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## The Illusory Absorption

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*Māyopamasamādhī*

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*'phags pa sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Illusory Absorption”

*Āryamāyopamasamadhināmamahāyānasūtra*

· Toh 130 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 55 (mdo sde, da), folios 210.b–230.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

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## SUMMARY

- s.1 In this sūtra Buddha Śākyamuni explains how to attain the absorption known as “the illusory absorption,” a meditative state so powerful that it enables awakening to be attained very quickly. He also teaches that this absorption has been mastered particularly well by two bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, who live in Sukhāvātī, the distant realm of Buddha Amitābha. Buddha Śākyamuni summons these two bodhisattvas to this world and, when they arrive, recounts the story of how they first engendered the mind of awakening. Finally the Buddha reveals the circumstances surrounding the future awakening of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

ac.

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i.

## INTRODUCTION

- i.1 *The Illusory Absorption* is a sūtra that belongs to the general sūtra section of the Kangyur. In the fashion typical of Great Vehicle sūtras, the Buddha's discourse unfolds within a worldview vastly different in scope from ordinary reality. Here we meet bodhisattvas who have journeyed across billions of universes to hear the Buddha's teaching, bringing with them samples of the splendors and pleasures that adorn their distant buddha realms. The vast scope of this sūtra pertains not only to the distances traveled, but also to the timespan covered. Through his omniscience, the Buddha recalls events that happened at the dawn of time and predicts affairs yet to unfold in a far-distant future. In this way our ordinary perceptions of time and space are challenged as we enter the worldview of the Great Vehicle.
- i.2 The sūtra begins outside Vārāṇasī, in the Deer Park where the Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma after his awakening. This time, however, he is not just speaking to his five previous companions, the audience for his first teaching. Now, we are told, there are 20,000 monks, 12,000 bodhisattvas, 20,000 deities, and several hundred thousand other beings present.
- i.3 As is customary in sūtra literature, the Buddha delivers his Dharma talks at the request of someone who poses a particular question and asks for clarification. In this particular sūtra, the role of the questioner is played by a bodhisattva named Padmaśrīgarbha, who asks the Buddha how one can attain a particular type of absorption known as "the illusory absorption" and, after attaining that absorption, quickly attain complete awakening.
- i.4 The Buddha is pleased with this request and praises Padmaśrīgarbha for asking such a meaningful question. He then proceeds to explain that there is one quality that underlies all attainments of awakened qualities and the state of awakening itself. When in possession of this one quality, a bodhisattva will naturally proceed along the path until finally gaining



perfect buddhahood. The Buddha reveals that this crucial and indispensable quality is not to abide anywhere in the three realms, whether internally in the mental sphere or externally in the outer world.

- i.5 If one is able not to abide in this manner, one will come to understand that all phenomena are unborn, an understanding that enables one to practice the bodhisattva path. With the realization that all phenomena are unborn comes the understanding that phenomena are likewise illusory and empty. This is the point at which one attains the illusory absorption. When this absorption is attained, one is able to display a variety of bodies in order to teach and guide sentient beings. At that point, full and complete awakening is not far off.
- i.6 Padmaśrīgarbha continues to ask the Buddha about the illusory absorption, and he wonders whether anyone among his peers in the Buddha's retinue might have obtained this absorption. Indeed, the Buddha confirms, several students have gained this absorption, but all of them have attained their realization by associating with two bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, who live in Sukhāvātī, the distant realm of Buddha Amitābha.
- i.7 Padmaśrīgarbha implores the Buddha to manifest a miraculous sign that will summon these two bodhisattvas, so that others may be blessed by their presence in this world and likewise attain the illusory absorption. The Buddha consents and emits a light from the hair between his eyebrows, a light so bright that it illuminates the entire world of Sukhāvātī. When all the bodhisattvas in Sukhāvātī ask Amitābha about the origin of this light, he reveals that it is being emitted by Buddha Śākyamuni to indicate that a Dharma teaching will shortly be delivered. Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta request permission to attend the teaching, and Amitābha encourages them to go. The two bodhisattvas bring with them on the journey no fewer than 840 million other bodhisattvas, who each manifest a beautiful mansion as an offering to the Buddha Śākyamuni. Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta multiply this offering by emanating 840 million exact copies within each mansion, thus producing a mind-boggling display of gifts.
- i.8 The pilgrimage to this world is not an arduous one by any means, being completed within a single second. Once the bodhisattvas arrive, they pay homage to Buddha Śākyamuni and sing his praises in a series of beautiful verses. The bodhisattvas and hearers in the retinue of Buddha Śākyamuni are, of course, amazed by the arrival of all the bodhisattvas from Sukhāvātī and their impressive display of offerings. So they ask the Buddha about the merit that allows Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta to perform such a

display. The Buddha reveals how these two bodhisattvas are able to multiply their bodies in inconceivable ways, thus gaining merit by serving countless buddhas in endless realms.

i.9 Next, Buddha Śākyamuni recounts the story of how Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta first gave rise to the mind of awakening that signifies the beginning of the bodhisattva path. We hear how these two beings, in a far, far distant past, were born miraculously from two lotus flowers in the realm of a buddha known as King of the Golden-Hued Lion's Play, who himself was a previous emanation of Buddha Amitābha. The place where it all unfolded, we are told, was none other than the world of Sukhāvātī, at that time known as Boundless Accumulation of Precious Qualities and Full Display of Happiness.

i.10 As is typical of many Great Vehicle sūtras, the Buddha proceeds to reveal the circumstances surrounding the future awakening of the protagonists in question, in this case Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Once Buddha Amitābha has passed into nirvāṇa and no trace remains of his teachings, Avalokiteśvara will fully awaken at dawn on the very next day and receive the name Buddha Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūṭarāja. At that point the realm will no longer be known as Sukhāvātī, but rather Complete Gathering of Wealth. Next, once this particular buddha passes into nirvāṇa, Mahāsthāmaprāpta will awaken in a similar fashion and be known as Supra-tiṣṭhitaguṇamaṇikūṭarāja.

i.11 The names of these two future buddhas turn out to be of key importance in the sūtra, because anyone who happens to hear them will be irreversibly destined to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. The blessing of hearing these two names is also such that any woman will be able to put an end to future female rebirths, and in that way join the saṅgha of monks.

i.12 At this point the Buddha's teaching is complete, and everyone in attendance rejoices and arouses the mind set upon unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Many of the listeners in attendance develop various signs of accomplishment and become free from obscurations. Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta also cause a miracle so that the entire retinue can behold all the limitless, uncountable buddhas in all directions, who are making prophecies for their unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

i.13 As is typical of Great Vehicle sūtras, toward the end of the story the Buddha speaks of the great amount of merit to be gained by upholding and propagating the sūtra, and everyone gathered at the occasion promises to spread the teaching to the best of their ability. The Buddha repeats his statement that any woman who hears this teaching will be transformed immediately into a man. (Today's readers should keep in mind that these teachings were given in a society where the status of women was generally

low, and women were expected to be subservient and deferential to men. It is also important to remember that the Buddha did allow women into his order, which at the time was a radical endorsement of women as worthy spiritual practitioners.)

i.14 Finally, while thousands of gods scatter flowers and praise on the Buddha and the assembled bodhisattvas, a young girl stands up and announces that she has decided to give up the negative emotions that cause beings to be born as women. Instead, she promises, she will set her mind on complete awakening. In front of the Buddha she vows to become an example for other women by relinquishing her female body, and she requests the Buddha's blessings to help her do so. Immediately her body is transformed and becomes that of a man. With this metamorphosis complete, the Buddha foretells that she is destined to become a future buddha known by the name Repeller of All Disturbing Emotions, and the sūtra comes to an end.

i.15 No Sanskrit version of the text is known to exist, but in addition to this Tibetan translation the sūtra survives in two earlier Chinese translations. The Tibetan translation, by Surendrabodhi and Bandé Yeshé Dé, must have been completed in the early translation period, as it is listed in both early ninth century inventories, the Denkarma (*Idan dkar ma*) and Phangthangma (*phang thang ma*). According to the catalogues of both the Degé and Narthang Kangyurs, the sūtra has nine chapters or sections (*le'u*), and the Narthang catalogue mentions that the existence of nine *le'u* is mentioned by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama in the list of texts of which he received the transmission (*gsan yig*). However, no such formal section breaks can be seen in the Tibetan text as preserved in the different Kangyurs, and it would be unusual for a relatively short text such as this to be divided into formally distinct chapters. It may be that in this and similar catalogue entries<sup>1</sup> the term *le'u* is being used to denote "episodes" or "scenes," rather than in its more usual sense of chapters; it would not be impossible to discern nine or more parts to the narrative in this text.

i.16 Unlike the names of some of the specific absorptions described in sūtras, "the illusory absorption" is a term that occurs in a wide range of canonical texts, including the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and in several tantras and their Tengyur commentaries.<sup>2</sup> This sūtra, as would be expected from its title, is indeed sometimes mentioned or cited in later Tibetan works in connection with the illusory absorption itself. More often, however, it is mentioned as one of the scriptural sources of the stories of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The other notable source is the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (Toh 113), which contains a similar but much more detailed account of the predictions of these two bodhisattvas' future attainment of complete buddhahood, as well as a different episode from their previous lives.<sup>3</sup>

**The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra  
The Illusory Absorption**

1.

## The Translation

[F.210.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in the Deer Park by the Hill of the Fallen Sages near Vārāṇasī, together with a great saṅgha of twenty thousand worthy monks and twelve thousand bodhisattvas that included the bodhisattva great beings Harisīmha, Sīmhamati, Supraṭiṣṭhita-buddhi, Anupamamati, Dharaṇīṃdhara, Agnidatta, Varuṇa, Ratnākara, Guhyagupta, Bhadrāpāla, Vidyutdeva, Vairocana, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta, Jñānākara, Anikṣiptadhura, Amoghadarśin, and the bodhisattva great being Maitreya. Also in attendance were twenty thousand gods who had all entered the Great Vehicle, such as Susīma and Supraṭiṣṭhitabuddhi. [F.211.a] At that time the Blessed One, surrounded and venerated by a retinue of several hundred thousand beings, was teaching the Dharma.

1.3 The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha stood up, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms together, he bowed toward the Blessed One, and inquired of the Blessed One, “If this is an opportune moment for the Blessed One to grant me answers to some questions of mine, may I put them to the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha?”

The Blessed One replied to the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha, “Padmaśrīgarbha, it is always opportune for the Thus-Gone One to address your concerns. Padmaśrīgarbha, ask the Thus-Gone One, the worthy, completely perfect Buddha, whatever you wish, and I will address your questions, so that you may feel at ease.”

1.4 The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how is it that bodhisattva great beings render irreversible their progress to unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening, come to possess the five types of clairvoyance, and attain the illusory absorption?”

How is it that, as soon as they attain that absorption, they emanate whatever bodies in whatever way will perfect sentient beings' roots of virtue, and teach the Dharma according to sentient beings' inclinations? How do they quickly awaken to unsurpassed and completely perfect buddhahood?"

1.5 The Blessed One said to the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha, [F.211.b] "Padmaśrīgarbha, excellent! Padmaśrīgarbha, previously you have served the victorious ones, gathered the roots of virtue, and venerated a myriad buddhas. You feel love and compassion for all beings, and that is why you ask the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha about this. That is excellent! Padmaśrīgarbha, therefore, listen well and pay attention. Then I shall explain it to you."

The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha said to the Blessed One, "Wonderful!" and he listened as the Blessed One had directed him.

1.6 The Blessed One said, "Padmaśrīgarbha, there is one quality that, if bodhisattva great beings possess it, renders irreversible their progress to unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening, and grants them the five types of clairvoyance and the illusory absorption. Moreover, as soon as they attain that absorption, they emanate whatever bodies in whatever way will perfect sentient beings' roots of virtue, teach the Dharma according to sentient beings' inclinations, and quickly awaken to unsurpassed and completely perfect buddhahood.

"What is that single quality? Padmaśrīgarbha, those bodhisattvas must not abide anywhere in the three realms, neither abiding internally nor externally. As they do not abide, they will see reality. As they see reality, they will unite with reality. As they unite with reality, nothing will impede their mind. As nothing impedes their mind, they will engage in authentic conduct.

1.7 "What does it mean to engage in authentic conduct? It is as follows. [F.212.a] All phenomena arise in dependence. There is no phenomenon that can remain constantly. All phenomena arise from circumstances. There is no phenomenon that arises without circumstances. Any phenomenon that arises in dependence is unborn. Therefore all phenomena are unborn. To realize that all phenomena are unborn is to know how to practice the bodhisattva's path. In this way, one attains the basis for benefiting all beings and can proceed with a compassionate outlook. With such conviction, one comes to understand that all phenomena are illusory. All phenomena are magically manifest because they are imputed. Those imputations are also utterly empty. The realization that all phenomena are empty is the attainment of the illusory absorption.

"As soon as one attains this absorption, one emanates whatever bodies in whatever way will perfect sentient beings' roots of virtue, and one teaches the Dharma according to sentient beings' inclinations. In this way, one

quickly awakens to unsurpassed and completely perfect buddhahood.”

1.8 The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, is there any bodhisattva great being here in this gathering who has attained this illusory absorption?”

“Padmaśrīgarbha,” replied the Blessed One, “there are sixty holy beings here in this gathering who intentionally wear the armor and who have attained the illusory absorption. There are sixty holy beings, including the bodhisattva great beings Maitreya and Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta, who have attained this illusory absorption.”

1.9 Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, did these holy beings [F.212.b] attain this illusory absorption here in this world? Or did these holy beings attain this illusory absorption in some other realm?”

The Blessed One answered, “Padmaśrīgarbha, to the west of this buddha realm, passing through one trillion buddha realms, there is a realm known as Sukhāvātī. Right now the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha resides there, flourishes there, lives there, and teaches the Dharma. In his buddha realm live the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta, both of whom have attained this absorption. Padmaśrīgarbha, it is from conversations lasting seven days with those two holy beings that other bodhisattva great beings attain this illusory absorption.”

1.10 The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, there must be many bodhisattva great beings who attained the illusory absorption in that buddha realm. Blessed One, the reason is that the bodhisattva great beings who are born in that buddha realm can engage in Dharma conversations with those two holy beings without any effort.”

“Padmaśrīgarbha, it is exactly as you say,” said the Blessed One. “The bodhisattva great beings who abide there within the illusory absorption are indeed limitless and countless.”

1.11 The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha implored the Blessed One, “Blessed One, [F.213.a] thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha, please use your miraculous powers to show a mental sign by which the two holy beings will come to this Sahā world, and the whole Sukhāvātī world together with the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha will also arrive here in this world. The reason is, Blessed One, that if those two holy beings come to this buddha realm, the sons and daughters of noble family who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will perfect their roots of virtue. They will hear the Dharma talks of those two holy beings, and they, too, will thereby attain the illusory absorption. Here in this buddha realm they will be able to behold Sukhāvātī as well as the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha. Witnessing that, the sons and

daughters of noble family will arouse the mind of unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening. They will make aspirations to be born in that buddha realm and, as soon as they are born there, they will render irreversible their progress to unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening.”

1.12 The Blessed One, understanding the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha’s request, emitted a bright light from the hair between his eyebrows. The light pervaded this entire trichiliocosm with a bright golden radiance. Throughout the entire trichiliocosm, all mountain ranges and forests as well as the central mountain, the Mucilinda Mountains, the Greater Mucilinda Mountains, the surrounding mountains, the greater surrounding mountains, and all places of deep darkness throughout the world were bathed in that golden light, [F.213.b] eclipsing even the sun and the moon—so well known for their great miraculous ability, great strength, and great power—to the point of invisibility. Toward the west, crossing through a trillion buddha realms, that brilliant golden light pervaded the entire realm of Sukhāvātī. There, the light prostrated at the feet of the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha, circumambulated him seven times, and, in that blessed one’s presence, disappeared.

1.13 The beings who lived in Sukhāvātī, including the bodhisattvas and the great hearers, looked toward this Sahā world and saw the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni surrounded by the gathering of bodhisattvas and attended upon by the saṅgha of hearers. As they saw it all, as clearly as seeing an āmalakī fruit right in their own hand, they were filled with joy and great happiness, and exclaimed, “Homage to the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni!”

1.14 Here in the Sahā world, the assembled retinue of the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni consisted of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, demigods, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragās, humans, nonhumans, Śakra, Brahmā, the guardians of the world, and bodhisattvas. All of them could now also vividly see the world of Sukhāvātī and the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha, [F.214.a] who was shining like the king of mountains, surrounded by the assembly of bodhisattvas and attended upon by the saṅgha of hearers. They saw the entire buddha realm in this way. Just as a person with perfect sight can see the face of another person only a fathom away without any strain, from this world and this buddha realm they saw the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha, as well as the world of Sukhāvātī, which appeared in a great display of fine features, filled with



trillions of qualities. Witnessing it, they were filled with joy and great happiness, and exclaimed, "Homage to the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha!"

1.15 When that buddha realm was shown to them, 84,000 beings here in this buddha realm, who had not previously aroused the mind of awakening, now gave rise to the mind set upon unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening. They dedicated the roots of virtue toward taking birth in the world of Sukhāvātī, as well as toward unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening.

In the world of Sukhāvātī, the assembled bodhisattva great beings and great hearers saw the Sahā world and were amazed. They joined the palms of their hands and prostrated toward the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni while they called out, "Homage to the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni!"

As soon as the bodhisattva great beings and the great hearers had spoken these words, the entire world shook in six ways: [F.214.b] it vibrated, shuddered, and reeled; quivered, trembled, and quaked; wobbled, rocked, and swayed; boomed, thundered, and roared; rattled, shook, and convulsed; and clattered, rattled, and clanged.

1.16 Then the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta went before the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha. Prostrating with their heads to the Blessed One's feet, they respectfully stood to one side. Standing together, the two holy beings said to the Blessed One, "The Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni has attained very stable powers. Blessed One, it is amazing. Blissful One, it is amazing. Why? Blessed One, it is like this. When so much as the name of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni was pronounced, even this inanimate earth shook in six ways."

1.17 The Thus-Gone Amitābha said to the two holy beings, "Sons of noble family, not only was the name of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni pronounced in this buddha realm, the name of that Blessed One was also pronounced in many other buddha realms. Those buddha realms, too, all shook in six ways when touched by that light. In those buddha realms, limitless and countless beings heard the name of the Thus-Gone Śākyamuni, [F.215.a] and thereby perfected their roots of virtue and rendered irreversible their progress to unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening. Then, from among the assembly of bodhisattvas, four hundred million bodhisattvas heard the name of the Blessed One, the thus-gone Śākyamuni. When they heard it, they all

gathered and, in a single voice, dedicated the roots of virtue toward unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening. The Blessed One also prophesied that they would render irreversible their progress to unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening.”

1.18 Then the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta said to the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha, “The Blessed One, the thus-gone Śākyamuni, has sent forth a light that we have previously never seen nor heard of. Now, since the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, would not emit such a wonderful and beautiful light without causes or circumstances, please tell us what the causes and conditions are for the Blessed One, the thus-gone Śākyamuni, to send forth such a wonderful and beautiful light.”

1.19 The Thus-Gone Amitābha said to the two holy beings, “Sons of noble family, what you say is true. That Blessed One would not send forth such a wonderful and beautiful light without any causes and conditions. And why? Because the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, is about to deliver a Dharma teaching on how to accomplish the precious absorption known as ‘the bodhisattvas’ application.’ That is why [F.215.b] the Blessed One Śākyamuni emitted this wonderful and beautiful light as an omen of that Dharma teaching.”

1.20 Then the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta said to the Thus-Gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha, “In order to gaze upon, honor, venerate, and serve the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, and also to hear his Dharma teaching, we, Blessed One, will travel to that Sahā world.”

The thus-gone one Amitābha said, “Sons of noble family, you know that the time has come for the Blessed One, the thus-gone Śākyamuni, to teach the Dharma to an assembly headed by the two of you, so please do go ahead.”

1.21 With this permission, the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta called out to the four hundred million bodhisattvas assembled in the retinue of the Blessed One, the thus-gone Amitābha, “Sons of noble family, come! In order to behold, honor, venerate, and serve the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, and also to hear his Dharma teaching, let us travel to the Sahā world. Why? Because the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, gave up all the many perfectly pure buddha realms and, through his aspirations and great compassion, manifested in that afflicted buddha realm. Because he

undertook austerities, it was amidst those sentient beings who have base desires and raging attachment, anger, and delusion, [F.216.a] that he fully awakened to unsurpassed and completely perfect buddhahood.”

1.22 As soon as the two holy beings had spoken these words, all of the bodhisattva great beings in the world of Sukhāvātī assembled and said in a single voice, “Blessed One, any being who even hears the name of the Blessed One, the thus-gone Śākyamuni, reaches excellent attainments. That being so, what need is there to mention those who actually see him with their physical eyes and engender faith? Blessed One, we shall also travel to the Sahā world in order to behold, honor, venerate, and serve the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, and also to hear his Dharma teaching.”

The Blessed One said, “Sons of noble family, you know that the time has come, so please go ahead.”

1.23 So the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta set out from the world of Sukhāvātī, surrounded and preceded by 840 million bodhisattvas. At that point they manifested their miraculous powers, and by those miraculous powers 840 million bodhisattvas each emanated 840 million mansions. The miraculously manifested mansions were square, structured around four pillars, even and well proportioned, and of excellent design. Each of the mansions was twelve leagues tall and eight leagues wide. Some mansions were made of gold; [F.216.b] some were made of silver; some were made of beryl; some were made of crystal; some were made of red pearl, emerald, and coral; some were made of combinations of gold and silver; some were made of combinations of gold, silver, and beryl; some were made of combinations of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal; some mansions were made of combinations of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, and red pearl; some mansions were made of combinations of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, red pearl, and coral; some mansions were made of combinations of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, red pearl, coral, and emerald; some mansions were made of red sandalwood; some were made of uragasāra sandalwood; some were made of aloeswood and sandalwood; some were made of black aloeswood and sandalwood; some mansions were made of all types of sandalwood; some mansions were made of blue lotuses, pink lotuses, water lily, and white lotuses; some mansions were made of flowers of nutmeg, jasmine, magnolia, pāṭalam, mountain ebony, aloe flower, and gotaraṇi; some mansions were made of danuskari flowers; some mansions were made of mādārava and mahāmādārava flowers; some mansions were made of flowers of pārūṣaka, mahāpārūṣaka, mañjuṣaka, mahāmañjuṣaka, roca, mahāroca, cakra, mahācakra, sarvacakra, atyarthaśobhaticakra, candra, mahācandra, atyarthaśobhaticandra, paramacandra,

sthāla, and mahāsthāla; [F.217.a] some mansions were made of all types of flowers; and some were made of flowers of various colors, multiple colors, hundreds of thousands of colors, beautiful, pure, and shining.

1.24 In each mansion were emanated 84,000 goddesses. Some of the goddesses held conches, drums, clay kettle drums, wooden kettle drums, lutes, and flutes, while others sang melodiously, and yet others held up reed pipes, one-stringed lutes, and three-stringed lutes. In this way they were playing instruments, singing songs, and making music in abundance. Some goddesses were holding vessels of powdered red sandalwood; some goddesses were holding vessels of powdered uragasāra sandalwood; some goddesses were holding vessels of powdered aloeswood and sandalwood; some goddesses were holding vessels of powdered black aloeswood and sandalwood; some goddesses were holding vessels of all types of powdered sandalwood; some goddesses were holding vessels of powdered blue lotuses, pink lotuses, water lilies, and white lotuses; some goddesses were holding vessels of powdered flowers of mādārava, mahāmādārava, pārūṣaka, mahāpārūṣaka, mañjuṣaka, mahāmañjuṣaka, roca, mahāroca, cakra, mahācakra, sarvacakra, atyarthaśobhaticakra, candra, mahācandra, atyarthaśobhaticandra, paramacandra, sthāla, and mahāsthāla; some goddesses were proffering vessels of all types of powdered flowers, perfume, incense, flower garlands, and ointments.

1.25 In each mansion appeared an ornately decorated lion throne upon which the form of a thus-gone one was seated, adorned with the thirty-two marks of a great being. [F.217.b] In each of the mansions appeared 84,000 pearl garlands, made of white, red, and blue pearls. In each of the mansions appeared 84,000 victory banners made of divinely manufactured fabric, each of them covered in a lattice of small golden bells. In each of the mansions appeared 84,000 censers of incense. In each of the mansions appeared 84,000 parasols of various colors, multiple colors, hundreds of thousands of colors, beautiful, well-crafted, and of fine proportions. In each of the mansions appeared 84,000 rows of palm trees. In each of the mansions appeared 84,000 jewel trees. In each of the mansions appeared 84,000 lattices of small bells that, when stirred by the wind, sounded tunes resembling the music performed by skilled musicians playing trillions of divine instruments. Such were the sweet and beautiful tunes that rang out from those bells when stirred by the wind. In each of the mansions appeared ponds, the bottom of each lined with gold dust, adorned with beryl and crystal, and encircled by a ring of the seven precious gemstones. The ponds were filled with blue and pink lotuses, water lilies, and white lotus flowers, and on them were wild geese calling out. The ponds were filled to the brim with water of eight properties, making them excellent for the birds to quench their thirst. Each of

the mansions was surrounded by seven rows of jewel trees, and 84,000 jewel strings bound them all together. The light shining from each of the mansions extended for 84,000 leagues. Such was the layout of all the mansions. [F.218.a]

Inside each of those mansions, the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta then again emanated the entire display of all the mansions that they had produced, along with all of their elaborate internal contents, in a precise copy.

1.26 Once the two bodhisattva great beings had emanated those displays inside each of the mansions, the displays together with 840 billion bodhisattvas all vanished from the world of Sukhāvātī and arrived here in this Sahā world in just a single moment, a single second, a single instant. It happened as quickly as it takes for a strong person to extend his arm and flex it again. At that point the two bodhisattvas miraculously transformed this Sahā world so that it became as even as the palm of a hand. Such was the miracle that they manifested. All the bodhisattvas also arrived together with the 840 million mansions. This great display of qualities was absolutely resplendent. The light that shone from the mansions pervaded this entire trichiliocosm.

1.27 Then the two bodhisattvas went before the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni. They prostrated with their heads at the feet of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, the worthy, completely perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, and circumambulated him three times before standing off to one side. As they stood there, those two holy beings, [F.218.b] in a single tune and a single voice, praised the Blessed One with these verses:

1.28 “We prostrate to your unrivaled splendor, your mass of qualities!  
Great Omniscient Sage, you have perfected all good qualities.  
You outshine everyone and transcend the desirous path of the three realms.  
Supreme leader of the Śākyas, we prostrate before your stainless, moon-like  
face.

1.29 “Your body is beautiful, like the stainless sun.  
You wear the armor of the thirty-two perfect signs,  
And light up the world with your adornments, the excellent marks.  
Perfect man, no one in the three worlds can compare to you.

1.30 “When faced by the light from the body of the Blissful One,  
The light of the sun, the moon, every jewel and fire in the world,  
That of any human, or gods like Śakra and Brahmā,  
Is eclipsed, dimmed, and shines no more than a pool of ink.

- 1.31 “Victorious One, while present in one realm,  
You instantaneously go to limitless others for the sake of beings.  
No one can comprehend the departure and arrival of the teacher.  
Your many deeds and disciplines tame beings.
- 1.32 “In a single pore you can display limitless realms,  
Yet nothing increases or decreases.  
This is beyond the workings of karma, cause and effect.  
No being is harmed, and nothing is confused.
- 1.33 “To some supreme beings you display the pure lands,  
Where there are no hell beings, animals, or pretas,  
And which are full of the renowned sons of the victorious ones—  
A realm of perfect delight beyond the eight unfree states.
- 1.34 “To remedy others, gods and humans lacking fear and careless in their ways,  
Once you show them the unbearably afflicted realms,  
The states to which they could go as hell beings, animals, and pretas,  
They all take refuge fully in the Blissful One. [F.219.a]
- 1.35 “In some other realms you manifest in the form of space;  
Likewise, in other realms you blaze in the form of fire and flames.  
You manifest by filling other realms with water—  
These emanations are the domain of omniscient wisdom.
- 1.36 “In order to tame others you display limitless forms.  
To some you appear in the shining form of the Lord of Desire,  
Lord of the Brahma realm who attained the supremely peaceful absorption,  
And the Lord of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, the thousand-eyed blazing  
vajra.
- 1.37 “Many hundreds of beings are delighted and worship you;  
Through the ten virtues, limitless beings are tamed.  
You are supreme among ministers, merchants, and royal counselors;  
Fearless when enemies descend, you are unharmed by their attacks.
- 1.38 “With the four means of attracting disciples, you gather beings  
And establish them on the path to perfect awakening.  
Through meritorious action you become a universal monarch  
Who masters the four continents in possession of the seven riches.
- 1.39 “To some, here in this world, you demonstrated birth,  
And taking seven steps over the ground,  
With your beautiful voice endowed with eight aspects, you said:

- 'This birth of mine will bring an end to birth and death.'
- 1.40 "During the time of Dīpaṃkara you had abandoned all defilements,  
And yet, to ripen beings for the supreme wisdom of awakening,  
To some you stayed, a pure being, amidst a retinue of queens.  
Lord of Men, you also taught the queens and your son.
- 1.41 "You gave up your parents, your cherished retinue of friends and relatives,  
Your kingdom, wealth, and many treasuries of jewels.  
Śakra, Brahmā, and the demigods revered you;  
Great Sage, you left home and lived in the forest.
- 1.42 "To benefit beings, for six years you underwent hardship, [F.219.b]  
Focused in supreme and precious all-pervasive concentration.  
In order to defeat all the hordes of extremists,  
You, a pure being, went to the foot of the Bodhi tree.
- 1.43 "In order to ripen beings for the supreme wisdom of a buddha,  
Lord of Men, you entered into the supreme illusory absorption;  
Victorious One, you took on a physical appearance  
Of such a kind that would tame the world.
- 1.44 "Just as an illusionist, in order to trick others,  
Will produce many illusory manifestations, so too, you,  
Lamp of the World, in order to tame beings  
Produced the many manifestations of your buddhahood.
- 1.45 "Heroic Sage, to some you showed the taming of Māra and his armies,  
And did what no one else out of all the extremist hosts has done:  
You attained immaculate omniscience beyond nirvāṇa,  
And turned the unsurpassable and unchanging wheel.
- 1.46 "Over many billions of eons you discovered awakening;  
On all paths you turned the wheel.  
Lord of Men, like a moon reflected in water, you appear to all;  
Self-Originated Blissful One in infinite places, we prostrate to you.
- 1.47 "To some, you show the Dharma body of a Buddha,  
The permanent, stable, enduring, unchanging,  
Immutable, unborn, stainless, and unceasing Dharma.  
It pervades all the ten directions, which are like an optical illusion.
- 1.48 "To some you say, 'In no time at all, you will be separated from your loved  
ones,  
So it is no good for you to put your trust in this compounded world.'

- And thus you show them how all beings are like a dream, an illusion, a  
mirage,  
And impermanent, unstable, and momentary.
- 1.49 “The physical activity of the Blissful One knows no bounds or borders;  
The domains of your verbal and mental activity are also unfathomable.  
[F.220.a]  
Like the sky, the deeds of the Teacher are impossible to measure;  
The domain of the Victorious One cannot be understood by sentient beings.
- 1.50 “Even if all the beings throughout the ten directions  
Were as knowledgeable as Śāriputra,  
They could not fathom the limitless scope of the victorious Dharma King’s  
nature,  
Nor the entirety of the Victorious One’s domain.
- 1.51 “The wisdom of the perfect Buddha is limitless like the sky,  
And the experience of the victorious ones is entirely inconceivable.  
The assemblies of sons of the victorious ones, hearers,  
And circumstantial victorious ones<sup>4</sup> cannot comprehend it.
- 1.52 “Thus you show them boundless physical deeds,  
Skillfully performed to tame infinite beings.  
You have bodies as infinite as the element of space.  
Protector devoid of concept and thought, we prostrate to you.
- 1.53 “You have crossed to the other shore of the vast ocean of suffering.  
We praise you, Victorious One, tamer of disturbing emotions, and foremost  
being.  
May all the merit gained thereby go to all beings  
So that they may reach precious, supreme, peaceful, and blissful  
awakening!”
- 1.54 When the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great  
being Mahāsthāmaprāpta had praised the Blessed One with these fitting  
verses, they asked the Blessed One about his health, saying, “The Blessed  
One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha is asking  
if the Blessed One is in good health. Are you free from any misfortune and  
agitation? Are you enjoying good health and well-being?”
- 1.55 They also said, “Hearers of the Blessed One, behold how delightful the  
world has become.”



When the bodhisattvas and great hearers here in the Sahā world [F.220.b] saw the great display of mansions that pervaded this entire world, as well as its many riches, they were amazed and thought to themselves, “Is it due to the power of the Thus-Gone One, or is it due to the power of these bodhisattva great beings, that all of this has arrived here from the world of Sukhāvātī?”

1.56 At that point, inspired by the Buddha, the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, all these many mansions that now fill up and adorn this Sahā world are amazing! Blissful One, they are truly amazing! Did all of this arrive here in the Sahā world from the world of Sukhāvātī due to the power of the Thus-Gone One or due to the power of these bodhisattvas?”

The Blessed One answered the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha, “Padmaśrīgarbha, that these many jewel mansions now fill up and adorn this Sahā world is not due to the power of the Thus-Gone One. Rather, it is due to the power of the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta.”

1.57 Padmaśrīgarbha exclaimed, “Because of their power, this Sahā world is now filled and adorned with these many jewel mansions. The perfection of the aspirations and roots of virtue of these two holy beings is inconceivable! Blessed One, it is amazing! Blissful One, it is truly amazing!”

[F.221.a] “Padmaśrīgarbha, it is just as you say,” said the Blessed One. “For innumerable trillions of eons, these two holy beings have perfected the roots of virtue. Padmaśrīgarbha, these two holy beings have attained the illusory absorption. As they abide within the illusory absorption, they can demonstrate such miraculous emanations. Padmaśrīgarbha, when you look toward the east, what do you see?”

1.58 When the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha looked toward the east with the unobscured divine eye of a bodhisattva, he saw as many buddha realms as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, with as many blessed buddhas as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges. At the feet of all of those blessed buddhas were the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta, prostrating and inquiring about their health, saying, “The Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha is asking if the Blessed One is in good health. Are you free from any misfortune and agitation? Are you enjoying good health and well-being?”

1.59 The same thing occurred in the south, in the west, in the north, below, above, and in all the ten directions. In all directions Padmaśrīgarbha saw as many buddha realms as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, filled with and adorned by a great display of mansions made of various precious

substances. In all those buddha realms he saw blessed buddhas, and he witnessed the two holy beings prostrating before all those blessed buddhas. As he saw this, he was filled with great wonder.

The bodhisattva great being [F.221.b] Padmaśrīgarbha was amazed, and exclaimed to the Blessed One, “The accomplishment of the illusory absorption by these two holy beings is inconceivable! Blessed One, it is amazing! Blissful One, it is truly amazing! Why do I say so? Because these two holy beings abide in that absorption, and thus are present in all buddha realms.”

1.60 The Blessed One then produced a miraculous display so that the bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha could see the buddha realms in all ten directions. He could also behold blessed buddhas in those buddha realms, and he saw how the two holy beings prostrated at the feet of the blessed ones. In a similar way, the entire retinue present could see the buddha realms in all ten directions, behold the blessed buddhas in those buddha realms, and see the two holy beings prostrated at the feet of the blessed ones. Witnessing this, thirty-two thousand beings in the retinue of the Blessed One developed the mind set on unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening. Such were the miracles that the Blessed One produced.

1.61 Then the bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, from which thus-gone one did these two holy beings develop the mind set on unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening? And how long ago was that? What was his name? Blessed One, thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha, please tell us!”

The Blessed One replied, “It is thus that other bodhisattvas, too, should perfect their conduct, actions, and aspirations. [F.222.a] Therefore, Padmaśrīgarbha, listen very well and keep in mind what I will now explain.”

The bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha said, “Blessed One, excellent!” and he listened as the Blessed One had advised.

1.62 “Padmaśrīgarbha,” continued the Blessed One, “previously, in times past, an inconceivable number of eons ago, an endless number of eons ago, at a time stretching further back than any number of eons, a number of eons so great that the number of atoms found in 100,000 worlds—all the limitless and inconceivable number of such atoms—would not equal the number of eons, there was a world called Boundless Accumulation of Precious Qualities and Full Display of Happiness. In that world was a blessed, thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect buddha who had perfect knowledge and conduct. He was a blissful one who knew the world, an unsurpassed charioteer who trained beings, and a teacher of gods and men. His name was Blessed Buddha King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play.

1.63       “Padmaśrīgarbha, in the buddha realm of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play, there was a display of precious qualities. I will only give you a mere illustration of this, just to mention a few of the qualities, so listen. Padmaśrīgarbha, tell me, are there many displays of precious qualities in the buddha realm of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha?”

Padmaśrīgarbha replied, “Blessed One, there are indeed—inconceivably many. They are limitless, and it would not be easy to describe them in words.”

1.64       The Blessed One said, “Padmaśrīgarbha, consider this analogy. Imagine a person splits the tip of a hair into one hundred pieces, and then uses the tip of one of those pieces to lift up one drop of water from the ocean. [F.222.b] Tell me now, Padmaśrīgarbha, which would be greater, the amount of water that has been extracted or the water that remains?”

Padmaśrīgarbha replied, “Blessed One, the extracted water would be less. The amount remaining is measureless.”

1.65       “Padmaśrīgarbha, think about this and understand it,” said the Blessed One. “The amount of water extracted from the ocean in a single drop by that person using a hundredth of a hair tip represents the displays of precious qualities in the buddha realm of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha, while the body of water remaining in the ocean represents the displays of precious qualities in Boundless Accumulation of Precious Qualities and Full Display of Happiness, the buddha realm of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha, King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play.

1.66       “His saṅgha of hearers was also endless. Right now the Thus-Gone Amitābha’s saṅgha of hearers is said to be boundless, but the saṅgha of hearers belonging to the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha, King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play, was a hundred thousand times larger than that. His saṅgha of bodhisattvas was also of comparable size. That blessed, thus-gone one taught the Dharma exclusively within the three vehicles. Padmaśrīgarbha, even if I had as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River to describe the display of precious qualities in the buddha realm of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha, King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play, as well as the display of qualities of his hearers and the causes for their happiness, I would not run out of things to say, and I would be unable to complete my description of the display of qualities in that buddha realm.

- 1.67       “Padmaśrīgarbha, [F.223.a] back then, during the life of the blessed Thus-Gone One, King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play, there was a virtuous and religious king who ruled over a thousand worlds. He was known as Glorious Splendor. Padmaśrīgarbha, King Glorious Splendor had one billion sons. All the young princes had the twenty-eight marks of a great being, and all of them had genuinely attained unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening. Padmaśrīgarbha, King Glorious Splendor also had seventy-six thousand pleasure groves for his enjoyment, while each of his sons had ten thousand pleasure groves.”
- 1.68       Then the bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, were there no women in that buddha realm?”
- “No, Padmaśrīgarbha, there were not,” answered the Blessed One. “In that buddha realm not even the word ‘woman’ was heard. All those young princes had been born out of chastity. They were all born in a miraculous manner. All those beings sustained themselves on the joy of concentration and the joy of the Dharma, and in that buddha realm there was no gross type of food. Padmaśrīgarbha, King Glorious Splendor had no formal duties, so together with his sons he worshipped the Blessed One for 840 trillion years. That Blessed, Thus-Gone One knew the king’s good intentions, so he taught him how to gain expertise in the mode of Dharma known as *the boundless seal*.
- 1.69       “Padmaśrīgarbha, you may wonder what that ‘expertise in the mode of Dharma known as *the boundless seal*’ might be. Well, Padmaśrīgarbha, it is that bodhisattva great beings never fail to strive for boundless activities. [F.223.b] They never fail to undertake boundless efforts. And why? Because those bodhisattvas’ generosity is boundless. Their discipline is boundless. Their patience is boundless. Their diligence is boundless. Their concentration is boundless. Their knowledge is boundless. Their embrace of saṃsāra is boundless. Their love for beings is boundless. Their display of realms is boundless. Their hearers are boundless. Their perfect forms are boundless. Their voices are boundless. Their eloquence is boundless.
- 1.70       “Padmaśrīgarbha, bodhisattvas will dedicate any root of virtue that has been created, even a single instance of the thought of awakening, so that it becomes boundless. You may wonder how dedication can make it boundless. Well, at the time bodhisattvas dedicate that root of merit to all sentient beings, the non-birth of all those sentient beings is actualized, and it is through their passing into the parinirvāṇa of a buddha that they will pass into parinirvāṇa. That, son of noble family, is called *boundless dedication*.
- 1.71       “Their emptiness is boundless. Their signlessness is boundless. Their wishlessness is boundless. Their lack of conditioned existence is boundless. In this way they are free of desire and liberated within the realm of phenomena, the limit of reality. They are unborn, serene, free, beyond

suffering, and boundless. Son of noble family, in short, all phenomena are boundless. Therefore all phenomena are said to be unborn and unceasing. Whatever is unborn and unceasing is boundless.

1.72 “Padmaśrīgarbha, the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha, King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play, taught King Glorious Splendor perfectly how to gain expertise in the mode of Dharma known as *the boundless seal*, so that he, too, could reflect on the boundless Dharma. Then, as King Glorious Splendor received the teaching on the boundless Dharma from that blessed one, [F.224.a] he was satisfied and pleased. He rejoiced and was extremely delighted. Since he was so joyful and happy, together with his sons he praised that blessed one with these verses:

1.73 “ ‘Guide, you are the master of all dharmas.  
You conquer the hordes of theoreticians;  
You eliminate all of the demons’ disputes and disturbing emotions.  
We prostrate to you, incomparable ocean of wisdom.

1.74 “ ‘The sun, the moon, and the light of fires,  
The radiance of Śakra, Brahmā, jewels, and lightning,  
Are eclipsed by the splendor of the Blissful One.  
We prostrate to you, luminous leader of men.

1.75 “ ‘Sage, throughout an ocean of eons,  
You perform many hardships.  
Since the result of that activity is so beautiful,  
Beings never tire of beholding you.

1.76 “ ‘Seeing that beings are pained by many sufferings,  
And tormented by birth, old age, sickness, and death,  
Great sage, your compassion for them  
Will never change as you teach the Dharma of peace.

1.77 “ ‘You are like a physician for all beings in the three existences;  
You purify all attachment, anger, and darkness.  
Dharma physician, you develop compassion  
And teach on the unsurpassed state of peace.

1.78 “ ‘You know well all beings’ actions.  
Since you understand everyone in the infinite worlds,  
You teach the Dharma that brings them  
To supreme nirvāṇa.

1.79 “ ‘Supreme man, your compassion is such  
That it is a compassion unrivaled

- By all hearers and conditioned sages  
In all the infinite worlds.
- 1.80 “ ‘A gathering of merit endowed with the supreme marks,  
The body of the Victor is like a golden mountain,  
More splendid than ten million suns.  
We prostrate to you, unrivaled perfect man.
- 1.81 “ ‘When from the expansive cloud of Dharma<sup>5</sup> the rain of teachings falls,  
Those who have the vast inclinations to be within its scope,  
And were not intimidated by the acts of previous buddhas,  
Always find themselves before the blissful one.
- 1.82 “ ‘During an inconceivable number of trillions of eons,  
It is exceedingly difficult to behold the perfect man.  
Yet through the workings of merit the mind is purified [F.224.b]  
And the guides become visible.
- 1.83 “ ‘The bodies of the Victor fill the entire realm of phenomena  
And are present in all infinite realms.  
They know no actual coming or going,  
And yet fill the world like a vessel.
- 1.84 “ ‘You who see the truths and teach the ultimate,  
You are a benefactor of the Dharma with a peaceful mind;  
Having crossed over, you liberate others who were in bondage.  
We prostrate to you, Blissful One.
- 1.85 “ ‘You have pulled out the tree of rebirth by its root;  
You have reduced to rubble the massive mountain of pride;  
You know no agitation and are beyond deceit and deception.  
We prostrate to you, who are completely at peace.
- 1.86 “ ‘Perfect man, you have gone beyond all attachments,  
And your realization is like earth, water, and fire.  
Victor, you are impartial toward all beings.  
We prostrate to you, who are like wind and space.
- 1.87 “ ‘Great sage, your qualities are like a treasure;  
Your body appears from an ocean of merit.  
Even if we had billions of eons to speak of them  
We would be unable to exhaust the ocean of your qualities.
- 1.88 “ ‘Gods and men worship your ocean of qualities,  
And I with my sons offer worship as well.

By whatever merit accrues from worshipping the Victor,  
May we become a great sage like you!

1.89 “Padmaśrīgarbha, on another occasion King Glorious Splendor was in his pleasure grove practicing concentration, when two beautiful and captivating lotus flowers made of uraḡasāra sandalwood sprang up on either side of him. From those two lotus flowers, two beings miraculously appeared: one bore the name Precious Mind, and the other was called Perfect Wealth. They sat cross-legged in the flowers.

1.90 “Padmaśrīgarbha, when King Glorious Splendor arose from his absorption, he saw those two beings sitting there, cross-legged, and at the sight he spoke this verse:

“ ‘Are the two of you gods or nāḡas?  
Or yakṣas, gandharvas, or kinnaras?  
Or humans or nonhumans?  
Friends, please answer this question.’

1.91 “Padmaśrīgarbha, [F.225.a] the being who had appeared on King Glorious Splendor’s right replied with these verses to King Glorious Splendor:

“ ‘My friend, all phenomena are empty,  
So why do you ask their names?  
Since all phenomena are devoid of names,  
What name are you asking for?’

1.92 “ ‘In emptiness, there are no gods,  
No nāḡas or rākṣasas,  
Nor any humans or nonhumans.  
None of them exist within emptiness.’

1.93 “Padmaśrīgarbha, the other being then spoke to King Glorious Splendor in these verses:

“ ‘Name is empty of name;  
In names there are no names.  
All phenomena are devoid of names,  
And still they are described using names.’

1.94 “ ‘Whatever nature a name might have  
It cannot be seen or heard,  
And no action can bring it to an end,  
So what name are you asking for?’<sup>6</sup>

1.95 “ ‘Conventionally names are formed,

And names are given and spoken.  
Thus, my name is Precious Mind,  
And he is Perfect Wealth.'

- 1.96 "Padmaśrīgarbha, once these two beings had spoken these verses, the king attained the five types of clairvoyance. Together with King Glorious Splendor, the two beings then went before the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha King of the Golden-Hued Lion's Play. They prostrated with their heads to the blessed one's feet, circumambulated the blessed one three times, joined the palms of their hands together, and stood to one side. Padmaśrīgarbha, these two beings then spoke these verses to the blessed one, as if in a single voice:
- 1.97 " 'Victorious one, how should we venerate you?  
Should it be with lotus flowers, perfume,  
Flower garlands, clothing,  
Or perhaps with food and drink?
- 1.98 " 'Perfect buddha, foremost among men,  
How should we venerate you?  
Please teach us this point,  
And we shall follow your advice!'
- 1.99 "Padmaśrīgarbha, then the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha [F.225.b] spoke the following verses to the two beings:
- " 'If you give rise to the mind of awakening  
In order to help all embodied beings,  
You will be venerating the buddhas  
With their thirty-two major marks.
- 1.100 " 'A being may make offerings  
By filling as many buddha realms  
As there are grains of sand in the Ganges River  
With flowers for the protectors of the world.
- 1.101 " 'Yet if a person joins his palms  
And bows to the mind of awakening,  
His merit will be much larger  
And know no bounds.
- 1.102 " 'The one with superior intelligence has shown  
The mind of awakening, precisely as it is.  
There is no other comparable offering,



And no other similar glory.'

1.103 "Padmaśrīgarbha, once again the two beings addressed the blessed one in verse:

" 'In the presence of the protector of the world,  
We make a firm commitment.  
Gods and men, listen  
To this unsurpassed lion's roar.

1.104 " 'However long it may have been  
Since saṃsāra's unknowable beginning,  
For that long, even if it takes many eons,  
We shall act for the welfare of beings.

1.105 " 'For as many eons as have passed  
Since the very beginning, for that many eons  
We shall act as you have taught  
In order to help beings.

1.106 " 'If, from today on,  
We should feel any desire,  
We will have betrayed  
The buddhas in the ten directions.

1.107 " 'So, too, for any feelings of anger, dullness,  
Jealousy, and avarice.  
We shall always speak truthfully  
And give up all lies.

1.108 " 'If, from today on,  
Without attaining stainless awakening,  
Our attitude should become like that of the hearers,  
This pledge would have been a lie.

1.109 " 'We shall also abstain from  
Delighting in the ways of solitary buddhas.  
For ten million eons,  
We shall feel compassion for beings.

1.110 " 'Guide, just as your realm  
Has tens of millions of other qualities  
Beyond these accomplishments,  
So shall we, too, produce a perfect realm.

- 1.111 “ ‘In that realm there shall be no hearers,  
Nor any guides who are solitary buddhas.  
At that time, there shall only be bodhisattvas  
Numbering tens of millions. [F.226.a]
- 1.112 “ ‘The beings who enjoy this realm  
Will all be stainless.  
As they hold the treasury of the Buddha,  
They will perfect the dharmas of the Buddha.
- 1.113 “ ‘If things are certain to be like that,  
And not in any other way,  
May this entire earth shake  
With its oceans and mountains.’
- 1.114 “ ‘As soon as they said this,  
The entire world shook,  
And musical instruments all sounded  
Without even being played.
- 1.115 “ ‘Billions of gods  
Scattered a beautiful rain  
Of a million flowers, powders,  
Incense, and clothing.
- 1.116 “ ‘Padmaśrīgarbha, you should not have any doubts or uncertainties as to whether the person who at that time, at that point, was named King Glorious Splendor was somebody else. And why? Because at that time, at that point, the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha Amitābha was named King Glorious Splendor. Padmaśrīgarbha, you should also not think that at that time, at that point, the two beings called Precious Mind and Perfect Wealth were anybody else. And why? Because at that time, at that point, the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara was the being called Perfect Wealth, and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta was the being called Precious Mind. Son of noble family, this was the first time that these two beings developed the mind set upon unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening.’”
- 1.117 Then the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha said to the Blessed One, “ ‘Blessed One, it is amazing how these two holy beings, devoting themselves so much to the profound and without apprehending their own names, have both been developing the mind of awakening for so long! How many other blessed buddhas apart from that thus-gone one have these two holy beings served?’”

“Son of noble family,” said the Blessed One, “it may be possible to count the number of grains of sand in the Ganges River. [F.226.b] But it is not possible to count the blessed buddhas who were venerated by those two holy beings since the time of that thus-gone one. That is how long these two have been developing the mind of awakening. Those two holy beings wear inconceivable armor and possess boundless skills. In fact it is impossible to comprehend the scope of those two beings’ qualities.”

1.118 Then the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “From here, in which direction is that world called Boundless Accumulation of Precious Qualities and Full Display of Happiness where the Blessed One, the thus-gone King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play lived?”

The Blessed One said, “Son of noble family, at that time, at that point, the world of Sukhāvātī in the west was that world called Boundless Accumulation of Precious Qualities and Full Display of Happiness.”

1.119 The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha requested of the Blessed One, “Please tell us what kind of display of precious qualities the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, completely perfect Buddha manifested in the buddha realm of those two holy beings in order to aid many beings, show love for the world, and bring happiness and health to all, including gods and men. How were his perfect hearers? How long did they live? What kind of enjoyments did they have? What was their radiance like? And what were the names of the two holy beings after they awakened to unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood? Why, you may wonder, am I making this request? It is so that other bodhisattvas may hear the Thus-Gone One describe the great aspirations of those two holy beings, [F.227.a] so that they, too, may perfect similar great aspirations.”

The Blessed One said to the bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha, “Padmaśrīgarbha, for that very purpose I shall answer you, so listen well and keep in mind what I say.”

The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha said to the Blessed One, “Excellent!” and listened as the Blessed One had directed.

1.120 The Blessed One said, “Son of noble family, the extent of the Thus-Gone One Amitābha’s life is boundless. Even if you had a trillion eons to describe its limits, it would not be easy. Son of noble family, although the life of the Thus-Gone One Amitābha is boundless, all compounded phenomena are empty, unstable, without solidity, and fleeting. Therefore, son of noble family, in a distant future the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Amitābha will also pass into nirvāṇa. Though he will pass into nirvāṇa, his sacred Dharma will remain for 84 trillion eons. Just as when he was alive, his passing into nirvāṇa will also accomplish sentient beings’ roots of virtue to their full extent.

- 1.121 “At that point, however, other sentient beings will no longer behold that thus-gone one. Yet the bodhisattvas will obtain the absorption of remembering the Buddha. They will always and continuously behold the Buddha and not be separate from him. Son of noble family, when Amitābha passes into nirvāṇa, lotus flowers and trees made of the seven gems will emit several hundred Gates of Dharma similar to the Dharma teachings that the thus-gone one taught.
- 1.122 “Son of noble family, after the Thus-Gone One Amitābha has passed into nirvāṇa, there will come a night when the sacred Dharma disappears. As soon as that happens, at the break of dawn on the very next day, [F.227.b] the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood at the foot of a Bodhi tree made of various gems. As he perfectly and completely awakens, he will be known as Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja. The precious qualities displayed in the buddha realm of the Thus-Gone One Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja will be so extensive that even a thus-gone one who is otherwise able to recount how many grains of sand there are in the river Ganges will not be able to comprehend them. There are so many causes for happiness and the precious qualities found in that buddha realm, but, son of noble family, let me just give you a brief illustration of their number.
- 1.123 “The display of precious qualities in the buddha realm of the Blessed One, the thus-gone King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play, which I described before, would not equal even one hundredth of this display of qualities. Nor would it measure one thousandth, or ever one hundred thousandth of it. In fact no number, analogy, or illustration would suffice. In this buddha realm even the names of hearers and solitary buddhas do not exist. This buddha realm is entirely filled with bodhisattvas. Son of noble family, even if one were to gather all of the hearers, solitary buddhas, and bodhisattvas of the Blessed Amitābha, they would not equal even one hundredth of the bodhisattva saṅgha of the Blessed One, the Thus-Gone One Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja. Nor would they measure one thousandth, or even one hundred thousandth of that. In fact no number, analogy, or illustration would suffice. As for his lifespan, it will be 96 trillion eons. The sacred Dharma that he teaches will remain for 630 million eons.”
- 1.124 The bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, [F.228.a] “Blessed One, will the name of that world also be Sukhāvātī?”
- The Blessed One said, “No, son of noble family, it will not. That world will be called Complete Gathering of Wealth. Son of noble family, during the lifetime of Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja, until he passes into

nirvāṇa, he will be worshipped by the bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta. After he passes into nirvāṇa, that bodhisattva will uphold his sacred Dharma and propagate it, so that the sacred Dharma may remain for long.

1.125 “Later, when the sacred Dharma has disappeared in that buddha realm, Mahāsthāmaprāpta will awaken there to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. He will appear in that world as a thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha, a learned and virtuous being, a blissful one, someone who knows the world, an unsurpassed charioteer who tames beings, a teacher of gods and men, a blessed buddha known as Supraṭiṣṭhitaguṇamaṇikūṭarāja. Just as were the perfect bodhisattvas and the perfect environment belonging to the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja, so will they be, precisely and without any difference, for the Blessed One, the thus-gone Supraṭiṣṭhitaguṇamaṇikūṭarāja. His lifespan and the period of his sacred Dharma will also be the same.

1.126 “Any son or daughter of noble family who hears the names of the Blessed One, the thus-gone Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja, or the Blessed One, the thus-gone Supraṭiṣṭhitaguṇamaṇikūṭarāja, will render irreversible their progress to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. [F.228.b]

“Padmaśrīgarbha, any woman who hears the account of how the Blessed One, the thus-gone King of the Golden-Hued Lion’s Play, passed into nirvāṇa, and who hears the name of these two future buddhas, will no longer have the identity of a woman, and after 400 million eons she will destroy saṃsāra. She will render irreversible her progress to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. She will always see the Buddha, listen to the Dharma, and serve the Saṅgha; and as she moves to the next life, she will take ordination. She will recollect her past lives and attain unimpeded eloquence and retention.”

1.127 Then, from within the retinue, 960 million gods, men, and other beings called out in a single voice, “We pay homage to all thus-gone ones: those yet to come, those who presently remain, and those in the ten directions who have passed into nirvāṇa. We rejoice in their names!” And they continued, “Blessed One, this entire gathering now engenders the mind of unsurpassed and perfect awakening.”

Then the Blessed One prophesied their unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Eight trillion four hundred thousand million beings purified their eye of Dharma regarding phenomena so that it became stainless and unobscured. Seven thousand monks freed their minds from defilements without further clinging.

1.128 Then, at that time, the bodhisattva great being Avalokiteśvara and the bodhisattva great being Mahāsthāmaprāpta caused a miracle by which the entire retinue could see all the limitless, uncountable blessed ones in the ten

directions making prophecies for their unsurpassed and perfect awakening. [F.229.a] Such was the miracle that they performed.

At this spectacle, everyone present exclaimed, “Blessed One, we now see the extent to which these two bodhisattva great beings are cared for by those blessed buddhas! It is amazing to see so many blessed buddhas making prophecies regarding these two holy beings!”

1.129 Then the bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how much merit is created when a son or daughter of noble family remembers this sūtra taught by the Thus-Gone One, carries it, reads it, comprehends it, and extensively and genuinely teaches it to others?”

The Blessed One said, “Son of noble family, it could be asked what would be accomplished and what would be the reason for me to reply to the question you have put to the Thus-Gone One. Son of noble family, it is because base sentient beings may distrust the Thus-Gone One’s teachings, and will therefore continue to meet with harm, unhelpful situations, unhappiness, and misfortune.”

1.130 Padmaśrīgarbha said, “Blessed One, in this assembly there are sons and daughters of noble family who are dedicated to the vast, indeed extremely dedicated; this teaching will also appear to beings yet to come. So it is for the sake of the welfare and happiness of many beings that I request the Thus-Gone One to explain.”

The Blessed One said, “Padmaśrīgarbha, that being so, I ask you to listen well to what I will say and keep it in mind.”

The bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha said, “Blessed One, excellent!” and he listened as the Blessed One had instructed him.

1.131 Then the Blessed One said, “Son of noble family, say there is a man who is strong, powerful, and with great amounts of merit. Now, however many beings one may think there are in what one thinks of as the realm of beings, the Thus-Gone One has said that there are many more than that; [F.229.b] it is not like the realm of the earth. All those beings that person supports with his head, shoulders, or hands for limitless tens of millions of eons. For as long as he lives, he offers them clothing and food, and provides them with all types of pleasant provisions and services.<sup>7</sup> Now tell me, Padmaśrīgarbha, would that man’s merit increase greatly on this basis?”

1.132 Padmaśrīgarbha said, “A lot of merit is created when just a single person develops a loving attitude, even if only for as long as it takes him to snap his fingers. So how much more would be created if someone embraces all beings with love and serves them with all necessities for their happiness for endless, limitless, tens of millions of eons?”

The Blessed One said, “Padmaśrīgarbha, you should be inspired by this, and you should fully understand it: any son or daughter of noble family who, immersed in faith and full of interest, develops the mind of awakening based on a sūtra that the Thus-Gone One has taught, like this one, and takes hold of the sūtra, remembers it, reads it, understands it, and teaches it extensively to others will, based on that foundation, give rise to a much greater amount of merit.”

1.133 The bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha declared to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, when the Thus-Gone One has passed into nirvāṇa, I will take hold of this sūtra, which has been taught by the Thus-Gone One, and grasp it, read it, understand it, and teach it extensively to others.”

The bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha and the 960 million bodhisattvas then all declared, in a single voice, “Blessed One, we too will take hold of this sūtra and grasp it, read it, understand it, [F.230.a] and teach it extensively to others.”

1.134 The Blessed One said to the bodhisattva Padmaśrīgarbha, “Padmaśrīgarbha, if any woman hears this Dharma teaching, she will immediately be transformed from the state of a woman, unless there are the two causative factors, jealousy and stinginess.”

Then Śakra, who is lord of the gods, Brahmā, who rules the Sahā world, the four great kings, and many hundreds of thousands of gods scattered divine mādārava flowers on the Blessed One and the bodhisattva great beings. While playing billions of divine instruments, they called out, “Those sentient beings who hear this Dharma teaching, grasp it, and teach it extensively to others will reap a great profit.”

The Blessed One said, “Sons of noble family, what you have said is true. Any sentient being who holds this Dharma teaching in their hands or hears it, and subsequently feels devotion for it, will give rise to roots of virtue before ten thousand buddhas.”

1.135 Then a young girl named Viraja rose from her seat in the congregation and, motivated by altruistic thoughts, announced, “Blessed One, with an altruistic motivation I have decided to give up any jealousy and stinginess, and instead develop the mind of unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Blessed Thus-Gone One, you speak the truth. Blessed One, if it is so that were I to become a buddha, and other women should happen to hear this Dharma teaching, they will also be freed from being a woman as soon as they hear it, to that end, Blessed One, may all my woman’s organs now disappear from my body, and those of a man appear!” [F.230.b]

1.136 Instantly the girl’s female organs vanished, and her body became that of a man, of whom the Blessed One prophesied that his progress to unsurpassed and perfect awakening had now been rendered irreversible, and that he

would become a thus-gone one, a worthy one, a perfect buddha named Repeller of All Disturbing Emotions.

When the Blessed One had spoken this teaching, the bodhisattva great being Padmaśrīgarbha, the monks, and the many bodhisattvas, as well as the world with its gods, men, demigods, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.137 *This concludes the Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra "The Illusory Absorption."*



c.

## Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Surendrabodhi and the translator-editor Bandé Yeshé Dé.

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 See, for example, Dharmachakra 2016, Introduction [i.7](http://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-056-002.html#UT22084-056-002-9) (<http://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-056-002.html#UT22084-056-002-9>).
- n.2 Particularly in texts of the Ārya, or *'phags lugs*, commentarial tradition related to the *Guhyasamāja*.
- n.3 For a translation, see [Roberts and Bower \(2018\)](http://read.84000.co/translation/toh113.html) (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh113.html>).
- n.4 *rkyen gyi rgyal ba*, a term that from the context is very likely a synonym of *pratyekabuddha* (*rang sangs rgyas*). The term is found only in one other canonical text, the *Sūryagarbhamahāvaiṣṭyasūtra* (Toh 257). The Sanskrit equivalent would be *pratyayajina*, which is rare or unknown, but *pratyayabuddha* is well attested. Norman (1997, p. 87) has argued that *pratyayabuddha*, or *pacceyabuddha* in Pali, may have been the original, more correct form of *pratyekabuddha*.
- n.5 While most other Kangyurs have *chos sprin rgyal las*, the Degé Kangyur has *chos sprin rgya las*, and the Stok Palace Kangyur *chos sprin rgyas las*. The latter two readings seem more likely.
- n.6 We are unsure of the meaning in the two last lines of this verse.
- n.7 We have not been able to translate this analogy with confidence. This represents no more than our best guess at this passage

b.

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## GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·  
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language 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 Agnidatta

*mes byin*

མེས་བྱིན།

*agnidatta*

g.2 aloe flower

*ta ra ni*

ཏ་ར་ནི།

*taraṇi*

g.3 aloeswood

*a ka ru*

ཨ་ཀ་རུ།

*aguru*

g.4 āmalakī

*skyu ru ra*

སྐུ་རུ་ར།

*āmalakī*

g.5 Amitābha

*'od dpag med*

འོད་དཔག་མེད།

*amitābha*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The buddha of the western buddhafiield of Sukhāvātī, where fortunate beings are reborn to make further progress toward spiritual maturity.

Amitābha made his great vows to create such a realm when he was a bodhisattva called Dharmākara. In the Pure Land Buddhist tradition, popular in East Asia, aspiring to be reborn in his buddha realm is the main emphasis; in other Mahāyāna traditions, too, it is a widespread practice. For a detailed description of the realm, see *The Display of the Pure Land of Sukhāvātī*, Toh 115.

In some tantras that make reference to the five families he is the tathāgata associated with the the lotus family.

Amitābha, “Infinite Light,” is also known in many Indian Buddhist works as Amitāyus, “Infinite Life.” In both East Asian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions he is often conflated with another buddha named “Infinite Life,”

Aparimitāyus, or “Infinite Life and Wisdom,” Aparimitāyurjñāna, the shorter version of whose name has also been back-translated from Tibetan into Sanskrit as Amitāyus but who presides over a realm in the zenith. For details on the relation between these buddhas and their names, see *The Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* (1) Toh 674, i.9.

g.6 Amoghadarśin

*mthong ba don yod*

མགོང་བ་དོན་ཡོད།

*amoghadarśin*

g.7 Anikṣiptadhura

*brtson pa mi gtong ba*

བརྩོན་པ་མི་གཏོང་བ།

*anikṣiptadhura*

g.8 Anupamamati

*dpe med blo gros*

དཔེ་མེད་བློ་གྲོས།

*anupamamati*

g.9 atyarthaśobhaticakra

*shin tu mdzes pa'i 'khor lo*

ཤིན་ཏུ་མངོས་པའི་འཁོར་ལོ།

*atyarthaśobhaticakra*

g.10 atyarthaśobhaticandra

*shin tu mdzes pa'i zla ba*

ཤིན་ཏུ་མངོས་པའི་རྩེ་བ།

*atyarthaśobhaticandra*

g.11 Avalokiteśvara

*spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug*

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱུག

*avalokiteśvara*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

One of the “eight close sons of the Buddha,” he is also known as the bodhisattva who embodies compassion. In certain tantras, he is also the lord of the three families, where he embodies the compassion of the buddhas. In Tibet, he attained great significance as a special protector of Tibet, and in China, in female form, as Guanyin, the most important bodhisattva in all of East Asia.

g.12 Bandé Yeshé Dé

*ban de ye shes sde*

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

Yeshé Dé (late eighth to early ninth century) was the most prolific translator of sūtras into Tibetan. Altogether he is credited with the translation of more than one hundred sixty sūtra translations and more than one hundred additional translations, mostly on tantric topics. In spite of Yeshé Dé's great importance for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet during the imperial era, only a few biographical details about this figure are known. Later sources describe him as a student of the Indian teacher Padmasambhava, and he is also credited with teaching both sūtra and tantra widely to students of his own. He was also known as Nanam Yeshé Dé, from the Nanam (*sna nam*) clan.

g.13 beryl

*bai dU rya*

བི་དུ་རྩ།

*vaidūrya*

g.14 Bhadrapāla

*bzang skyong*

བཟང་སྐྱོང་།

*bhadrapāla*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

Head of the “sixteen excellent men” (*ṣoḍaśasatpuruṣa*), a group of householder bodhisattvas present in the audience of many sūtras. He appears prominently in certain sūtras, such as *The Samādhi of the Presence of the Buddhas* (*Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*, Toh 133) and is perhaps also the merchant of the same name who is the principal interlocutor in *The Questions of Bhadrapāla the Merchant* (Toh 83).

g.15 black aloeswood

*a ga ru nag po*

ཨ་ག་རུ་ནག་པོ།

—

g.16 blue lotus

*ud pa la*

ལུང་པ་ལ།

*utpala*

g.17 bodhi tree

*byang chub shing*

བྱང་ཚུབ་ཤིང་།

*bodhiṅkṣa*

g.18 Boundless Accumulation of Precious Qualities and Full Display of Happiness

*yon tan rin chen bsag pa dpag tu med pa bde ba kun tu ston pa*

ཡོན་ཏན་རིན་ཆེན་བསལ་པ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་བདེ་བ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྟོན་པ།

—

g.19 Brahmā

*tshangs pa*

ཚེངས་པ།

*brahmā*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

A high-ranking deity presiding over a divine world; he is also considered to be the lord of the Sahā world (our universe). Though not considered a creator god in Buddhism, Brahmā occupies an important place as one of two gods (the other being Indra/Śakra) said to have first exhorted the Buddha Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma. The particular heavens found in the form realm over which Brahmā rules are often some of the most sought-after realms of higher rebirth in Buddhist literature. Since there are many universes or world systems, there are also multiple Brahmās presiding over them. His most frequent epithets are “Lord of the Sahā World” (*Sahāṃpati*) and Great Brahmā (*Mahābrahmā*).

g.20 cakra

*me tog 'khor lo*

མེ་ཏོག་འཁོར་ལོ།

*cakra*

“Wheel”; here, a flower.

g.21 candra

*me tog zla ba*

མེ་ཏོག་རྩེ་བ།

*candra*

“Moon”; here, a flower.



g.22 circumstantial victorious one

*rkyen gyi rgyal ba*

ཀླུ་གྱི་རྒྱལ་བ།

\**pratyayajina*<sup>RS</sup>

A being who attains victory (i.e. awakening) through specific circumstances. Almost certainly a synonym for a solitary buddha.

g.23 Complete Gathering of Wealth

*rin chen kun nas bsags pa*

རིན་ཆེན་ཀུན་ནས་བསགས་པ།

—

The buddha realm in which Avalokiteśvara will become a fully enlightened buddha. Probably the same as Sarvaratnasannicaya attested in the *Karuṇā-puṇḍarikasūtra*, where the Tibetan rendering is *rin po che tham cad yang dag par sags pa*.

g.24 coral

*spug*

སྤུག

—

g.25 danuskari

*da nu ska ri*

ད་ལུ་སྐ་རི།

—

g.26 Dharaṇīṃdhara

*sa 'dzin*

ས་འཛིན།

*dharaṇīṃdhara*

g.27 Dīpaṃkara

*mar me mdzad*

མར་མེ་མཛད།

*dīpaṃkara*

g.28 eight unfree states

*mi khom brgyad*

མི་ཁོམ་བརྒྱུད།

*aṣṭākṣaṇāni*

Being born as a hell being, preta, animal, god, barbarian, human with wrong views, where there is no buddha, or as a human with impaired faculties.

g.29 emerald

*rdo'i snying po*

རོ་འི་སྤྱིང་པོ།

*marakata*

g.30 four means of attracting disciples

*bsdu ba'i dngos po bzhi*

བསྐྱུ་བའི་དངོས་པོ་བཞི།

*catuḥsaṃgrahaḥastu*

Generosity, kind talk, meaningful actions, and practicing what one preaches.

g.31 Glorious Splendor

*dpal gyi gzi brjid*

དཔལ་གྱི་གཟི་བརྗིད།

—

g.32 gotaraṇi

*go ta ra ni*

གོ་ཏ་ར་ཎི།

*gotaraṇi*

g.33 Greater Mucilinda Mountains

*btang bzung chen po*

བཏང་བརྩུང་ཆེན་པོ།

*mahāmucilinda*

g.34 Guhyagupta

*phug sbas*

ཕུག་སྤམ།

*guhyagupta*

g.35 Harisimha

*seng ge'i seng ge*

སང་གེ་ཉི་སང་གེ

*harisimha*

g.36 Hill of the Fallen Sages

*drang srong lhung ba*

དང་སྟོང་ལྷུང་བ།

*ṛṣipatana*

g.37 illusory absorption

*sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin*

སྐྱུ་མ་ལྷ་བུ་ཉི་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

*māyopamasamadhi*

The realization that all phenomena are illusory and empty, which occurs when a bodhisattva understands the unborn nature of phenomena.

g.38 jasmine

*bar sha ka*

བར་ཤ་ཀ།

*vārṣika*

g.39 Jñānākara

*ye shes 'byung gnas*

ཡེ་ཤེས་འབྱུང་གནས།

*jñānākara*

g.40 King of the Golden-Hued Lion's Play

*gser 'od seng ge'i rnam par rol pa'i rgyal po*

གསེར་འོད་སང་གེ་ཉི་རྣམ་པར་རོལ་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

g.41 magnolia

*tsam pa ka*

ཅམ་པ་ཀ།

*campaka*

g.42 Mahāsthāmaprāpta

*mthu chen thob*

མཐུ་ཚེན་ཐོབ།

*mahāsthāmaprāpta*

g.43 Maitreya

*byams pa*

བྱམས་པ།

*maitreya*

*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 the heaven of Tuṣita, 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.44 māndārava

*man dA ra*

མན་དྲ་འ།

*māndārava*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

One of the five trees of Indra's paradise, its heavenly flowers often rain down in salutation of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and are said to be very bright and aromatic, gladdening the hearts of those who see them. In our world, it is a tree native to India, *Erythrina indica* or *Erythrina variegata*, commonly known as the Indian coral tree, mandarava tree, flame tree, and tiger's claw. In the early spring, before its leaves grow, the tree is fully covered in large flowers, which are rich in nectar and attract many birds. Although the most widespread coral tree has red crimson flowers, the color of the blossoms is not usually mentioned in the sūtras themselves, and it may refer to some other kinds, like the rarer *Erythrina indica alba*, which boasts white flowers.

g.45 mañjuṣaka

*ma ny+dzu Sha ka*

མ་རྩུ་ཤ་ཀ

*mañjuṣaka*

g.46 Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta

*'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa*

འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུ་རྒྱུ་པ།

*mañjuśrī kumārabhūta*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

Mañjuśrī is one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha” and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. To his name, Mañjuśrī, meaning “Gentle and Glorious One,” is often added the epithet Kumārabhūta, “having a youthful form.” He is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.47 mental sign

*sems kyi mtshan ma*

སེམས་ཀྱི་མཚན་མ།

*cittanimitta*

A high level of absorption reached through mastery of concentration.

g.48 mountain ebony

*a ti mug ta ka*

ཨ་ཏི་མུག་ཏ་ཀ

*atimuktaka*

g.49 Mucilinda Mountains

*btang bzung*

བཏང་བབྱུང་།

*mucilinda*

g.50 nutmeg

*sna ma*

སྤ་མ།

*jāti*

May also mean a type of jasmine.

g.51 Padmaśrīgarbha

*pad ma'i dpal gyi snying po*

པད་མའི་དཔལ་གྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

*padmaśrīgarbha*

g.52 palm tree

*shing ta la*

ཤིང་ཏ་ལ།

*tāla*

g.53 paramacandra

*zla ba mchog*

ཟླ་བ་མཚོག།

*paramacandra*

g.54 pāruṣaka

*pa ru Sha ka*

པ་རུ་ཤ་ཀ།

*pāruṣaka*

g.55 pāṭalam

*skya snar*

སྐྱ་སྐར།

*pāṭalam*

g.56 Perfect Wealth

*rin chen mchog*

རིན་ཆེན་མཚོག།

—

g.57 Precious Mind

*rin chen sems*

རིན་ཆེན་སེམས།

—

g.58 Ratnākara  
*dkon mchog 'byung gnas*  
དཀོན་མཚོག་འབྱུང་གནས།  
*ratnākara*

g.59 realm of phenomena  
*chos kyi dbyings*  
ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།  
*dharmadhātu*  
The “sphere of dharmas,” a synonym for the nature of things.

g.60 Repeller of All Disturbing Emotions  
*nyon mongs pa thams cad zlog pa*  
ཉོན་མོངས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྲོག་པ།  
—

g.61 roca  
*mdog mdzes*  
མདོག་མཛེས།  
*roca*

g.62 roots of virtue  
*dge ba'i rtsa ba*  
དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ།  
*kuśalamūla*  
Wholesome actions that are conducive to happiness.

g.63 Sahā  
*mi mjed*  
མི་མཛེད།  
*sahā*  
*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*  
The name for our particular world system, the universe of a thousand million worlds, or trichiliocosm, in which our four-continent world is located. Although it is sometimes said that it can refer only to our own four-continent world around Mount Meru, the sūtras largely seem to equate it with this trichiliocosm, and this is confirmed by scholars like Jamgön Kongtrul (see

*The Treasury of Knowledge, Book One*). Each trichiliocosm is ruled by a god Brahmā; thus, in this context, he bears the title of *Sahāmpati*, Lord of Sahā. Our world system of Sahā, or Sahālokadhātu, is also described as being the buddhafield of the Buddha Śākyamuni. He teaches the Dharma here to beings who adhere to inferior ways and perceive this universe as an impure buddhafield contaminated with the five degenerations (*pañcakaṣāya*, *snyigs ma lnga*): the degeneration of time, sentient beings, place, lifespan, and mental afflictions (see *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, Toh 176). It is also mentioned as the field of activity of all the thousand buddhas of this Fortunate Eon (see *The White Lotus of Compassion*, Toh 112).

The name Sahā possibly derives from the Sanskrit  $\sqrt{sah}$ , “to bear, endure, or withstand.” It is often interpreted as alluding to the inhabitants of this world having to endure suffering. The Tibetan translation, *mi mjed*, follows along the same lines. It literally means “not unbearable,” in the sense that beings here are able to bear the suffering they experience.

g.64 Śakra

*brgya byin*

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

*śakra*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The lord of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (*trāyastriṃśā*). 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.65 Śākyamuni

*shAkya thub pa*

ཤཱཀྱ་ཐུབ་པ།

*śākyamuni*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

An epithet for the historical Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama: he was a *muni* (“sage”) from the Śākya clan. He is counted as the fourth of the first four buddhas of the present Good Eon, the other three being Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kāśyapa. He will be followed by Maitreya, the next buddha in this eon.



g.66 Samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja

*'od zer kun nas 'phags pa'i dpal brtsegs rgyal po*

འོད་ཟེར་ཀུན་ནས་འཕགས་པའི་དཔལ་བཞུགས་རྒྱལ་པོ།

*samantaraśmyabhyudgataśrīkūtarāja*

“King of Heaped Splendors That Shine Above All.” The name that Avalokiteśvara will have when he becomes a tathāgata. The Sanskrit name is attested in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarikasūtra*.

g.67 Śāriputra

*shA ri'i bu*

ཤ་རི་བུ།

*śāriputra*

*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.68 sarvacakra

*kun tu 'khor lo*

ཀུན་ཏུ་འཁོར་ལོ།

*sarvacakra*

g.69 Siṃhamati

*seng ge'i blo gros*

སེང་གེ་འི་བློ་གྲོས།

*siṃhamati*

g.70 sthāla

*s+tha la*

སྐྱ་ལ།

*sthāla*

g.71 Sukhāvati

*bde ba can*

བདེ་བ་ཅན།

*sukhāvātī*

The buddha realm in which Buddha Amitābha lives.

g.72 Supraṭiṣṭhitabuddhi

*legs par gnas pa'i blo gros*

ལེགས་པར་གནས་པའི་སློབ་གྲོས།

*supraṭiṣṭhitabuddhi*

g.73 Supraṭiṣṭhitaguṇamaṇikūṭarāja

*yon tan shin tu gnas pa nor bu brtsegs pa'i rgyal po*

ཡོན་ཏན་ཤིན་ཏུ་གནས་པ་ནོར་བུ་བརྟེན་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

*supraṭiṣṭhitaguṇamaṇikūṭarāja*

“King Jewel Mound Full of Enduring Qualities.” The name that Mahāsthāmaprāpta will have when he becomes a tathāgata. The Sanskrit name is attested in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarikasūtra*, but in the Tibetan translation of that text it is rendered as *rab tu brtan pa yon tan nor bu brtsegs pa'i rgyal po*.

g.74 Surendrabodhi

*su ren dra bo dhi*

སུ་རེན་བོ་ལྷི།

*surendrabodhi*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

An Indian paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

g.75 Susīma

*mtshams bzangs*

མཚམས་བཟངས།

*susīma*

g.76 ten virtues

*dge ba bcu*

དགེ་བ་བཅུ།

*daśakuśala*

Abstaining from killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, lying, uttering divisive talk, speaking harsh words, gossiping, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

g.77 twenty-eight marks of a great being

*skyes bu chen po'i mtshan nyi shu rtsa brgyad*

སྐྱེས་བུ་ཚེན་པོའི་མཚན་ཉི་ཤུ་རྩ་བརྒྱད།

*aṣṭaviṃśatimahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa*

A variation on the more usual set of 32 such marks; this set is mentioned only in this sūtra and in three others: the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (ch. 45 of Toh 44), the *Tathāgatācintyaguhyanirdeśa* (Toh 47), and the longest *Sāgaramatipariṣṭhā* (Toh 153). None of these texts give a list.

g.78 uragasāra sandalwood

*tsan dan sbrul gyi snying po*

ཅན་དན་སྐྱུལ་གྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

*uragasāracandana*

g.79 Vairocana

*rnam par snang byed*

རྣམ་པར་སྐྱང་བྱེད།

*vairocana*

g.80 Varuṇa

*chu lha*

ཚུ་ལྷ།

*varuṇa*

g.81 Vidyutdeva

*glog lha*

གློག་ལྷ།

*vidyutdeva*

g.82 Viraja

*rdul dang bral ba*

རུལ་དང་བྲལ་བ།

*viraja*

g.83 water lily

*ku mu da*

ཀུ་མུ་ད།

*kumuda*