343); and (6) the sickly and short-lived Pūrṇa of Śrāvastī, attendant of Aniruddha, who became an arhat just before he died and is the subject of one of the stories in the first chapter of *The Hundred Deeds* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh340.html>) (*Karmaśataka*, Toh 340).

- n.7 Here we have emended the Tibetan 'jigs pa (“fear”) to 'jig pa (“perish,” “decay”) to reflect the Chinese translation: 具足不壞信 (“Filled with incorruptible faith”).
- n.8 Stok Palace reads: *ye shes dang mthong ba* (“wisdom and vision”).
- n.9 Here, we have preferred the Narthang, Kangxi, Yongle, Lhasa, and Stok Palace editions: *rtog*. Degé reads: *rtogs*.
- n.10 A related metaphor appears in the Narthang edition: *de phyir mang thos btsal bar bya/ btsal nas chu bzhin gnas bya ste/ chos dbyings sangs rgyas rjes dran na/ mang du thos pa de las skye*. (“Therefore, one should pursue erudition and then remain like water. When one recollects the expanse of phenomena and the Buddha, erudition is born from that.”)
- n.11 Translated based on the Narthang, Kangxi, Yongle, and Lhasa editions (*gzugs*), and the Chinese translation (形色). Degé reads: *gzungs*.
- n.12 The Chinese translation reads: 菩薩不隨言 知皆是虛誑 知諸法空故 但求於善語 (“Bodhisattvas do not follow the words;/ They know they are all deceptive./ But to understand that all phenomena are empty,/ They still pursue virtuous statements”).
- n.13 Translated based on the Narthang, Kangxi, Yongle, Lithang, Choné, Lhasa, and Stok Palace editions ('jigs), and the Chinese translation (畏). Degé reads: 'jig.

- n.14 The Chinese translation reads: 眞妙法 (“authentic sublime Dharma”).
- n.15 Translated based on the Narthang, Kangxi, Lithang, Choné, and Stok Palace editions (*'jigs*), and the Chinese translation (畏). Degé reads: *'jig*.
- n.16 The Lithang, Kangxi, and Choné editions read: *dben* (“void”).
- n.17 Translated based on the Narthang (*nang zhes bya ba ni dngos po 'di gnyis 'du byed pa yang mi bden zhing slu bar byed pa yin*) and Lhasa (*nang zhes bya ba'i dngos po 'di gnyis 'du byed pa yang mi bden zhing slu bar byed pa yin*) editions. Degé reads: *nang zhes bya bas dngos po 'di gnyis 'du byed pa yang mi bden zhing slu bar byed pa yin* (“since they are said to be *inner*, those two categories of phenomena are conditioned, untrue, and deceptive”). The Chinese translation reads: 內名爲二。此事虛誑 (“Inner is said to be twofold. These things are false and deceptive”).
- n.18 The word *dharmā* (Tib. *chos*) in this text denotes and shifts between multiple interconnected senses, such as “phenomena,” “teachings,” “qualities,” “reality,” and “trainings on the path.”
- n.19 Here we have emended *mngon thob 'phags*, as found in the different Tibetan editions, to *mngon mtho 'phags*, in accordance with the Chinese translation (轉高增).
- n.20 We have been unable to identify the types of cloth mentioned in this list, apart from *kāśīkā* cloth, which is the name of fabric produced in Kāśī (Vārāṇasī). Perhaps the others are also names of fabrics from cities known for their production of fine fabrics.
- n.21 Translated based on the Kangxi, Yongle, and Stok Palace editions: *'grul*. Degé reads: *'drul*.
- n.22 Translated based on the Stok Palace edition (*smra dka'*) and the Chinese translation: 難與語 (“difficulty with words”). Degé reads: *smra dga'* (“fond of talking”).
- n.23 Here we have emended Degé’s *lam log can* (“following wrong paths”) to *ma log can*, in accordance with the Chinese translation: 無反復, (“not to return something”), since the general pattern throughout these verses is to have terms with similar meanings next to each other. Different variants for this line are found in the Tibetan editions: *byas pa mi gzo lam log can* (Degé, Choné), *bya dka' mi bzod le lo can* (Stok Palace), *byas pa mi gzo snyams log can* (Lhasa), *bya dga' myi bzod leb log can* (Yongle), *byas pa mi bzod lam log can* (Kangxi), and *byas pa mi bzo lim log can* (Narthang).

- n.24 Here, we have preferred the Narthang, Kangxi, Yongle, Lhasa, and Chinese versions, all of which, unlike the Degé version, negate the verb “to cultivate.”
- n.25 The Comparative Edition wrongly has *smas pa* here instead of *smras pa*, archaic for “wounded,” as it appears in the Degé edition.
- n.26 Translated based on the Kangxi and Yongle editions (*sems*), and the Chinese translation (思). Degé reads: *bzod* (“patience”).
- n.27 Translated based on the Kangxi (*mi byed*) and Yongle (*myi byed*) editions, and the Chinese translation (不作). Degé reads: *bzod byed* (“I will remain patient”).
- n.28 Translated based on the Stok Palace edition (*gal te ngan pas lan byas na*) and the Chinese translation (若還以惡報). Degé reads: *gal te ngan pa'i las byas na* (“If I commit negative actions”).
- n.29 Translated based on the Narthang, Kangxi, Yongle, and Lhasa editions: *'dod pa mang ba*. Degé reads: *'dod pa med pa*.
- n.30 Meaning “leader.”
- n.31 Here we have emended *dga' zhing* (“joyfully”), as found in the different Tibetan editions, to *'ga' zhig*, in accordance with the Chinese translation (若有人: “if there were someone...”). The Tibetan could be the result of a two-stage scribal error: first, an accidental error transforming *'ga'* to *dga'*, based on the appearance of *dga'* in the previous verse; then, a deliberate “correction” of *zhig* to *zhing*, to “make sense” of *dga'*.
- n.32 Translated based on the Narthang and Lhasa editions (*lha 'dre*) and the Chinese translation (天神). Degé reads: *lha klu* (“gods and *nāgas*”). Most instances of *lha 'dre* in Tibetan Kangyur discourses appear in texts translated from Chinese.
- n.33 Translated based on the Narthang, Kangxi, Yongle, Lithang, Choné, and Lhasa editions: *yon tan ldan*. Degé reads: *yon tan bden*.
- n.34 Tibetan: *g.yo dang mi g.yo sems can*; Chinese: 動不動衆生. This most likely refers to beings in the desire realm (Skt. *kāmadhātu*) constantly “moving/shifting” throughout *saṃsāra*, and beings in the two higher realms of form (Skt. *rūpadhātu*) and formlessness (Skt. *arūpadhātu*) “unmoving/unshifting” throughout *saṃsāra* in the same manner, respectively. Cf. Soothill’s entry for the similar 動不動法: “The mutable and the immutable, the changing and the

unchanging, the *kāmadhātu* or realms of metempsychosis and the two higher realms, *rūpadhātu* and *arūpadhātu*.”

- n.35 The Chinese translation, as it appears in the Taishō, has this as a rhetorical question: (世尊以何思 何行舉下足: “With what intent or behavior/ Does the Blessed One lift and place down his feet?”).
- n.36 These refer to the three divisions of time pertaining to the longevity of the Dharma on earth after the passing of the Buddha. During the first period, the Dharma is upheld properly; during the intermediate period, only a semblance of the Dharma remains; and during the final period, the Dharma declines until it vanishes.
- n.37 This follows the Chinese 轉法輪經. The Tibetan Stok Palace version has *chos kyi 'khor lo'i mdo sde*, whereas the Degé version has the rather redundant *chos kyi 'khor lo yongs su bskor ba'i 'khor lo*. This title is probably a reference to the *Dharmacakrapravartanasūtra* (Toh 31) and/or the *Dharmacakrasūtra* (Toh 337 (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh337.html>)), each of which contains what is considered the first teaching delivered by the Buddha.
- n.38 The Tibetan only very partially reflects the Chinese here: 梨師山鹿園; literally: *r̥ṣi* (梨師) mountain (山) deer (鹿) park (園).
- n.39 The term *nam mkha'i sa mtshams*, the “edge of space” or “boundary of space,” is only found elsewhere in the Kangyur as an impossibility describing the tenth kind of acceptance (in chapter 35 of the *Buddhavataṃsaka*, Toh 44, Degé Kangyur vol. 36, F.383.b), and could conceivably be a reference to the ineffability of the Bodhisattva Collection, although that does not fit the syntax. It is also possible that “the edge of space” here is a reference to the sacred geography of *Vārāṇasī*, which is said to consist of an environment of five concentric rings associated with the elements (fire, water, wind, earth, and space). Since the Deer Park in Sarnath would be at the outer edge of that geographic map, it would hence be “at the edge of space.” The subsequent reference to *Veṇuvana* (near *Rājagṛha*) would then seem to imply that the term applies to everything outside of *Vārāṇasī*. Thanks to Paul Hackett for making this suggestion to us.
- n.40 The four attitudes are not clearly listed in the text. However, based on the following accounts of the Buddha’s past lives as a bodhisattva, the four seem to be love, compassion, generosity, and patience.
- n.41 As this passage seems corrupt in Tibetan (Degé reads: *mod gal ngas ni 'di lta bu'i smon lam dang brtson 'grus chen po bskyed nas blo dang ldan pa 'di lta ste/ sangs rgyas dang/ de'i nyan thos dag la 'di lta rigs pa'i tshul dri ba'i rgyu dang rkyen yod*

par gyur na sdug bsngal dang du blangs nas sems can rnams sems can dmyal ba las thar bar byed pas mod gal mkhas pa dag gis thos par gyur na nga'i mang du thos pa'i bsngags pa brjod), we have translated it based on the Chinese: 目連。我發如是大願。精進諮問有智。所謂佛及弟子。可有如是道理因緣代受苦惱。令諸衆生出地獄不。目連。智者聞已。但爲我讚說多聞。 .

- n.42 Translated based on the Narthang, Kangxi, Yongle, and Stok Palace editions (*lha 'dre*) and the Chinese translation (天鬼神). Degé reads: *lha klu* (“gods and nāgas”).
- n.43 Translated based on Stok Palace edition: *nyes pa'i 'du shes skyed pa byed*. Degé reads: *nyes pa'i 'du shes skyed pa med* (“He has not perceived me as an evil person”). The Chinese translation reads: 而不能使以我為親 (“However, I could not make him consider me a friend”).
- n.44 The Chinese translation reads: 骨髓 (“marrow”). This might be related to what Devadatta cries as he is about to enter the Hell of Ceaseless Torment.
- n.45 Stok Palace alternatively reads: *sems can rnams kyi sems* (“the minds of sentient beings”).
- n.46 The Chinese translation reads: 倍 (“twice as much as”).
- n.47 Translated based on the Stok Palace edition: *ngas chos de thos nas/ sems rtse gcig tu 'khor rnams nyan thos dang rang sangs rgyas kyi 'bras bu yongs su gnyer ba la gzud pa'i phyir 'dun par gyur pa kho nar zad do*. Degé reads: *ngas chos de bstan pas nga'i 'khor rnams las sems rtse gcig tu nyan thos dang rang sangs rgyas kyi 'bras bu yongs su gnyer ba dag gzud pa'i phyir 'dun par gyur pa kho nar zad do* (“By delivering this teaching, my only motivation has been to look after those among my retinue who one-pointedly pursue the fruition of the hearers and solitary buddhas”).
- n.48 We are unsure what the *twofold abode* (Tibetan: *gnas gnyis*) refers to. It might perhaps refer to the form realm (Tibetan: *gzugs kyi khams*, Sanskrit: *rūpadhātu*) and the formless realm (Tibetan: *gzugs med pa'i khams*, Sanskrit: *arūpadhātu*).

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for Sanskrit names and terms ·

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in the Sanskrit manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other Sanskrit manuscripts of the Kangyur or Tengyur.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionaries.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where Tibetan-Sanskrit relationship is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source Unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 affliction

kun nas nyon mongs pa

ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

saṅkleśa

煩惱

Saṃsāra, in being nothing but afflicted; its opposite is “purification”
(*vyavadāna*).

g.2 aggregates

phung po

ཕུང་པོ།

skandha

陰

The fivefold basic grouping of the components out of which the world and the personal self are formed.

g.3 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

ānanda

阿難

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A major śrāvaka disciple and personal attendant of the Buddha Śākyamuni during the last twenty-five years of his life. He was a cousin of the Buddha (according to the Mahāvastu, he was a son of Śuklodana, one of the brothers of King Śuddhodana, which means he was a brother of Devadatta; other sources say he was a son of Amṛtodana, another brother of King Śuddhodana, which means he would have been a brother of Aniruddha).

Ānanda, having always been in the Buddha’s presence, is said to have memorized all the teachings he heard and is celebrated for having recited all the Buddha’s teachings by memory at the first council of the Buddhist saṅgha, thus preserving the teachings after the Buddha’s parinirvāṇa. The phrase “Thus did I hear at one time,” found at the beginning of the sūtras, usually stands for his recitation of the teachings. He became a patriarch after the passing of Mahākāśyapa.

g.4 aphorisms

ched du brjod pa'i sde

ཆེད་དུ་བརྗོད་པའི་སྡེ།

udāna

憂陀那

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.5 ascetic practices

sbyangs pa'i yon tan

སྤྱུངས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན།

dhūtaguṇa

頭陀

An optional set of thirteen practices that monastics can adopt in order to cultivate greater detachment. They consist of 1) wearing patched robes made from discarded cloth rather than from cloth donated by laypeople; 2) wearing only three robes; 3) going for alms; 4) not omitting any house while on the alms round, rather than begging only at those houses known to provide good food; 5) eating only what can be eaten in one sitting; 6) eating only food received in the alms bowl, rather than more elaborate meals presented to the Saṅgha; 7) refusing more food after indicating one has eaten enough; 8) dwelling in the forest; 9) dwelling at the root of a tree; 10) dwelling in the open air, using only a tent made from one's robes as shelter; 11) dwelling in a charnel ground; 12) satisfaction with whatever dwelling one has; and 13) sleeping in a sitting position without ever lying down.

g.6 Bimbisāra

gzugs can snying po

གཟུགས་ཅན་སྤྱིང་པོ།

bimbisāra

洪沙

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The king of Magadha and a great patron of the Buddha. His birth coincided with the Buddha's, and his father, King Mahāpadma, named him "Essence of Gold" after mistakenly attributing the brilliant light that marked the Buddha's birth to the birth of his son by Queen Bimbī ("Goldie"). Accounts of Bimbisāra's youth and life can be found in *The Chapter on Going Forth* (Toh 1-1, *Pravrajyāvastu*).

King Śreṇya Bimbisāra first met with the Buddha early on, when the latter was the wandering mendicant known as Gautama. Impressed by his conduct, Bimbisāra offered to take Gautama into his court, but Gautama refused, and Bimbisāra wished him success in his quest for awakening and asked him to visit his palace after he had achieved his goal. One account of this episode can be found in the sixteenth chapter of *The Play in Full* (Toh 95, *Lalitavistara*). There are other accounts where the two meet earlier on in childhood; several episodes can be found, for example, in *The Hundred Deeds* (Toh 340, *Karmaśataka*).

Later, after the Buddha's awakening, Bimbisāra became one of his most famous patrons and donated to the saṅgha the Bamboo Grove, Veṇuvana, at the outskirts of the capital of Magadha, Rājagṛha, where he built residences for the monks. Bimbisāra was imprisoned and killed by his own son, the prince Ajātaśatru, who, influenced by Devadatta, sought to usurp his father's throne.

g.7 biographies

rtogs pa brjod pa'i sde

ཏོགས་པ་བརྗོད་པའི་སྡེ།

avadāna

阿波陀那

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.8 Black Line Hell

thig nag

ཐིག་ནག

kālasūtra

黑繩大

One of the eight hot hells.

g.9 Brahmaghoṣa

tshangs pa'i dbyangs

ཚངས་པའི་དབྱངས།

brahmaghoṣa

梵音聲

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.10 brahmin

bram ze

བྲམ་ཟེ།

brāhmaṇa

婆羅門

A member of the Indian priestly caste.

g.11 Crushing Hell

bsdus 'joms

བསྐྱེས་འཛོམས།

saṃghāta

僧伽陀

One of the eight hot hells.

g.12 Damaśrī

da ma shi ri

དམ་ཤི་རི།

damaśrī

陀摩尸利

A prince living in the past at the time of the buddha Merugandha.

g.13 Deer Park

ri dwags rgyu ba'i tshal

རི་དྭགས་རྒྱ་བའི་ཚལ།

mṛgadāva

梨師山鹿園

The forest, located outside of Vārāṇasī where the Buddha first taught the Dharma.

g.14 Devadatta

lhas byin

ལྷས་བྱིན།

devadatta

調達, 提婆達多

A cousin of Buddha Śākyamuni who broke with him and established his own community. His tradition was still continuing during the first millennium CE. He is portrayed as engendering evil schemes against the Buddha and even succeeding in wounding him. He is usually identified with wicked beings in accounts of previous lifetimes.

g.15 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

陀羅尼

A formula invoking a particular deity for a particular purpose; dhāraṇīs are longer than most mantras, and their applications are more specialized.

g.16 discourses

mdo'i sde

མདོའི་སྡེ།

sūtravarga

修多羅

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.17 eight limbs of the noble path

'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad pa

འཕགས་པའི་ལམ་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་པ།

āryāṣṭāṅgamārga

八聖道

Right view, intention, speech, actions, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.

g.18 eighteen unique qualities

ma 'dres pa bco brgyad

མ་འདྲེས་པ་བཅོ་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭādaśāveṇikā

十八不共法

Eighteen special features of a buddha's behavior, realization, activity, and wisdom that are not shared by other beings.

g.19 elements

khams

ཁམས།

dhātu

種

One way of describing experience and the world in terms of eighteen elements (eye and form, ear and sound, nose and odor, tongue and taste, body and touch, mind and mental objects, to which the six consciousnesses are added).

g.20 Elephant Trunk

glang po che'i lag

གྲུང་པོ་ཚེའི་ལག

—

象手

A monk. Interlocutor of the Buddha in the *Questions of Pūrṇa sūtra*.

g.21 emptiness

stong pa nyid

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

śūnyatā

空

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Emptiness denotes the ultimate nature of reality, the total absence of inherent existence and self-identity with respect to all phenomena.

According to this view, all things and events are devoid of any independent, intrinsic reality that constitutes their essence. Nothing can be said to exist independent of the complex network of factors that gives rise to its origination, nor are phenomena independent of the cognitive processes and mental constructs that make up the conventional framework within which their identity and existence are posited. When all levels of conceptualization dissolve and when all forms of dichotomizing tendencies are quelled through deliberate meditative deconstruction of conceptual elaborations, the ultimate nature of reality will finally become manifest. It is the first of the three gateways to liberation.

g.22 erudition

mang du thos pa

མང་དུ་བློས་པ།

bahuśrutya · bāhuśrutya

多聞

g.23 Evil Mind

sdig pa'i yid

སྲིག་པའི་ཡིད།

—

惡意

Name of a demon who lived in the past.

g.24 Expanding Arm

rab tu 'phel ba'i dpung

རབ་ཏུ་འཕེལ་བའི་དཔུང།

—

增肩

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.25 extensive teachings

shin tu rgyas pa'i sde

ཤིན་ཏུ་རྒྱས་པའི་སྡེ།

vaipulya

方廣經

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.26 Extremely Hot Hell

rab tu tsha ba

རབ་ཏུ་ཚ་བ།

pratāpana

大炎

One of the eight hot hells.

g.27 five faculties

dbang po lnga

དབང་པོ་ལྔ།

pañcendriya

五根

Faith, mindfulness, diligence, concentration, and insight.

g.28 five higher perceptions

mngon par shes pa lnga

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་ལྔ།

pañcābhijñā

Divine sight, divine hearing, knowledge of the minds of others, remembrance of past lives, and ability to perform miracles. See “six higher perceptions,” the same list with the addition of “ability to destroy mental defilements,” which can only be attained by Buddhist practitioners.

g.29 five powers

stobs lnga

སྟོབས་ལྔ།

pañcabala

五力

Faith, mindfulness, diligence, concentration, and insight. Similar to the five faculties but differing in that they cannot be shaken by adverse conditions.

g.30 former births

skyes pa'i rabs kyi sde

སྐྱེས་པའི་རབས་ཀྱི་སྡེ།

jātaka

本生經

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.31 former events

de lta bu byung ba'i sde

དེ་ལྟ་བུ་བྱུང་བའི་སྡེ།

itivr̥ttaka

如是諸經

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.32 four applications of mindfulness

dran pa nye bar gzhag pa bzhi

བྲན་པ་ཉེ་བར་གཞག་པ་བཞི།

catuḥsmṛtyupasthāna

四念處

A fundamental practice of Buddhist meditation: the close application of mindfulness to the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena.

g.33 four bases of miraculous displays

rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi

རྩུ་འཕྲུལ་གྱི་རྒྱུ་ཀླུ་པ་བཞི།

catvāraṅddhipādā

四如意足

Determination, discernment, diligence, and concentration.

g.34 four concentrations

bsam gtan bzhi

བསམ་གཏན་བཞི།

caturdhyāna

四禪

The four levels of concentration of beings residing in the form realm.

g.35 four fearlessnesses

mi 'jigs pa bzhi

མི་འཇིགས་པ་བཞི།

caturvaiśāradya

四無所畏

Fearlessness in declaring that one has (1) awakened, (2) ceased all illusions, (3) taught the obstacles to awakening, and (4) shown the way to liberation.

g.36 four relinquishments

yang dag par spong ba bzhi

ཡང་དག་པར་སྲོང་བ་བཞི།

catuḥsamyakprahāṇa

四正勤

Four types of relinquishment consisting in abandoning existing negative mind states, abandoning the production of such states, giving rise to virtuous mind states that are not yet produced, and letting those states continue.

g.37 Fruitful Conduct

gdon mi za ba'i spyod pa

གདོན་མི་ཟ་བའི་སྟོན་པ།

—

不空行

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.38 gandharva

dri za

དྷི་ཟ།

gandharva

捷闍婆

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of generally benevolent nonhuman beings who inhabit the skies, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds, and more specifically to dwell on the eastern slopes of Mount Meru, where they are under the jurisdiction of the Great King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They are most renowned as celestial musicians who serve the gods. In the Abhidharma, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by any sentient being in the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*) during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

g.39 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་འདྲིང་།

garuḍa

迦樓羅

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.40 Good Profit

legs par rnyed pa

ལེགས་པར་རྟེན་པ།

—

吉利

Name of Buddha Śākyamuni in a past life, when he was a merchant practicing bodhisattva conduct.

g.41 Great Wailing Hell

ngu 'bod chen po

ངུ་འབོད་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāraurava

大叫喚

One of the eight hot hells.

g.42 Healer of Men

mi'i sman

མིའི་སྐྱེས།

—

人藥

Name of Buddha Śākyamuni in a past life, when he was a prince practicing bodhisattva conduct.

g.43 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum lha'i gnas

སུམ་རུ་ཚ་གསུམ་ལྷ་འི་གནས།

trāyastriṃśā

忉利天

The second lowest of the six heavens of the desire realm, located on top of Mount Sumeru in the Buddhist cosmology.

g.44 Hell of Ceaseless Torment

mnar med pa

མནལ་མེད་པ།

avīci

阿鼻大

One of the eight hot hells.

g.45 Hot Hell

tsha ba

ཚ་བ།

tāpana

灸

One of the eight hot hells.

g.46 hymns and praises

dbyangs kyis bsnyad pa'i sde

དབྱངས་ཀྱིས་བསྟན་པའི་སྡེ།

geya

祇夜

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.47 irreversible

phyir mi ldog pa

ཕིར་མི་ལྷོག་པ།

avaiṅartika

不退轉

g.48 Īśvarasena

dbang phyug gi sde

དབང་ཕྱུག་གི་སྡེ།

īśvarasena

摩醯斯那

A king who lived in the past.

g.49 Kalandaka Forest

ka lan da ka

ཀ་ལན་དཀ།

kalandaka

迦蘭陀

A grove or forest within the Veṅuvana near Rājagṛha, where Buddha Śākyamuni spent several monsoon retreats and delivered many Great Vehicle teachings. In other texts it is known as the Kalandakanivāsa or °nivāpa, the dwelling place or feeding ground of *kalandaka*—crows or other birds according to Tibetan renderings, but some Sanskrit and Pali sources suggest flying squirrels.

g.50 Kaṭamorakatiṣya

ka ta mo ra ka ti sha

ཀ་ཏ་མོ་ར་ཀ་ཏི་ཤ།

kaṭamorakatiṣya

迦樓羅提舍

One of the members of a group of four monks described in the Vinaya as followers of Devadatta that attempted to create a schism in the Buddhist saṅgha.

g.51 Kauverdu

ke'u wer du

ཀེ་ལུ་ཨེ་དུ།

kauverdu

橋越兜

A bodhisattva of the past.

g.52 Khaṇḍadravja

khaN Da dra ba bya

ཁཎ་ཌ་བ་བྱེ།

khaṇḍadravja

蹉陀達多

One of the members of a group of four monks described in the Vinaya as followers of Devadatta that attempted to create a schism in the Buddhist saṅgha.

g.53 King of All Qualities' Light Rays

yon tan thams cad kyi 'od zer gyi rgyal po

ཡོན་ཏན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་འོད་ཟེར་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

sarvagūṇa

一切功德光明王

Past buddha who lived countless eons ago.

g.54 kinnara

mi'am ci

མི་འམ་ཅི།

kinnara · kiṇnara

緊那羅

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings that resemble humans to the degree that their very name—which means “is that human?”—suggests some confusion as to their divine status. Kinnaras are mythological beings found in both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, where they are portrayed as creatures half human, half animal. They are often depicted as highly skilled celestial musicians.

g.55 Kokālika

ko ka li ka

ཀོ་ཀ་ལི་ཀ།

kokālika

拘迦梨

One of the members of a group of four monks described in the Vinaya as followers of Devadatta that attempted to create a schism in the Buddhist saṅgha.

g.56 Kṣāntibala

bzod pa'i stobs

བཟོད་པའི་སྟོབས།

kṣāntibala

忍力

Name of the Buddha Śākyamuni in a past life, when he was a sage practicing bodhisattva conduct.

g.57 Magadha

ma ga dha

མ་ག་ན།

magadha

摩竭

The largest kingdom of northern India during the time of the Buddha.

g.58 Mahābala

stobs pa che

སྟོབས་པ་ཅེ།

mahābala

大力

Name of the Buddha Śākyamuni in a past life, when he was a king practicing bodhisattva conduct.

g.59 Mahākāśyapa

'od srung chen po

འོད་སྲུང་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākāśyapa

摩訶迦葉

A senior student of Buddha Śākyamuni, famous for his austere lifestyle.

g.60 Mahāmaudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu chen po

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāmaudgalyāyana

大目犍連

Alternate name for Maudgalyāyana, one of the closest disciples of the Buddha Śākyamuni, known for his miraculous abilities.

g.61 Mahāsthāmaprāpta

mthu chen thob pa

མཐུ་ཆེན་ཐོབ་པ།

mahāsthāmaprāpta

那羅延

Dharma-preaching monk living at the time of the buddha King of All Qualities' Light Rays.

g.62 Mahāśumata

ma hA shu ma ta

མ་རུ་ཤུ་མ་ཏ།

mahāśumata

摩訶耐摩陀

Son of Śani, householder who lived in the past at the time of the buddha King of All Qualities' Light Rays.

g.63 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱི་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

摩睺羅伽

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally “great serpents,” mahoragas are supernatural beings depicted as large, subterranean beings with human torsos and heads and the lower bodies of serpents. Their movements are said to cause earthquakes, and they make up a class of subterranean geomantic spirits whose movement through the seasons and months of the year is deemed significant for construction projects.

g.64 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya

彌勒

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The bodhisattva Maitreya is an important figure in many Buddhist traditions, where he is unanimously regarded as the buddha of the future era. He is said to currently reside in Tuṣita heaven, as Śākyamuni's regent, where he awaits the proper time to take his final rebirth and become the fifth buddha in the Fortunate Eon, reestablishing the Dharma in this world after the teachings of the current buddha have disappeared. Within the Mahāyāna sūtras, Maitreya is elevated to the same status as other central bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, and his name appears frequently in sūtras, either as the Buddha's interlocutor or as a teacher of the Dharma. *Maitreya* literally means "Loving One." He is also known as Ajita, meaning "Invincible."

For more information on Maitreya, see, for example, the introduction to *Maitreya's Setting Out* (Toh 198).

g.65 marvels

rmad du byung ba'i chos kyi sde

མཎད་དུ་བྱུང་བའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྡེ།

adbhutadharmā

未曾有經

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.66 Maudgalyāyana

maud gal

མོད་གཤམ།

maudgalyāyana

目犍連

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha Śākyamuni, known for his miraculous abilities.

g.67 Merugandha

me ro gan dha

མེ་རོ་གན་ན།

merugandha

彌樓捷馱

A past buddha who lived countless eons ago.

g.68 Merurāja

ri'i rgyal po

འདི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

merurāja

山王

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.69 Mount Sumeru

ri rab

རི་རབ།

sumeru

須彌山

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

According to ancient Buddhist cosmology, Meru is the great mountain forming the axis of the universe. At its summit lies Sudarśana, home of Śakra and his thirty-two gods, and on its flanks live the asuras. The mount has four sides facing the cardinal directions, each of which is made of a different precious stone. Surrounding it are several mountain ranges and the great ocean where the four great island continents lie: in the south, Jambudvīpa (our world); in the west, Godānīya; in the north, Uttarakuru; in the east, Pūrvavideha. Above it are the abodes of the gods of the realm of desire. Often also referred to as Mount Sumeru.

g.70 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

龍神

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments, where they guard wealth and sometimes also teachings. Nāgas are associated with serpents and have a snakelike appearance. In Buddhist art and in written accounts, they are regularly portrayed as half human and half snake, and they are also said to have the ability to change into human form. Some nāgas are Dharma protectors, but they can also bring retribution if they are disturbed. They may likewise fight one another, wage war, and destroy the lands of others by causing lightning, hail, and flooding.

g.71 narratives

gleng gzhi'i sde

སྒྲིང་གཞིའི་སྡེ།

nidāna

尼陀那

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.72 **Pariṇāyaka**

rab tu 'dren pa

རབ་ཏུ་འདྲེན་པ།

pariṇāyaka

導師

Reincarnation of Damaśrī, prince living in the past at the time of the buddha Merugandha.

g.73 **perfumed chamber**

dri gtsang khang

དྷི་གཙང་ཁང་།

gandhakuṭī

精舍

Term that was first used in reference to the Buddha's personal residence. Later, after the Buddha's passing, the term came to denote the inner chamber of Buddhist monasteries in India, where a Buddha statue was housed to represent the Buddha's residence at the monastery.

g.74 **preceptor**

mkhan po

མཁན་པོ།

upādhyāya

和上

A personal preceptor and teacher.

g.75 **profound doctrines**

gtan la phab par bstan pa'i sde

གཏན་ལ་ཕབ་པར་བསྟན་པའི་སྡེ།

upadeśa

論議經

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.76 prophecies

lung du bstan pa'i sde

ལུང་བུ་བསྟན་པའི་སྡེ།

vyākaraṇa

受記經

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.77 purification

rnam par byang ba

རྣམ་པར་བྱང་བ།

vyavadāna

清淨

The purification of affliction (*saṃkleśa*).

g.78 Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra

byams ma'i bu gang po

བྱམས་མའི་བུ་གང་པོ།

pūrṇa maitrāyaṇīputra

富樓那彌多羅尼子

Main interlocutor of the buddha in the *Questions of Pūrṇa sūtra*.

g.79 Rājagṛha

rgyal po'i khab

རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།

rājagṛha

王舍城

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ancient capital of Magadha prior to its relocation to Pāṭaliputra during the Mauryan dynasty, Rājagṛha is one of the most important locations in Buddhist history. The literature tells us that the Buddha and his saṅgha spent a considerable amount of time in residence in and around Rājagṛha—in nearby places, such as the Vulture Peak Mountain (Gṛdhra-kūṭaparvata), a major site of the Mahāyāna sūtras, and the Bamboo Grove (Veṇuvana)—enjoying the patronage of King Bimbisāra and then of his son King Ajātaśatru. Rājagṛha is also remembered as the location where the first

Buddhist monastic council was held after the Buddha Śākyamuni passed into parinirvāṇa. Now known as Rajgir and located in the modern Indian state of Bihar.

g.80 Reviving Hell

yang sos

ཡང་སོས།

saṃjīva

活

One of the eight hot hells.

g.81 sage

drang srong

ངང་སྲོང།

ṛṣi

仙人

Indian sage or wise man (often a wandering ascetic or hermit).

g.82 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

śakra

釋, 帝釋

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The lord of the gods. Alternatively known as Indra, the deity that is called “lord of the gods” dwells on the summit of Mount Sumeru and wields the thunderbolt. The Tibetan translation *brgya byin* (meaning “one hundred sacrifices”) is based on an etymology that *śakra* is an abbreviation of *śata-kratu*, one who has performed a hundred sacrifices. Each world with a central Sumeru has a Śakra. Also known by other names such as Kauśika, Devendra, and Śacipati.

g.83 Samudradatta

rgya mtshos byin

རྒྱ་མཚོས་བྱིན།

samudradatta

三聞陀達多

One of the members of a group of four monks described in the Vinaya as followers of Devadatta that attempted to create a schism in the Buddhist saṅgha.

g.84 Śani
sha ni

ཤ་ནི།

śani

闍匿

Householder who lived in the past at the time of the buddha King of All Qualities' Light Rays.

g.85 Śāriputra
shA ri'i bu

ཤ་རི་བུ།

śāriputra

舍利弗

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, he was renowned for his discipline and for having been praised by the Buddha as foremost of the wise (often paired with Maudgalyāyana, who was praised as foremost in the capacity for miraculous powers). His father, Tiṣya, to honor Śāriputra's mother, Śārikā, named him Śāradvatīputra, or, in its contracted form, Śāriputra, meaning "Śārikā's Son."

g.86 sense source
skye mched

སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

āyatana

入

One way of describing experience and the world in terms of twelve sense sources (eye and form, ear and sound, nose and odor, tongue and taste, body and touch, mind and mental objects).

g.87 seven limbs of awakening
byang chub kyi yan lag bdun

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ཡན་ལག་བདུན།

saptabodhyaṅga

七覺意

Mindfulness, discrimination, diligence, joy, pliability, absorption, and equanimity.

g.88 signlessness

mtshan ma med pa

མཚན་མ་མེད་པ།

animitta

無相

One of the three doors of liberation.

g.89 six higher perceptions

mngon par shes pa drug

མཛོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་དུག།

ṣaḍabhijñā

六神通, 六通

Divine sight, divine hearing, knowledge of the minds of others, remembrance of past lives, ability to perform miracles, and ability to destroy all mental defilements.

g.90 Smṛtipratilabdha

dran pa thob pa

དྲན་པ་ཐོབ་པ།

smṛtipratilabdha

得念

Reincarnation of Damaśrī, prince living in the past at the time of the buddha Merugandha.

g.91 Śūla

shu la

ཤུ་ལ།

śūla

首羅

Reincarnation of Damaśrī, prince living in the past at the time of the buddha Merugandha.

g.92 Sumeru

ri rab

ཇི་རབ།

sumeru

須彌山

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.93 Sunetra

legs pa'i spyan

ལེགས་པའི་སྤྱན།

sunetra

善眼

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.94 Supratiṣṭhita

shin tu brtan pa

ཤིན་ཏུ་བརྟན་པ།

supratiṣṭhita

堅牢

A hearer who lived in the past and was a disciple of the buddha Merugandha.

g.95 Supreme Assembly

'khor mchog

འཁོར་མཚོག།

—

上衆

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.96 teacher

slob dpon

སློབ་དཔོན།

ācārya

師

A spiritual teacher (sometimes more specifically the deputy or substitute of the *upādhyāya*).

g.97 ten strengths

stobs bcu

སྟོབས་བཅུ།

daśabala

十力

The ten strenghts of a buddha: reflection, intention, application, insight, aspiration, vehicle, conduct, manifestation, awakening, and turning the Dharma wheel.

g.98 The Determined One

rus pa can

རུས་པ་ཅན།

—

骨髓

The name, mentioned in the *Questions of Pūrṇa sūtra*, that Devadatta will receive upon reaching the fruition of a solitary buddha.

g.99 three doors of liberation

rnam par thar pa'i sgo gsum

རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པའི་སྐོ་གསུམ།

trivimokṣamukha

三解脱門

Emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness.

g.100 three types of knowledge

rig pa gsum

རིག་པ་གསུམ།

trividya

三明

The three kinds of supernormal cognition among the six supernormal powers (六神通). Applied to buddhas they are called 三達, and applied to worthy ones they are called 三明. They are the power of divine vision (天眼通), whereby they can observe the full course of passage by sentient beings through the six destinies; the power of the knowledge of previous lifetimes (宿命通), (宿住通), whereby they know the events of countless kalpas of previous lifetimes experienced by themselves, as well as by all the beings in the six destinies; and the power of the extinction of contamination (漏盡通), whereby they completely extinguish all the afflictions of the three realms and thus are no longer subject to rebirth in the three realms. In the

Abhidharmakośabhāṣya (俱舍論) 27, the three are termed 住智識證明, 死生識證明, and 漏盡識證明 (Skt. *tri-vidya*, *tisrovidyāḥ*, *traividya*; Pāli *ti-vijjā*; Tib. *rig pa gsum*).

g.101 Total Isolation

rab tu dben pa

རབ་ཏུ་དབེན་པ།

—

Name of a great city in the world, countless eons ago.

g.102 trichiliocosm

stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi khams

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཛིན་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

三千大千世界

A series of parallel universes containing one billion worlds, according to traditional Indian cosmology.

g.103 twelve links of dependent origination

rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i yan lag bcu gnyis

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བའི་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱའི་སྟེན།

dvādaśāṅgapratītyasamutpāda

十二因緣

The twelve causal links that perpetuate life in saṃsāra; starting with ignorance and ending with death.

g.104 Unimpeded Vision

thogs ma mi mnga' ba'i spyan

ཐོགས་མ་མི་མངའ་བའི་སྟོན།

asaṅganetra

無礙眼

A thus-gone one of the past.

g.105 universal monarch

'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal po

འཁོར་ལོས་སྐུར་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

cakravartin

轉輪聖王

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term “universal monarch” denotes a just and pious king who rules over the universe according to the laws of Dharma. Such a monarch is called a *cakravartin* because he wields a disk (*cakra*) that rolls (*vartana*) over continents, worlds, and world systems, bringing them under his power. A universal monarch is often considered the worldly, political correlate of a buddha. (*Provisional 84000 definition. New definition forthcoming.*)

g.106 Vārāṇasī

bA ra NA si

वृत्तसि

vārāṇasī

波羅奈

City in northern India where the Buddha first taught the Dharma.

g.107 Veṇuvana

'od ma'i tshal

འོད་མའི་ཚལ།

veṇuvana

竹园

A bamboo grove or forest containing a monastery, north of Rājagṛha, where Buddha Śākyamuni spent several monsoon retreats and delivered many Great Vehicle teachings.

g.108 verses

tshigs su bcad pa'i sde

ཚིགས་སུ་བཅད་པའི་སྡེ།

gāthā

伽陀

One of the twelve branches of Buddhist scriptures.

g.109 virtues of ascetic practice

sbyangs pa'i chos

སྤྱད་ས་པའི་ཚོས།

dhūṭadharmā

頭陀法

The qualities associated with the observance of ascetic practices.

g.110 Vulture Peak Mountain

bya rgod phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྗོད་ཕུང་པོ་འི་རི།

gr̥dhrakūṭaparvata

耆闍崛山

The mountain where many Great Vehicle teachings were delivered by Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.111 Wailing Hell

ngu 'bod

ངུ་འབོད།

raurava

叫喚

One of the eight hot hells.

g.112 wishlessness

smon pa med pa

སྲོན་པ་མེད་པ།

apran̥ihita

無願

One of the threedoors of liberation.

g.113 world

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུ་འི་གླིང།

jambudvīpa

閻浮提

The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology, which can mean the known world of humans or more specifically the Indian subcontinent. A gigantic, miraculous rose-apple (Skt. *jambu*) tree at the source of the great Indian rivers is said to give the continent its name.

g.114 worthy one

dgra bcom pa

དགུ་བཙེམ་པ།

arhat

阿羅漢

A person who has accomplished the final fruition of the path of the hearers and is liberated from saṃsāra.

g.115 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གོང་སྤྱིན།

yakṣa

夜叉

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the jurisdiction of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.

Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.

g.116 Yaśas

ya sha

ཡ་ཤ།

yaśas

耶舍

Reincarnation of Damaśrī, prince living in the past at the time of the buddha Merugandha.