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The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One's Wisdom Seal

Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhi

འཕགས་པ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཕྱག་རྒྱའི་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

*'phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes kyi phyag rgya'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya ba theg pa chen
po'i mdo*

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One’s Wisdom
Seal”

Āryatathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhināmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 131 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 55 (mdo sde, da), folios 230.b–253.b

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Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

First published 2020

Current version v 1.5.27 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.23.3

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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 In *The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One's Wisdom Seal*, a vast number of bodhisattvas request the Buddha Śākyamuni to teach them about his state of meditative absorption. In his responses to various interlocutors, including the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, the Buddha expounds on this profound state, exhorting them to accomplish it themselves. The sūtra also describes the qualities of bodhisattvas and their stages of development.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 This sūtra was translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the supervision of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche. Joseph McClellan produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Andreas Doctor compared the draft translation with the Tibetan, and edited the text.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One's Wisdom Seal* is a sūtra significant in the canon of the Great Vehicle for its rich description of the highest levels of Buddhist absorption, as well as for its unique discussion of the stages of a bodhisattva's journey and the qualities that pertain to them.

i.2 It is a scripture that appears to have enjoyed a measure of sustained popularity in Asia. Of the three Chinese translations¹ the earliest was completed by the translator Zhi Qian sometime between 223 and 253 CE, while the Tibetan translation was produced almost six centuries later during the great imperial translation project of the early ninth century. In between these two notable efforts to propagate the sūtra outside India, we also know of citations of this text in the works of at least two Indian scholars: in the sixth century by Bhāviveka² and in the eighth century by Kamalaśīla.³ We have evidence, therefore, of the continuing relevance of this sūtra during the formative centuries of the Great Vehicle tradition in India.

i.3 Nevertheless, to our knowledge this scripture has until now remained unexplored by modern scholars, and no translation of the text has been made since the Tibetan translation was produced in the early ninth century. There is no extant Sanskrit manuscript and, while a comparison with the Chinese translations remains a desirable future goal, our translation is based entirely on the Tibetan source texts, the Tibetan Degé block print with reference to the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace manuscript.

i.4 The sūtra is one of eleven sūtras in the Kangyur with titles including the term "The Absorption of..." (Sanskrit *samādhi*, Tibetan *ting nge 'dzin*). In the Degé Kangyur and other Kangyurs of the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) lineage these texts are grouped together, and although that might seem to suggest that they could be construed as forming an unofficial subgenre of sūtra literature, the sharing of a common term in the title is simply one of several organizing principles used to order the titles in these Kangyurs without implying that

the common term in question necessarily constitutes a common theme as such.⁴ Indeed, the significance of the term “absorption” or *samādhi* clearly varies from sūtra to sūtra within this group of texts. For example, in the famous *King of Samādhis Sūtra (Samādhirājasūtra, Toh 127)*,⁵ *samādhi* does not appear to refer to an altered state of mind, or to meditative absorption. Instead, the term is used to encapsulate a whole range of practices and qualities that the sūtra presents in a detailed list, with no explicit mention of states of deep meditative concentration. Nevertheless, in most other sūtras within this group of texts,⁶ the term seems to lean more toward referring to specific meditative states to be accessed and accomplished.⁷

i.5 It is in that respect that the current sūtra resembles some of these other works, describing as it does a particular meditative absorption that the rest of the title qualifies as “the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal.” Here, *thus-gone one* (Skt. *tathāgatha*) is a common epithet of a fully awakened being. We have translated this term from the Tibetan *de bzhin gshegs pa*, “one who has thus gone,” whereas the Chinese equivalent, *ru lai*, reads closer to “thus-come one.” The final term, *wisdom seal* (Skt. *jñānamudrā*), qualifies the absorption in which the thus-gone one dwells. *Seal* (Skt. *mudrā*) has a rich and varied usage in Buddhist literature. Generally, it refers to a stamp or brand, like a royal seal that is used to mark property. Since the thus-gone one’s absorption is infinite and unimpeded, all of reality falls into its domain. Thus, all of reality is subsumed in, or sealed by, the wisdom actualized in this absorption.

i.6 Like many Great Vehicle sūtras, *The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One’s Wisdom Seal* situates ancient India and Buddha Śākyamuni in a much larger, cosmic context. The opening scene takes place in the famous Veṇuvana (Bamboo Grove) monastic compound, near Rājagṛha, the capital of the former kingdom of Magadha (present-day Bihar). Here the Buddha is dwelling with a vast retinue of monks and bodhisattvas when he enters into an exalted state of absorption called *the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal*, indescribable except in ways that suggest its sheer ineffability: it is “formless, indefinable, ungraspable, unimpeded, and not apparent.”

i.7 The power of this state of absorption affects the entire trichiliocosm, inspiring buddhas and bodhisattvas dwelling in faraway realms to intensify their spiritual activity. Cosmic buddhas exhort their innumerable bodhisattva disciples to seize the opportunity to go to the Veṇuvana and learn about this absorption, which will be the culmination of their training. Accordingly, the bodhisattvas magically travel there, eager to receive teachings about this exalted state. Countless gods and nonhuman beings, hearers, and monks join them in their quest. When they arrive, however, the Buddha is nowhere to be seen, as their perceptions are not attuned to the state in which he is absorbed. In dismay, the assembly, led by a group of close disciples

including Mahāmaudgalyāyana and Subhūti, turns to the great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī for advice on how to communicate with the Buddha. He simply tells them to look inward: they will find the Buddha within their own absorptions.

i.8 Thus, a line of communication is established with the Buddha, who now begins to teach them about this absorption, which is the hallmark of all thus-gone ones. The teaching follows an extensive apophatic methodology, in which the Buddha negates any proposition that may be made about this most profound state of absorption: “This absorption is formless, indefinable, ungraspable, unimpeded, and not apparent. It is beyond knowledge and not an object of knowledge.” Upon concluding his teaching about the *absorption of the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal*, all those in attendance purify negative karma accumulated over innumerable eons and ensure that their progress to unsurpassed and perfect awakening is irreversible.

i.9 The discourse then shifts, and the Buddha addresses Maitreya, explaining seven ways in which bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening. He also lists two sets of five qualities that characterize a nonregressing bodhisattva, as well as five that mark an incorrigible, flawed individual on the bodhisattva path. To illustrate the exemplary bodhisattva, the Buddha recounts a past-life memory of the deeds of a great king named Puṇyodgata, who was a devotee of the buddha Śāśiketu.

i.10 Following this discourse, countless female devotees, led by one of the queens of King Bimbisāra and one of his daughters, promise their service to the Dharma in all subsequent lives. This delights the Buddha, who beams a smile at them. The women, captivated, eloquently enjoin the Buddha to give them a teaching about the causes, qualities, and implications of his smile. In response, the Buddha recounts more past-life memories, this time about the noble deeds of an ancient ruler named Puṇyaraśmi, who was an exemplary guardian of the Dharma. The Buddha also describes the degenerate age, in which the influence of the Dharma will wane. During this time, he explains, it will be especially important for those who follow him to train in the sūtra of *The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One’s Wisdom Seal*, and to master the absorption it describes. The Buddha then highlights differences between bodhisattvas based on whether they have aroused the mind of awakening and the roots of virtue in the presence of hundreds, of thousands, or of millions of buddhas. In short, the latter have the greatest resolve to traverse the path and are least susceptible to any kind of regression. However, they will still suffer. The sūtra explains that whatever negative karma remains for these bodhisattvas will be purified through instances of ordinary human misfortune: they will be criticized, they will suffer bouts of depression, they will be born into

dysfunctional families, they will face adverse economic conditions, and so forth. Bodhisattvas of the highest order will bear these pains and persevere on the path; others will falter.

i.11 Toward the end of the sūtra, the Buddha addresses Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, and an assembly of distinguished disciples who ask him to explain the meaning of the term *Dharma* itself. Thus begins a long synonymic chain of significant Buddhist terms: inexhaustible, unborn, uninterrupted, uncollected, ungraspable, nonabiding, and groundless, until the final term *nirvāṇa*. This list echoes the terms used earlier in the sūtra to describe the *absorption of the thus-gone one's wisdom seal*. Given this definition of the Dharma, the disciples wonder how they should act as its protectors. The Buddha explains that if they indeed realize the meaning of what he has taught them, “ultimately we find nothing at all—no Dharma and no conflict with the Dharma.” Then, in a set of philosophically rich verses, he instructs them further in the ultimate truth, beyond concepts and characteristics. The sūtra concludes with another exhortation to the gathered assembly to accomplish the *absorption of the thus-gone one's wisdom seal*.

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra
The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One's Wisdom
Seal

1.

The Translation

[B1] [F.230.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time: The Blessed One was in the Kalandakanivāpa, at the Veṇuvana near Rājagṛha. He was there together with a great saṅgha of twelve hundred fifty monks, and with three hundred million bodhisattvas, all of whom had attained dhāraṇī, unobstructed eloquence, and mastery over absorption. They dwelled in the absorption of emptiness, their domain was free of marks, their aspiration was uncontrived, they dwelled in the absence of wishes, and their conduct was natural. They had attained the dhāraṇīs that accomplish limitless gateways. They had attained acceptance regarding sameness, they had attained sameness, and they had attained unobstructed dhāraṇī. They knew the higher or lower capacities of all beings [F.231.a] and had precise knowledge of beings' thoughts and actions.

1.3 At that time, the Blessed One settled into the absorption that is the blessing of the thus-gone one, that enters the domain of all the buddhas. This absorption is formless, indefinable, ungraspable, unimpeded, and not apparent. It is beyond knowledge and not an object of knowledge. It is free from mentation, mind, and consciousness. It is rootless, unsupported, and beyond observation. It is an incomparable, unequaled, and matchless state. It has no notion of "mine," is free from grasping, is free from anything to avoid, and is uncreated. It never went and never came. It does not go and does not stay. It is without interruption, baseless, and without marks. It is free of all marks. It is beyond accepting and rejecting. It is uncompounded and beyond any accumulation. It is beyond assembling and beyond separating. It is without mind and free from mind. It is unoriginated, beginningless, unestablished, nonarising, and totally nonoccurring. It is utterly beyond movement, perfectly without movement, totally empty, beyond association,

and without superimpositions regarding any phenomenon. It is a dhāraṇī gateway to enter the domain of all buddhas. It is known as *the thus-gone one's wisdom seal*.

- 1.4 As soon as he settled into that absorption, neither the Blessed One's body nor the characteristics of his body appeared; neither his mind nor the characteristics of his mind appeared; neither his robes nor the characteristics of his robes appeared; neither his cushion nor the characteristics of his cushion appeared; neither his sleeping nor the characteristics of his sleeping appeared; neither his walking nor the characteristics of his walking appeared; neither his rising nor the characteristics of his rising appeared; neither his remaining nor the characteristics of his remaining appeared; neither his shadow nor the characteristics of his shadow appeared; neither his sitting nor the characteristics of his sitting appeared; and neither his sounds nor the characteristics of his sounds appeared.
- 1.5 At that point, through the power of this absorption, [F.231.b] and through the blessings of the Buddha, a bright light filled the entire trichiliocosm. So bright was this light that everywhere in the trichiliocosm the moonlight was outshone, as was the sunlight and the light of stars, fire, jewels, and lightning. The radiance of gandharvas, kinnaras, gods of the realms of desire and form, constellations, and divine palaces was outshone. So too were that of Śakra, Brahmā, and the protectors of the worlds.
- 1.6 Through the Buddha's blessings and the power of his absorption, some of the gods could no longer smell their divine fragrances, and the whole trichiliocosm was suffused by an aroma sweeter than any other scent that completely transcended the fragrances of the gods. All the dark spaces between the worlds were brought into the light, as were the major and minor mountain ranges that surround the worlds. Mount Meru and all the other principal mountains like it were illuminated, as were the Black Peaks. Subsequently, however, they did not appear to the eye faculties of sentient beings.
- 1.7 The entire trichiliocosm was encompassed in a net of jewels. The entire Sahā buddha realm was decorated with silk hangings, suffused with frankincense, and strewn with a variety of flowers. Through the power of the Buddha, the Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇuvana, along with Vulture Peak Mountain, became as level as the palm of a hand and were saturated with the delicious and captivating scent of a giant hundred-thousand-petaled lotus flower composed of various jewels the size of chariot-wheels. From the sky, a lattice-like jeweled canopy appeared, which covered and adorned everything. All of Magadha became soft to the touch, like kācilindika cloth.

- 1.8 Then in the east, in as many buddha realms as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, the individual blessed buddhas exhorted a limitless, innumerable, and immeasurable number of hundreds of thousands of bodhisattva great beings who were just one life away from unexcelled and perfect awakening, [F.232.a] “Sons of noble family, you should go into the Sahā world. That is where the blessed one, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Śākyamuni presently resides. He lives there and teaches the Dharma. Now he has settled into the absorption that is a dhāraṇī gateway to enter the domain of all buddhas known as the *thus-gone one’s wisdom seal*. Sons of noble family, even engaging in the six perfections for a hundred thousand eons, but without skillful means, bears no comparison to the esteem bodhisattvas will feel merely hearing about this absorption. Therefore, go and hear about this absorption.”
- 1.9 The bodhisattva great beings listened accordingly to the respective thus-gone ones and paid these blessed ones homage. Then, in an instant, they all disappeared from those buddha realms and, by giving rise to their magical powers of superknowledge, they came to the Sahā world, to the four central continents, to the continent of Jambudvīpa, to the town of Rājagṛha, to the Veṇuvana, and into the Kalandakanivāpa, where the blessed one, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Śākyamuni was. Upon arriving, they bowed their heads to the feet of the blessed one, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Śākyamuni. They then circled the Blessed One three times and stood to one side. The Blessed One welcomed them and they took their places cross-legged upon a great lotus composed of various jewels.
- 1.10 The same thing happened in the south, west, north, below, above, [F.232.b]—throughout the cardinal and intermediate directions, and everywhere in between. In all the ten directions, in as many buddha realms as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, individual blessed buddhas exhorted a limitless, innumerable, and immeasurable number of hundreds of thousands of bodhisattva great beings who were just one life away from unexcelled and perfect awakening, “Sons of noble family, you should go into the Sahā world. That is where the blessed one, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Śākyamuni presently resides. He lives there and teaches the Dharma. Now he has settled into the absorption that is a dhāraṇī gateway to enter the domain of all buddhas, known as the *thus-gone one’s wisdom seal*. Sons of noble family, even engaging in the six perfections for a hundred thousand eons, but without skillful means, bears no comparison to the esteem bodhisattvas will feel merely hearing about this absorption. Therefore, go and hear about this absorption.”

- 1.11 The bodhisattva great beings listened accordingly to the respective thus-gone ones and paid these blessed ones homage. Then, in an instant, they all disappeared from those buddha realms and, by giving rise to their magical powers of superknowledge, they came to the Sahā world, to the four central continents, to the continent of Jambudvīpa, to the town of Rājagṛha, to the Veṇuvana, and into the Kalandakanivāpa, where the blessed one, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Śākyamuni was. Upon arriving, they bowed their heads to the feet of the blessed one, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Śākyamuni. They then circled the Blessed One three times and stood to one side. The Blessed One welcomed them and they took their places cross-legged upon a great lotus composed of various jewels. [F.233.a]
- 1.12 Throughout this great trichiliocosm, all the monks—whether engaged with the vehicle of the hearers, the vehicle of the solitary buddhas, or the bodhisattva vehicle—each in their own individual realms, stirred and, through the blessings and power of the Buddha, they all came to Vulture Peak Mountain, where the Blessed One resided. Upon arriving, they could not see the Blessed One anywhere. Not seeing him, they joined their palms and paid homage to him.
- 1.13 Through the radiance of the absorption of *the thus-gone one's wisdom seal*, instantly, in that very moment, eight hundred million bodhisattvas gathered at the Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇuvana, where they sat down in the Blessed One's retinue. Three hundred thousand hearers also gathered together and took their seats. Within this great trichiliocosm, many other beings arrived at the Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇuvana, where the Blessed One was. They included Śakra, Brahmā, the guardians of the world, Maheśvara, the gods of the pure realms, all gods including their lords, all nāgas and their lords, all yakṣas and their lords, all gandharvas and their lords, all asuras and their lords, all garuḍas and their lords, all kinnaras and their lords, all mahoragas and their lords, as well as all suparṇis and their lords. Each of these groups also brought with them many quadrillions of servants. As they arrived at the Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇuvana, where the Blessed One was, no one could see the Blessed One anywhere. Not seeing him, they joined their palms and paid homage to him. [F.233.b]
- 1.14 At that time the powerful and eminent bodhisattva great beings, hearers, gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, nonhumans, monks, nuns, and male and female lay practitioners were all assembled. No place was left unfilled in this great trichiliocosm, from the peak of existence on down. Not even the space for the tip of a hair was left unfilled.

- 1.15 Then the elder Śāradvatīputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, the elder Kauṣṭhila, Mahākātyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, the venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, and the elder Subhūti—all those great hearers—turned to the youthful Mañjuśrī and asked, “Mañjuśrī, where is the Thus-Gone One right now? What does his body look like? How is he present?”
- 1.16 The youthful Mañjuśrī replied to the great hearers, “Venerable ones, you are great hearers, and you possess insight and miraculous abilities. You are powerful and mighty, you have mastered the absorptions of the erudite, and you have long observed pure conduct. Venerable ones, you should enter your own absorptions and search for the Thus-Gone One’s body and his presence. You should strive to discover where the Thus-Gone One’s body is, what his body is like, and how he is present.”
- 1.17 Thereupon the hearers settled into their own absorptions and investigated this entire trichiliocosm. They looked, but they still could not see the Thus-Gone One’s body, [F.234.a] nor could they see his presence. Then, when the great hearers did not see the Thus-Gone One’s body nor his presence upon completely investigating the trichiliocosm, they arose from their respective absorptions and addressed the youthful Mañjuśrī as follows: “Mañjuśrī, we fail to see the Thus-Gone One’s body or his presence.”
- 1.18 Mañjuśrī replied to the great hearers, “Then all you venerable great hearers must silently join your palms and one-pointedly hold the Thus-Gone One in your mind for a moment. Do this, and you will see his body and witness his presence.”
- 1.19 Just then, the Blessed One, who was aware and cognizant of this, emerged from his absorption. As soon as the Blessed One emerged from his absorption, the entire trichiliocosm shook in six ways, with eighteen signs: it quivered, trembled, and quaked; it wobbled, rocked, and swayed; it vibrated, shuddered, and reeled; it rattled, shook, and convulsed; it clattered, rattled, and clanged; and it boomed, thundered, and roared. The world became exceedingly brilliant, open, and vivid.
- 1.20 As an offering to the Blessed One, a rain of divine flowers fell to the accompaniment of divine cymbals and song. At that point venerable Śāradvatīputra arose from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. Joining his palms, he bowed toward the Blessed One and asked, [F.234.b] “Blessed One, in what kind of absorption did you abide so that even the eye of insight of the great hearers was unable to see the Thus-Gone One’s body? Blessed One, what is the Thus-Gone One’s presence like?”
- 1.21 The Blessed One replied to venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, this absorption is not a stage of the hearers or solitary buddhas. Śāradvatīputra, it is on the level of the thus-gone ones. This magical display and miracle of the

buddhas is inconceivable. Nevertheless, Śāradvatīputra, listen well and keep this in mind. I will now teach you a little bit about the body of the Thus-Gone One.”

“Very well, Blessed One!” Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, and he listened as the Blessed One had instructed.

1.22 Then the Blessed One explained to him, “Śāradvatīputra, the true body of the Thus-Gone One transcends any view, like the sky. It is incorporeal, uncreated, unborn, and unceasing. It is nonoccurring, truly nonoccurring, and utterly nonoccurring. It is unobtained, unimputed, nonengaging, unestablished, boundless, and limitless. It is peaceful, placid, and absolutely serene. It is nonabiding, nonarising, ineffable, beyond mind, and beyond origination. It is unmoving, utterly unmoving, and free of movement. It is totally pure. It is nothing whatsoever and exists in no way. It is beyond appropriation and acceptance. It is without motion, without activity, and without support. It is unborn, unarisen, without action, and without ripening. It is unseen, unheard, uncognized, detached, not bound, and not released. It does not exist. It is not recalled, not held, not experienced, and not seen. [F.235.a] It is beyond cognition, is not an object of cognition, and is characterized by absence of cognition.

1.23 “It is without mind. It is unfathomable and unimaginable. It is not mind. It is devoid of mind. It possesses the mind of sameness. Nothing is the same as it, and it cannot be comprehended by any act of mind. It has not gone anywhere, does not go anywhere, is without going, and has eliminated any going. It is uninterrupted, immeasurable, uninterrupted, boundless, unobservable, and marvelous. It has no substance and is no substance. It is insubstantial. It is not a distinction and has no distinctions. It is nonarising, truly nonarising, unshakable, nondiscursive, nonconceptual, beginningless, unestablished, and wholly unestablished. It is not accomplished, without pervasion, and motionless. It is not clear, not tangible, and not a thing to be desired. It has no light and does not appear. It is not apprehended and has no appearance. It is without darkness, is not darkness, and is free of darkness. It is not lucidity. It is without abode and free of abode. It is not at peace, by no means at peace, without peace, and free from peace. It is the same as peace. It is pure, totally pure, and wholly pure.

1.24 “It is nothing whatsoever, beyond appropriation, and without perpetuation. It is without friendship, without strife, and free from strife. It is present through its way of not being present. It is without ties, free from ties, limpid, and unsullied. It does not die or take rebirth. It will not die or take rebirth. It is without Dharma and without non-Dharma. It is without a field, and also without anything other than a field. It is inexhaustible, not something that can be exhausted, and free from exhaustion. It is without

dust, instantaneous, and unshakable. It is beyond syllables, sounds, tones, explanations, trainings, and mind. It is without logic and not illogical, and it is not separate from logic. It does not possess anything and is without possession. It is also not destitute. It is inexhaustible, [F.235.b] not inexhaustible, immortal, and not immortal.

1.25 “It is not something to be pacified. It is without marks, not something without marks, not limited, not unlimited, and not something to be measured. It has not gone and has not come. It is nondual and not nondual. It is not perceived, not here, and not there. It is baseless, without abode, nonemerging, indestructible, nontransferable, and nothing to be heard. It does not conquer enemies. It accepts nothing and rejects nothing. It is without characteristics, free of characteristics, not a characteristic itself, and it has abandoned characteristics. It is without action and not without action. It is without marks, not without marks, and adorned with marks. It is gateless, unattached, and free from attachments. It inspires faith. It is without connections and free from connections. It causes delight and it causes bliss. It is freed from the six sense sources and invisible.

1.26 “It is reality—thoroughly distinguished by suchness. It is suchness, which liberates beings by not liberating. It liberates by not liberating sentient beings. It purifies sentient beings by way of not purifying. It protects sentient beings by way of not protecting. It teaches the Dharma to sentient beings by way of nonduality. Nothing is the same as it, it is incomparable, without likeness, and peerless. It is the same as that which is not present, the same as space, and the same as that which does not remain. It is exceedingly even, unborn, and the same as unborn. It does not apprehend and is the same as nonapprehension. It is not at peace, is free from peace, and its peace has waned. It is at peace, very much at peace, and thoroughly at peace. It is gentle, supple, utterly stainless, utterly controlled, not permanent, and not interrupted. It has withdrawn from activities. It is irreversibly brave. It has vanquished fear. It is beyond return. [F.236.a] It has severed all grasping and cut through all ties.

1.27 “It is clear, without distinctions, nondual, free from duality, and taught to be without any duality. Its essence being unproduced, its nature is luminosity that is utterly beyond occurring. Without any liberation, it is liberated from activity. It is without meeting, without separating, not long, not short, not round, not square, not spherical, and not substantial. It is not perceived as the aggregates, elements, or sense sources. It cannot be established as something conditioned, nor does it emerge from the unconditioned. It is nonwaxing, nonwaning, nonaccumulating, and unborn.

No one can see it, hear it, or be conscious of it. It is neither real nor unreal. It is unborn. It does not die or transmigrate. It does not coexist with the world, nor does it not coexist with the world.

1.28 “That body is unwavering, unmistaken, unexcited, motionless, and undeviating. It is without cultivation and free from cultivation. It is nonoccurring, not destroyed, not an essence, and not without essence. It is without mind and indescribable. It is without connection and does not connect, nor does it not connect. It has no attachment to desires, nor is it without attachment to desires. It is nothing and it is not nothing. It is without characteristics and is not without characteristics. It does not transcend suffering and has not fully transcended suffering. It is not present, but it is not without presence, either. Śāradvatīputra, can sentient beings who fixate on characteristics and who have fallen into dualistic perception possibly understand the way in which the body of the Thus-Gone One abides?”

1.29 “No, Blessed One, they cannot at all,” replied Śāradvatīputra. “That is impossible. [F.236.b] And why? Because, Blessed One, the Thus-Gone One’s body is free of any and all marks.”

1.30 “Śāradvatīputra, yes, that is correct. That is how it is,” the Blessed One agreed. “The Thus-Gone One’s body is free from any and all marks.”

1.31 The Blessed One then proceeded to teach extensively about the absorption of *the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal*. In order to be comprehensive and thorough, he spoke these verses:

1.32 “This body is not a body, and it is completely free from a body.
Nobody has created it, nobody destroys it, and no one obtains it.
It is absolutely bereft of properties, yet it is not bereft.
Such are the terms applied to the body of the well-gone ones.

1.33 “It is without meeting, parting, abode, or substance.
It is neither grasped, nor freed, nor even, nor is it long.
It has no beginning, no impediment, nor is it present anywhere at all.
This is how the body of the well-gone ones is explained.

1.34 “It is not grasped, is not made, has no place, and is nothing at all.
It has no form and no mind, and it is neither two nor one.
It is unreal, not unreal, and not nonoccurring.
The body of the victorious ones is like this in its true state.

1.35 “It is without a core, not weak, and not interrupted.
It is not disrupted, nonoccurring, unoriginated, and without destruction.
It is without obtainment, purified of dust, and not destroyed.
The body of the stainless ones should be understood like this.

- 1.36 “It is not seen, heard, held, or touched.
It is not perceived and not analyzed; rather, it is like a hallucination.
When beings see it, they are delighted to apprehend it.
This is how the body of the buddhas is taught to be.
- 1.37 “It is not an aggregate, not an element, not false, and not true.
It is not pure, utterly not pure, and not encountered by the senses.
It is without concepts, utterly nonconceptual, and like the moon in water.
This is how we should hold the body of the well-gone ones to be.
- 1.38 “Since this body comes from causes and conditions, it has no intrinsic nature.
It is unborn, unceasing, not going, and unmoving.
Under analysis, the three worlds appear like an illusion. [F.237.a]
The body of the victorious ones must be seen nonconceptually like this.
- 1.39 “It has no peace, is not at peace, is free from peace, and unconnected.
It is without desire, without reason, and like an empty hand.
Moreover, it is naturally spacious.
Seeing it thus, one honors the Buddha day and night.
- 1.40 “You might fill billions of realms with jewels,
All the way up to the peak of existence,
And offer it to the buddhas until the end of time.
Yet that generosity cannot compare to copying this sūtra.
- 1.41 “You might cultivate loving kindness with equanimity toward all beings
For as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges.
Yet that discipline cannot match the patience of someone
Who feels confidence in the supreme absorption of the wisdom seal.
- 1.42 “You might have forbearance toward every being for as many eons
As have passed in the infinity of cyclic existence.
Yet if you develop a single moment of trust in this seal of the victorious ones,
The former merit, compared to this, will seem like a mustard seed next to
Mount Meru.
- 1.43 “You might honor as many beings as there are in the three worlds,
By carrying them over your head for many eons,
Without ever feeling tired or bothered.
Still, such diligence cannot compare to this patience.
- 1.44 “You might practice concentration for more eons
Than there are dust motes in a hundred buddha realms.
Still, compared to applying yourself to this sūtra for a single day,

That merit is no match for this patience.

- 1.45 “You might persevere in the insight that abandons the two extremes
For as many countless eons as there are particles in the world.
Still, if anyone realizes this wisdom, just as I have taught,
The former merit, compared to this, will seem like a drop of water next to the
ocean.
- 1.46 “When it comes to the Victorious One, do not look for forms or features.
Do not regard the Well-Gone One as would a child.
Whoever sees me as Subhūti sees me
Trains in every kind of generosity found anywhere in the trichiliocosm.”
- 1.47 After the Blessed One had spoken these verses, he continued to address the
elder Śāradvatīputra: [F.237.b] “Śāradvatīputra, this absorption of *the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal* is the perfection of the stainless wisdom vision of all
bodhisattvas in the worlds throughout the ten directions. Śāradvatīputra,
whoever wants to see the blessed buddhas should train in this absorption
with an altruistic intention. Such bodhisattvas, practicing with altruistic
intention, are able to see the Thus-Gone One within the course of just a
single day.
- 1.48 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas who desire to see the blessed
buddhas in all the buddha realms of the ten directions should train day and
night in this absorption. When bodhisattvas apply themselves with altruistic
intention, they come to see the blessed buddhas in all the buddha realms of
the ten directions. Śāradvatīputra, this absorption of *the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal*
accomplishes the dhāraṇī Dharma method that brings about infinite
gateways for bodhisattvas. It is the basis for all dhāraṇī gateways. From it
the dhāraṇī gateways emerge. This absorption will bring about for
bodhisattvas their great being’s thirty-two marks and complete their eighty
excellent signs. Whoever trains in this absorption of the bodhisattvas will
purify all karmic obscurations, overcome all kinds of demonic activity, and
will neither honor nor experience the Thus-Gone One as a regular being.
Whoever trains in this absorption of the bodhisattvas, no matter what they
say it will not be mistaken. All their physical actions, whatever they may be,
will be faultless. All their verbal actions, whatever they may be, will be free
from being the origin of suffering. All their mental activity, whatever it may
be, will be free of affliction.
- 1.49 “Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas who wish to understand the hidden
teaching of the thus-gone ones should train in this absorption. [F.238.a]
Wanting to understand Dharma teachings, they should train in this
absorption. Wanting to teach Dharma discourses, they should train in this

absorption. Wanting to understand the way of truth, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to actualize the limit of reality, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to understand dependent origination, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to know the inclinations of sentient beings, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to apprehend the excellent display of qualities in the buddha realms at will, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to attain excellent luminosity, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to perfect an excellent retinue, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to perfect an excellent lifespan, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to perfect an excellent arrangement, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to perfect the excellent teaching, they should train in this absorption. Wanting to fulfill the wishes of bodhisattva great beings and others, they should train in this absorption. They should train in this absorption in order to investigate, trust, write, read, remember, retain, and meditate.

1.50 “Why is this? Because within this absorption, none of that is difficult. Śāradvatīputra, this absorption is like a precious wish-fulfilling jewel that provides for all wants. It is a wish-granting tree that fulfills all beings’ wishes. Śāradvatīputra, thus this absorption completely fulfills all the intentions of bodhisattva great beings.” [F.238.b]

Then the Blessed One spoke these verses:

- 1.51 “This sūtra of the seal of infinite wisdom
Is a mass of wisdom, a distinguished and sublime wisdom,
A wisdom light, a wisdom treasury,
A wisdom source, and an entrance to the gateway to wisdom.
- 1.52 “It is powerful insight, the source of insight, the site of insight,
The lamp of insight, the light of insight that dispels darkness,
The inexhaustible insight, and the way of insight.
Like the sun, it accompanies the three worlds.
- 1.53 “It is sameness, abides in sameness,
Cuts through all grasping, and is the way of truth,
The gateway to all absorptions, and the seal of wisdom.
It is the vision of the buddhas’ discriminating awareness.
- 1.54 “It is an inexhaustible treasury that takes you to the other side.
It is miraculous insight, the source of insight, and a treasure.
It is the root of the happiness of having one’s wishes fulfilled.
This absorption seal is the well-gone ones’ wealth.
- 1.55 “It is the luxurious kingdom enjoyed by the king.

- It is the source of excellent, supreme jewels.
It clears away the dust of passion and the stain of aggression.
This sūtra teaching is the root of precious things.
- 1.56 “It is peaceful, at peace, and sets your mind in peace.
It makes you beautiful and purifies the belief in a self.
When you discover this dhāraṇī seal of the buddhas,
You destroy Māra with this heroic weapon.
- 1.57 “Its wisdom knows all beings in existence.
This insight is the source of wisdom, a wisdom fortune.
It is the light of wisdom, an infinite transcendence.
This sūtra is the source of the gateway to wisdom.
- 1.58 “It cuts through the two knots of discipline and training.
It purifies the sixty-two conceptual views.
It is the conqueror’s gateway; it obtains ambrosia.
It is the source of the thirty-two marks.
- 1.59 “It is awakening; it agrees with full awakening.
It reveals extremist positions and the cause of awakening.
This awakening rouses you from sleep.
This way of awakening is infinite and inexhaustible.
- 1.60 “It is the way of Dharma, which cultivates reason.
It accomplishes infinite dhāraṇīs.
It engages in the Dharma of the ten powers.
This dhāraṇī is like the ocean. [F.239.a]
- 1.61 “This is the accomplishment of the perfection of generosity.
This is the perfection of discipline and patience.
It is inexhaustible diligence, concentration, and insight.
To rest in it is the completion of all the perfections.
- 1.62 “Do not be afraid of karma and disturbing emotions.
Do not be afraid of the demon of wrong understanding.
For those who connect with this, there are no obstacles.⁸
Just as you wish, you will manifest awakening.
- 1.63 “Those who have traveled throughout the ten directions
To receive this discourse are certain vessels for awakening.
The offspring dwelling during this fortunate eon
Are all witnesses⁹ to this.
- 1.64 “This is the mother of the buddhas of the past.

This sūtra is the mother of those not yet come.
And all the present buddhas are born from it.
Therefore, kinsmen of the conqueror, apply yourselves to this!

- 1.65 “Those who live according to this sūtra
Attain the Thus-Gone One’s wealth.
They purify karma and perfect their conduct.
They become nonregressing and go beyond the swamp.”
- 1.66 When the Blessed One delivered this Dharma teaching, many hundreds of billions of bodhisattvas, as numerous as the grains of sand in thirty Ganges rivers, attained this absorption. Six trillion eight hundred billion bodhisattvas purified the karmic obscurations accumulated over a hundred thousand eons and their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening became irreversible. All of them attained the dhāraṇī called *accomplishing the inexhaustible moment*. Six quintillion gods and humans who had previously failed to arouse the mind set upon unsurpassed and perfect awakening now aroused this mind and rejoiced in this absorption. Due to the roots of virtue resulting from rejoicing in this absorption, their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening became irreversible. Then the Blessed One prophesied that after three million eons, all of them would become thus-gone ones, worthy ones, perfect buddhas known as Fearless One. [F.239.b] Some among them would, after having made aspirations for a long time, accomplish patience. For others among them, their aspirations would quickly bring them to various buddha realms, there to awaken fully to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. However, all of them would share the name Fearless One.
- 1.67 The Blessed One now gazed out over this entire retinue and addressed Mañjuśrī, saying, “Mañjuśrī, for these reasons you must remain without apprehending anything, and by delighting in the absence of conceptual thinking you must practice nonabiding. Not dwelling on any phenomenon, you must maintain this accomplishment of unsurpassed and perfect awakening over many countless quadrillions of eons. You must embrace it, hold it, and teach it elaborately to others. You must delight in the absence of conceptual thinking. You must practice nonabiding. You must not dwell upon anything and be free from envy.”
- 1.68 Then Mañjuśrī rose from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. Joining his palms, he bowed toward the Blessed One and said, “Blessed One, since there are no phenomena to be grasped, I am happy to maintain and protect this unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Blessed One, as for awakening, it is nothing at all. It comes from nowhere. It

is found nowhere. It does not come about through anything. It is nothing whatsoever. It does not appear. It is ungraspable, unattainable, and inexhaustible.”

1.69 Then the three billion bodhisattvas in the retinue rose from their seats. They joined their palms and addressed the Blessed One: [F.240.a] “Blessed One, as for this accomplishment of the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the thus-gone ones that spans countless quadrillions of eons, we are happy to maintain it, hold it, explain it, and teach it elaborately to others.”

1.70 All those bodhisattvas then offered their own robes for the body of the Blessed One, and they made aspirations.

1.71 The Blessed One then said to the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, “Maitreya, remember your intention to uphold the Dharma in a future life, in the future, during the final five hundred years! This will be your task!”

1.72 At this the bodhisattva great being Maitreya rose from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. Joining his palms, he bowed toward the Blessed One and said, “Blessed One, I remember my intention to uphold the sacred Dharma!”

1.73 The Blessed One said to the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, “Maitreya, among the three billion bodhisattvas, eight thousand of them uphold the holy Dharma and will continue to do so. As for the other bodhisattvas, they are incorrigibly attached to grasping at objective perceptions. They will not uphold the holy Dharma. In the future, during the final five hundred years, they will abandon my unsurpassed and perfect awakening, which I have accomplished over countless quadrillions of eons. They will go against it. They will not teach it. They will not uphold it. They will not uphold it at all.

1.74 “Why is this? Maitreya, bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening in seven ways. [F.240.b] What are these seven? Bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening inspired by the blessed buddhas. Bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening in order to protect the holy Dharma when that holy Dharma is disappearing. Bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening when they feel great compassion on seeing the realms of beings afflicted by so many pains. Bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening inspired by other bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening themselves when they have respectfully given beautiful gifts to bodhisattvas who have aroused the mind of awakening. Bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening when they see others arouse the mind of awakening. Bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening on hearing perfect praises sung about the qualities of the various ornaments of the thus-gone ones’ body, such as the excellent marks and signs. Maitreya, these are the seven ways in which bodhisattvas arouse the mind of awakening.

1.75 “Maitreya, as I have just mentioned, there are those bodhisattvas who arouse the mind of awakening because of the blessed buddhas, and those bodhisattvas who arouse the mind of awakening in order to preserve the holy Dharma at a time when it is disappearing, and those bodhisattvas who arouse the mind of awakening due to feelings of great compassion caused by witnessing the realms of sentient beings afflicted with all kinds of suffering. Maitreya, those bodhisattvas who arouse the mind of awakening in these three ways are maintaining the blessed buddhas’ awakening. Their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening quickly becomes irreversible. The four other ways of arousing the mind of awakening are for incorrigible bodhisattvas who do not uphold the holy Dharma.

1.76 “Maitreya, there are five qualities that bodhisattvas must have for their progress to become *irreversible*. [F.241.a] What are the five? They have the same attitude toward all sentient beings. They do not envy the success and prestige of others. Even if their lives are threatened, they will speak nothing but praise of monks who uphold the sacred Dharma. They are not attached to worldly success sought through knowledge of the Dharma, nor to acquisitions, prestige, or compliments. They are devoted to the profound Dharma, and without interest in any kind of mundane activity keep the profound Dharma with them in all situations. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these five qualities, know that their progress will be irreversible.

1.77 “Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess five other qualities, know them to be *incorrigible*. What are the five? They have little charisma and do not follow any advice. They are interested in base things and give degraded teachings to others. They are attached to worldly success sought through knowledge of the Dharma, acquisitions, and prestige, and behave enviously in the patron’s household. They are fraudulent and deceitful. Their verbal professions do not lead toward emptiness. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these five qualities, know them to be incorrigible.

1.78 “Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess the following five qualities, know them to be *irreversible* in their progress. What are they? They do not perceive a self, and they do not extol a self. They do not perceive any sentient beings. They do not use concepts to teach about the realm of reality. They do not perceive awakening. They do not regard the Thus-Gone One’s body as having the characteristics of form. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these five qualities, know that they will not regress from unsurpassed and perfect awakening.”

1.79 Then the Blessed One spoke the following verses:

“Those who are envious, who covet worldly success through knowledge,
Who harm, who are fraudulent and insulting, and
Those who are all talk and whose conduct is petty
Are not able to guard the awakening of the well-gone ones. [F.241.b]

- 1.80 “Yet those who delight in solitude and live in desolate wildernesses,
Paying more than lip service and persevering in what is profound,
Are like the rhinoceros, shun the pleasure of worldly success through
knowledge,
And guard against awakening’s destruction.
- 1.81 “Far away from crowds, they are intent on absolute peace.
Like antelopes, they are skittish and wander homelessly.
Like the wind in the sky, they are not attached to property.
Such are those who uphold the teachings of the victorious ones.
- 1.82 “As they have no regard for their bodies, and make no efforts to survive,
Surely they have also renounced worldly success.
Their efforts are not for themselves in any way.
In the future, they will be vessels of awakening.
- 1.83 “In the future, there will appear beings,
Who proclaim, ‘We are awakened.’
Their haughty and pretentious ways will be marred by afflictions.
Such people will be unable to uphold this teaching.
- 1.84 “Billions of eons before
The teacher Dīpaṃkara,
I remember that the buddha called Śaśiketu appeared.
He taught this absorption to beings.
- 1.85 “That victorious one’s first retinue
Consisted of eighty trillion irreversible beings.
The second, seven trillion.
The third, seven trillion three hundred billion.
- 1.86 “That victorious one’s lifespan lasted many millions of eons,
And his light shone over sixty-three leagues.
His saṅgha was ninety-nine million strong,
And all of them were powerful worthy ones.
- 1.87 “At that time there was a king,
A wheel-turning sovereign named Puṇyodgata.
His realm was as vast as Jambudvīpa,
Some twenty thousand leagues.
- 1.88 “It was as large as the four continents.
The king had six hundred million queens
And at least one thousand sons.

- The name of his palace was Pleasing Light.
- 1.89 “His realm contained eight hundred million towns,
Each situated within lush and beautiful parks.
With bountiful harvests, this realm was delightful and enjoyable.
It was like the Vaijayanta Palace in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.
- 1.90 “In a dream, the king heard
That the buddha Śaśiketu had come.
With six hundred million servants and attendants,
He sought him out.
- 1.91 “The king prayed, ‘After hearing the teaching of this sūtra
On the profound absorption that is the body of the Victorious One,
May I experience emptiness, precisely as intended.’¹⁰ [F.242.a]
Then he offered his entire kingdom to that buddha.
- 1.92 “In all the cities, he commissioned
Temples to¹¹ the Thus-Gone One made of sandalwood.
He offered them with joy and delight,
And covered the ground he tread upon with gold leaf.
- 1.93 “For a full eighty thousand years
The king did nothing but make offerings,
Never wearying or sleeping.
Without succumbing to¹² desire, he did not crave¹³ his kingdom.
- 1.94 “All the arrays of things he offered
To the Thus-Gone One each day,
In order that this absorption would be disclosed,¹⁴
Cannot be described in words.
- 1.95 “Still, since it remained hidden, the king began to think,
‘Since this absorption is extremely profound,
It is impossible to accomplish this absorption, the wisdom seal,
While clinging to worldly goods.’
- 1.96 “Thus, he went forth as a monk and renounced his kingdom.
He dressed in hemp robes and collected alms.
For a full eighty thousand years,
He did not succumb to sleep and trained in absorption.
- 1.97 “During that time, he retained whatever
Teachings that buddha gave.
When the Well-Gone One passed into the space of nirvāṇa,

- He built six hundred forty million stūpas.
- 1.98 “To each, he offered five hundred parasols
Adorned and beautified with the seven precious substances.
To each, a hundred cymbals were rung,
And a hundred thousand lamps were offered.
- 1.99 “For seven hundred thirty billion years
He lived his life with few possessions.
Having thus abided, free from worldly distractions,
He taught this absorption to his retinue.
- 1.100 “He did not desire even praise,
Let alone any success gained through knowledge.
Wishing to preserve the Dharma,
He renounced all invitations to meals for the monastics.
- 1.101 “He then pleased thus-gone ones
Numbering seven trillion eight hundred million.
He offered such arrays to them all,
And he obtained this absorption from each of them.
- 1.102 “Whoever wishes to preserve this awakening
Should meditate devotedly, without desire,
And with unwavering altruistic motivation,
Just like that king trained. [F.242.b]
- 1.103 “Yet there are others who strive for wealth, without concern for the Dharma;
Such undisciplined beings may claim to train in awakening.
In the future, people with such claims will appear.
They will delight in chattering and say that everything is empty.
- 1.104 “Yet they will not understand things to be empty in the way of emptiness
itself.
Their lives will be full of desire, harshness, and afflictions.
Encouraging emptiness to be grasped through words,
They will say, ‘I am awakened—beyond the shadow of a doubt.’
- 1.105 “At that time, the supreme king’s lifespan will become infinite.
His thousand children of this fortunate eon
And the many in the retinue seated in front of him
Will all take vows and go forth.
- 1.106 “Recollecting the myriad victorious ones
Under whom I went forth,

All the words I have taught are only what they taught,
And remaining in that, I also cultivated emptiness.

1.107 “While adhering for infinite eons to such a method,
I made offerings to all the buddhas,
Yet I did not attain awakening thereby
Until, because I had remained in it,

1.108 “As soon as I saw Dīpaṃkara
I cast away uncertainties, beheld sameness,
And the Guide then gave me the prophecy:
‘You will become the buddha named Śākyasiṃha.’ ” [B2]

1.109 At that point King Bimbisāra’s true queen, Śrībhadrā,¹⁵ who was the mother of Ajātaśatru, and Suvaṃottamaprabhāsā, who was the daughter of Kṣemavati,¹⁶ also a true queen of King Bimbisāra, were seated as members of that very assembly. Queen Śrībhadrā and Suvaṃottamaprabhāsā both rose from their seats and approached the Blessed One. They draped their shawls over their left shoulders and knelt on their right knees. Joining their palms, they bowed toward the Blessed One. With reverence and respect, they each offered to the Blessed One’s body a gift of priceless woven fabrics. Then, setting forth five hundred bowls of the flowers of the seven precious substances, [F.243.a] they made the following promise:

1.110 “Blessed One, in the future, during the final five hundred years, we two shall be devoted to this precious absorption. We shall ensure that others trust it, appreciate it, remember it, study it, understand it, and teach it extensively to others, by serving and venerating those Dharma teachers who uphold discourses such as this, with offerings of clothing, food, bedding, healing medicines, and other necessities. We shall work to mature sentient beings into unsurpassed and perfect awakening. We shall not abandon emptiness. We shall not be occupied with words but practice sincerely. Blessed One, never mind any outer material concerns, we shall do so without regard even for our bodies and lives.”

1.111 Following the two queens’ example, the retinue of King Bimbisāra’s queens, which consisted of a hundred thousand girls, rose from their seats and joined their palms. Those who had embarked on the path to unsurpassed and perfect awakening rejoiced in this absorption and said, “Blessed One, in the future, during the final five hundred years, we too shall gladly embrace the sacred Dharma.” The sixty thousand female lay practitioners of Magadha who had also embarked for unsurpassed and perfect awakening rejoiced in this absorption. Rejoicing, they said, “In the future, during the final five hundred years, we too shall gladly embrace the sacred Dharma.”

- 1.112 Then the Blessed One smiled. As is the nature of the blessed buddhas, when he smiled, light radiated from the Blessed One’s mouth in hundreds of thousands of distinct, manifold colors—blue, [F.243.b] yellow, red, white, violet, crystalline, and silver. This light beamed from his mouth and illuminated boundless, infinite world systems. It subdued all demonic abodes and extended even up to the world of Brahmā. Its brilliance outshone the light of the sun and the moon and pacified the painful feelings of all beings born in hell, the animal realm, and the world of the Lord of Death. Returning back, it swirled around the Blessed One hundreds of thousands of times and disappeared back into the crown of his head.
- 1.113 At this point Śrībhadrā and Suvarṇottamaprabhāsā, who was the daughter of Kṣemavatī, rose from their seats, draped their shawls over their left shoulders, and knelt on their right knees. Joining their palms, they bowed toward the Blessed One. They praised him with these melodious verses and asked him about the purpose behind his smile:
- 1.114 “Supreme being with so many qualities, unlike anyone in the three existences,
Your hundreds of qualities radiate like the moon in the sky.
Your smile is so beautiful and your speech so sweet!
With your ten powers, please tell us why you smiled.
- 1.115 “Foremost being, please survey the world with your smiling face, which is like the moon.
Your voice is so gentle—the beautiful and clear voice of Brahmā.
It soothes the mind and pleases the body, fully satisfying our minds.
O Teacher, best of men, please reveal the cause of your lion-like smile.
- 1.116 “Your speech is untroubled, unsullied, and not lacking in any way.
It is exceedingly rich, even-toned, and beautifully sweet.
Differentiating between the trillions of differing attitudes among people,
You who possess every kind of precious quality, please explain your smile.
- 1.117 “Your speech possesses the eight factors and sixty branches;
Your voice contains seven hundred languages and six hundred million syllables.¹⁷ [F.244.a]
The Buddha’s voice has one hundred eighty billion applications.
Please declare the true and boundless causes¹⁸ behind your smile.
- 1.118 “Like the supreme mountain, others do not sway you.
You discern a hundred differing attitudes and totally dismantle ambivalence.
You pacify the suffering of existence and grant beings happiness.
Please explain in detail about your lovely smile.

- 1.119 “Your body is like a jeweled offering pillar, delightful like a golden mountain.
Your face has the appearance of a hundred-petaled lotus in full bloom.
You have the overwhelming power of a lion, the roar of the lord of beasts.
Please reveal the meaning of your laughing smile.
- 1.120 “In the three worlds, you are unequalled and have none of the three stains.
Acting beautifully, you thoroughly pacify and delight the hundreds of existences.
Your smile illuminates all within the ten directions.
Tell us swiftly and in detail about the nectar that clears away darkness.
- 1.121 “The lute, clay drum, one-string, three-string, conch, and flute;
kinnaras, nightingales, and cuckoos;
Swans, cranes, large drums, and tabors—
Even if resounding together, they would not equal a fraction of the Buddha’s speech.
- 1.122 “In these vast assemblies, which have come here from the ten directions,
Are a great number of intelligent beings, as well as some with poor intelligence.
They have come from many places, having gained results and accomplished their training.¹⁹
Please explain how these beings will eliminate²⁰ the vine of craving.
- 1.123 “This boundless and sacred assembly comes from millions of realms.
The best of men from the ten directions sent forth these beings who desire the Dharma.
Surely, having heard of this accomplishment, they will be delighted.²¹
So please bring down a rain of Dharma that explains the reasons for your smile.”
- 1.124 In reply, the Blessed One spoke these verses to queen Śrībhadrā and Suvarṇottamaprabhāsā:

“I remember, innumerable eons ago, as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges,
There was a guide of the world called Puṇyaraśmi.
That teacher’s life spanned seven hundred million years.
That Dharma king’s saṅgha of hearers was infinite. [F.244.b]
- 1.125 “Then appeared a wheel-turning king, Prajñāsārathi.
His two wives, Keturājñī and Arcī, were utterly free from attachment.
Desiring the Dharma, they went forth

- And kept their precepts for millions of years.
- 1.126 “During those days, they maintained the precepts
Of six hundred three million guides.
In the future, when the precepts of the world protectors—as many as there
are grains of sand
In thirty Ganges rivers—weaken, they will preserve them together.
- 1.127 “Throughout those lives, you two were together as those beings,
And eventually, you became the wives of the king Prajñāsārathi.
Through having preserved the Dharma, in the future you will cast off your
female forms
And behold the thus-gone one Amitābha in Sukhāvātī.
- 1.128 “Moreover, during the end times, all other followers
Will set out with the intent to safeguard awakening.
They will become the victors’ sons, adorned with the thirty signs,
Seated upon blooming lotus flowers in Sukhāvātī.
- 1.129 “In that realm they will devotedly pay homage to the teacher,
And in the eon without enemies called Vyūharāja,
All of them will attain the highest awakening of buddhahood.
They will remain, so that all gods and humans can practice the Dharma.
- 1.130 “In that buddha realm there will be no demonic activity,
And at that time, hearers will be unheard of.
All actions will be flawless; there will be no lower realms, and no one will
enter the womb.
Infinite numbers of bodhisattvas will always congregate there.
- 1.131 “Those who give up their lives to guard the awakening of the victorious
ones,
Who desire no profit and have no regard for their own lives,
Will soon abide in the highest awakening of buddhahood.
Just as they desire, they will travel to the buddha realms.
- 1.132 “In this way, during the time of great quarrels, you must get along,
Delight in the buddhas, and, respectfully and without envy, preserve my
awakening!
In that future time of divisions, [F.245.a]
Do not follow those who long for wealth.
- 1.133 “As I pursued the meaningful qualities of buddhahood for millions of eons,
I relinquished my wives, sons, daughters, kingdoms, heads, and eyes.

- Those senseless ones will destroy my Dharma with a lust for wealth.
For the sake of profit and gain, they will be hostile to one another.
- 1.134 “During the end times, you will guard awakening with your sincere intention.
To that end you will act, impelled by the tears of eight hundred million beings.
The trichiliocosm will stir, and the gods will rain down flowers.
Whoever delights in this sūtra will discover a treasure.
- 1.135 “All the guides in the ten directions will be delighted.
The gods will praise them in wonderful garlands of song.
In the future, whoever hears and trains in this sūtra of the wisdom seal
Will receive the offerings of the gods and the protection of the yakṣas.
- 1.136 “One may fill with gold as many buddha realms as there are grains of sand
in the Ganges,
And offer it all to the guides for as many eons as there are grains of sand in
the Ganges.
Yet this would not approach the accumulation of merit
Of those who accept this discourse of the wisdom seal, and apply it.
- 1.137 “Awakening should not be forced upon those who do not want it.
Instead, let them arouse the mind of awakening by hearing of the Buddha’s
splendor.
When this teaching is applied just as it is explained in the discourse,
They will soon become protectors of the world.
- 1.138 “Those who want to reach the vast and sacred awakening of buddhahood
Should stay in hermitages and devotedly take the vows of individual
liberation.
Because of the three vows, they will see all beings like a mother sees her son.
They joyfully honor²² them and see them as teachers.
- 1.139 “Those who record this absorption of the wisdom seal,
Who hold it, show it, read it, and teach it to others,
Will accrue limitless and unfathomable merit.
Such children of the victorious ones will travel to the world of Sukhāvātī.”
- 1.140 Then the bodhisattva great being Maitreya asked the Blessed One,
“Venerable Blessed One, in the future, during the final five hundred years,
[F.245.b] what will happen to those who receive and hold this absorption of
the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal?”

- 1.141 The Blessed One replied to the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, “Maitreya, in future times, they will suffer, suffer immensely. They will be false, totally false. They will have little patience or interest, and they will destroy their roots of virtue. Maitreya, even if I were to explain to you how bodhisattvas will be destroyed in the future, Maitreya, you could not comprehend it.”
- 1.142 The bodhisattva great being Maitreya beseeched the Blessed One, “Please consider us all compassionately! Blessed One, please teach us! Well-Gone One, please teach us! Blessed One, those bodhisattvas who endeavor to learn, once they hear your teaching, will train in suchness. Once they train in suchness, they will gain accomplishment in suchness. From then on, their progress toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening will be irreversible. This will be their accomplishment.”
- 1.143 The Blessed One responded to the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, “Maitreya, beings who previously aroused the mind of awakening and engendered roots of virtue in the presence of a hundred buddhas will, in future times, allow the mind of awakening to deteriorate. They will no longer have any interest in the extremely vast, but renounce it.
- 1.144 “Maitreya, even beings who have previously aroused the mind of awakening and produced roots of virtue in the presence of a thousand buddhas will, in future times, no longer have any interest in the extremely vast, but renounce it, even though they aroused the mind of awakening. They will not commit it to writing, [F.246.a] receive it, hold it, teach it, or trust it.
- 1.145 “Maitreya, beings who have previously aroused the mind of awakening and produced roots of virtue in the presence of a hundred thousand buddhas will, in future times, arouse the mind of awakening, feel interest in the extremely vast, and not renounce it. However, they will not proclaim it, and they will not understand its meaning.
- 1.146 “Maitreya, beings who have previously aroused the mind of awakening and produced roots of virtue in the presence of ten million buddhas will, in future times, arouse the mind of awakening, hear about the extremely vast, commit it to writing, retain it, stay interested, proclaim it, and understand its meaning. However, they will not gain acceptance of awakening, will not attain this absorption, and will not gain eloquence.
- 1.147 “Maitreya, beings who have previously aroused the mind of awakening and produced roots of virtue in the presence of a hundred million buddhas will, in future times, arouse the mind of awakening, hear about the extremely vast, feel interested in it, commit it to writing, retain it, proclaim it, and gain acceptance of it. Yet, they will not attain this absorption and will not gain eloquence.

- 1.148 “Maitreya, beings who have previously aroused the mind of awakening and produced roots of virtue in the presence of three hundred million buddhas will, in future times, arouse the mind of awakening, hear about the extremely vast, feel interested in it, not renounce it, trust it, recite it, commit it to writing, read it, and chant it. They will master it, retain it, retain it thoroughly, realize its meaning, and teach it extensively to others. They will train in it, gaining acceptance of awakening. However, they will not attain this absorption of *the thus-gone one’s wisdom seal*, [F.246.b] and they will not gain eloquence.
- 1.149 “Maitreya, beings who have previously aroused the mind of awakening and produced roots of virtue in the presence of eight hundred million buddhas and heard from these buddhas about this absorption that is *the wisdom seal of the thus-gone ones*, and who grasp it and understand it will, in future times, arouse the mind of awakening, hear about the extremely vast, feel interested in it, trust it, and not renounce it. They will recite it, trust it, chant it, commit it to writing, read it, and master it. They will retain it, retain it thoroughly, realize its meaning, and teach it extensively to others. They will train in it, gaining acceptance of awakening. Furthermore, they will also attain this absorption that is *the wisdom seal of the thus-gone ones*. They will reveal the awakening of the buddhas by means of the indivisibility and nonapprehension of all phenomena. They will not be swept away by demonic activity. They will not be swept away by the obscurations of phenomena. Whatever negative karma they have accumulated over countless prior lifetimes, in future times, it will all be purified merely by a headache. It will all be purified merely by a moment of worry. It will all be purified merely by criticism. It will all be purified merely by scorn. It will all be purified merely by disparagement. It will all be purified merely by belittlement. It will all be purified merely by their having few possessions. In just one life, everything will be purified.
- 1.150 “Maitreya, in future times, those bodhisattvas who are not discouraged from the mind of awakening, who teach the resolve, and who have resolutely set out for awakening will have thereby venerated countless buddhas. [F.247.a] Maitreya, the negativity accumulated by those bodhisattvas that otherwise leads to the lower realms will, in future times, be purified by ugliness of appearance. It will be purified by lack of refinement. It will be purified by sickness. It will be purified by lack of charisma. It will be purified by birth into a lowly family. It will be purified by birth into an obscure family. It will be purified by birth into a disrespected family. It will be purified by birth into a poor family. It will be purified by being born into a family on the borderlands. It will be purified by birth into a wretched family. It will be purified by birth into a ruined family. It will be purified by birth into

a family with wrong view. It will be purified by birth into a family of slaves or barbarians. It will be purified by encounters with unfortunate beings. It will be purified by meetings with ignoble beings. It will be purified by their minds being beset by many sorrows.

1.151 “Their karmic obscurations will be purified by experiences of troubles in the kingdom, regions, provinces, towns, cities, villages, countryside, royal palace, and their homes. Their karmic obscurations will be purified by experiences of separation from loved ones, famine, not encountering a teacher, and not being able to continuously listen to the Dharma, as well as by long periods without clothing, food, bedding, medicine, or possessions. They will also be purified by receiving only things of poor quality, or too few things. They will also be purified by admiration of the mediocre, and through lack of interest in those who are excellent. Their karmic obscurations will also be purified by obstacles to persevering in the roots of virtue, meager comprehension, straying concentration, the inability to settle the mind, not achieving the factors of awakening, and failing to comprehend the true meaning of the Dharma. Their obscurations will even be purified by witnessing negative actions in dreams.

1.152 “If karmic obscurations afflict them, they will be overcome by the evil Māra. [F.247.b] If the evil Māra overcomes them, they will not understand Māra’s faults. Because they do not fully understand Māra’s faults, those who have possessions will despise those who are without. Those who are handsome will despise those who are not handsome. Those who are lovely will despise those who are not lovely. Those who are delightful to behold will despise those who are not so. The learned will despise the ignorant. Those who are eloquent will despise those who are not so. Those who like giving will despise the stingy. The disciplined will despise those with no restraint. Those with a mere modicum of patience will despise those who are malicious. The diligent will despise the lazy. Those with concentration will despise those who are distracted. Those with insight will despise those with erroneous insight. The skillful will despise the unskillful. No matter what beautiful quality they obtain, they will distort it to despise others. Maitreya, when even those who have previously created roots of virtue in the presence of a hundred buddhas—and who now agree, stand together, and are united—become divided in future times, then how could it not be so for other irresolute beings with wild minds who have not produced any such roots of virtue? Maitreya, in that way, the world will one day become a terrifying place.

1.153 “Thus, Maitreya, a bodhisattva such as you must don great and solid armor. You must practice selflessly with the power of patience. You must master the wisdom that engages in the profound Dharma. You must have a

view free of any objective reference. [F.248.a] Your mind must be firm, as must your diligence. Your resolve and endeavor must be firm. In future times, you must take up the sacred Dharma. You must uphold the sacred Dharma. You must guard the sacred Dharma. You must delight in making the sacred Dharma endure for a long time. You must engender diligence, remain diligent, and keep others in mind.”

1.154 When Prāmodyarāja, Mañjuśrī, and the rest of the sixty incomparable beings, as well as Maitreya, Siṃhapradyota, and all the other bodhisattva great beings of the fortunate eon, had listened to the teaching on upholding the sacred Dharma delivered by the Blessed One, they were delighted by the prospect of upholding the sacred Dharma, so they promised the Blessed One, “Blessed One, all of us agree to renounce all deceit and artifice. We renounce all pride, conceit, and arrogance. We eliminate all likes, dislikes, and cravings.²³ We are dedicated to the profound state beyond any objective reference, and we will maintain this awakening of the buddhas—the thus-gone ones—accomplished over the course of countless quintillions of eons. We will protect it. We will teach it extensively to others. Paying no heed to our bodies or lives, we will preserve this awakening of the buddhas.”

1.155 Then, in order to instruct them, the Blessed One spoke these verses to Prāmodyarāja, Mañjuśrī, and the other sixty incomparable beings, and to Maitreya, Siṃhapradyota, and all the other bodhisattva great beings of the fortunate eon:

1.156 “Be without deceit, artifice, ego, or rigidity.
Remain mindful, intelligent, and without a home.
Accept the profound and rest without distraction,
And guard the wealth of the ten powers! [F.248.b]

1.157 “Be honest, artless, without desire, and free from ego;
Delight in absence of grasping, and be totally free from clinging.
Keep to sameness like a path in the open sky.
Practicing like this, you will accomplish this absorption.

1.158 “Make your constant aspiration for awakening firm,
And meditate on the profound, as the victorious ones did.
If you disregard all loved ones and acquaintances,
That is the way you attain this precious absorption.

1.159 “By equalizing the mind that always likes or dislikes,
By perceiving supreme beings as teachers,
And by delighting in what is delightful,
You will quickly realize this absorption.

- 1.160 “Here are presented a billion paths to the seal of eloquence:
A treasure trove of inexhaustible light.
This is the way to enter wisdom,
As sunlight clears away darkness.
- 1.161 “You must uphold this sūtra,
For it is like the sun, the moon, the stars,
The earth, the snowy mountains,
The lords of the four continents, Śakra, Brahmā, and a healer.
- 1.162 “It purifies the mind and exhausts karma.
It is nectar and it tames the demons.
It is a magical eye that sees the minds of others.
It is a roar that causes realization in all beings.
- 1.163 “It makes you remember billions of eons.
It entirely exhausts all entrapments.
This seal of the buddhas is praised by the well-gone ones.
Awakening is in the hand of the one who holds it.
- 1.164 “One realizes emptiness
According to how one abides in this empty nature.
By abandoning the conceptual thinking
Of both thoughts and concepts, you uphold the Dharma.
- 1.165 “After I pass into nirvāṇa, some people will say
That this teaching should be seen as a dream.
The Dharma that is unarisen and uncreated
Is conceptualized by some according to their own understanding.
- 1.166 “Emptiness is unborn and not created by anyone.
It is not seen, does not come, and does not change place.
So when those who dwell on objective references say ‘We know how to train
well in emptiness,’
It is a statement made by thieves of the Dharma.
- 1.167 “It may be said, of those for whom receiving this teaching
Causes tears to well up and all their pores to tingle,
That their progress toward awakening is irreversible,
But they will later be spoken of with multiple insults.
- 1.168 “For the sake of well-being, those from humble households will go forth
After their family wealth has run out, [F.249.a]
And find every kind of happiness in this teaching,

- And yet they will become hostile toward my offspring.
- 1.169 “Some who long for awakening will go forth in this teaching.
They will speak of awakening, yet not abide in it.
For those not secured in awakening,
It is as distant as the far shore of an ocean.²⁴
- 1.170 “They will say, ‘Because we rely on households with wealth and friends,
We genuinely go forth.
We are pure in terms of our conduct and hermitage,
And with respect to our preceptor and friends.’
- 1.171 “Whoever goes forth in my teaching
Stays in worldly life like a lotus stays in water.
Those who persevere in this sūtra in this way
Will preserve my awakening.
- 1.172 “Prāmodyarāja, now that I have taught you this,
Do not train like those with low intelligence!
Attain the qualities of buddhahood in earnest!
Apply yourself to it without concepts!
- 1.173 “Imagine that every person in billions of buddha realms
Were to sow as many seeds
As there are grains of sand in the Ganges,
And that each seed were to grow fruits.
- 1.174 “Imagine next that by skillful means,
All the grains were multiplied by a thousand,
Thus filling up all the infinite realms,
And that the ensuing set were counted as one.
- 1.175 “Imagine then that each such collection
Were multiplied by the previous number of sand grains,
And that all the ten directions
Were filled with that many victorious ones.
- 1.176 “Imagine further that each of those buddhas had that many heads,
And each head had that many tongues,
And each tongue called out praises of this sūtra
For as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges.
- 1.177 “Such descriptions of this sūtra’s qualities
Would be like a mustard seed compare to Mount Meru,

Like a blade of grass compared to the sky, or like a single drop from the ocean.

Thus, it must be approached in a way that transcends concepts."

- 1.178 Then Prāmodyarāja, Mañjuśrī, and the other sixty incomparable beings, as well as Maitreya, Siṃhapradyota, and all the other bodhisattva great beings of the fortunate eon, asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, when we say *Dharma*, to what does that term refer?" [F.249.b]
- 1.179 The Blessed One replied to Prāmodyarāja, Mañjuśrī, and the other sixty incomparable beings, and to Maitreya, Siṃhapradyota, and all the other bodhisattva great beings of the fortunate eon, "Noble sons, *Dharma* refers to that which is unchanging and nonconceptual."
- 1.180 "Blessed One, to what do the terms *unchanging* and *nonconceptual* refer?"
"Noble sons, *unchanging* and *nonconceptual* refer to *nonreferential*."
"Blessed One, to what does *nonreferential* refer?"
"Noble sons, *nonreferential* refers to *inexhaustible*."
- 1.181 "Blessed One, to what does *inexhaustible* refer?"
"Noble sons, *inexhaustible* refers to *unborn*."
"Blessed One, to what does *unborn* refer?"
"Noble sons, *unborn* refers to *uninterrupted*."
- 1.182 "Blessed One, to what does *uninterrupted* refer?"
"Noble sons, *uninterrupted* refers to *uncollected*."
"Blessed One, to what does *uncollected* refer?"
"Noble sons, *uncollected* refers to *ungraspable*."
- 1.183 "Blessed One, to what does *ungraspable* refer?"
"Noble sons, *ungraspable* refers to *nonabiding*." [F.250.a]
"Blessed One, to what does *nonabiding* refer?"
"Noble sons, *nonabiding* refers to *unchanging*."
- 1.184 "Blessed One, to what does *unchanging* refer?"
"Noble sons, *unchanging* refers to *uncompounded*."
"Blessed One, to what does *uncompounded* refer?"
"Noble sons, *uncompounded* refers to *unquantifiable*."
- 1.185 "Blessed One, to what does *unquantifiable* refer?"
"Noble sons, *unquantifiable* refers to *free from thought*."
"Blessed One, to what does *free from thought* refer?"
"Noble sons, *free from thought* refers to *unknowable*."
- 1.186 "Blessed One, to what does *unknowable* refer?"
"Noble sons, *unknowable* refers to *unassembled*."
"Blessed One, to what does *unassembled* refer?"
"Noble sons, *unassembled* refers to *without separation*."
- 1.187 "Blessed One, to what does *without separation* refer?"

- “Noble sons, *without separation* refers to *sameness*.”
 “Blessed One, to what does *sameness* refer?” [F.250.b]
 “Noble sons, *sameness* refers to *without difference*.”
 1.188 “Blessed One, to what does *without difference* refer?”
 “Noble sons, *without difference* refers to *nonabiding*.”
 “Blessed One, to what does *nonabiding* refer?”
 “Noble sons, *nonabiding* refers to *immaterial*.”
 1.189 “Blessed One, to what does *immaterial* refer?”
 “Noble sons, *immaterial* refers to *essenceless*.”
 “Blessed One, to what does *essenceless* refer?”
 “Noble sons, *essenceless* refers to *groundless*.”
 1.190 “Blessed One, to what does *groundless* refer?”
 “Noble sons, *groundless* refers to *nirvāṇa*.”
 1.191 Then Prāmodyarāja, Mañjuśrī, and the other sixty incomparable beings, as well as Maitreya, Siṃhapradyota, and all the other bodhisattva great beings of the fortunate eon, inquired of the Blessed One, “Blessed One, if the Dharma has such characteristics, how can it be that the Dharma ever vanishes? What is it that we should protect?”
 1.192 The Blessed One replied to Prāmodyarāja, Mañjuśrī, and the other sixty incomparable beings, and to Maitreya, Siṃhapradyota, and all the other bodhisattva great beings of the fortunate eon, [F.251.a] “Noble sons, what childish ordinary beings perceive to be the Dharma and understand to be the Dharma are conceptual elaborations of the Dharma. Because they conceptually impute and elaborate on the Dharma, they teach it dualistically. Those who teach it dualistically are in conflict with the Dharma. However, noble sons, ultimately we find nothing at all—no Dharma and no conflict with the Dharma.”
 1.193 When the Blessed One had explained the meaning to them, he spoke these verses:
 “Some say that what is created is compounded,
 While others say that it is un-compounded.
 However, as both apprehend phenomena, both are concepts.
 Such conceptual elaborations are called impure.
 1.194 “Phenomena are not created by anyone, nor does anything destroy them.
 No one sees them, knows them, or is close to them.
 Such untenable domains of imputed thought—
 All are designated empty.
 1.195 “The thought that something is empty is untenable,
 Because the unarisen is imputed through such concepts.

- All concepts are demonic nooses,
And immutability is called the *seal of Dharma*.
- 1.196 “When they imagine nonexistent things,
The childish are bound by those movements of thought.
All concepts are like echoes,
Yet the childish conceptualize about them dualistically.
- 1.197 “The wise never discover knowledge,
And from the wise no knowledge arises.
It is taught in dependence on the relative;
Yet here, no knowledge or knower is observed.
- 1.198 “If phenomena had essences,
Then, because they perish, their cessation would be nirvāṇa.
If phenomena did abide,
Then nirvāṇa would be completely permanent.
- 1.199 “Childish beings engage in abandonment and attainment.
Childish beings create nirvāṇa, though it has no characteristics.
Those who perceive a self attain the compounded,
While the wise are free from notions of existence and absence.
- 1.200 “Knowing and not knowing are not different.
They are mere conventions and have no core.
Those who engage with constructs and marks
Declare nirvāṇa to be a destruction of entities.
- 1.201 “The mind does not know the essence of mind. [F.251.b]
Neither does the essence know the mind.
All phenomena are essentially dreams.
This is what some call the two truths.
- 1.202 “Birth is not real,
Nor does cessation have any reality.
None of the buddhas are subject to birth.
They become real through skillful means.
- 1.203 “The buddhas have not attained any wisdom,
And the Dharma that has been taught—they did not teach at all.
Nobody liberates any beings whatsoever.
In this way the buddhas are unborn buddhas.
- 1.204 “If they had an essence that passed beyond suffering,
The victorious ones would go there together with the hearers.

- But solid phenomena do not pass beyond suffering,
And the nonconceptual will never be known.
- 1.205 “Those who do not see beings for what they actually are
Teach beings according to the relative world;
But those who see beings as they actually are
Rest in groundless nirvāṇa.
- 1.206 “Some say that the aggregates are true.
Some say that existence, cessation, and the path are true.
Although the unborn is a single truth,
Some speak of four truths.
- 1.207 “At the seat of awakening I did not accomplish or see²⁵
Even a single truth, so how could there be four?
Thus, many of low intelligence go forth
And destroy my teaching.
- 1.208 “Spiritual practitioners who want to pursue positive qualities
In order to practice this absorption
Should not associate with such wild beings;
Instead, like the rhinoceros, they should stay in solitude.
- 1.209 “This was intended to be practiced
By eight hundred million excellent humans.
The many gods who behold this truth
Guard it day and night.
- 1.210 “Whoever meditates on this absorption, so hard to see,
In that person’s dream the Buddha will appear—
Clear, limitless, and inexhaustible—
And grant them entrance into the gateway of attainment.”
- 1.211 Then the Blessed One said to youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, bodhisattva
great beings who wish to realize the buddhas’ awakening should strive in
this absorption. [F.252.a] Bodhisattvas who wish to accomplish the excellent
marks and signs should strive in this absorption. Bodhisattvas who wish to
attain the eighteen unique qualities of a buddha should strive in this
absorption. Bodhisattvas who wish to attain the powers, the fearlessnesses,
great love, and great compassion should strive in this absorption.
Bodhisattvas who wish to attain the buddha eye, the self-arisen state, the
excellent buddha realm, the excellent lifespan, and the excellent array should
strive in this absorption. Bodhisattvas who wish to attain the excellent
retinue, the excellent form, the excellent bodhisattva name, as well as the

excellent hearers should strive in this absorption. Bodhisattvas who wish to attain illumination, wisdom, dhāraṇī, the conventions of beings' languages, reason, methods, and gateways should strive in this absorption. Bodhisattvas who wish to attain skill in entering the path, the perfection of light, the generation of the power of correct understanding, and the generation of the power of conviction should strive in this absorption. Bodhisattvas who wish to attain excellent eloquence, unmistaken view, and the realization of sameness should strive in this absorption.

1.212 “Why is that? Because when bodhisattvas strive in this absorption, they attain all these advantageous qualities. And when bodhisattvas have these advantageous qualities, they are called buddhas. They are called guides, leaders, great leaders, teachers, omniscient ones, victorious ones, protectors of the world, self-arisen ones, thus-gone ones, those who practice what they preach, [F.252.b] peerless ones, unequaled ones, and incomparable ones. They are called those who speak supremely, those who speak correctly, those who speak the truth, those who speak at the right time, and those who propound the vinaya. They are called unsurpassed, and they are called the most excellent persons. Why is this? Mañjuśrī, as I rested in this absorption and beheld the thus-gone one Dīpaṃkara, I immediately attained awakening.”

1.213 Mañjuśrī then asked, “If you discovered awakening upon seeing the blessed thus-gone one Dīpaṃkara, then, Blessed One, why did you continue to circle in saṃsāra for countless eons?”

1.214 “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “I was circling in saṃsāra for countless eons in order to perform buddha activities, ripen beings, and accomplish excellent former aspirations. However, Mañjuśrī, all the while I sustained awakening and nirvāṇa.”

1.215 Then, in order to explain this meaning more extensively, the Blessed One spoke these verses:

“With this, you become a leader with boundless and supreme intelligence,
Esteemed by billions of buddhas in the ten directions.
It discloses the methods of a hundred sūtras, beyond imagination and limit.
Applying this sūtra, you will accomplish inexhaustible dhāraṇī.

1.216 “This wisdom absorption is surely the gateway to all languages.
It brings realization, liberation, nonattachment, and an end to all clinging.
It is beyond birth, interruption, or basis; it is nirvāṇa, free of afflictions.
It brings power, noble marks and signs, and all the victors' qualities.

1.217 “It purifies all melodious speech and any form of language.
It brings realization, satisfaction, purification,²⁶ and freedom from clinging.
It knows very well, is beyond any doubt, and exhausts all afflictions.

To practice this discourse is to stand before awakening. [F.253.a]

- 1.218 “Apply yourself to this—one-pointedly, directly, and properly.
Do not sleep or be lazy; do not obsess over profit or happiness.
Always be disciplined and free from jealousy, and have a loving mind.
In a state of delight, full of devotion, you will attain this supreme absorption.
- 1.219 “Keep an unbiased, disciplined, honest, and joyous mind.
Have no dwelling or relations; concerning profit and pleasure, be like a lotus
in a pond.
Whatever you do, be egoless and dedicated, without craving or deceit.
Then, in the future you will attain this king of supreme dhāraṇīs.
- 1.220 “The trichiliocosm will tremble, and the cymbals of a hundred gods will
sound.
From the sky will appear hundreds of ointments, clothing, powders, and
victory banners.
Lovely garlands, chokers, earrings, capes, conch shells, anklets, necklaces,
Jewels, pearls, armbands, crowns, and rings will be scattered all around.
- 1.221 “Hosts of gods, goddesses, nāgas, gandharvas, and garuḍas;
Several hundred garuḍa lords, asura lords, male lay practitioners, and
monks;
Along with many nuns and female lay practitioners, will all be delighted.
Offering their own clothing and jewelry, they will arouse the mind of
awakening.
- 1.222 “When this Dharma is taught, many beings will embark for awakening.
It is impossible to show or calculate how many will become nonregressing.
Those who become tamed as worthy ones will be as infinite as the grains of
sand in the Ganges.
To behold the Guide, they will joyfully assemble from hundreds of realms.”
- 1.223 When the Blessed One gave this Dharma teaching, countless beings set out
for unsurpassed and perfect awakening. The progress toward unsurpassed
and perfect awakening of eight trillion bodhisattvas became irreversible. Six
hundred million three hundred thousand bodhisattvas attained this
absorption that is *the wisdom seal of the thus-gone ones*. Innumerable monks,
nuns, male and female lay practitioners, and countless other beings attained
the state of a worthy one. [F.253.b] All bodhisattvas in all the worlds in the
ten directions attained this absorption that is *the wisdom seal of the thus-gone
ones*.

- 1.224 When the Blessed One had given this teaching, the great hearers; Prāmodyarāja, Mañjuśrī, and the other sixty incomparable beings; as well as Maitreya, Simhapradyota, and all the other bodhisattva great beings of the fortunate eon up until Avabhāsakara, as well as all the bodhisattva great beings who had gathered from the worlds in the ten directions, the royal queen Śrībhadrā and Suvarṇottamaprabhāsā, the entire retinue, and the whole world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.225 *This completes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra “The Absorption of the Thus-Gone One’s Wisdom Seal.”*

c.

Colophon

- c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized, with revisions made according to the new terminology, by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra, Munivarman, and Dānaśīla, along with the chief editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Taishō 632, 佛說慧印三昧經 (*Fo Shuo Hui Yin Sanmei Jing*), third century; Taishō 633, 佛說如來智印經 (*Fo Shuo Rulai Zhi Yin Jing*), translator unknown, fifth century; and Taishō 634, 佛說大乘智印經 (*Fo Shuo Dasheng Zhi Yin Jing*), translated by Zhi Jixiang in the Song.
- n.2 In the *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa* (Toh 3854), folio 277.b; and according to Eckel 1994, p. 166, in the *Tarkajvālā* (Toh 3856).
- n.3 In the first *Bhāvanākrama* (Toh. 3915), folio 24.a.
- n.4 In the Degé Kangyur, this group consists of eleven sūtras (Toh 127–37), but in Kangyurs of the Thempangma line they are scattered throughout the General Sūtra section. Title elements used similarly to group texts in the Tshalpa Kangyurs include “The Questions...” (Skt. *paripṛchā*), “The Prophecy...” (Skt. *vyākaraṇa*), “The Teaching...” (Skt. *nirdeśa*), “The Exemplary Tales...” (Skt. *avadāna*), and others.
- n.5 See Roberts (2018).
- n.6 Such as, for example, the *Praśāntaviniścayaṅprātihāryasamādhi* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh129.html>) (Toh 129, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2020), *Māyopamasamādhi* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh130.html>) (Toh 130, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2016), and *Sarvapūnyasamuccayasamādhi* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh134.html>) (Toh 134, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2016.a).
- n.7 For further reading, see Skilton 2002.
- n.8 Translated based on Stok: ‘*di la sbyor la bar du gcod med de*. Degé reads: ‘*di la sbyor la rab tu mchod med de*. Narthang has *spyod* instead of *sbyor*.

- n.9 Translated based on Stok: *dpang*. Degé reads: *dbang*.
- n.10 Translated based on Stok: *stong pa*. Degé reads: *ston pa*.
- n.11 Translated based on Stok: *yi*. Degé reads: *ysis*.
- n.12 Translated based on Stok: *mi mthun*. Degé reads: *mi 'dun*.
- n.13 Translated based on Stok, Yongle, Kangxi, and Lhasa: *sred ma yin*. Degé reads: *srid ma yin*.
- n.14 Translated based on Stok: *'don pa*. Degé reads: *'dod pa*.
- n.15 The name of Ajātaśatru's mother is more typically given as Vaidehī (See Edgerton, vol. II, 510) or Kośaladevī, given that she was from the region of Kośala/Kosala.
- n.16 The Tibetan for this name, *bye ba ldan*, has no variants in the Kangyur collections consulted and appears nowhere else in the Degé Kangyur. However, other sources (*Kṣemavatīvyākaraṇa-sūtra*, *bde sdan ma lung bstan pa'i mdo*, [Toh 192 \(https://read.84000.co/translation/toh192.html\)](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh192.html)) give *bde ldan ma* (*Kṣemavatī) as an attested name for one of Bimbisāra's wives. In *dbu med* manuscripts *bde* might be easily confused for *bye*, with the following *ba* subsequently added to make some sense of the peculiar name resulting from the initial scribal error. We have thus chosen to render this name accordingly. This wife is also sometimes known as Kṣemā, and may be identified with Khemā in the Pali literature.
- n.17 Translation tentative. The Tibetan reads: *skad ni bdun brgya dag dang yi ge bye ba drug cu ldan*.
- n.18 Translated based on Stok: *gleng gzhi*. Degé reads: *gling bzhi*.
- n.19 Translation tentative. The Tibetan reads: *ci nas 'bras bcas brtul zhugs grub nas phyogs phyogs mchi 'gyur pa*.
- n.20 Translated based on Stok: *bsal ba*. Degé reads: *btsal ba*.
- n.21 Translated based on Stok: *de nas ci nas dngos grub thos nas dga' ste mchi 'gyur bar*. Degé reads: *de dag ci nas dngos grub thob nas rga ste 'chi 'gyur bar*.
- n.22 Translated based on Stok: *mdun du byas pa*. Degé reads: *mdun du byas dpa'*.
- n.23 Translated based on Yongle and Kangxi: *sred*. Degé reads: *srid*.

- n.24 Translated based on Yongle, Lithang, Kangxi, Narthang, and Choné: *rgya mtsho tshur mtha' pha mtha'*. Degé reads: *rgya mtsho chu mtha' phyi mtha'*.
- n.25 Translated based on Stok: *ma grub ma mthong*. Degé reads: *grub par ma mthong*.
- n.26 Translated based on Stok: *yongs sbyong*. Degé reads: *spyod dang*.

b.

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'phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes kyi phyag rgya'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya ba thegs pa chen po'i mdo. Stok no. 214, *stog pho brang bris ma*, vol. 73 (mdo sde, za), folios 43a5–74b2.

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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 Ajātaśatru

ma skyes dgra

མ་སྐྱེས་དགའ།

ajātaśatru

g.2 Amitābha

mtha' yas 'od

མཐའ་ཡས་འོད།

amitābha

The buddha who resides in Sukhāvātī.

g.3 Arcī

'od 'phro

འོད་འཕྲོ།

**arcī^{RS}*

A wife of the ancient king Prajñāsārathi.

g.4 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A type of nonhuman being whose precise status is subject to different views, but is included as one of the six classes of beings in the sixfold classification of realms of rebirth. In the Buddhist context, asuras are powerful beings said to be dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility. They are also known in the pre-Buddhist and pre-Vedic mythologies of India and Iran, and feature prominently in Vedic and post-Vedic Brahmanical mythology, as well as in the Buddhist tradition. In these traditions, asuras are often described as being engaged in interminable conflict with the devas (gods).

g.5 Avabhāsakara

snang byed

སྐྱང་བྱེད།

**avabhāsakara^{RS}*

A bodhisattva in attendance as the Buddha delivers this teaching.

g.6 Bimbisāra

gzugs can snying po

གཟུགས་ཅན་སྡིང་པོ།

bimbisāra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

King Śreṇya Bimbisāra first met with the Buddha early on, when the latter was the wandering mendicant known as Gautama. Impressed by his conduct, Bimbisāra offered to take Gautama into his court, but Gautama refused, and Bimbisāra wished him success in his quest for awakening and asked him to visit his palace after he had achieved his goal. One account of this episode can be found in the sixteenth chapter of *The Play in Full* (Toh 95, *Lalitavistara*). There are other accounts where the two meet earlier on in childhood; several episodes can be found, for example, in *The Hundred Deeds* (Toh 340, *Karmaśataka*). Later, after the Buddha's awakening, Bimbisāra became one of his most famous patrons and donated to the saṅgha the Bamboo Grove, Veṇuvana, at the outskirts of the capital of Magadha, Rājagṛha, where he built residences for the monks. Bimbisāra was imprisoned and killed by his own son, the prince Ajātaśatru, who, influenced by Devadatta, sought to usurp his father's throne.

g.7 Black Peaks

ri nag po

རི་ནག་པོ།

kālaparvata

The Nine Black Mountains found on the northern edge of the continent of Jambudvīpa. There are three sets of three of these peaks, and behind them lies the great snow mountain that is the source of the Ganges River. A description of this cosmology can be found in chapter three of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu.

g.8 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.9 correct understanding

so sor yang dag par rig pa

སོ་སོར་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ།

pratisaṃvoid

Correct understanding of meaning, Dharma, language, and eloquence.

g.10 Dānaśīla

dA na shI la

དྲན་ལྷི་ལ།

dānaśīla

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

g.11 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

Literally, “retention,” or “that which retains, contains, or encapsulates,” this term refers to mnemonic formulas, or codes possessed by advanced bodhisattvas that contain a quintessence of their attainments, as well as the Dharma teachings that express them and guide beings toward their realization. They are therefore often described in terms of “gateways” for entering the Dharma and training in its realization, or “seals” that contain condensations of truths and their expression. The term can also refer to a statement, or incantation meant to protect or bring about a particular result.

g.12 Dīpaṃkara

mar me mdzad

མར་མེ་མཛད།

dīpaṃkara

The former buddha who prophesied Buddha Śākyamuni's awakening, sometimes said to have been the fourth in a line of twenty-seven buddhas preceding Śākyamuni.

g.13 gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

A class of semidivine beings known for their skills as musicians, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds but more usually on the slopes of Mount Meru.

g.14 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗིང་།

garuḍa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.15 hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Sanskrit term *śrāvaka*, and the Tibetan *nyan thos*, both derived from the verb “to hear,” are usually defined as “those who *hear* the teaching from the Buddha and *make it heard* to others.” Primarily this refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat seeking their own liberation and nirvāṇa. They are the practitioners of the first turning of the wheel of the Dharma on the four noble truths, who realize the suffering inherent in saṃsāra and focus on understanding that there is no independent self. By conquering afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), they liberate themselves, attaining first the stage of stream enterers at the path of seeing, followed by the stage of once-returners who will be reborn only one more

time, and then the stage of non-returners who will no longer be reborn into the desire realm. The final goal is to become an arhat. These four stages are also known as the “four results of spiritual practice.”

g.16 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་རུ་སྐྱ་གསུམ།

trāyastriṃśa

The second heaven of the desire realm located above Mount Meru and reigned over by Indra, otherwise known as Śakra, and thirty-two other gods.

g.17 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu gling

འཛམ་བུ་གླིང་།

jambudvīpa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology, which can signify either the known human world, or more specifically the Indian subcontinent, literally “the *jambu* island/continent.” Jambu is the name used for a range of plum-like fruits from trees belonging to the genus *Szygium*, particularly *Szygium jambos* and *Szygium cumini*, and it has commonly been rendered “rose apple,” although “black plum” may be a less misleading term. Among various explanations given for the continent being so named, one (in the *Abhidharmakośa*) is that a jambu tree grows in its northern mountains beside Lake Anavatapta, mythically considered the source of the four great rivers of India, and that the continent is therefore named from the tree or the fruit. Jambudvīpa has the Vajrāsana at its center and is the only continent upon which buddhas attain awakening.

g.18 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇོ་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

jinamitra

An Indian Kashmiri paṇḍita who was resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. He worked with several Tibetan translators on the translation of several sūtras. He is also the author of the *Nyāyabindupinḍārtha* (Toh 4233), which is contained in the Tibetan Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) collection.

g.19 kācilindika cloth

gos ka tsa lin di ka

གོས་ཀ་ཙ་ལིན་དི་ཀ

kācilindika

A very soft substance. The Tibetan translators added “cloth” (*gos*) to the term.

g.20 Kalandakanivāpa

bya ka la da ka'i gnas

བྱ་ཀ་ལ་ད་ཀའི་གནས།

kalandakanivāpa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A place where the Buddha often resided, within the Bamboo Park (Veṇuvana) outside Rajagṛha that had been donated to him. The name is said to have arisen when, one day, King Bimbisāra fell asleep after a romantic liaison in the Bamboo Park. While the king rested, his consort wandered off. A snake (the reincarnation of the park’s previous owner, who still resented the king’s acquisition of the park) approached with malign intentions. Through the king’s tremendous merit, a gathering of *kalandaka*—crows or other birds according to Tibetan renderings, but some Sanskrit and Pali sources suggest flying squirrels—miraculously appeared and began squawking. Their clamor alerted the king’s consort to the danger, who rushed back and hacked the snake to pieces, thereby saving the king’s life. King Bimbisāra then named the spot Kalandakanivāpa (“Kalandakas’ Feeding Ground”), sometimes (though not in the *Vinayavastu*) given as Kalandakanivāpa (“Kalandakas’ Abode”) in their honor. The story is told in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* (Toh 1, ch.17, Degé Kangyur vol.4, folio 77.b et seq.).

g.21 Kauṣṭhila

gsus po che

གསུས་པོ་ཚེ།

kauṣṭhila

A senior student of Buddha Śākyamuni, famous for his analytical knowledge.

g.22 Keturājñī

tog gi rgyal po

ཏོག་གི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

**keturājñī*^{RS}

A wife of the ancient king Prajñāsārathi.

g.23 kinnara

mi'am ci

མིའམ་ཅི།

kinnara

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.24 Kṣemavatī

bye ba ldan · bde ldan ma

བྱེ་བ་ལྡན། · བདེ་ལྡན་མ།

**kṣemavatī^{RS} · *kṣemā^{RS}*

The mother of Suvarṇottamaprabhāsā, who was married to King Bimbisāra. She is likely to be the same person as Khemā in the Pali Canon, one of Bimbisāra’s consorts who became an arhat and bhikṣuṇī. See also [n.16](#).

g.25 Limit of reality

yang dag pa'i mtha'

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

bhūtakoṭi

A synonym for ultimate reality and a way of describing the attainment of perfection as the culmination of the spiritual path.

g.26 Lord of Death

gshin rje

གཤིན་རྗེ།

yama

Usually the Lord of Death who directs the departed into the next realm of rebirth, but here refers to the Lord of the hungry ghost realm.

g.27 Magadha

ma ga dhA

མ་ག་ཏྲ།

magadha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

An ancient Indian kingdom that lay to the south of the Ganges River in what today is the state of Bihar. Magadha was the largest of the sixteen “great states” (*mahājanapada*) that flourished between the sixth and third centuries BCE in northern India. During the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, it was ruled by King Bimbisāra and later by Bimbisāra's son, Ajātaśatru. Its capital was initially Rājagṛha (modern-day Rajgir) but was later moved to Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna). Over the centuries, with the expansion of the Magadha's might, it became the capital of the vast Mauryan empire and seat of the great King Aśoka.

This region is home to many of the most important Buddhist sites, including Bodh Gayā, where the Buddha attained awakening; Vulture Peak (*Gṛdhra-kūṭa*), where the Buddha bestowed many well-known Mahāyāna sūtras; and the Buddhist university of Nālandā that flourished between the fifth and twelfth centuries CE, among many others.

g.28 Mahākāśyapa

'od srung chen po

འོད་སྤྱང་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākāśyapa

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

g.29 Mahākātyāyana

kA tyA'i bu chen po

ཀལ་ཏྱའི་བུ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākātyāyana

One of the hearers present during the delivery of the sūtra.

g.30 Mahāmaudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu chen po

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāmaudgalyāyana

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

g.31 Maheśvara

dbang phyug chen po

དབང་ཕྱུག་ཆེན་པོ།

maheśvara

An epithet of Śiva; sometimes refers specifically to one of the forms of Śiva or to Rudra.

g.32 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.33 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.34 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

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.35 Māra

bdud

མ་རྩལ།

māra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Māra, literally “death” or “maker of death,” is the name of the deva who tried to prevent the Buddha from achieving awakening, the name given to the class of beings he leads, and also an impersonal term for the destructive forces that keep beings imprisoned in saṃsāra:

(1) As a deva, Māra is said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations (*paranirmitavaśavartin*), the highest paradise in the desire realm. He famously attempted to prevent the Buddha’s awakening under the Bodhi tree—see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.1—and later sought many times to thwart the Buddha’s activity. In the sūtras, he often also creates obstacles to the progress of śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. (2) The devas ruled over by Māra are collectively called *mārakāyika* or *mārakāyikadevatā*, the “deities of Māra’s family or class.” In general, these māras too do not wish any being to escape from saṃsāra, but can also change their ways and even end up developing faith in the Buddha, as exemplified by Sārthavāha; see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.14 and 21.43. (3) The term māra can also be understood as personifying four defects that prevent awakening, called (i) the divine māra (*devaputramāra*), which is the distraction of pleasures; (ii) the māra of Death (*mṛtyumāra*), which is having one’s life interrupted; (iii) the māra of the aggregates (*skandhamāra*), which is identifying with the five aggregates; and (iv) the māra of the afflictions (*kleśamāra*), which is being under the sway of the negative emotions of desire, hatred, and ignorance.

g.36 Meru

ri rab

མེ་རུ།

meru

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.37 Munivarman

mu ni war+ma

མུ་ནི་འཇམ་མེད།

munivarman

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

g.38 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.39 perfections

pha rol tu phyin pa

ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

pāramitā

The trainings of the bodhisattva path: generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight.

g.40 Pleasing Light

dga' ba'i 'od

དགའ་བའི་འོད།

—

The palace of a king known as Puṇyodgata.

g.41 Prajñāsārathi

shes rab kha lo sgyur ba

ཤེས་རབ་ཁ་ལོ་སྐུར་བ།

**prajñāsārathi* ^{RS}

An ancient king.

g.42 Prāmodyarāja

mchog tu dga' ba'i rgyal po

མཚོག་ཏུ་དགའ་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

**prāmodyarāja* ^{RS}

A bodhisattva in attendance as the Buddha delivers his teaching.

g.43 Puṇyaraśmi

bsod nams 'od zer

བསོད་ནམས་འོད་ཟེར།

**puṇyaraśmi* ^{RS}

An ancient king.

g.44 Puṇyodgata

bsod nams 'phags

བསོད་ནམས་འཕགས།

**puṇyodgata* ^{RS}

An ancient king.

g.45 Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra

byams ma'i bu gang po

བྱམས་མའི་བུ་གང་པོ།

pūrṇa maitrāyaṇīputra

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha.

g.46 Rājagrha

rgyal po'i khab

རྒྱལ་པོ་འི་ཁབ།

rājagṛha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ancient capital of Magadha prior to its relocation to Pāṭaliputra during the Mauryan dynasty, Rājagṛha is one of the most important locations in Buddhist history. The literature tells us that the Buddha and his saṅgha spent a considerable amount of time in residence in and around Rājagṛha—in nearby places, such as the Vulture Peak Mountain (Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata), a major site of the Mahāyāna sūtras, and the Bamboo Grove (Veṇuvana)—enjoying the patronage of King Bimbisāra and then of his son King Ajātaśatru. Rājagṛha is also remembered as the location where the first Buddhist monastic council was held after the Buddha Śākyamuni passed into parinirvāṇa. Now known as Rajgir and located in the modern Indian state of Bihar.

g.47 realm of reality

chos kyi dbyings

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

dharmadhātu

A synonym for the nature of things, ultimate reality.

g.48 Sahā World

mi mjed 'jig rten

མི་མཇེད་འཇིག་རྟེན།

sahāloka

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 *Sahāṃpati*, Lord of Sahā. Our world system of Sahā, or Sahālokadhātu, is also described as being the buddhafiield of the Buddha Śākyamuni. He teaches the Dharma here to beings who adhere to inferior ways and perceive this universe as an impure buddhafiield 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 *√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.49 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.50 Śākyamuni

shAkya thub pa

ཤཱཀ་ལུ་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.51 Śākyasiṃha

shAkya seng ge

ཤཱཀ་སེང་གེ།

śākyasiṃha

Literally, “Lion of the Śākyas,” this is the name under which Buddha Śākyamuni was prophesied for awakening by Buddha Dīpaṅkara.

g.52 Śāradvatīputra

sha ra dwa ti'i bu

ཤ་ར་དྲ་ཏི་བུ།

śāradvatīputra

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.53 Śāsiketu

zla ba'i tog

ཟླ་བའི་ཏོག།

*śāsiketu^{RS}

An ancient buddha.

g.54 sense source

skye mched

སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

āyatana

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

g.55 Simhapradyota

seng ge rab snang

སེང་གེ་རབ་སྐྱང།

*simhapradyota^{RS}

A bodhisattva who is attending the Buddha's teaching in this sūtra.

g.56 spaces between the worlds

'jig rten gyi bar

འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་བར།

lokāntarika

According to abhidharma cosmology, when different world systems form, they drift near each other, but remain divided by the spaces (small according to some descriptions, immense according to others) between the massive rings of stone that surround each of them. These spaces are completely dark, unreached by any light from the suns of the worlds they lie between. Often classified as one kind of hell, these frigid and desolate places are populated by beings brought there by very negative karma. They cling to the cliffs, climbing around in darkness searching for sustenance. When they encounter fellow sufferers, they fight and try to push each other off, and tumble into the icy waters below.

g.57 Śrībhadrā

dpal bzang

དཔལ་བཟང་།

*śrībhadrā^{RS}

One of King Bimbisāra's queens. See also [n.15](#).

g.58 Subhūti

rab 'byor

རབ་འབྱོར།

subhūti

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha, known for his profound understanding of emptiness.

g.59 Sukhāvātī

bde ba can

བདེ་བ་ཅན།

sukhāvātī

The buddha realm in which Buddha Amitābha lives.

g.60 suparṇi

'dab bzangs

འདབ་བཟངས།

suparṇi

A type of garuḍa: a divine creature with the body of a giant bird.

g.61 Suvarṇottamaprabhāsā

gser mchog snang ba

གསེར་མཚོག་སྣང་བ།

**suvāṇottamaprabhāsā* ^{RS}

One of King Bimbisāra's daughters.

g.62 three worlds

srid gsum

སྲིད་གསུམ།

trailokya

The desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm.

g.63 Vaijayanta Palace

rnam rgyal khang

རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ཁང་།

vaijayanta

The palace of Śakra, an epithet for the god Indra, in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

g.64 Veṇuvana

'od ma'i tshal

འོད་མའི་ཚལ།

veṇuvana

The famous bamboo grove near Rājagṛha where the Buddha regularly stayed and gave teachings. It was situated on land donated by King Bimbisāra of Magadha, the first of several landholdings donated to the Buddhist community during the time of the Buddha.

g.65 Vulture Peak Mountain

bya rgod phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྗོད་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

ḡḡhrakūṭaparvata

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ḡḡhrakūṭa, literally Vulture Peak, was a hill located in the kingdom of Magadha, in the vicinity of the ancient city of Rājagṛha (modern-day Rajgir, in the state of Bihar, India), where the Buddha bestowed many sūtras, especially the Great Vehicle teachings, such as the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras. It continues to be a sacred pilgrimage site for Buddhists to this day.

g.66 Vyūharāja

bkod pa'i rgyal po

བོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

vyūharāja

The name of a previous eon.

g.67 Yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

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

g.68 Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

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.

