

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་དབྱེར་མེད་པ་བསྟན་པ།

**The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the
Realm of Phenomena**

Dharmadhātuprakṛtyasambhedanirdeśa

འཕགས་པ་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་དབྱེར་མེད་པ་བསྟན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa chos kyi dbyings kyi rang bzhin dbyer med pa bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena”

Āryadharmadhātuprakṛtyasambhedanirdeśanāmamahāyānasūtra



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SUMMARY

- s.1 While the Buddha is in the Jeta Grove, he asks Mañjuśrī to teach on the nature of reality. Mañjuśrī's account upsets some of the monks present in the gathering, who subsequently leave. Nevertheless, by means of an emanation, Mañjuśrī skillfully teaches the distraught monks, who return to the Jeta Grove to express their gratitude. The monks explain that their obstacle has been a conceited sense of attainment, of which they are now free. At the request of the god Ratnavara, Mañjuśrī then teaches on nonduality and the nature of the bodhisattva. Next, the Buddha prophesies the future awakening of Ratnavara and other bodhisattvas present in the gathering. However, the prophecies cause Pāpīyān, king of the māras, to appear with his army. In a dramatic course of events, Mañjuśrī uses his transformative power on both Pāpīyān and the Buddha's pious attendant, Śāradvatīputra, forcing both of them to appear in the form of the Buddha himself. He then makes Pāpīyān and Śāradvatīputra teach the profound Dharma with the perfect mastery of buddhahood. Numerous bodhisattvas appear from the four directions, pledging to practice and uphold the sūtra's teaching. The Buddha grants his blessing for the continuous transmission of the sūtra among bodhisattvas in the future.

ac.

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INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* has survived in Chinese and Tibetan translations but, like all except five of the forty-nine texts belonging to the *Heap of Jewels*, is no longer extant in Sanskrit.¹ The Chinese translation (Taishō 310-8, scroll 21) was produced in 503 by the itinerant monk Mandrasena, who became an influential translator in China, having been invited there from his native Cambodia to assist with the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese.² The Tibetan translation appeared approximately three centuries later during the early ninth century and was made, according to the colophon, by the great translator-editor Yeshé Dé in collaboration with the Indian paṇḍītas Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi. This English translation was made based primarily on the Tibetan Degé edition, with consultation of the Comparative Edition and the Stok Palace manuscript edition.

i.2 It is hard to estimate the influence of *The Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* in India and Tibet, because the sūtra does not appear to be frequently cited or referred to. An important exception is the *Precious Lamp of the Middle Way*,³ which is in fact delivered in explicit response to this sūtra's critique of the principle of relative versus ultimate truth.⁴ As an example of reliance on the sūtra in the works of influential Tibetan authors, we may note that Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen (*dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan*, 1292–1361) presents the arguments of a proponent of intrinsic emptiness (Tib. *rang stong*) based on its teaching.⁵ To our knowledge no academic research has been specifically concerned with *The Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena*.

i.3 The setting of the sūtra is the renowned Jeta Grove at Śrāvastī, a site donated to the Buddha and his Saṅgha by the wealthy benefactor Anāthapiṇḍada, where the Buddha subsequently spent many annual monsoon retreats. As the sūtra opens, we learn that eight thousand monks, twelve thousand bodhisattvas, and thirty-two thousand gods who practice the mind of awakening have assembled around the Blessed One. The god Ratnavara is also present in the assembly, and we witness him forming the wish that the Buddha may inspire Mañjuśrī to teach the Dharma. Knowing Ratnavara's thoughts, the Buddha turns to Mañjuśrī and encourages him to explain the "realm of phenomena." Mañjuśrī's playful and profound response is to wonder whether the very idea of such a

teaching is at all intelligible. How could that which is present everywhere possibly be singled out and set apart from anything? How could it be identified in any meaningful way?

i.4 The “realm of phenomena,” the *dharmadhātu* (*chos kyi dbyings*), about which the Buddha asks Mañjuśrī to teach, is thus one of the key principles in this text. The treatise *Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes* (Skt. *Madhyāntavibhāga*)—attributed to Maitreya and transmitted by Asaṅga—enumerates this term among five synonyms for emptiness, and goes on to explain that this particular term is constructed in consideration of the way the perception of emptiness serves as the basis for attaining the qualities of the *āryas* or “noble beings.”⁶ In the sūtras and śāstras the bodhisattva’s liberation upon the first of the ten stages is moreover typically described as the result of perceiving—directly and for the first time—the omnipresent nature of the realm of phenomena.⁷ Thus, in responding to the Buddha’s request, Mañjuśrī takes up the implications of this notion of omnipresence. He argues that given its constant and pervasive presence, ultimate reality turns out to be indivisibly one with everything from which we may otherwise want to set it apart: the flawed, the seeming, and the unreal. How could the true nature of things then be distinguished or known in any way? This paradox is also discernible in the sūtra’s title: in declaring that its objective is to show the indivisible nature of reality and ordinary experience, the sūtra ventures to treat a theme that arguably, by definition, cannot even be identified as a topic.

i.5 This short-circuiting of the dichotomy between relative and ultimate truths—or of the distinction between appearance and reality—recurs throughout the sūtra in a number of variations. Thus, as an upshot of its radically nondual approach, the sūtra identifies the very notion of spiritual attainment as an obstacle. The sense of having gained a superior result is hence classified as an affliction and associated with *saṃsāra*. Yet the sūtra also teaches that exact knowledge of affliction and *saṃsāra* is itself the purification of the latter two. The idea of a path from ignorance to awakening is further undermined when Mañjuśrī, in reply to Ratnavara’s questions, for example, identifies the “beginner bodhisattva” in terms of a realization that transcends both time and space. “Long-term experience,” on the other hand, Mañjuśrī sees as descriptive only of beings who suffer in *saṃsāra*, and thus not of bodhisattvas.

i.6 The sūtra acknowledges the potentially intimidating and alienating effects of its teaching of nonduality, yet its response can be seen as both unrelenting and genuinely concerned. As the Buddha warns Mañjuśrī that his teaching is likely to cause fear in the audience, Mañjuśrī replies, “Those who become afraid are themselves of the nature of the realm of phenomena, and the nature of the realm of phenomena does not become frightened.” Yet as a group of monks ends up leaving in distress, Mañjuśrī dispatches an emanation of himself who, appearing to sympathize with the dejected monks in their dismissal of the teaching, finally succeeds in showing them its deeper truth. It should also be noted that despite the repeated rejection of the principles of liberation and

spiritual accomplishment, we are repeatedly informed about the liberating effects of the sūtra's teaching when each section of discourse concludes, as in many sūtras, with a statement of the resulting attainments of the attending monks, bodhisattvas, or gods.

i.7 The sūtra's story line is dramatic and culminates in the transformation of both Pāpīyān—the ruler of the māras, who create obstacles for those following the Dharma—and Śāradvatīputra (also known as Śāriputra), who is the very image of spotless piety and adherence to the word of the Buddha. Starkly against their wishes, both Pāpīyān and Śāradvatīputra are transformed and appear instead as awakened buddhas. Once present as such, they engage in an astonishing Dharma dialogue, explaining to each other and the audience the profound intent of Mañjuśrī's teaching. Subsequent to this very graphic illustration of the omnipresent nature of the realm of phenomena, the sūtra concludes with the Buddha asking Mañjuśrī to bless the sūtra so that in future times it will be widely practiced. In a manner reminiscent of his initial response to the Buddha's call at the opening of the sūtra, Mañjuśrī wonders how he should understand such a request, given the unborn and unceasing nature of all phenomena. Might the Blessed One, Mañjuśrī wonders, perhaps also ask him to bless the unborn and unceasing element of space so that it may remain unaffected by fire? Mañjuśrī instead chooses to entreat the Blessed One himself to bless the sūtra. The Buddha complies and, having granted his blessing for the sūtra to be widely taught and practiced, he asks Ānanda to recollect the sūtra, and also provides it with three alternative names. While for the most part its teaching has been delivered by bodhisattvas, monks, and even by the king of māras, the sūtra ends as is traditional with everyone rejoicing in the words of the Blessed One.

tr.

THE TRANSLATION

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra

The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena

1.1 [F.140.b] [B1] Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was in the Jeta Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍada's park at Śrāvastī. He was residing there together with a great saṅgha of eight thousand monks, and with twelve thousand bodhisattvas from various buddha realms, and thirty-two thousand gods, who had all genuinely entered into unexcelled and perfect awakening. Youthful Mañjuśrī and the god Ratnavara had also joined the gathering and were present there.

1.2 Ratnavara at that time thought to himself, "If the Blessed One encourages youthful Mañjuśrī to teach the Dharma, he will surely teach so that all the abodes of the māras will be subdued and Māra the evil one will despair. He will teach so that all opponents are defeated, and so that those possessed of excessive pride will become free of their pride and reveal their knowledge.⁸ He will teach so that those engaged in yogic practices will achieve their fruition, and so that those who have already achieved fruition will gain further distinction. In this way the lineage of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha will continue unbroken so that numerous beings will arouse the mind set on awakening. The awakening that the Thus-Gone One has gained over incalculable eons will long remain and expand. Whether the Thus-Gone One remains or passes entirely into nirvāṇa, the teaching of the Dharma [F.141.a] will cause those who hear it to pass quickly beyond suffering by means of whichever vehicle may inspire them. Would it not be wonderful were youthful Mañjuśrī to deliver such a teaching!"

- 1.3 The Blessed One knew in his mind what the god Ratnavara was thinking, and so he said to youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, the gathering here wishes to hear the Dharma from you. Therefore, please go ahead and speak some words to those who are gathered here.”
- 1.4 In response youthful Mañjuśrī inquired, “Blessed One, where should I begin my teaching?”
- “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “you should begin by teaching the nature of the realm of phenomena.”
- 1.5 “But Blessed One,” replied youthful Mañjuśrī, “all phenomena are the nature of the realm of phenomena. Hence, Blessed One, the nature of the realm of phenomena cannot possibly be a topic of discourse or study. So, Blessed One, how could I begin my teaching with the nature of the realm of phenomena?”
- The Blessed One said, “Mañjuśrī, if those who are possessed of excessive pride hear that teaching, it will frighten them.”
- 1.6 “Those who become afraid,” said Mañjuśrī, “are themselves of the nature of the realm of phenomena, and the nature of the realm of phenomena does not become frightened.”
- 1.7 At that point the venerable Śāradvatīputra addressed youthful Mañjuśrī. “Mañjuśrī,” he said, “you say that all phenomena are the nature of the realm of phenomena. But within the nature of the realm of phenomena there is no affliction, nor is there purification. How is it, then, that sentient beings get afflicted, or purified?”
- Mañjuśrī replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, childish and ordinary beings are stricken by the errors of the view of the transitory collection. In those who persist in the belief in ‘I’ and ‘mine’ there arises the conception of self and other. [F.141.b] In those who conceive of self and other there arise a virtuous and unvirtuous mind and the mental states that arise from it; that mind and the factors arising from it then condition the formation of virtuous and unvirtuous actions, and for them, that cause and those conditions bring about their particular forms of ripening according to their particular natures.⁹ Venerable Śāradvatīputra, for as long as such beings take birth within the realms of existence, that is what we call affliction.
- 1.8 “However, venerable Śāradvatīputra, affliction is the very nature of the realm of phenomena. Hence, to know that affliction is indeed the very nature of the realm of phenomena is what we call purification. Ultimately there is no affliction or purification and nothing is afflicted or purified.”
- 1.9 When youthful Mañjuśrī gave this teaching, one hundred proud monks liberated their minds from defilement with no further appropriation.
- 1.10 Venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, as you gave this teaching, one hundred proud monks liberated their minds from defilement with no further appropriation. Mañjuśrī, the realm of phenomena is flowing from you!”
- 1.11 Mañjuśrī said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, what do you think? Is the nature of the realm of phenomena something that was bound in the past and later liberated?”

- “Mañjuśrī, the nature of the realm of phenomena was not bound in the past, nor is it later liberated.”
- 1.12 “Well, venerable Śāradvatīputra, from what mind state were those monks liberated?”
“Mañjuśrī, the Thus-Gone One has trained many hearers, and so their minds are liberated from defilement with no further appropriation.”
- 1.13 “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, are you one of the Thus-Gone One’s hearers?” [F.142.a]
“I am, Mañjuśrī. I am one among the Thus-Gone One’s hearers.”
- 1.14 “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, is your mind free from appropriation and liberated from defilements?”
“Indeed, Mañjuśrī, it is liberated.”
- 1.15 “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, was your mind liberated in the past, will it be in the future, or is it being liberated at present? Venerable Śāradvatīputra, the characteristic of past mind is that it has ceased, the characteristic of future mind is that it has not yet occurred, and the characteristic of present mind is that it does not remain. That being so, venerable Śāradvatīputra, in which of these is that liberation of your mind?”
Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “Mañjuśrī, this mind was not liberated in the past, is not being liberated at present, nor will it be in the future.”
- 1.16 Mañjuśrī responded, “Well then, venerable Śāradvatīputra, what is this liberated mind of yours?”
To this Śāradvatīputra answered, “Mañjuśrī, it is only in relative terms that a mind is said to be liberated. Ultimately there is no bound or liberated mind to be observed.”
- 1.17 Mañjuśrī asked him, “Would you say that the nature of the realm of phenomena is relative or ultimate?”
Śāradvatīputra replied, “Mañjuśrī, within the nature of the realm of phenomena neither the relative nor the ultimate can be observed.”
- 1.18 Mañjuśrī asked him, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, how, then, can you declare that the mind is liberated in relative terms?”
So Śāradvatīputra asked, “Mañjuśrī, is there, then, never any mind that is liberated at all?”
Mañjuśrī answered, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, if there were a mind to be observed inside, outside, or in between, then there could also be a liberated mind. However, venerable Śāradvatīputra, there is no mind to be observed inside, outside, or in between, and therefore there is no bondage or liberation whatsoever.” [F.142.b]
- 1.19 At that point two hundred monks from that retinue heard this teaching by Mañjuśrī and rose from their seats, getting ready to leave. They said, “If nobody was ever liberated and nobody ever will be, what is the point of our going forth and taking vows to become monks? If there is no such thing as deliverance at all, then what purpose would it serve to train on the path?” Disapproving and disconcerted, they then left the gathering.
- 1.20 Considering what ought to be done to train those monks, youthful Mañjuśrī projected an emanation in the form of a monk on the road in front of them.

1.21 When they encountered the emanation, the monks asked him, “Where do you come from, venerable one?”

“Venerable ones,” he replied, “I do not wish to participate in the Dharma teaching that youthful Mañjuśrī is now giving. I do not understand it, I am not interested in it, and I do not believe in it. Hence, I have left the gathering.”

1.22 The two hundred monks concurred, “We do not wish to be present at Mañjuśrī’s Dharma teaching, either. We do not understand it, we are not interested in it, and we do not believe in it. Therefore, we have also left the gathering.”

1.23 Addressing the two hundred monks, the emanated monk asked them, “What were the disagreeable points in youthful Mañjuśrī’s Dharma teaching that made you leave the gathering?”

The monks replied, “Venerable one, youthful Mañjuśrī declared that nobody ever achieves anything, and that there is no such thing as gaining realization and liberation. At that point we thought, if nobody ever gains any attainment, realization, or liberation, then what purpose would there be in our going forth, and why should we have taken vows to become monks? [F.143.a] Why should we observe celibacy? If there were no such thing as deliverance at all, what purpose would it serve to train on the path? It was with these thoughts in mind that we left the gathering.”

1.24 The emanated monk asked the group, “Venerable ones, did you simply leave because you did not appreciate what was being said? Or did you reject the teaching and express your displeasure in words?”

They replied, “We just left because we did not like it. We did not reject the teaching, nor as we left did we say anything unpleasant.”

1.25 “Well done,” said the emanated monk. “Venerable ones, to refrain from dispute is the foremost training for spiritual practitioners. Therefore, without saying anything offensive and without arguing against this teaching, let us try to follow it for a while.

“Venerable ones, would you say that the mind is blue, or is it yellow? Or is it red or white? Or would you say that it is similar to the color of madder, or of a crystal? Is it real, or should we call it unreal? Is it permanent, or would you say that it is impermanent? Does it have a form, or would you say that it is formless?”

The monks replied, “Venerable one, the mind does not have any form and it cannot be shown. It has no appearance yet is unimpeded. It has no dwelling and is imperceptible.”

1.26 The emanated monk then asked the group, “Venerable ones, the mind that has no form and cannot be shown, that has no appearance, is unimpeded, has no dwelling, and is imperceptible—do you think that it is to be observed as something that can be said to dwell inside? Or to dwell outside? Or to dwell in between?”

“No, it is none of these,” said the monks.

1.27 So the emanation continued, “If the mind has no form, cannot be shown, has no appearance, is unimpeded, [F.143.b] without dwelling, and imperceptible, if it is not to be observed inside, nor outside, nor in between, do you think it is real and established?”

“No, it is not,” answered the monks.

- 1.28 “Do you then think, venerable ones, that a mind that is not real and not established can nevertheless be liberated?”
“No, it cannot,” they replied.
- 1.29 “Venerable ones,” the emanation continued, “now consider youthful Mañjuśrī’s teaching. He said that within the nature of the realm of phenomena there is neither affliction nor purification. Venerable ones, the minds of childish and ordinary beings stricken by errors give rise to the belief in ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ As they persist in that belief in ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ they continuously engage with objects and abide on them. As such, a mind that arises from observation comes into being; but when that observation ends, that mind will also end, disintegrate, and no longer remain.
- 1.30 “It is the observing mind that goes forth, takes vows, and becomes a monk. Yet the mind that practices the path has no intrinsic existence, is not real, and does not occur. And that which is nonexistent, unreal, and non-occurring knows neither arising, disintegration, nor remaining. That which neither arises, disintegrates, nor remains cannot be bound and cannot be liberated. It knows neither attainment nor realization. Venerable ones, it was with this in mind that youthful Mañjuśrī said, ‘Within the nature of the realm of phenomena there is neither affliction nor purification. Nobody ever attains anything; there is no realization and no liberation.’ ”
- 1.31 When the emanated monk had given them this teaching [F.144.a] the minds of the monks, with no further appropriation, were liberated from defilement. With their minds liberated, they now returned to youthful Mañjuśrī. Covering themselves with their upper robes, they addressed him as follows: “Mañjuśrī, you have protected us! We have avoided giving up the Dharma and henceforth we will never relinquish the practice of the profound Vinaya Dharma.”
- 1.32 Hearing this, venerable Subhūti asked the monks, “What are your attainments, and what type of realization have you gained, that you now cover yourselves with your upper robes before Mañjuśrī?”
The monks replied, “Venerable Subhūti, we have neither attained nor realized anything at all. That is why we now cover ourselves with our upper robes before Mañjuśrī. Venerable Subhūti, when we had the sense of having attained something we rose from our seats and left the gathering. Now, free from that sense of attainment, we are here again.”
- 1.33 “Venerable ones,” inquired Subhūti, “what makes you say this?”
They replied, “Venerable Subhūti, to speak of ‘attainment’ is boastful and conceited. And whoever is boastful and conceited has neither attainment nor realization. Venerable Subhūti, one who has neither any attainment nor realization has truly vanquished all forms of conceit.”
- 1.34 “Venerable ones,” asked venerable Subhūti, “who has trained you?”
“Eminent Subhūti,” they replied, “we have been trained by him who has no attainment or realization, for whom there is no birth and no passing beyond suffering, and who is neither composed nor distracted.” [F.144.b]

- 1.35 “How,” Subhūti asked, “did you get trained?”
“Ask Mañjuśrī,” they replied.
- 1.36 So the venerable Ānanda now inquired, “Mañjuśrī, who has trained these monks?”
In reply Mañjuśrī explained, “Venerable Ānanda, these monks have been trained by one for whom there are no aggregates, no elements, and no sense sources; one who is neither an ordinary being, nor someone who trains, nor someone beyond training; one who is neither a hearer, nor a bodhisattva, nor a thus-gone one; one who has no body, no speech, and no mind; one for whom there is neither connection nor separation.”
- 1.37 “What sort of teacher is that?” inquired Ānanda.
In reply Mañjuśrī asked, “Venerable Ānanda, what do you think: if the Thus-Gone One produces an emanation, is that emanation connected with something?”
“No,” replied Ānanda, “such an emanation would not be connected with any phenomenon, yet neither would it be separate from anything.”
- 1.38 Mañjuśrī asked, “Venerable Ānanda, are all phenomena essentially like emanations?”
“Yes, Mañjuśrī, they are,” replied Ānanda.
- 1.39 “Venerable Ānanda,” Mañjuśrī said, “these monks were trained by an emanation, and whenever hearers are trained, it is like being trained by an emanation. Venerable Ānanda, whenever training occurs in that way, the training is genuine. Know that those who have no interest in this very Dharma training are excessively proud.”
- 1.40 “Mañjuśrī,” said venerable Ānanda, “how can monks who have no such interest be seen to have excessive pride?”
Mañjuśrī replied, “Venerable Ānanda, monks who conceitedly consider themselves pure because of their pure aggregate of discipline [F.145.a] are excessively proud. Those who conceitedly think of themselves as pure because they have pure aggregates of absorption, insight, liberation, and liberated wisdom vision—such individuals should be seen as excessively proud. Thinking, ‘I have gained the attainments and achieved direct perception,’ they pride themselves on those achievements. Such thoughts should be viewed as excessive pride.
- 1.41 “Those who are fearful of the view of the transitory collection and relish the taste of the one path to be traveled should be viewed as excessively proud. Why is that? Because that emptiness by virtue of which the view of the transitory collection is empty is also the emptiness by virtue of which the single traversed path is empty. So those who do not engage correctly with such empty things because of their emptiness should be seen as excessively proud. Moreover, venerable Ānanda, you should understand that monks who use emptiness to make the emptiness of the view of the transitory collection the same emptiness as the emptiness of the one path to be traveled are excessively proud. Why is that? Because, venerable Ānanda, emptiness and the view of the transitory collection are not two different things; the view of the transitory collection is itself emptiness. Nor are emptiness and the path two different things; the path is itself emptiness.

1.42 “Moreover, venerable Ānanda, any monk who fears ignorance and the cravings of existence and relishes the taste of liberation from ignorance should also be seen as excessively proud. Why is that? Because, venerable Ānanda, whoever engages in them with the perception that they are two things is not liberated.

1.43 “Venerable Ānanda, some monks are frightened by desire, anger, and delusion and relish the taste of the three gateways of liberation. Some are frightened by the four errors and hence relish the taste of the four perceptions. Some are frightened by the five obscurations and so relish the taste of the five faculties. [F.145.b] Some are frightened by the six sense sources and instead relish the six super-knowledges. Some are frightened by the seven bases of consciousness and instead relish the taste of the seven branches of awakening. Some are frightened by the eight flaws and hence relish the taste of the eight-fold path of the noble ones. Some are frightened by the nine conditioned entities¹⁰ and instead relish the taste of the nine successive attainments. Some are frightened by the path of action associated with the ten non-virtues and instead relish the experience of the ten qualities of no-more-training. Some are frightened by the conditioned elements and instead relish the taste of the unconditioned elements. All such monks should be known to be excessively proud.

1.44 “And why? Venerable Ānanda, because all of that amounts to boasting, conceit, and construction. Venerable Ānanda, however much a monk is involved in boasting, conceit, construction, thoughts of something high, thoughts of something low, appropriation, relinquishment, conceptualization, dependence, clinging, and superimposition—that much will he be afflicted by excessive pride. Hence, venerable Ānanda, all such monks should be known as excessively proud. And why is that? Because, venerable Ānanda, anyone who does not engage with emptiness—the emptiness that is the emptiness of the conditioned elements and the emptiness that is the emptiness of the unconditioned elements—as sameness must be known as excessively proud.”

1.45 Venerable Ānanda then asked youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, how, then, is a monk who is not excessively proud?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Venerable Ānanda, a monk who, because he himself is at peace within, sees all outer objects as at peace—such a monk has no conceited ideas about ‘the same’ or ‘not the same,’ ‘knowledge’ or ‘ignorance,’ ‘perception’ or ‘non-perception,’ ‘the conditioned’ or ‘the unconditioned.’ [F.146.a] He does not think, does not conceive, does not divide things in two, does not unite them in one, does not accept, does not reject, does not scatter, and does not cling. He truly observes that while all phenomena are the same as the limit of reality, they are the same through a sameness that is beyond being the same or being not the same, and as there is nothing whatsoever to be made the same or to be made not the same, he does not truly observe anything that is that sameness. Hence, as he has no conceit, does not think, does not conceive, and does not cling, it goes without saying that he is without any conceit regarding his attainment, his understanding, or his realization. There is no basis for it.

- 1.46 “Venerable Ānanda, such a monk is free from excessive pride. For him, there is no remedy and no position. He is free of a position for himself and a position for others. All feelings have been interrupted. He is free from feeling, from all absence of feeling, from all perceptions, all thoughts, and all ways of directing the mind. He has no bondage and no appropriation. He is at peace, thoroughly at peace, utterly at peace. Since he has no thought of ‘I’ or ‘mine,’ he does not truly observe that there is any quality to relinquish, understand, or realize. When a monk is like this, he does not harbor any excessive pride.
- 1.47 “When he understands the sameness of all phenomena by means of the sameness of the element of space, he will not superimpose on any phenomena that they are ‘virtuous’ or ‘unvirtuous,’ ‘evil’ or ‘good,’ ‘defiled’ or ‘undefiled,’ ‘mundane’ or ‘supramundane,’ [F.146.b] ‘conditioned’ or ‘unconditioned.’ While not making such superimpositions, he will also not develop conceit about them, will not think them, and will not conceive of them, for he does not truly observe them. Without superimposing anything on phenomena, he understands that they are all the same in their very sameness, the very same just like space. Venerable Ānanda, any monk who becomes inspired in this way is known as truly and fully liberated; that is why he is not proud. It is with this in mind that the Blessed One has taught, ‘Space does not stick to the palm of one’s hand; so too, are a spiritual practitioner’s qualities.’”
- 1.48 When Mañjuśrī had given this teaching, two hundred monks experienced their minds’ liberation from defilement with no further appropriation.
- 1.49 At that point the god Ratnavara inquired of youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, how should a bodhisattva who is free from pride reveal his knowledge?”
- In reply, Mañjuśrī explained, “Divine being, the omniscient mind, the mind that is equal to the unequaled, the mind that is superior to all of the three worlds, the mind that is entirely beyond the hearers and solitary buddhas—when bodhisattvas do not perceive that mind to be present inside, outside, or both, such bodhisattvas do not perceive any movement of the mind toward external objects or any abiding there, and yet their mind does move for the sake of accumulating roots of virtue, ripening sentient beings, and upholding the sacred Dharma. Thus their omniscient mind expresses itself to other sentient beings and to other persons while they understand that that mind, too, has the essential nature of the limit of reality. When asked, they reply that through the essential nature of their mind they understand the essential nature of all beings. Through the essential nature of all beings, [F.147.a] they understand the essential nature of all phenomena. Through the essential nature of all phenomena, they understand the essential nature of all roots of virtue. Through the essential nature of all roots of virtue, they reveal the essential nature of a bodhisattva. This, divine being, is the bodhisattvas’ revelation of their correct knowledge.
- 1.50 “Divine being, moreover, when bodhisattvas, as they practice generosity, give by relinquishing the gift, the giver, the recipient, the context of giving, and the purpose of the gift, such bodhisattvas rely on nothing and do not remain fixed on anything. They have no attachment, do not hope for anything, do not focus on anything, and do not

truly observe anything. When asked, they reply that they understand that the essential nature of giving is utter relinquishment, utter absence of goals, and utter emptiness. Through the essential nature of giving they understand the essential nature of the limit of reality. Through the essential nature of the limit of reality they understand the essential nature of all phenomena. Through the essential nature of all phenomena they understand the essential nature of all beings, and through the essential nature of all beings they reveal the essential nature of a bodhisattva. This, divine being, is the bodhisattvas' revelation of their correct knowledge purified through generosity.

1.51 "Divine being, moreover, when bodhisattvas, being physically at peace, understand that discipline is at peace; and being verbally and mentally at peace, understand that discipline is at peace; and being physically, verbally, and mentally at peace, understand that awakening is at peace; and as awakening is at peace, understand that all sentient beings are at peace; and as all sentient beings are at peace, understand that all phenomena are at peace; and as all phenomena are at peace, understand that the limit of reality is known as "at peace;" for them, as the limit of reality is at peace, they are at peace, thorough peace, and utter peace. [F.147b] Hence, when asked, they reveal that all phenomena are at peace. This, divine being, is the bodhisattvas' revelation of their correct knowledge purified through discipline.

1.52 "Divine being, moreover, when bodhisattvas understand the utterly fleeting, momentary, and hollow nature of reality, they are patient regarding all the woes that sentient beings may cause, and patient without their minds being actuated externally or internally;¹¹ and without directing any aggressive contemplation externally they are patient regarding all the misdeeds of sentient beings. They understand that the essential nature of all beings is the essential nature of patience; that the essential nature of patience is the essential nature of awakening; and that the essential nature of awakening is the essential nature of all phenomena. They thus understand also that all phenomena are of the essential nature of the limit of reality. When asked, they reply that because they understand the fleeting, momentary, and hollow nature of reality, they reveal their patience by not being moved. This, divine being, is the bodhisattva's revelation of his correct knowledge purified through patience.

1.53 "Divine being, moreover, when bodhisattvas understand the teaching¹² of disengagement from all contemplation and are free of superimpositions, their diligence will have equanimity and they will truly observe that whatever exertion they might undertake is itself disengagement. With this inward disengagement, without moving outwardly they move to ripen others. Through the disengagement of their diligence they understand the disengagement of sentient beings. Through the disengagement of sentient beings they understand the disengagement of awakening. Through the disengagement of awakening they understand the disengagement of all phenomena. Through the disengagement of all phenomena they understand the disengagement of the limit of reality. When asked, they reveal that their diligence is disengaged in just the

same way as all those things are, by their nature, disengaged. [F.148.a] This, divine being, is the bodhisattva's revelation of his correct knowledge purified through diligence.

1.54 "Divine being, moreover, when bodhisattvas practice concentration on all phenomena being the same and having no differences, they do not place their minds to remain in that concentration and make their consciousness dwell on it. Without their consciousness dwelling on it they understand, through the sameness of mind, that concentration is sameness. Through the sameness of their concentration they understand the sameness of awakening. Through the sameness of awakening they understand the sameness of all sentient beings. Through the sameness of all sentient beings they understand the sameness of all phenomena. They know that it is in this way that all phenomena are said to be the same. When asked, they reveal that, because they are all of just that sameness by nature, all phenomena are sameness. This, divine being, is the bodhisattva's revelation of his correct knowledge purified through concentration.

1.55 "Divine being, moreover, when bodhisattvas see all phenomena through their pure wisdom by means of the eye of insight, they do not truly see any phenomenon. When they see in that way, in which they do not truly see any phenomena, there is nothing at all. Having attained an understanding of there not being anything at all, they do not move, proceed, or transfer anywhere. Having interrupted all moving, proceeding, and transferring, they do not transmigrate; they do not transmigrate at all. Why is that? It is because they have interrupted what sets transmigration in motion—desire, craving, and wishing. Without pursuing any desires at all, they intentionally move through various births in order to ripen beings, gather the factors of awakening, uphold the sacred Dharma, and ensure the unbroken continuity of the lineage of the Three Jewels. [F.148.b] They move without moving and without upsetting the characteristic purity of the nature of all phenomena. As this is their insight, through the nature of insight they understand awakening. Through the nature of awakening they understand the nature of sentient beings. Through the nature of sentient beings they understand the nature of all phenomena, and they also know that all phenomena are of the nature of the limit of reality. When asked, they reveal the indivisible nature of the realm of phenomena. This, divine being, is the bodhisattva's revelation of his correct knowledge purified by means of the eye of insight.

1.56 "Divine being, moreover, when bodhisattvas observe the body and apply mindfulness, they know that the body of the past was unborn. They know that the body of the future does not transfer. And they understand that the present body is similar in essence to grass, trees, walls, rocks, or visual aberrations. When they observe the body, they understand that the nature of the body is non-arising, and so they do not instigate any contemplation that involves notions of the body. Those who do not instigate contemplation will not dwell on any concerns. Free from concerns and with a consciousness that does not dwell, they train in observing the body and applying mindfulness to it, yet they neither cultivate nor eliminate any phenomena at all.

- 1.57 “Having understood that all phenomena are without reality, they observe the body with the understanding that the mind that observes the body is also just like a magical illusion or an echo. With this insight they are neither attached to pleasant feelings nor hostile to painful ones, [F.149.a] and since they are also not confused with respect to feelings that are neither painful nor pleasant, they are not predisposed to ignorance. When they are no longer ravished by feelings, then this is their application of mindfulness to the observation of feelings.
- 1.58 “As they observe and dwell on feelings, their minds are not moved by any movement of their feelings about phenomena, and as their minds therefore do not dwell upon any phenomenon, they do not abandon, discard, or relinquish the mind of awakening. This is their application of mindfulness to the observation of the mind.
- 1.59 “With their knowledge of phenomena actualized, they observe phenomena. At that point they are free from mindfulness and contemplation, and so they understand the intrinsic nature. They no longer entertain any notions, contemplation, views, or entanglements with respect to body, feelings, mind, or phenomena. This is their application of mindfulness to the observation of phenomena.
- 1.60 “They understand all phenomena to be intrinsically non-arising and devoid of substance, like the essential nature of space. Hence, when asked, they reveal their applications of mindfulness through being free of mindfulness and conditioning. This, divine being, is the bodhisattva’s revelation of his correct knowledge purified by means of the applications of mindfulness.
- 1.61 “Divine being, moreover, the correct knowledge of bodhisattvas is what causes them to assimilate the mind of omniscience, to notice it, stabilize it, ensure that it is not lost, ensure that there is no distraction from it, and ensure that it is not forgotten. At the beginning it precedes all roots of virtue. It is free from stinginess and relinquishes all possessions. It abandons attitudes of flawed discipline and in the aggregate of discipline it is without dwelling. It harbors no wish to harm any being, is free of strife, [F.149.b] and inflicts no injury with body, speech, or mind. It does not practice the diligence of a listener or a solitary buddha but does undertake the diligence of the Great Vehicle. It does not direct the mind to unvirtuous phenomena or pay attention to them but cultivates non-dwelling in any concentration or equilibrium. It does not move toward all the aspects of a view and does not project out to phenomena; it engages with all phenomena without mediation. It engages with the thoughts of sentient beings. It does not move toward objects.
- 1.62 “It adheres to noble beings and does not associate with those who are not noble. It is irreproachable with respect to the actions of body, speech, and mind. It is assiduously careful and pursues the qualities of the buddhas. Without needing direction, it comprehends all needs. It is pure, having relinquished desire, anger, and bewilderment. Since its discipline is flawless, it is free from all torments, and is not involved with mistaken practices. Because of its complete inner purity, it is free from hypocrisy, and because of its purity with respect to speech, it knows no flattery. Content with what it

finds, it does not search. Having abandoned negative forms of livelihood, it does not take over others' property. Content with the bare necessities, it knows no deceit. Not aiming for the three worlds, it has modest wishes. Free from unvirtuous wishes, it is content. Inclined to the disengagement of all phenomena, it is disengaged. Having relinquished mundane activities, it keeps few things.

1.63 "Having cut through all mental constructs, it is free from thoughts. Without intention, anger, fear, or bewilderment, it is immutable. Having conquered pride, it takes delight in the Dharma. With a well-trained mind, it is noble. With the aggregate of discipline, it is guarded in all respects. [F.150.a] With the aggregate of absorption, this mind does not dwell anywhere. With the aggregate of insight, this mind is liberated. Never does it abandon the lineage of the noble ones, nor does it ever spoil the vow of the mind of awakening. It does not pursue gain and honor, nor does it pander to others. It guards itself for the sake of guarding others. Being certain of its own intentions, it does not seek the mistakes of others. Observing discipline, it is free from all fears. Without being tightfisted, it shares the Dharma. It protects the mental activities of all beings. At the beginning it precedes all virtuous dharmas. Experiencing all phenomena as of one taste, it is beyond differences with respect to activity. Having conquered all forms of conceit, it is free from conceit.

1.64 "In the discernment that there is no birth, it intentionally takes birth in order to ripen sentient beings; and in the discernment that all phenomena are empty from the beginning, too, it also ripens sentient beings so as to subdue all views. While acting in full acquaintance with the absence of marks, it nevertheless considers all sentient beings who engage with marks. Without any wishes, it nevertheless perfects all aspirations for the sake of omniscient wisdom. In the discernment of the absence of formations, it is nevertheless insatiable in forming roots of virtue. Since it sees entities as nonentities, it comprehends both entity and nonentity. Free from any concerns, it does not keep anything in mind. Leading sentient beings to the absence of self, it knows the self to be without self. Relinquishing affliction while not relinquishing sentient beings, it is both relinquishing and non-relinquishing. Cultivating skillful means and insight, it is peaceful beyond both peace and lack of peace. [F.150.b] In distinction from hearers and solitary buddhas, it proceeds without proceeding. Beyond the paths of the māras, this is the path of no path. In distinction from childish, ordinary beings, this is the activity of non-action. As it understands all phenomena, it is sameness that neither raises things up nor puts them down. Without any conceited superiority over others, it does not make proclamations regarding itself. Perfecting all the qualities of a buddha, it is an unequaled understanding. Accepting all phenomena as unborn and unceasing, it is the acceptance of the non-arising of phenomena. Divine being, such is the knowledge of bodhisattvas.

1.65 "Divine being, being unborn and unoriginated is not what bodhisattvas' minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas' minds embrace birth within cyclic existence and perfect the qualities of a buddha.

- “Being despondent and free from desire is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds take delight, supreme delight, in correctly knowing the qualities of a buddha.
- 1.66 “Being without connection to future existences is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds know the way to take birth.
“A complete severance is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds are a continuity of roots of virtue.
- 1.67 “A lack of concern for the roots of virtue is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds are insatiable for the roots of virtue.
“Relinquishing the process of taking birth within the three realms is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds knowingly take birth to ripen sentient beings.
- 1.68 “Eliminating only their own afflictions is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds work diligently to eliminate the afflictions of all sentient beings. [F.151.a]
“Acting for themselves is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds act to pacify the suffering of all sentient beings.
- 1.69 “Leaving anyone uncared for is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds reach out to ripen sentient beings.
“Exhausting desire, anger, bewilderment, and affliction is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds have complete knowledge of desire, anger, bewilderment, and affliction.
- 1.70 “Actualizing the qualities of cessation is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds have complete familiarity with cessation.
“Exhausting defilements is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds are familiar with defilement by means of roots of virtue.
- 1.71 “Actualizing the three gateways of liberation is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds are familiar with the three gateways of liberation.
“Putting down the load of the five aggregates is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds cause all beings to put down their loads.
- 1.72 “Blocking the six faculties is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds know all the different faculties of beings, whether superior or not.
“Bringing an end to birth is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds engage in the process of taking birth.
- 1.73 “Attaining the result that is the liberation of hearers and solitary buddhas is not what bodhisattvas’ minds are like. Rather, bodhisattvas’ minds sustain all beings with the result of liberation at the seat of awakening.” [F.151.b]
- 1.74 When Mañjuśrī delivered this section of teaching on the revelation of correct knowledge, ten thousand beings within the gathering gave rise to the mind of unexcelled and perfect awakening. The Blessed One also expressed his approval to youthful Mañjuśrī, saying, “Well said, Mañjuśrī, well said. You have explained the

bodhisattvas' revelation of their knowledge well. Mañjuśrī, any bodhisattva who hears this teaching on the revelation of knowledge and is inspired, fearless, is unafraid and does not panic will awaken to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood and reveal the correct knowledge of the thus-gone ones." [B2]

1.75 Now the god Ratnavara asked youthful Mañjuśrī, "Mañjuśrī, do you reveal this knowledge?"

Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine being, had I attained or relinquished something I might also reveal knowledge. But, divine being, since I have not attained or relinquished anything, what sort of knowledge could I reveal?"

The god asked, "But Mañjuśrī, have you not gained or realized anything from following those blessed buddhas who are more abundant than the number of grains of sand in the River Ganges?"

Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine being, the blessed buddhas do not teach the Dharma for the sake of attainment and realization."

1.76 "But how, Mañjuśrī, do they then teach the Dharma?"

Mañjuśrī said, "Divine being, the blessed buddhas teach the Dharma by means of the indivisible nature of the realm of phenomena. They do not teach the Dharma for the sake of no arising, no ceasing, no raising up, no putting down, no coming, no going, no sentient beings, [F.152.a] separation from sentient beings, affliction, purification, cyclic existence, or the transcendence of suffering. Divine being, this is how the blessed buddhas teach the Dharma."

1.77 The god asked, "But Mañjuśrī, if the blessed buddhas do not teach the Dharma for the sake of the transcendence of suffering, then why do they appear?"

Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine being, the buddhas appear so that the essential nature of the view of the transitory collection may be realized. Divine being, the buddhas appear in order to reveal the essential nature of ignorance and craving within existence. Divine being, the buddhas appear for the sake of the realization of the essential nature of desire, anger, and delusion. Divine being, the buddhas appear in order to show that the nature of error is sameness. Divine being, the buddhas appear so that all features of the various views may be realized. Divine being, the buddhas appear in order to reveal that the essential nature of the aggregates, elements, and sense sources is the realm of phenomena. Divine being, the expression 'the buddhas appear' is a reference to all phenomena being unborn. Where no phenomena at all are born, there is neither any cyclic existence nor any transcendence of suffering."

1.78 The god asked, "Mañjuśrī, if that is so, then those sentient beings who don armor for the sake of unexcelled and perfect awakening have no need for that armor. Why? Because the appearance of the buddhas does not benefit anyone."

1.79 Mañjuśrī asked, "Divine being, tell me, how is benefit differentiated?"

"Mañjuśrī," replied Ratnavara, "benefit is differentiated through formation."

1.80 "Divine being, do you then also claim that the thus-gone ones are subject to formation?" [F.152.b]

- “No, Mañjuśrī, I do not. Formation does not pertain to the thus-gone ones. They have discovered the unconditioned and are unconditioned, and formation is therefore not relevant to them.”
- 1.81 “Divine being,” declared Mañjuśrī, “according to your contention, neither benefit nor harm can be observed with respect to the unconditioned.”
- 1.82 The god said, “Mañjuśrī, you should not deliver this Dharma teaching when beginners are present. Why would I say so? Because if they hear it, they will become frightened, and when frightened they will regress.”
- 1.83 Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, the fear and regression of beginner bodhisattvas abide within irreversibility itself.”
- 1.84 “Mañjuśrī, what makes you say that?”
“Divine being, frightened by the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas, beginner bodhisattvas turn back from stinginess, flawed discipline, hostility, laziness, distraction, and misguided intelligence. That is how they genuinely abide within irreversibility.”
- 1.85 “Mañjuśrī, what do you mean by ‘genuinely abide’?”
“Divine being, genuinely abiding is to abide neither evenly nor not evenly.”
- 1.86 “Mañjuśrī, how does a beginner bodhisattva abide?”
“Divine being, when one rests in sameness by means of non-abiding within the sameness of the realm of phenomena—that is the abiding of a beginner bodhisattva.”
- 1.87 “Mañjuśrī, when is one a beginner bodhisattva?”
“Divine being, one is referred to as a beginner bodhisattva when, for the very first time, one becomes inspired by the Dharma of emptiness, [F.153.a] the absence of marks, the absence of wishes, no arising, and no origination.”
- 1.88 “Mañjuśrī, what is a bodhisattva with extensive experience?”
“Divine being, childish and ordinary beings are the ones who have extensive experience, because the beginning of their cyclic existence cannot be observed.”
- 1.89 “Mañjuśrī, how do bodhisattvas maintain their conduct?”
“Divine being, bodhisattvas maintain their conduct by engaging in activities of desire in order to ripen those who experience desire, yet they do not dwell on the experience of desire. For the sake of ripening those who experience anger they engage in activities of anger, yet they do not dwell on the experience of anger. For the sake of ripening those who experience bewilderment they engage in activities of bewilderment, yet they do not dwell on the experience of bewilderment. For the sake of ripening those who experience all the afflictions, they engage in activities of all of the afflictions, yet they do not dwell on any of the afflictions. Divine being, for the sake of ripening sentient beings the bodhisattvas engage with all the features of sentient beings’ experiences, yet bodhisattvas do not disturb the characteristics of the realm of phenomena. Hence, when this is the case one maintains the conduct of a bodhisattva.”
- 1.90 “Mañjuśrī, what is an irreversible bodhisattva?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, a bodhisattva who neither fears anything nor is attached to anything, and who realizes the nature of the realm of phenomena by means of fearlessness and freedom from attachment—that is an irreversible bodhisattva. Divine being, moreover, whenever a bodhisattva turns back or enters, he is an irreversible bodhisattva. [F.153.b] Why is that? Because bodhisattvas return to the realm of desire and they enter the concentrations. Divine being, moreover, whenever a bodhisattva realizes what was not realized before and wholeheartedly refrains from dispute, he is an irreversible bodhisattva. Why? Because when the constituents of sentient beings, phenomena, and oneself, which were not realized, become directly perceptible, one becomes irreversible with respect to all phenomena. Such a person is referred to as irreversible. Without having to rely on the statements of others, one becomes free from hesitation, doubt, and uncertainty with respect to the qualities of a buddha. Hence one is stainless and pure from the beginning. In the absence of afflictions, the light of insight shines, one gains mastery with respect to all phenomena, and one actualizes all the qualities of a buddha. That is why one is referred to as irreversible.”

1.91 “Mañjuśrī, what are bodhisattva great beings, who have only one birth remaining, like?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, such bodhisattvas know all births to be devoid of birth and yet at the same time they know of the death and birth of all beings. For the sake of ripening sentient beings they display birth throughout all lives, accepting birth yet remaining free from appropriation. Free from appropriation throughout all births and lifetimes, such bodhisattvas are beyond death and birth. They do not waver from or pass beyond the sameness of all phenomena. They understand the significance of causes and conditions coming together. Their bodies are the same as the bodies of all beings. Their minds are the same as the minds of all beings. Their voices are the same as the voices of all sentient beings. Their realm is the same as the realm of all beings. They abide within the domain of the buddhas. They realize the domain of the realm of phenomena. They are the same due to the sameness of the realm of phenomena. [F.154.a] They know the thoughts of beings, are aware of time, and reach the ultimate seat of awakening. Divine being, this is what it means to be a bodhisattva who has only one birth remaining.”

1.92 The god Ratnavara asked youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, what are bodhisattvas, who are free from evil and beyond reproach, like?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine being, when bodhisattvas act by means of wisdom and not through pride, they are bodhisattvas who are free from evil and beyond reproach. Moreover, divine being, when giving away all their possessions based on the superior intent of the mind of awakening, they are free from evil. When not involved in stinginess, they are irreproachable. When observing the ascetic practices, trainings, disciplines, and all the commitments, they are free from evil. When not involved in flawed discipline, they are irreproachable. When not harboring anger toward anyone, they are free from evil. When not involved in the latent tendencies for covetousness and

- ill will, they are irreproachable. When they manifest the diligence that brings forth all roots of virtue, they are free from evil. When not involved in laziness, they are irreproachable. When resting in concentration and attainment, they are free from evil. When they do not relish the blissful taste of concentration, they are irreproachable. When diligently pursuing the learning that leads to insight, they are free from evil. [F.154.b] When not associated with misguided knowledge, they are irreproachable.
- 1.93 “When not retaliating when hurt by others, they are free from evil. When not retaliating when wounded by others, they are irreproachable. When saying things as they are, they are free from evil. When acting accordingly, they are irreproachable. When at peace within, they are free from evil. When not stained by outer objects, they are irreproachable. When not having different views with respect to the mind of omniscience, they are free from evil. When not having any interest in the lesser vehicles, they are irreproachable. When recognizing the works of the māras, they are free from evil. When thwarting the works of the māras, they are irreproachable. When attaining illumination within the world, they are free from evil. When unstained by worldly qualities, they are irreproachable.
- 1.94 “When not acting in conflict with what should be done, they are free from evil. When avoiding what should not be done, they are irreproachable. When free from pride, conceit, and arrogance, they are free from evil. When in possession of perfect wisdom, intelligence, and the truths of the noble ones, they are irreproachable. With steadfast resolve, they are free from evil. When living by their pledges, they are irreproachable. When being in harmony with the way of dependent origination, they are free from evil. When not grasping at the phenomena of dependent origination, they are irreproachable. [F.155.a] When comprehending the empty nature of all phenomena by means of insight and wisdom, they are free from evil. When skillfully gathering all roots of virtue, they are irreproachable.
- 1.95 “When engaging in all activities by means of great compassion, they are free from evil. When abiding in liberation with respect to all phenomena, they are irreproachable. When not observing any phenomena, they are free from evil. When teaching the Dharma for the sake of abandoning views that involve observation, they are irreproachable. When engaged in proper conduct without truly observing any phenomena they are free from evil. When manifesting the attainment of the fruition, they are irreproachable. When discerning the realm of phenomena to be empty, they are free from evil. When never giving up on any sentient being, they are irreproachable. When not dwelling in the three realms, they are free from evil. When not transcending suffering because of seeing sentient beings, they are irreproachable.
- 1.96 “Divine being, moreover, as much as one makes use of words, reflects by means of words, understands by means of words, and is attached to words—that much one is at fault. Divine being, as much as one understands that all phenomena are beyond explanation, engagement, reflection, thinking, conception, and expression, and as much as one does not pass beyond suffering in order not to abandon sentient beings—

that much one is free from evil and irreproachable. Divine being, someone who is free from evil and irreproachable is beyond words. That which is beyond words is inexpressible, and the inexpressible meaning is free from evil and beyond reproach. [F.155.b] Therefore, divine being, since bodhisattvas, who base themselves on the inexpressible meaning, emphasize their own minds, they are free from evil and beyond any reproach from noble beings.”

1.97 When youthful Mañjuśrī had given this teaching, the Blessed One expressed his approval. “Well said, Mañjuśrī, well said. You have explained well how bodhisattvas are free from evil and irreproachable. Mañjuśrī, when bodhisattvas become free from evil and beyond reproach in this way, the blessed buddhas prophesy their unsurpassed and perfect awakening.”

1.98 When they heard this teaching, five hundred bodhisattvas within the gathering gained acceptance of the non-arising of phenomena. The Blessed One also delivered a prophecy regarding their unexcelled and perfect awakening, specifying their individual buddha realms and declaring their names as thus-gone ones.

1.99 At that time some gods within the gathering wondered, “When might the god Ratnavara awaken to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood? What might his buddha realm be like? And under what name will he attain awakening?”

1.100 Then, by the power of the Buddha, venerable Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “When will the god Ratnavara awaken to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood? What will his buddha realm be like? And under what name will he attain awakening?”

The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, [F.156.a] one hundred thousand eons from now, during the eon known as Ratnasamvara, in a world to the east known as Pritivyūha, the god Ratnavara will awaken to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood; and so it will be that the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect buddha Ratnavyūha will appear in the world. Ānanda, the Pritivyūha world will be rich, vast, and delightful. There will be bountiful harvests, and it will be filled with gods and humans. It will know no unfree states or lower realms. Ānanda, in that world there will be no stones, pebbles, or gravel. The ground will be smooth like the palm of a hand and covered with three precious substances: beryl, crystal, and the gold of the Jambū River. Delightful to behold, it will be decorated with lattices of gold.

1.101 “Ānanda, the humans of that realm will experience enjoyments comparable to those of the gods in the Heaven of Delighting in Emanations. In that world food and drink will manifest simply by the mere thought of them. In that realm, ‘hearers’ and ‘solitary buddhas’ will be unheard of. The bodhisattvas there will enjoy various Dharma delights, Dharma liberations, concentrations, absorptions, attainments, and miraculous manifestations. They will experience nothing but the best, highest, and most delightful Dharma joys; that is why this realm will be known as Pritivyūha, ‘Array of Joy.’ The lifespan of the future buddha Ratnavyūha [F.156.b] will be six hundred million years, and his bodhisattva saṅgha will consist of six hundred million ordained bodhisattvas and innumerable bodhisattvas living as householders.

- 1.102 “When the Thus-Gone One Ratnavyūha teaches the Dharma to the bodhisattvas of that realm he will ascend into the sky to a height of eight hundred million palm trees. There his crossed legs will cover the entire celestial world and he will shine hundreds of thousands of light rays throughout the entire buddha realm. A rain of divine flowers, incense, and colored powder will fall from the sky while the gods sing hundreds and thousands of songs accompanied by the sounds of big and small cymbals.
- 1.103 “As those sounds are heard throughout the buddha realm, the bodhisattvas will receive a Dharma teaching in the form of a dhāraṇī gateway known as the inexhaustible gateway. What is that dhāraṇī gateway of the inexhaustible gateway? It teaches the disengagement of body and mind and is a gateway to the disengagement of all phenomena. It teaches the definitive understanding of phenomena and is a gateway to the comprehension of all phenomena. It teaches the pacification of all phenomena and is a gateway to connecting with the way all phenomena are. It teaches how phenomena are free from evil and is a gateway to genuine exertion with respect to all phenomena. It teaches the light of insight concerning phenomena and is a gateway to illuminating all phenomena. It teaches the absence of difference among phenomena and is a gateway to the sameness of all phenomena.
- 1.104 “It teaches the absence of distraction with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to tranquility with regard to all phenomena. It teaches the absence of conflict with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to special insight with regard to all phenomena. It teaches the non-disturbance of phenomena and is a gateway to the ascertainment of all phenomena. [F.157.a] It teaches the absence of forgetfulness with regard to phenomena and is a gateway to the recollection of all phenomena. It teaches the understanding of the meaning of phenomena and is a gateway to the understanding of all phenomena. It teaches the mind’s purity with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to intelligence concerning all phenomena. It teaches the way to conquer all the various views about phenomena and is a gateway to the emptiness of all phenomena. It teaches the peace of phenomena and is a gateway to the absence of marks with respect to all phenomena.
- 1.105 “It teaches the elimination of all transmigration with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to the absence of wishes with respect to all phenomena. It teaches the lack of formation of phenomena and is a gateway to the absence of formation with respect to all phenomena. It teaches the lack of establishment of phenomena and is a gateway to the non-arising of all phenomena. It teaches the non-dual nature of all phenomena and is a gateway to the non-occurrence of all phenomena. It teaches non-conceptuality regarding phenomena and is a gateway to freedom from desire for phenomena. It teaches the direct cognition of phenomena and is a gateway to the absence of constructs with respect to all phenomena. It teaches how all phenomena are free from duality and is a gateway to the non-duality of all phenomena. It teaches the immutability of all phenomena and is a gateway to the baseless nature of all phenomena.

1.106 “It teaches the sameness of sentient beings pertaining to phenomena and is a gateway to the absence of sentient beings pertaining to all phenomena. It teaches the unchanging nature of phenomena and is a gateway to non-doing with regard to all phenomena. It teaches the absence of activity with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to the non-appropriation of all phenomena. It teaches how to crush the ground of phenomena and is a gateway to the groundlessness of all phenomena. It teaches the absence of concerns with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to certainty about all phenomena. [F.157.b] It teaches how to accomplish the fruition of phenomena and is a gateway to the cause of all phenomena.

1.107 “It teaches the lack of forgetfulness of phenomena and is a gateway to diligence with respect to all phenomena. It teaches the absence of aggression with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to the deliverance of all phenomena. It teaches the unmistakable suchness of phenomena and is a gateway to the suchness of all phenomena. It teaches the indivisible nature of phenomena and is a gateway to the limit of reality of all phenomena. It teaches the one taste of phenomena and is a gateway to the realm of phenomena of all phenomena. It teaches the sameness of the three times with regard to phenomena and is a gateway to the actual state of all phenomena. It teaches non-attachment to the sounds and verbal expressions associated with phenomena and is a gateway to the inexpressible nature of all phenomena.

1.108 “It teaches the pacification of all phenomena and is a gateway to the concentrations that pertain to all phenomena. It teaches the absence of a person with respect to phenomena and is a gateway to the reality of all phenomena. It teaches the understanding of the sameness of phenomena and is a gateway to the awakening of all phenomena.

In this way, Ānanda, without arising from the center of space, the Thus-Gone One Ratnavyūha will teach the bodhisattvas these dhāraṇī gateways known as ‘the inexhaustible gateway,’ doing so in an elaborate and genuine manner. Thereby bodhisattvas beyond number and count will gain acceptance.”

1.109 Venerable Ānanda then exclaimed to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, the wisdom of the thus-gone ones is spontaneously accomplished and beyond formation. They therefore possess a wisdom vision that unimpededly perceives all phenomena—whether past, future, or present. What a wonder this is!”

1.110 The Blessed One responded, “Ānanda, [F.158.a] this wisdom of the thus-gone ones, spontaneously accomplished and beyond formation, which unimpededly perceives all phenomena of the past, future, and present, is indeed unique.”

1.111 Venerable Ānanda then turned to the god Ratnavara with the following words: “Divine being, the Thus-Gone One has prophesied your awakening to true and perfect buddhahood. You have gained something excellent.”

1.112 The god replied, “Venerable Ānanda, nothing can be observed to which any such prophecy could apply. How is that? Form is not the bodhisattva, and hence form is not something that can receive a prophecy. Neither are feeling, perception, formation, or

consciousness the bodhisattva. Therefore, they also cannot receive any prophecy. The earth element is not the bodhisattva, and hence it does not receive any prophecy. The elements of water, fire, and wind are not the bodhisattva either, and therefore those elements also do not receive any prophecy. Just as the eyes are not the bodhisattva and therefore cannot receive any prophecy, the same is the case with the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Name and form are not the bodhisattva, and hence name and form cannot receive any prophecy. The events of the past, future, and present are not the bodhisattva, and therefore the three times cannot receive any prophecy. Causes and views are not the bodhisattva. Therefore, causes and views cannot receive any prophecy either. Arising and disintegration are not the bodhisattva, and hence arising and disintegration cannot receive any prophecy.

1.113 “Venerable Ānanda, the term *bodhisattva* is a designation that functions as a basis for communication. [F.158.b] That, in turn, is the basis for peace. That which is at peace cannot in any way be prophesied. Venerable Ānanda, the term *prophecy* is a synonym for the fact that no phenomena can be grasped. Venerable Ānanda, it is when bodhisattvas do not grasp any phenomena—whether inner or outer, virtuous or unvirtuous, conditioned or unconditioned—that they receive a prophecy. Venerable Ānanda, the so-called prophecy for bodhisattvas is a declaration of the fact that no phenomena can be grasped at all. The prophecy declares that it is impossible to grasp any phenomena. The prophecy declares that all phenomena are devoid of abiding. The prophecy declares that all phenomena are unborn. The prophecy teaches the inconceivability of all phenomena; it shows them to be beyond thought. Venerable Ānanda, such is the prophecy for bodhisattvas.”

1.114 At this point the Blessed One expressed his approval to the god Ratnavara: “Excellent, divine being, excellent! It is indeed to bodhisattvas who realize such a teaching that the blessed buddhas prophesy awakening to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood.”

1.115 When the Blessed One had spoken these words, Māra Pāpīyān appeared with his armies, mounts, and retinue. When they all had gathered at the site where the Blessed One was residing, Māra Pāpīyān addressed the Blessed One: “Blessed One, why do you give prophecies to bodhisattvas instead of to listeners?”

1.116 The Blessed One replied, “Pāpīyān, bodhisattvas are well known and acknowledged by gods and humans throughout the great trichiliocosm. [F.159.a] This is why bodhisattvas receive such prophecies. Hearers are not acknowledged among gods and humans and hence they do not receive this prophecy. Evil māra, when a bodhisattva receives the prophecy, numerous sentient beings will arouse the mind aimed at unexcelled and perfect awakening. Yet if a listener received a prophecy, that would not be the case. As for those sentient beings who have entered the Great Vehicle, they will become irreversible. That, too, is why bodhisattvas and not hearers receive a prophecy.”

1.117 Mañjuśrī asked, “Pāpīyān, why have you come to this assembly?”

Māra Pāpīyān replied, “Mañjuśrī, when the Blessed One prophesied that the god Ratnavara will fully awaken to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood and become the Thus-Gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Ratnavyūha, some words could be heard in my realm. From all my palaces with their windows and archways, from our jewel trees, and from all our delightful and enjoyable places, the following words rang out: ‘The Blessed, Thus-Gone Śākyamuni has prophesied that the god Ratnavara will attain unexcelled and perfect awakening. More such prophecies will be given to other bodhisattvas. So, Pāpīyān, you should go there!’”

1.118 “Pāpīyān,” asked Mañjuśrī, “do you not rejoice in the prophecies of the bodhisattvas?”

Māra Pāpīyān replied, “Mañjuśrī, if it were prophesied that all the inhabitants of Jambudvīpa were to become worthy ones, I would indeed rejoice. But it is a different matter when even one single bodhisattva [F.159.b] is prophesied for unexcelled and perfect awakening. Why is that? Mañjuśrī, when a bodhisattva is given the prophecy of awakening to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood, all of my realms are threatened. Moreover, by means of the three vehicles such a bodhisattva will deliver a limitless, countless, and boundless number of sentient beings from the three realms. Mañjuśrī, this thought brings me to despair.”

1.119 Mañjuśrī replied, “Pāpīyān, whether you come here or not, you will not be able to create any obstacles for a bodhisattva who has set out with superior intent, who is endowed with skillful means, and who has departed by means of the perfection of insight. Why not? Because a bodhisattva who has set out with superior intent, who is endowed with skillful means, and who has departed by means of the perfection of insight is truly beyond the paths of the māras.”

1.120 By the power of the Buddha, Māra Pāpīyān then asked Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, how does one set out with superior intent, how does one become endowed with skillful means, and how does one depart by means of the perfection of insight?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Pāpīyān, when a bodhisattva does not pursue any trifling activities at all, such a bodhisattva will have set out with superior intent. When a bodhisattva sees that all the afflictions and all the activities of the māras are aids to the attainment of unexcelled and perfect awakening, such a bodhisattva is endowed with skillful means. When a bodhisattva does not keep company with any of the afflictions, such a bodhisattva will have departed by means of the perfection of insight.

1.121 “Pāpīyān, moreover, when a bodhisattva with superior intent [F.160.a] dons the great armor for the sake of liberating all beings, such a bodhisattva will have set out with superior intent. When a bodhisattva gathers sentient beings through the four means of attraction, such a bodhisattva is endowed with skillful means. When a bodhisattva comprehends that the nature of all beings is the complete transcendence of suffering, such a bodhisattva will have departed by means of the perfection of insight.

- 1.122 “Pāpīyān, moreover, when a bodhisattva is motivated by the superior intent of the mind of awakening and thereby gives away all possessions without concern for any inner or outer entities, such a bodhisattva will have set out with superior intent. When a bodhisattva perceives all beings as worthy recipients of gifts, such a bodhisattva is endowed with skillful means. When a bodhisattva considers the giver and the recipient to be the sameness of the limit of reality, such a bodhisattva will have departed by means of the perfection of insight.
- 1.123 “Pāpīyān, moreover, when a bodhisattva cannot be turned back from the practice of engendering roots of virtue, such a bodhisattva will have set out with superior intent. When bodhisattvas are occupied with the wellbeing of others and set aside their own welfare, such bodhisattvas are endowed with skillful means. When a bodhisattva relies on the meaning and not on words and letters, such a bodhisattva will have departed by means of the perfection of insight.
- 1.124 “Pāpīyān, moreover, when a bodhisattva sees a beggar and responds with appreciation rather than anger, such a bodhisattva will have set out with superior intent. When a bodhisattva gathers roots of virtue and dedicates them to omniscience, such a bodhisattva is endowed with skillful means. When a bodhisattva fully understands that all phenomena are of the nature of awakening, such a bodhisattva will have departed by means of the perfection of insight.”
- 1.125 The god Ratnavara now said to Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, if Māra Pāpīyān, along with his armies, [F.160.b] mounts, retinue, and realm, were placed in confinement, then they could not create any obstacles for the noble sons and daughters who have entered the Great Vehicle.”
- 1.126 Mañjuśrī replied, “Noble son, placing Māra Pāpīyān in confinement is not becoming for a bodhisattva. Noble son, instead I shall transform Māra Pāpīyān so that he will come to possess all the physical marks of a buddha, be endowed with supreme bliss, sit on a lion throne, and teach the Dharma with the eloquence of a buddha.”
- 1.127 When Māra Pāpīyān heard these words, he attempted to become invisible and escape. However, due to the power of youthful Mañjuśrī, he was unable to become invisible and escape. At that point Mañjuśrī decided that the entire gathering should witness Māra Pāpīyān residing on a lion throne, adorned with all the physical marks of a buddha, so he said to Māra Pāpīyān, “Pāpīyān, you have attained the awakening of the thus-gone ones! You have the physical marks of a buddha and reside on a lion throne!”
- 1.128 Due to Mañjuśrī’s power, Māra Pāpīyān replied, “Mañjuśrī, when even the Blessed One himself has not attained awakening, how could I possibly have done so? Why is that? Awakening is characterized by an absence of desire for attainment. Therefore, in that absence of desire there is no attainment and no realization. Awakening is an attainment of the unconditioned, and the unconditioned is characterized by no attainment. Awakening is characterized by the realization of emptiness, yet emptiness cannot truly realize emptiness. Awakening is characterized by the absence of marks, [F.161.a] yet the absence of marks cannot truly realize the absence of marks. Awakening

is characterized by the absence of wishes, yet the absence of wishes cannot truly realize the absence of wishes. Awakening is the nature of the realm of phenomena, yet that nature cannot truly realize that nature. Awakening is characterized by indivisible suchness, yet suchness cannot truly realize suchness. Awakening abides within the limit of reality, yet the limit of reality cannot truly realize the limit of reality. Awakening is the essence of the lack of a self, a sentient being, a life force, a soul, a being, and a person. Therefore, it is not in any way something that can be fully realized. Mañjuśrī, moreover, bodhisattvas who hear this teaching on the characteristics of awakening without disturbing the characteristics of the essential nature of all phenomena should be declared to have awakened.”

1.129 When the māra gave this teaching, five hundred bodhisattvas attained acceptance of the non-arising of phenomena.

1.130 Venerable Śāradvatīputra then addressed youthful Mañjuśrī: “Mañjuśrī, due to your power, Māra Pāpīyān now has the complexion and physical marks of a thus-gone one and resides on a lion throne, teaching such profound matters—what a wonder this is!

1.131 Mañjuśrī replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, if I were to bless them in the same manner, even inanimate objects, such as the trees, grass, and forest here would display those features and teach the Dharma with the eloquence of a buddha. Likewise, were I to bless you, the elder Śāradvatīputra, you would also take the form of a buddha, displaying all the physical marks, [F.161.b] and you would also teach the Dharma with the eloquence of a buddha.”

1.132 At this point venerable Śāradvatīputra thought to himself, “If youthful Mañjuśrī were to transform me into the form and appearance of a buddha, a hearer would take the form of the Teacher, which would not be appropriate. I should therefore disappear from this gathering.”

1.133 However, due to Mañjuśrī’s power, he could not disappear. Knowing venerable Śāradvatīputra’s thoughts, Mañjuśrī now blessed Śāradvatīputra so that he appeared to the entire retinue in the form and appearance of a buddha seated upon a lion throne.

1.134 Mañjuśrī then said, “Now, venerable Śāradvatīputra, together with Māra Pāpīyān, please teach the Dharma, just like the Thus-Gone One does.”

1.135 Hence venerable Śāradvatīputra, in the form and appearance of a buddha, said to Māra Pāpīyān, who likewise was present in the form of a buddha, “Pāpīyān, how is the awakening of the thus-gone ones distinguished?”

Pāpīyān replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, the awakening of the blessed buddhas is distinguished by a realization of the sameness of all phenomena. It is distinguished by an understanding of the non-duality of Dharma and non-Dharma. It is distinguished by the consecration of the wisdom of omniscience. It is distinguished by a realization of the mental conduct of all beings. It is distinguished by a realization of all entities and nonentities. It is not distinguished by the destruction of entities. It is not distinguished

- by familiarization and the absence of entities. Still, it is not distinguished, [F.162.a] yet also not undistinguished either. It is without movement, free from movement, and the interruption of all movement, and so it does not come or go.”
- 1.136 Māra Pāpīyān then asked venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, what is the abode of the thus-gone ones?”
- Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “Pāpīyān, the thus-gone ones abide in the sameness of cyclic existence. They abide in the absence of conceit because of the transcendence of suffering. They abide in the characteristics of the essential nature of all views. They abide in the abode of all afflictions. They abide in the true and fundamental abode of all phenomena. They abide in the abode of the non-duality of the conditioned and the unconditioned. They abide by not abiding within any abodes. Pāpīyān, such is the abode of the thus-gone ones.”
- 1.137 Again, venerable Śāradvatīputra asked Māra Pāpīyān, “Pāpīyān, how should one pursue awakening?”
- Māra Pāpīyān said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, awakening is present at the root of the view of the transitory collection. It must be pursued from ignorance, the bonds of craving for existence, the fetters of error, obscurations, and hindrances.”
- 1.138 “Pāpīyān, what do you have in mind when you say this?”
- “Awakening, venerable Śāradvatīputra, is to understand these phenomena correctly as they are.”
- 1.139 When this teaching was given, the minds of eight hundred monks were liberated from defilements without any further appropriation. Among the gods who had faith in Śāradvatīputra and the gods who had faith in the factions of the māras, there were thirty-two thousand beings who aroused the mind set upon unexcelled and perfect awakening. It was for the sake of training those gods that youthful Mañjuśrī [F.162.b] caused Māra Pāpīyān and the elder Śāradvatīputra to appear with the body and physical marks of a buddha. Now youthful Mañjuśrī withdrew his power, and the elder Śāradvatīputra and Māra Pāpīyān both resumed their usual form.
- 1.140 From various buddha realms in the four directions many thousands of bodhisattvas now arrived. Descending from the sky, they all gathered before the Blessed One, worshipping him by bowing their heads to his feet. Having all circumambulated him three times, they took their place in the gathering to one side.
- Sitting there, those bodhisattvas said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, we heard this Dharma teaching on the indivisible nature of the realm of phenomena, so now we have come here to uphold the sacred Dharma. Blessed One, we shall uphold this Dharma teaching. We shall hold it, read it, and master it. So that the sacred Dharma may be upheld, we shall also teach it abundantly and correctly to others.”
- 1.141 Addressing the Blessed One, venerable Ānanda asked, “Blessed One, from where have all these bodhisattvas come?”

The Blessed One said, “Ānanda, they have gathered here from different buddha realms. Youthful Mañjuśrī ripened them and this Dharma teaching on the indivisible nature of the realm of phenomena has ripened them. Therefore, because of the gratitude and appreciation they feel for this Dharma teaching, they have come here to see the Thus-Gone One, [F.163.a] pay homage to him, and venerate him. They have also come to venerate Mañjuśrī and rejoice in this Dharma teaching. Ānanda, after I have passed beyond suffering, these bodhisattvas will uphold the sacred Dharma by spreading this Dharma teaching in Jambudvīpa. Ānanda, these bodhisattvas are diligently upholding the sacred Dharma of many hundreds of thousands of buddhas.”

1.142 At that time Śakra, Brahmā, and all the guardians of the world, who were present in the gathering, said, “Blessed One, we shall serve and venerate all holy beings, noble sons, noble daughters, and anyone else who upholds the sacred Dharma. We shall endeavor to protect them, guard them, and keep them from harm.”

1.143 The Blessed One then expressed his approval to Śakra, Brahmā, and the guardians of the world. “Friends, it is indeed excellent that you will exert yourselves in this way to protect the holy beings who uphold the sacred Dharma. Those who apply themselves to upholding the sacred Dharma are worshipping the buddhas of the past, the future, and the present.”

1.144 The Blessed One then spoke to Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, you must by all means bless this Dharma teaching, so that in future times it will be widely practiced in Jambudvīpa.”

1.145 Mañjuśrī replied, “Blessed One, you would not ask me, for example, to bless the element of space so that it would not get scorched during the eon of fire. [F.163.b] Similarly, Blessed One, since all phenomena are of the nature of the element of space, they are not subject to birth or cessation. That which is not born and does not cease, does not in any way have a nature that can be blessed. Blessed One, since no phenomenon can be blessed, their very essence is blessed. Nevertheless, Blessed One, in order that those noble sons and daughters, who revere the Dharma, who advance by means of the Dharma, and who are suitable vessels for such a profound discourse, may create roots of virtue, I request that the Thus-Gone One himself may bless this Dharma teaching. Blessed One, by all means, please grant your blessing so that all māras and opposing forces are overcome, so that there are no obstacles, and so that in the future this Dharma teaching will be practiced in Jambudvīpa.”

1.146 At that point the Blessed One radiated a golden light from his body, which was so bright that it illuminated the entire great trichiliocosm.

The Blessed One then said to youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, this light of the Thus-Gone One reaches everywhere. Just like that light, this Dharma teaching will also spread and pass into the hands of noble sons and daughters who have unimpaired knowledge and concern for the Dharma of the buddhas.”

1.147 The Blessed One said to venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, you should remember this Dharma teaching. You should hold it, recite it, and master it. You should teach it to others on a vast scale. In that way you will be worshipping the blessed buddhas of the

past, the future, [F.164.a] and the present.”

1.148 Ānanda inquired, “Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma teaching and how should it be remembered?”

The Blessed One declared, “Ānanda, you should remember this Dharma teaching as *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena*. You should also remember it as *The Inquiry of the God Ratnavara*. You should also remember it as *Youthful Mañjuśrī’s Instructions*.”

1.149 When the Blessed One had spoken these words, venerable Ānanda, youthful Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva Ratnavara, the bodhisattvas who had arrived from all the various buddha realms, as well as the world with its gods, humans, demigods, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

c.

COLOPHON

c.1 This was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi and the translator-editor, the venerable Yeshé Dé.

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NOTES

- 1 The sūtra is also included in the Mongolian and Korean (K22-8) canons.
- 2 Cambodia was at that time culturally influenced by India and home to a thriving Buddhist culture under royal patronage in the fifth and sixth centuries.
- 3 Skt. **Madhyamakaratnapradīpa*, Tib. *dbu ma rin po che'i sgron ma*. Although attributed to Bhāviveka (fl. 6th century) this Indian work, extant only in Tibetan translation (Toh 3854), refers to both Dharmakīrti and Candrakīrti (both fl. 7th century) and the attribution is hence contested. See Ruegg 2010, p. 23–24.
- 4 See the opening discussion in Bhāviveka, folios 259.b–260.a.
- 5 Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen, folio 198.b. English translation in Dol-bo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen 2006, p. 392.
- 6 See Maitreya-Asaṅga, *Madhyāntavibhāga*, I.14-15, folio 41.a.2.
- 7 See Maitreya-Asaṅga, II.14, folio 42.a.1, and Vasubandhu's commentary, folio 9.a.6–9.b.2.
- 8 Tib. *shes pa brda sprod pa 'gyur ba*. This complex term appears frequently in this sūtra. Following *Mahāvīyutpatti* 6419, the Sanskrit equivalent is *ājñāvyākaraṇa*. In Skt. *ājñā* means “instruction,” “command,” or “order,” and *vyākaraṇa* and the verb *vyākaroṭi* mean “explain/explanation,” “prophecy/prophesy,” “analyze/analysis,” “elucidate/elucidation,” or just “show,” “reveal/revelation,” or “manifest/manifestation” (see Monier-Williams s.v. *vyākaraṇa*). However, in the *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (Edgerton 1953) s.v. *ājñā*, we see that *ājñā* (Tib. *shes pa*), in Buddhist texts, has the sense of “correct knowledge,” and that it is a usage close to the Pāli equivalent *aññā*, meaning the sort of knowledge that comes with being an *arhat*. *Aññāṇ vyākaroṭi* is explained in *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* as “to manifest one's Arahantship (by a discourse or by mere exclamation).” See Pali Text Society s.v. *aññā*: “knowledge, recognition, correct knowledge, philosophic insight, knowledge par excellence, viz., Arahantship.” Based on these considerations, we translate *vyākaraṇa* as “reveal” and *ājñā* as “knowledge,” thus here arriving at “will... reveal their knowledge.”

- 9 The Degé Kangyur here reads: *de dag la rgyu de dang rkyen de dang ngo bo nyid de'i rnam par smin pa nyid mngon par 'grub par 'gyur ro*. However, the Stok Palace Kangyur has: *de dag la rgyu de dang rkyen de dag ngo bo nyid de'i rnam par smin pa nyid mngon par 'grub par 'gyur ro*, which seems more likely to be correct, although it is notable that the Shey Kangyur reads the same as the Degé. The Kangxi, Lithang, and Choné Kangyurs hedge their bets with *...rgyu de dang rkyen de dag dang ngo bo nyid...*
- 10 This may refer to the nine realms of existence within *samsāra*: the realm of desire plus the four form realms and the four formless realms.
- 11 The Degé Kangyur here reads *gang gi tshe phyi nang gi sems kun nas mi slong bar bzod pa dang /*, but the Stok Palace and Narthang have *gang gis phyi nang gi sems...*
- 12 The word *chos* (*dharma*) here could be understood in several other ways, including “quality,” “factor,” “the Dharma,” or perhaps “phenomena.”

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Acceptance of the non-arising of phenomena

mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa

མི་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་བཟོད་པ།

anutpattikadharmakṣānti

An attainment characteristic of the effortless and spontaneous wakefulness of the 8th ground of the bodhisattvas.

g.2 Affliction

kun nas nyon mongs pa

ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

saṃkleśa

The process of karma, afflictions of the mind, and suffering.

g.3 Aggregate of discipline

tshul khrims kyi phung po

ཚུལ་ལྷིམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ།

śīlaskandha

One of the five undefiled aggregates (*pañca anāsravaskandha*, *zag med kyi phung po lnga*), also known as the five aggregates beyond the world (*lokottaraskandha*, *'jig rten las 'das pa'i phung po lnga*), the others being the aggregates of absorption (*samādhi*), insight (*prajñā*), liberation (*vimukti*), and liberated wisdom vision (*vimuktijñānadarśana*).

g.4 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

The buddha's cousin and principal attendant.

g.5 Anāthapiṇḍada

mgon med zas sbyin

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན།

Benefactor of the Buddha.

g.6 Appropriation

len pa

ལེན་པ།

ādana, upādana

Also means “grasping” or “clinging;” but has a particular meaning as the ninth of the twelve links of dependent arising, between craving (*trṣṇā*, *sred pa*) and becoming or existence (*bhava*, *srid pa*).

g.7 Ascetic practices

sbyangs pa'i yon tan

སྤྱངས་པ་འཇོག་ཏུ་ན།

dhūtaguṇa

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

g.8 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

A divine being who rules the Brahma realm.

g.9 Buddha realm

sangs rgyas kyi zhing

སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང།

buddhakṣetra

The realm permeated by a buddha's teaching and blessing.

g.10 Disengagement

dben pa

དབེན་པ།

viveka · vivikta · viviktatā

This term usually has to do with a subjective state of ‘isolation,’ ‘separation,’ or ‘withdrawal,’ rather than a metaphysical idea. The *Akṣayamatīrdeśa-sūtra* contains a more or less parallel discussion of *dben pa nyid* in connection with diligence: “*de la 'jug pa gang zhe na gang dge ba'i rtsa ba thams cad rtsom pa'o/ gnas pa gang zhe na. gangs sems dben pa'o.*” Jens Braarvig translates this passage: “What then is activity? Undertaking all roots of good. What then is stillness? Aloofness of thought.” (Braarvig, vol. 1, pp. 175-76; vol. 2, p. 50.) Here *sems dben pa* is glossed in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśatīkā* (of Vasubandhu or perhaps Sthiramati) as: *sems dben pa ni mi dge ba spangs pa dang dge ba rtsom pa gang la yang mi rtog pa'o*. This can be translated as, “Disengagement of one's thought is not thinking at all about giving up the non-virtuous and undertaking the virtuous.” In any case, the term *viviktatā* in this context and in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* does not seem to be about emptiness, but more about a type of aloof or disengaged diligence that does not conceptualize the virtues and non-virtues of the actions undertaken.

g.11 Eight flaws

log pa nyid brgyad

ལོག་པ་ཉིད་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭamithyātva

Eight misunderstandings of the way things are.

g.12 Eight-fold path of the noble ones

'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad pa

འཕགས་པའི་ལམ་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་པ།

āryāṣṭāṅgamārga

Eight factors whereby the training on the path of cultivation takes place.

g.13 Excessive pride

mngon pa'i nga rgyal

མངོན་པའི་རྒྱལ།

abhimāna

A conceited, false sense of attainment. One of seven types of pride related to the spiritual path.

g.14 Factors of awakening

byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos

བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཕྱོགས་གྱི་ཚོས།

bodhipakṣyadharmā

Thirty-seven practices that lead the practitioner to the awakened state: the four applications of mindfulness, the four thorough relinquishments, the four bases of miraculous power, the five faculties, the five powers, the eightfold path, and the seven branches of awakening.

g.15 Five obscurations

sgrib pa lnga

སློབ་པ་ལྔ།

pañcanivarāṇāni

A set of mental factors that hinder discipline, concentration, and insight.

g.16 Four errors

phyin ci log bzhi

ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་བཞི།

catvāro viparyāsāḥ

Taking what is impermanent to be permanent, what is painful to be delightful, what is unclean to be clean, and what is no self to be a self.

g.17 Four perceptions

'du shes bzhi

འདུ་ཤེས་བཞི།

catuḥ-samjñā

The factual perceptions of that which is impermanent, painful, unclean, and devoid of self.

g.18 God

lha'i bu

ལྷ་འི་བུ།

devaputra

A being of any of the many levels of celestial or divine realms according to Buddhist cosmology.

g.19 Great trichiliocosm

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

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ལམས།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

A universe containing one billion worlds.

g.20 Heap of Jewels

dkon mchog brtsegs pa

དོན་མཚན་བརྗེས་པ།

Ratnakūṭa

A collection of texts comprising a section of the Kangyur as well as of the Chinese Buddhist canon. See the [Reading Room "About"](http://read.84000.co/section/O1JC114941JC14667.html#summary) (<http://read.84000.co/section/O1JC114941JC14667.html#summary>) tab notes for details.

g.21 Heaven of Delighting in Emanations

'phrul dga'

འཕྲུལ་དགའ།

Nirmāṇarati

The second highest of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.22 Jambū river

'dzam bu chu bo

འཛམ་བུ་རྩེ་བོ།

Jambūnadi

A divine river.

g.23 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu gling

འཛམ་བུ་གླིང།

The continent to the south of Mt. Sumeru, where according to Buddhist cosmology “the world as we know it” is located.

g.24 Jeta Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

Jetavana

A park outside Śrāvastī. It was donated to the Buddha by Anāthapiṇḍada, who purchased it at great cost from Prince Jeta.

g.25 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇོ་ན་མི་བྲ།

An Indian paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late 8th and early 9th centuries.

g.26 Limit of reality

yang dag pa'i mtha'

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

bhūtakoti

This term has three meanings: (1) a synonym for the ultimate nature, (2) the experience of the ultimate nature, and (3) the quiescent state of a worthy one (*arhat*) to be avoided by bodhisattvas.

g.27 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

A great bodhisattva, one of the eight “close sons” of the Buddha, the embodiment of wisdom.

g.28 Māra

bdud

བདུད།

A demonic being opposed to the spread of the Dharma and the happiness of beings.

g.29 Nine successive attainments

mthar gyis gnas pa'i snyoms par 'jug pa dgu

མཐར་ཀྱིས་གནས་པའི་སྙོམས་པར་འཇུག་པ་དགུ།

navānupūroavihārasamāpatti

The four concentrations, the four formless states, and the equilibrium of cessation.

g.30 Pāpiyān

sdig can

སྡིག་ཅན།

Demonic being (his name means “the wicked one”) who resides in the the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations.

g.31 Pritivyūha

dga' ba bkod pa

དགའ་བ་བོད་པ།

The world within which Ratnavara will attain enlightenment.

g.32 Purification

rnam par byang ba

རྣམ་པར་བྱང་བ།

vyavadāna

The purification of affliction.

g.33 Ratnavara

rin chen mchog

རིན་ཆེན་མཚོག།

Name of a bodhisattva god whose wish sets off the teaching of the sūtra.

g.34 Ratnavyūha

rin chen bkod pa

རིན་ཆེན་བོད་པ།

The name by which Ratnavara will be known when he becomes a buddha.

g.35 Realm of phenomena

chos kyi dbyings

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

dharmadhātu

A synonym for emptiness or the ultimate nature of things (see i.4). This term is interpreted variously—given the many connotations of *dharma* / *chos*—as the sphere, element, or nature, of phenomena, reality, or truth. In this text it is used with this general, Mahāyāna sense, not to be confused with its rather different meaning in the Abhidharma as one of the twelve sense sources (*āyatana*) and eighteen elements (*dhātu*) related to mental perception.

g.36 Relative

kun rdzob

ཀུན་རྫོབ།

saṅvṛti

Of seeming and apparent truth or reality.

g.37 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱའི་ན།

A divine being who rules the Heaven of the Thirty Three; equivalent to, or identified with, Indra.

g.38 Śākyamuni

shAkya thub pa

ཤཱཀྱ་ཐུབ་པ།

The buddha of this age; the historical buddha.

g.39 Śāradvatīputra

shA ra dwa tī'i bu

ཤར་དུ་ཉི་འུ།

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha, renowned for his pure observance of discipline. Also known as Śāriputra.

g.40 Seven bases of consciousness

rnam par shes pa'i gnas bdun

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པའི་གནས་བདུན།

sapta-vijñānasthiti

Seven categories that describe living beings in the higher realms, from humans up to the formless realm: 1) those different in body and different in perception; 2) those different in body and equal in perception; 3) those equal in body but different in perception; 4) those equal in body and equal in perception; 5) those reborn in the sphere of boundless space; 6) those reborn in the sphere of boundless consciousness; and 7) those reborn in the sphere of nothingness.

g.41 Seven branches of awakening

byang chub kyi yan lag bdun

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ཡན་ལག་བདུན།

saptabodhyaṅga

The set of seven factors that characteristically manifest on the path of seeing.

g.42 Six sense sources

skye mched drug

སྐྱེ་མཆོད་དུག།

ṣaḍāyatana

The five faculties along with the mind.

g.43 Six super-knowledges

mngon par shes pa drug

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་དུག།

ṣaḍabhijñā

Six modes of clairvoyant cognition.

- g.44 Śrāvastī
mnyan yod
 མཉམ་ཡོད།
 Ancient city of northern India.
- g.45 Subhūti
rab 'byor
 རབ་འབྱོར།
 One of the closest disciples of the Buddha.
- g.46 Surendrabodhi
su ren dra bo dhi
 སུ་རེན་ང་བོ་དྭོ།
 An Indian paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late 8th and early 9th centuries.
- g.47 Ten qualities of no-more-training
mi slob pa'i chos bcu
 མི་སྐྱོབ་པའི་ཚེས་བརྒྱ།
daśa-aśaikṣadharmā
 The eight practices of the eight-fold path of the noble ones as well as liberation and wisdom.
- g.48 Ten stages
sa bcu
 ས་བརྒྱ།
daśabhūmi
 The tenfold division of the progressive levels of realization attained and obscurations removed as a bodhisattva travels the path toward buddhahood. Also called the ten grounds or levels.
- g.49 Three gateways of liberation
rnam par thar pa'i sgo gsum · rnam par thar pa gsum
 རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པའི་སྐོག་གསུམ། · རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ་གསུམ།
trīṇi vimokṣamukhāni
 Absence of marks, absence of wishes, and emptiness.
- g.50 Ultimate
don dam pa
 དོན་དམ་པ།
paramārtha
 Of final truth or reality.
- g.51 View of the transitory collection
'jig tshogs la lta ba
 འཇིག་ཚོགས་ལ་ལྟ་བ།
satkāyadr̥ṣṭi
 The construction of personal identity in relation to the five aggregates.
- g.52 Yeshe Dé
ye shes sde

ཡེ་ཤེས་ལྷེ།

—

A prolific Tibetan translator active during the late 8th and early 9th centuries.