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Teaching the Five Perfections

Pañcapāramitānirdeśa

འཕགས་པ་པོའ་དུ་ཕྱིན་པ་ལྷ་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa pha rol tu phyin pa lnga bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “Teaching the Five Perfections”

Āryapañcapāramitānirdeśanāmamahāyānasūtra



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SUMMARY

- s.1 *Teaching the Five Perfections* is a compilation of five short sūtras that each present the practice of one of the five perfections in which bodhisattvas train on the path of the Great Vehicle: generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, and concentration. These five perfections embody the skillful methods of the bodhisattva path, and, as these sūtras show, they should always be combined with an understanding of the state of omniscience, the sixth perfection of insight that is supposed to permeate the practice of the first five perfections. The teachings are delivered by the Buddha as well as two of his close disciples, Śāradvatīputra and Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, who both teach the five perfections inspired by the Buddha's blessing.

ac.

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ac.2 The generous sponsorship of Liu Fan and family, which helped make the work on this translation possible, is most gratefully acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *Teaching the Five Perfections* is a compilation of five individual sūtras that each present the practice of one of the five perfections (*pāramitā*) in which bodhisattvas train on the path of the Great Vehicle: generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, and concentration. These five perfections embody the skillful methods of the bodhisattva path, and, as these sūtras emphasize, they should always be practiced in conjunction with an understanding of the state of omniscience, the sixth perfection of insight that is supposed to permeate the practice of the first five perfections. Throughout this sūtra, the perfection of insight is taught as the practice of turning one's mind to the omniscient state while transcending conceptual reference points. Only by integrating the perfection of insight into the practice of the other five trainings do they become genuine perfections.

i.2 *Teaching the Five Perfections* unfolds as a conversation between the Buddha and two of his close students, Śāradvatīputra, who is praised in the canonical literature as the foremost of the Buddha's disciples in terms of wisdom, and Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, who is lauded as the foremost preacher of the Dharma. As for these two outstanding disciples, we are told that they deliver their teachings on the perfections in a conversation inspired and guided by the Buddha's blessing. As is often the case in sūtra literature, this is one of the ways in which bona fide "words of the Buddha" (*buddhavacana*) can be expressed. A wide range of topics is addressed throughout the text, including the practice of nonconceptuality, the defining characteristics of bodhisattvas, the importance of dedicating merit toward omniscience, the distinction between bodhisattvas and hearers, and, of course, the distinctive practices of the five perfections themselves.

i.3 Over the course of discussing these topics, the Buddha and his two disciples address several challenging issues, such as defending the efficacy and legitimacy of meritorious actions once the lack of self has been realized, and repudiating objections that bodhisattvas do not voluntarily embrace

saṃsāra but are simply unable to obtain the cessation of the hearers and thus forced to remain in existence. In treating these and many other philosophical themes in detail, *Teaching the Five Perfections* thus provides a wealth of insight into the thought and practice of the Great Vehicle. The text presents the five central “methods” of the Great Vehicle in a manner that stands out from the highly codified presentations of the perfections that one finds in the commentarial literature. In this way the sūtra provides not only a wealth of doctrinal teachings but also a host of imaginative and humorous analogies that give us a rare glimpse of the cultural and social milieu in India during the time of its composition. As such, the text should be of interest to a contemporary readership concerned not only with the development of the Buddhist tradition and its scriptures, but also with classical Indian culture in general.

i.4 Today only two short manuscript fragments of *Teaching the Five Perfections* have survived in Sanskrit.¹ A complete Chinese translation by Xuanzang (ca. 602–64) does, however, exist.² Interestingly, the Chinese canon treats each of these five sūtras as individual scriptures, indicating that the texts most likely originally existed as distinct teachings that only later were compiled and united under a single title by the editors of the Tibetan Kangyur.³ Moreover, unlike the Tibetans, the Chinese tradition combines these five sūtras with the *Svoikrāntavoikrāmipariṣcchā* from the Prajñāpāramitā section of the Kangyur, which then is said to represent the teaching of the sixth perfection of insight.⁴ Since this English translation is based on the version found in the Degé Kangyur, we have here presented the five sūtras under the single title employed in that collection. As for the Tibetan translation, the translators for this particular text are listed in the colophon as the Indian preceptor Jinamitra and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé, who both flourished during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. As such, the Tibetan translation, which we have rendered into English here, would have been completed during the early translation period, a dating that is also attested by the text’s inclusion in the early ninth century Denkarma (*Idan dkar ma*) inventory of translations into Tibetan.⁵ This English translation from the Tibetan has been produced based on the Degé block print with reference to the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*).

The Translation

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

Teaching the Five Perfections

1. The Perfection of Generosity

[F.1.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

. CHAPTER 1: REJOICING .

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park at Śrāvastī, attended by a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks, all of whom were worthy ones who had exhausted their defilements, were without afflictions, self-controlled, their minds liberated, and their insight liberated; were of noble birth, great elephants who had accomplished their tasks, completed their work, laid down their burden, reached their goal, and had destroyed the bonds of existence; and, due to their perfect knowledge, had liberated their minds [F.2.a] and obtained supreme perfection in mastering all mental states. He was also attended by bodhisattva great beings, most of whom were youthful,⁶ and had only a single birth remaining; in keeping with the wishes of beings they had freed themselves from existence, yet accepted to be born within existence; and all of them were progressing irreversibly toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

1.3 Along with gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, all present were venerating, respecting, honoring, and paying homage to the Blessed One. As they did so, the well-gone one, the knower of the world, the unsurpassed charioteer who tames beings, the teacher of gods and humans, the blessed Buddha, taught the Dharma to all four assemblies, beginning with the six perfections themselves.

1.4 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of generosity, that generosity must be practiced without any formative factors."

- 1.5 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, you are the source of the entire Dharma. You are the chief of the entire Dharma. You are the teacher of the entire Dharma. For this reason, Blessed One, please explain to the monks what they should retain when they hear it from the Blessed One.” [F.2.b]
- 1.6 The Blessed One at first did not reply. But when he had been requested a second time he said, “Śāradvatīputra, I have appointed you, so be inspired to speak confidently, beginning with the perfection of generosity of bodhisattva great beings.”
- 1.7 Having been given the opportunity by the Blessed One, and due to the Blessed One’s power, Venerable Śāradvatīputra then began to explain and teach about the bodhisattva great beings’ perfection of generosity as follows.
- 1.8 “Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of generosity, they should first turn their focus to the omniscient state, and then practice generosity. If bodhisattva great beings practice generosity while focusing on the omniscient state, those bodhisattva great beings will be upholding the perfection of generosity. Bodhisattvas do not dedicate their generosity toward the level of the hearers or the level of the solitary buddhas, who have fallen into conceptual views and who do not practice dedicating merit. And why is that? Because they know they ought to be afraid of those states.”
- 1.9 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable One, why is it said that bodhisattva great beings are afraid of those states?”
- 1.10 Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “They are afraid of them because they fear arriving at the same result as the hearers.”
- 1.11 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, what is the difference between the practice of generosity of the bodhisattvas and the practice of generosity of the hearers, who practice generosity because they seek to actualize the state of a worthy one? How can they be differentiated?”
- 1.12 Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, [F.3.a] they can be distinguished, since one group dedicates their merit to reach omniscience, while the other dedicates it in order to reach the level of the hearers. Venerable One, to understand this, consider this analogy: One person may practice generosity out of the wish to be king, thinking, ‘How wonderful if I could be king!’ And yet another person may practice generosity out of a wish to become a servant, thinking, ‘How wonderful if I could be a subject in the country of that king!’ Now, when the latter person dedicates his merit in that way, would that person ever come to attain the same royal level that the former person aimed for?”

- 1.13 “Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings practice generosity and dedicate the merit with an eye to the state of omniscience, while the followers of the vehicle of the hearers practice generosity and dedicate the merit toward becoming a worthy one on the level of the hearers. In this way, one may wish to become a follower of either the noble hearers or the bodhisattvas. As such, individuals may have the power and strength to dedicate the practice of generosity toward the state of omniscience, or, Venerable Pūrṇa, they may have no interest in dedicating their generosity toward omniscience because they entertain a different interest, and in that case dedicate it toward attaining the state of a hearer. This is how beings are distinguished between those within the vehicle of the bodhisattvas and those who remain on the level of a worthy one within the vehicle of the hearers. Venerable Pūrṇa, the generosity of those within the vehicle of the hearers should be viewed as being similar to someone who thinks, ‘May this merit cause me to become a merchant, a householder, or Brahmā!’ ”
- 1.14 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable One, this is amazing! Śāradvatīputra, you have explained it so well! Venerable Śāradvatīputra, imagine a person who brings one hundred thousand coins to a wealthy householder and says, ‘I am offering you these one hundred thousand coins. I will also remain by your side and assist you with all your activities [F.3.b] and engagements.’ Similarly, Venerable One, those who follow the vehicle of the hearers practice generosity and promise to become servants of the Thus-Gone One. The bodhisattva great beings, however, do not practice generosity like that. That is the difference between the bodhisattvas’ practice of generosity and the hearers’ practice of generosity. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, imagine if a woman in the royal harem were to carry off one hundred thousand pieces of gold and bring them to a merchant, or an officer, saying, ‘I am offering you these one hundred thousand pieces of gold. I will also be your servant, rising early in the morning and going to bed late at night. I will do whatever makes you happy.’ Venerable One, similarly, the followers of the Hearers’ Vehicle practice generosity and declare themselves to be hearers of the Thus-Gone One.”
- 1.15 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable One, it is amazing how very similar acts of generosity can lead one person to the level of a hearer and another one to the state of omniscience. Venerable One, you have explained it well. Venerable Pūrṇa, you should understand that the bodhisattvas are rich in skillful means.”
- 1.16 Venerable Śāradvatīputra continued addressing Venerable Maitrāyaṇīputra, saying, “Moreover, Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas wish to practice generosity and wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect

buddhahood, they should begin their practice of generosity with the wish, ‘May the merit and virtue that is created hereby cause all bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle in all the limitless and endless worlds to reach the state of nonregression! [F.4.a] And may all those who have reached the state of nonregression swiftly perfect the state of omniscience!’ In this way, not only will they be included within this group, their roots of virtue will also sustain those bodhisattvas. The more roots of virtue there are sustaining and protecting bodhisattvas, the closer they will be to the state of omniscience. The more they dedicate their roots of virtue, the closer they will be to unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

1.17 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattva great beings practice generosity, they dedicate the roots of virtue of their generosity, saying, ‘By the roots of virtue that come from this gift—a gift of sustenance that feeds, in whole or in part, all beings whether they are visible or not—may all bodhisattva great beings in all the limitless and endless worlds who have newly entered this vehicle reach the state of nonregression, and may all those who have reached the state of nonregression swiftly perfect the state of omniscience.’ The more bodhisattvas are able to dedicate the roots of virtue, the more they will master the perfections and that much closer will they be to the state of omniscience. They should recognize that whenever a small act of generosity is made boundless in this manner, it is due to the skillful means of the bodhisattva great beings. Why is that? Because the state of omniscience itself is boundless.

1.18 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattva great beings practice generosity, they should develop the mind set upon awakening, saying, ‘May this gift of mine not ripen in any other way except for unsurpassed and perfect awakening!’ It is only when generosity is dedicated in this way [F.4.b] that it can be reckoned to be the perfection of generosity. However, an act of generosity may still be reckoned to be the perfection of generosity even if it is dedicated long after it was done, provided that it is dedicated to the state of omniscience.

1.19 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even when a bodhisattva’s act of generosity is insignificant, it should still be recognized as abundant. That is because it is dedicated toward the state of omniscience. Similarly, a great act of generosity should also be recognized as insignificant. That is because it is not dedicated toward the state of omniscience. Venerable One, furthermore, even if an act of generosity is dedicated long after it was done, it is still called the perfection of generosity, even though it may no longer be called an act of generosity.

- 1.20 “Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings who circle in saṃsāra without beginning may practice generosity, and yet fail to utter the word ‘omniscience.’ If they nonetheless employ skillful means to dedicate their generosity toward the perfections, and focus on the state of omniscience, their generosity should indeed be recognized as the perfection of generosity of the bodhisattvas.”
- 1.21 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable One, please tell me, are you this eloquent on your own accord or is it due to the blessing of the Blessed One?”
- 1.22 Śāradvatīputra replied, “Whatever eloquence I may possess, Venerable One, it is due to the blessing of the Thus-Gone One. Venerable Pūrṇa, say that all beings living in the boundless, countless, and limitless worlds, wishing for the result of a worthy one, were to practice generosity toward ordinary beings, hearers, and solitary buddhas for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. Bodhisattvas would reflect on that and declare, ‘I rejoice in this generosity!’ [F.5.a] When bodhisattvas rejoice in those who give in this manner, it creates a mass of merit. After rejoicing, they would then dedicate the merit in this manner: ‘By means of these roots of virtue from having rejoiced, may all bodhisattva great beings in all the limitless and endless worlds who have newly entered this vehicle reach the state of nonregression, and may all those who have reached the state of nonregression swiftly perfect the state of omniscience.’ The bodhisattvas who in this manner dedicated the roots of virtue created by rejoicing would swiftly perfect the state of omniscience. Comparatively, the roots of virtue that were created by the merit of those beings who at first performed the generosity would not constitute even one percent of the roots of virtue created by the bodhisattvas’ thought to rejoice. Nor would they measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. And why? Because the mindset of the bodhisattvas who rejoice in that manner surpasses anything else. Venerable Pūrṇa, in this regard the blessed Buddha is the lord of skillful means.
- 1.23 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, imagine if all those beings lived for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges and practiced generosity toward the Buddha and the community of monks, thereby creating merit. Now, a bodhisattva might rejoice in that generosity, thinking, ‘Oh my, how generous! What excellent acts of generosity! They are engaged in generosity with such veneration and respect! What faultless acts of giving! I rejoice in this generosity!’ Comparatively, the merit of those who at first performed the generosity would not constitute even one percent of that created by the bodhisattva’s thought to rejoice. [F.5.b] Nor would it measure a thousandth, a

hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. And why? Because the bodhisattva's thought to rejoice in that manner surpasses anything else.

1.24 "Venerable Pūrṇa, when the full moon rises, all the many stars lose their luster. And, Venerable Pūrṇa, when the sun's disc rises, it outshines all the fireflies in the world and makes them lose their luster. Venerable Pūrṇa, you may have a hundred, or a thousand, or ten million, or a billion semiprecious stones. However, if you placed a single beryl among them, the color and shine of that single beryl gem would surpass all the semiprecious stones and their luster would fade and disappear. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, the mass of merit that arose from the generosity of all those beings, who practiced generosity for as many limitless eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, would not constitute even one percent of the merit created by the bodhisattva's thought to rejoice. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

1.25 "Venerable Pūrṇa, if you placed the precious horse among a thousand common horses, none of those horses would seem special or stunning. They would not show any of the wild moods of a horse either, because the precious horse would surpass all of them. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, the mass of merit that arose from the generosity of all those beings, who practiced generosity for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, would not constitute even one percent of the merit created by the bodhisattva's thought to rejoice. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. The bodhisattva's thought to rejoice would surpass it all. [F.6.a]

1.26 "Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, that bodhisattva great being would dedicate the merit, saying, 'By the mass of merit that has been created through rejoicing, may all bodhisattva great beings in all the limitless and countless worlds who have newly entered this vehicle reach the state of nonregression, and may all those who have reached the state of nonregression swiftly perfect the state of omniscience.'

1.27 "The more bodhisattvas are able to give away their roots of virtue, the more they will manifest, and the closer they will be to the state of omniscience. The more they can avoid becoming possessive of their roots of virtue and wish that their roots of virtue may lead to all beings' happiness, the more those roots of virtue will enable them to excel. The more they excel by means of their roots of virtue, the closer they will be to the state of omniscience. The more they avoid thinking of the roots of virtue as their

own, the more boundless will be the roots of virtue they possess. Why is that? Because the state of omniscience is boundless. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, bodhisattva great beings who rejoice are skilled in means, so when they dedicate the merit, the dedication is directed toward benefiting and looking after those bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle and ensuring that the nonregressing bodhisattvas quickly obtain higher knowledge. In this way they are assisted while the bodhisattvas themselves attain the state of omniscience.

1.28 “Venerable Pūrṇa, you should understand that this is what is meant by bodhisattvas being skilled in means. And why? Because they dedicate to the state of omniscience in this manner and because they benefit themselves and other bodhisattva great beings immensely.” [F.6.b]

1.29 *This concludes the first chapter from “The Perfection of Generosity” entitled “Rejoicing.”*

· CHAPTER 2: THE SKILLFUL MEANS OF GENEROSITY ·

1.30 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, imagine the merit that would be created if all beings were to perform acts of generosity toward the Buddha and the assembly of monks for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. If you compare that with the merit that comes from a bodhisattva great being offering the Buddha and the assembly of monks a single meal, the merit of the former would not constitute even one percent of the merit of offering the meal. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. And why? Because of the dedication of merit.

1.31 “Venerable Pūrṇa, the recipient of the generosity of that bodhisattva and of those beings is the same here. Yet, although the recipient is no different, the generosity of beings lacks a dedication and therefore it does not constitute even one percent of the merit of the bodhisattva. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

1.32 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattva great beings practice generosity, they should make the aspiration, ‘Now that I have given this gift in this manner, may the virtue that has been created—the merit and the goodness that have been created—be the cause of all beings in hell being freed from their hellish states; may all those beings who have been born as animals be freed from the animal realm; may all beings living in the realm of the Lord of Death be freed from it; may all bodhisattva great beings in all the

limitless and endless worlds who have newly entered this vehicle reach the state of nonregression; and may all nonregressing bodhisattvas quickly perfect the state of omniscience!' [F.7.a] The more bodhisattvas create roots of virtue, the more they will master the perfection of generosity and increase the roots of virtue limitlessly, and that much closer will they be to the state of omniscience. You should understand that such is the bodhisattvas' skill in means. The more they avoid thinking of the roots of virtue as their own, the more they increase the merit limitlessly. And why? Because the state of omniscience is limitless.

1.33 "Venerable Pūrṇa, this is how bodhisattva great beings give away all of their possessions. Since they give away their roots of virtue, which are immaterial, what need is there to mention material things? Therefore, bodhisattva great beings give away everything, both material and immaterial. And since they give away everything, they achieve omniscience. Such bodhisattvas proclaim, 'I do not see anything, whether internal or external, whether material or immaterial, that I will not relinquish, give away, or make an offering of. I do not see any such thing.' With this lion's roar they cause joy.

1.34 "Venerable Pūrṇa, once bodhisattva great beings awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they perceive by means of the wisdom of omniscience. At that point they let out a lion's roar, proclaiming, 'I do not see anything, whether internal or external, whether material or immaterial, that I have not relinquished, given away, or offered. Because I do not see any such thing, I have awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood [F.7.b] and now I do not see anything that I have not awakened to or that I do not understand. Just as I do not see any such thing, so have I awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and obtained the sacred perfection of all phenomena. Now there is nothing whatsoever that I have not awakened to or that I do not understand. Just as there is nothing whatsoever that I have not relinquished or given away, so also do I not see anything that I have not awakened to or that I do not understand.'

1.35 "Venerable Pūrṇa, since bodhisattva great beings relinquish all inner and outer things in this way, they see that, among all inner and outer phenomena, there is nothing whatsoever that they do not awaken to or that they do not understand. Venerable Pūrṇa, this is how bodhisattva great beings should train in the perfection of generosity. When bodhisattvas train in this manner, they receive the name 'bodhisattva' and become inseparable from the mind of omniscience. Whenever bodhisattva great beings become inseparable from the mind of omniscience, the evil Māra will have no opportunity to cause harm, let alone the yakṣas and piśācas—it would be impossible for them to cause any harm.

- 1.36 “Venerable Pūrṇa, anywhere bodhisattvas go while bringing to mind the properties of omniscience, no human or nonhuman being will find an opportunity to cause them harm. And why? Because such considerations possess that much power. Thus, bringing omniscience to mind in this way [F.8.a] has such inconceivable and vast benefits. Venerable Pūrṇa, the actions performed by bodhisattva great beings for the sake of awakening benefit beings in this way and take care of them.
- 1.37 “Venerable Pūrṇa, in this way, bodhisattva great beings surpass all childish and ordinary beings as well as all the hearers and solitary buddhas. Awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they benefit and take care of these beings. In order to eradicate the disturbing emotions of beings, they also teach the Dharma. They also bring to nirvāṇa limitless beings within the three groups of beings.
- 1.38 “Venerable Pūrṇa, that is how bodhisattva great beings awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Then, compared to all childish and ordinary beings as well as all the hearers and solitary buddhas, they are known as ‘the supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled beings.’ Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, they continue to benefit beings and take care of them. Whoever venerates, respects, honors, and pays homage to the stūpa of a thus-gone one by offering incense, flowers, garlands, ointments, powders, garments, parasols, flags, and banners to it produces roots of virtue that make them destined for nirvāṇa. Whoever offers a single flower to the stūpa of a thus-gone one without any feelings of attachment has been prophesied by the Blessed One to be destined for nirvāṇa.
- 1.39 “Venerable Pūrṇa, this is how bodhisattva great beings benefit and take care of others while they are present. [F.8.b] Likewise, even as they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and pass into nirvāṇa, they benefit and take care of beings. There is, in fact, no time at all when bodhisattva great beings do not take care of others. Apart from a thus-gone one, there is no other being that can be seen to possess the qualities of a bodhisattva. It would be impossible for anyone else to have such qualities.
- 1.40 “Venerable Pūrṇa, think of gold. Whether it is heated or not, it can still provide for beings’ livelihood. Whether it is melted or not, or beaten or not, it can still provide for beings’ livelihood. Venerable Pūrṇa, the actions of bodhisattva great beings for the sake of awakening can provide for beings’ livelihood in the same way. Moreover, as they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and pass into nirvāṇa, they continue to provide for beings.

- 1.41 “Venerable Pūrṇa, think of the moon and the sun and how they sustain the four continents, and how because of them the beings on all four continents can carry out their activities. Whenever the moon and the sun are out, they shine brightly and beings are able to distinguish night and day, the fortnights, the seasons, and the years. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings take care of beings when they are present. Moreover, as they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and pass into nirvāṇa, they continue to take care of beings. Venerable Pūrṇa, since bodhisattva great beings possess such vast qualities, there is no time at all when they do not take care of beings.
- 1.42 “Venerable Pūrṇa, [F.9.a] if a merchant were to make a profit worth hundreds of thousands of gold coins, he would secure the well-being of a limitless number of beings, who could then enjoy his amassed wealth. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, if bodhisattva great beings secure the well-being of numerous beings even when they remain seated or stationary, then clearly they also secure the hearers’ well-being by the power of awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and passing into nirvāṇa. Therefore, Venerable Pūrṇa, whether they act, awaken, or pass into nirvāṇa, there is no time at all when bodhisattva great beings do not take care of others. The characteristic of a holy being is to be well oneself while ensuring the well-being of others.
- 1.43 “Venerable Pūrṇa, consider the analogy of a king from the ruling class who has been anointed. Such a king ensures the well-being of all brahmins and householders when he is alive. Even after he passes away, by means of his past magnificence, his realm remains free from harm by robbers and bandits. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, when bodhisattva great beings are present, they ensure the well-being of others. Even when they awaken and pass into nirvāṇa, they continue to ensure the well-being of limitless others. They ensure the well-being of anyone who recollects their discipline and recollects their absorption, insight, liberation, and vision of liberated wisdom. No terror by any human or nonhuman being will frighten such beings.”
- 1.44 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, excellent, excellent! Śāradvatīputra, that is how it is. Such beings will not be frightened by any kind of terror. [F.9.b] Whoever recollects the discipline, absorption, insight, liberation, and vision of liberated wisdom of the Thus-Gone One will not be frightened by any terror whatsoever.”
- 1.45 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, it is wonderful that the Blessed Buddha possesses such vast qualities!
- The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattvas should also be seen to possess vast qualities.”

1.46 Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, what are the vast qualities that the bodhisattva great beings possess?”

The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, arousing the mind set upon unsurpassed and perfect awakening—that is vast. And why? Because the state of a thus-gone one—the state of a buddha—is a vast state.”

1.47 *This concludes the second chapter from “The Perfection of Generosity” entitled “The Skillful Means of Generosity.”*

· CHAPTER 3: ANALOGIES ·

1.48 Venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable Pūrṇa, in this regard, here is how bodhisattva great beings should arouse the mind of awakening. If approached by a beggar, they should never think, ‘I will give later,’ or, ‘I don’t have enough to give.’ They should also never feel, ‘I cannot bear to give that away.’ If others are generous, they should rejoice, encourage them, and be happy. Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings should dedicate the merit that comes from rejoicing toward the state of omniscience. When bodhisattvas rejoice by thinking of how these beings have practiced generosity and created merit, they dedicate the merit of their virtuous mind state toward the state of omniscience. [F.10.a] By doing so their attitude surpasses the attitude of those who actually gave. Comparatively, the merit and roots of virtue created by those who initially were generous would not constitute even one percent of those created by the mind that rejoices and dedicates toward the state of omniscience. Nor would they measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. They would be surpassed by a single moment of the mind of bodhisattvas who rejoice, because they have dedicated the merit toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

1.49 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of generosity, they should be skillful and dedicate any form of generosity toward the state of omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, in this way bodhisattva great beings should be skilled in means. Even if bodhisattvas who are not skillful practice generosity for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, they will not be upholding the perfection of generosity if they fail to dedicate the merit toward the state of omniscience.

1.50 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if it should happen that they were approached by beings holding a vessel as large as the entire world and requesting that it be filled with gifts, bodhisattva great beings should definitely give, and never think, ‘I can’t!’ They should also not think, ‘This vessel is just too big!’ Nor should they think, ‘How could I ever fill this

vessel!’ You may then wonder how they should react. Well, they should think, ‘I can do that. I am happy to fill this vessel! I will strive and try my best to fill this vessel!’ [F.10.b] If bodhisattva great beings strive and try their best in this way, being diligent and generous, they uphold the perfection of generosity. Venerable Pūrṇa, this is how bodhisattva great beings should train in the perfection of generosity.

1.51 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, bodhisattva great beings should practice generosity toward beings with feelings of love. They should be filled with love and compassion while practicing generosity toward others. When they practice generosity, they should do it with the thought, ‘May the merit and virtue created hereby cause all bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle in all the limitless and endless worlds to become nonregressing! And may all nonregressing bodhisattvas swiftly perfect the state of omniscience!’ The more bodhisattva great beings are able to give away their roots of virtue, the more they will progress toward the state of omniscience.

1.52 “Venerable Pūrṇa, think of gold: the more it is heated, smelted, melted, and refined, the more it shines. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, the more bodhisattva great beings dedicate the merit and virtue that they have created toward the state of omniscience, the more their roots of virtue will enable them to excel. The more they excel by means of their roots of virtue, the more worthy they will become as recipients of others’ service, and that much more will their splendor increase in terms of their luster, shine, and charisma.

1.53 “Venerable Pūrṇa, [F.11.a] when a woman polishes a mirror, the more she does so, the clearer the mirror becomes. And the clearer it becomes, the clearer its reflections are. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, the more bodhisattva great beings dedicate the mass of merit created through generosity toward the state of omniscience and practice generosity by offering it to other bodhisattvas—saying, ‘May it cause those bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle to reach the state of nonregression and may all those who have reached the state of nonregression swiftly perfect the state of omniscience!’—the more their roots of virtue will increase. The more their roots of virtue increase, the closer they will be to the state of omniscience. You should understand that when bodhisattvas dedicate in this manner, they are being skilled in means.

1.54 “It is said that ‘when bodhisattva great beings make a small gift, the merit produced is great,’ meaning that if generosity is dedicated toward the state of omniscience, even a small gift given by bodhisattvas yields great merit. On the other hand, if the gift is not dedicated toward the state of omniscience, they may give extensively and yet the resulting merit would be insignificant. Therefore, if bodhisattvas were to live for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, all the while giving away a multitude

of desirable objects and dedicating their generosity toward the state of omniscience, not only would the bodhisattva great beings' gifts be extensive, they would also in turn yield great merit. As such, when bodhisattva great beings practice generosity, they should always keep their focus on the state of omniscience. [F.11.b] Any bodhisattva great beings who keep their focus on the state of omniscience are bodhisattvas who are close to awakening; soon they will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Why is that? Because when bodhisattva great beings keep their focus on the state of omniscience, they are being skilled in means.

1.55 “Moreover, Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings should train in the perfection of generosity right from the start. Why is that? Because, Venerable Pūrṇa, they have been accustomed to miserliness since time without beginning in saṃsāra. When they practice generosity, they distance themselves from miserliness and instead approach the state of omniscience. The closer they come to the state of omniscience, the more they turn away from the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas. The more they turn away from the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas, the closer they will be to the state of omniscience.

1.56 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, if you place a jar outside in the rain, it will gradually be filled as the raindrops fall. The very first raindrop does not fill the jar, nor does the very last. Rather, it is the raindrops that fall steadily from beginning to end that gradually fill the jar. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, bodhisattva great beings do not attain the state of omniscience as soon as they first arouse the mind of awakening, nor do they attain this state as they take their place at the seat of awakening. Rather, they do so by means of all the individual mind states that are directed toward the state of omniscience, beginning with their first arousal of the mind of awakening and continuing until they finally take their place at the seat of awakening. It is through the accumulation of all of those beneficial mind states [F.12.a] that they gradually produce the result of unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Venerable Pūrṇa, in this way, bodhisattva great beings should aim for the state of omniscience by means of a focused state of mind.”

1.57 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, how is that state of mind of the bodhisattvas focused?”

1.58 Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, even when improper thoughts occur to bodhisattvas, they should perceive those thoughts as advantageous for the state of omniscience, thinking, ‘Since such improper thoughts have created my body, they have indeed been helpful for my practice of the perfections.’ That is what is called a focused state of mind.

- 1.59 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, anyone, regardless of whether they help or harm bodhisattva great beings, should be perceived as a cause for omniscience. In this way, Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings should keep their minds focused. Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, when a man who is sentenced to death is being led to the place of execution, he only has the thought of his death in mind. Just like this analogy, bodhisattva great beings are only concerned with the state of omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, you should understand that such is the focused state of mind of bodhisattva great beings.
- 1.60 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, if those who are traveling with precious objects are forced to stay in a terrifying place or a desolate wilderness, they will constantly keep that terrifying place or desolate wilderness in mind. [F.12.b] They will continuously think, ‘When will I get away from this desolate wilderness? When will I reach the end of this terrifying place?’ Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings do not entertain any other thought besides attention to the state of omniscience. Such is the focused state of mind of bodhisattva great beings.
- 1.61 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, when a thief who wants to steal something goes to the marketplace and picks people’s pockets, he is only concerned with how to avoid being caught as he steals and picks people’s pockets. Apart from that, he has no other thought. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings do not entertain any other thought than the wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Venerable Pūrṇa, you should understand that such is the focused state of mind of bodhisattva great beings.
- 1.62 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, think of a goldsmith who has been entrusted with gold that belongs to the king and given the order, ‘Listen, make a piece of jewelry out of this gold! And make sure that you complete a whole year’s work in just one month! If it is not completed when one month has passed, you will pay with your head!’ In that case, the one who receives the order will have no other thought but to get the gold heated and smelted and fashioned into an ornament. All he will be able to think about is finishing the ornament. Even during mealtimes, he will be unable to focus on his food, since he will be preoccupied by thoughts concerning the gold and the state of the jewelry. All his thoughts and concerns will center around that. Why is that? Because of how much he values his life. Finally, he can offer the ornaments to the king, saying, ‘Your Majesty, here is your jewelry.’ [F.13.a] Delighted and thrilled, the king will exclaim, ‘You have indeed completed twelve months’ work, so you deserve a grand reward!’

1.63 “Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings should maintain a focused state of mind from the first time they arouse the mind of awakening until the very last time they do so. Just like the goldsmith who produces the jewelry with a focused state of mind because of how much he values his life, just so, Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings should maintain their focus on the state of omniscience without entertaining any other thoughts. If they are strongly dedicated to the omniscient state, they will also have a focused state of mind. Other bodhisattvas awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood after countless eons, yet these bodhisattva great beings do so within less than one hundred eons. And why? Because they do not entertain any other thought besides this attainment. That is why bodhisattva great beings maintain a focused state of mind and perfect their awakening within less than one hundred eons. Venerable Pūrṇa, this is how bodhisattva great beings should practice with a focused state of mind. In this way they will benefit both themselves and others. In this way they will arrive at the meaning of the unsurpassed wisdom of awakening.”

1.64 *This concludes the third chapter from “The Perfection of Generosity” entitled “Analogies.”*

. CHAPTER 4: NONCONCEPTUALITY .

1.65 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra now asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable One, if this state of mind should happen to become distracted what would its essence be and what would it entail?” [F.13.b]

1.66 Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, whenever bodhisattvas think in ways that are related to the level of the hearers or the level of the solitary buddhas, it should be understood that the bodhisattvas’ mind has become contaminated; these are incorrect ways of thinking for bodhisattva great beings. Why is that? Because awakening has no essence. If bodhisattva great beings’ thoughts become desirous, or angry, or deluded, such thoughts should not be viewed as contaminating the bodhisattvas’ mind. Why is that? Because such thoughts are helpful insofar as they create the impetus for the bodhisattvas’ further existence. They also bring about their transition into the omniscient state. Moreover, it is due to such thoughts that bodhisattvas take on a body. Lastly, due to their skill in means, just as they can dedicate the merit created by the six perfections, so bodhisattva great beings can make use of disturbing emotions to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.

- 1.67 “Venerable Pūrṇa, any thought that poses an obstacle to the state of omniscience should be understood as contaminating a bodhisattva great being’s state of mind. What does that mean? It refers to the states of mind associated with the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas. They should be regarded as contaminating the mind. The occurrences of other states of mind that accord with existence do not, however, contaminate bodhisattva great beings’ minds. If you wonder why such thoughts are desirable, [F.14.a] it is because bodhisattva great beings must wear the armor of never tiring of cyclic existence. As such thoughts manifest, they come to take on new modes of rebirth. As they take on such modes of rebirth, bodhisattvas are able to practice the perfection of generosity. Likewise, they become able to engage in the perfection of discipline, the perfection of patience, the perfection of diligence, and the perfection of concentration. They are also able to train in the perfection of insight. Therefore, those thoughts that perpetuate existence are desirable for bodhisattva great beings until they finally sit at the seat of awakening.
- 1.68 “Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings should therefore never be discouraged by disturbing emotions. If you wonder why disturbing emotions are desirable for bodhisattvas, it is because bodhisattvas benefit from them. If disturbing emotions had physical form, I would venerate them with great respect. Why is that? Because they possess such helpful qualities. If skillfulness had a form, I would venerate it as respectfully as if it were the Thus-Gone One. Why is that? Because skillfulness prevents one from cutting the ties to existence. It also increases the six perfections, refines them, and accomplishes the state of omniscience. The more one’s skillfulness increases the six perfections, refines them, and accomplishes the state of omniscience, the more the ties to existence are diminished, exhausted, and weakened.
- 1.69 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, when a chariot is fully loaded, [F.14.b] its central axle gets increasingly worn out the farther it travels. The load weighs heavily on the central axle so that it becomes worn out and weakened under the weight. Then, when the chariot finally enters the city, it may break down, now that the journey is over. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, any ties that cause bodhisattva great beings to have further existences only cause them to embrace such further existence. The more bodhisattvas manifest rebirth, the more they are able to refine the six perfections. The more they are able to refine the six perfections, the more the ties to existence are weakened. The more the ties to existence are weakened, the closer they are to the omniscient state. Then, when eventually bodhisattva great beings attain omniscient wisdom at the seat of awakening, those ties to existence no longer have a function, just as the central axle on the chariot no longer is needed once it arrives in the city. Just as the axle no longer functions once it breaks in the

city, the bodhisattvas' ties to existence no longer function once the bodhisattva great beings attain the omniscient state. Why is that? Because the bodhisattvas have completed their task.

1.70 “Whenever bodhisattva great beings are being scolded and rebuked by others, those bodhisattva great beings should say, ‘I deserved that!’ They will then be generous toward the ones who scolded them and in this way these people will have benefited the bodhisattva great beings. With that attitude they will also arouse the mind set upon the omniscient state. You should understand that this whole mental process [F.15.a] is beneficial for attaining the omniscient state. Venerable Pūrṇa, you must understand that any state of mind, apart from those entertained by the hearers and solitary buddhas, is helpful for the bodhisattva great beings.”

1.71 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, it should be understood that even the hearers and the solitary buddhas are helpful in this regard. The hearers are instructed and taught by means of the six perfections and so, since they are also brought to apply the perfections, they become recipients of the bodhisattva great beings' generosity. Therefore, they also assist with regard to the omniscient state. Because the solitary buddhas are likewise recipients of the bodhisattvas' generosity in this regard, they also benefit them.”

1.72 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable Pūrṇa, that is correct. Anyone who is taught and instructed by means of the perfections is also an object of the bodhisattvas' generosity. In this way even the hearers benefit the bodhisattvas. Since the solitary buddhas are also recipients of such generosity, they also benefit the bodhisattvas' attainment of omniscience. For that matter, when the bodhisattvas practice generosity and dedicate it toward the state of omniscience, no matter who is the object, it will help bodhisattvas to attain that state.

1.73 “However, Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas should not entertain any mind state of the hearers or wish for their level. [F.15.b] Why is that? Because bodhisattvas should turn away from such a level. Likewise, neither should they entertain any mind state of the solitary buddhas or wish for their level. Why is that? Because they should turn away from such a level. However, Venerable Pūrṇa, the hearers and the solitary buddhas themselves *do* benefit and so, Venerable Pūrṇa, there is no phenomenon that does not benefit a skillful bodhisattva toward reaching the state of omniscience.

1.74 “The attitude and consciousness of the worthy ones benefit bodhisattvas because without them there would be nothing from which bodhisattvas turn away. In this way, bodhisattvas must avoid engendering the attitude of the worthy ones; their states of consciousness are not equal. They should

abandon such an attitude, and instead arouse the attitude set upon attaining the state of omniscience. In the same way, the attitude and consciousness of the solitary buddhas also help the bodhisattvas to reach the state of omniscience. For without the attitudes and consciousnesses of the worthy ones and the solitary buddhas, the bodhisattvas could not be benefited. Why is that? Because a bodhisattva great being's state of mind is unique among all defiled and undefiled mind states. Compared to any other mind state—excluding the mind of a thus-gone one—the mind of a bodhisattva is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. Therefore, Venerable Pūrṇa, these two levels can be beneficial to the bodhisattva great beings for reaching the omniscient state. [F.16.a] In fact, there is no observable phenomenon that is not beneficial to skillful bodhisattvas for reaching the state of omniscience. [B2]

1.75 “Moreover, Venerable Pūrṇa, when bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of generosity, they should not conceive of the object that is offered in a conceptual manner. Instead, bodhisattvas should give free of any concepts and then dedicate the merit toward the state of omniscience. When giving in this manner, it will be of benefit. Without abandoning conceptuality in this way, they will never attain perfect awakening.

1.76 “Attaining omniscience is a great attainment. In comparison, securing a profit of millions of gold coins, or hoarding millions of gemstones, should not be considered a great achievement. Moreover, to give objects away in a manner that is beyond conceptuality and thereby awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood is the most exalted attainment of all. Even if one were to attain the kingdom of a universal monarch of the four continents, but not abandon conceptuality, it would not be a great achievement. And even if one were to rule the desire realm, yet did not abandon conceptuality, it would not be a great achievement. On the other hand, if one abandons concepts and attains the result of a stream enterer, a once-returner, a non-returner, a worthy one, or a solitary buddha, that should be recognized as a much greater achievement. Still, abandoning conceptuality and attaining unsurpassed and perfect awakening is the greatest attainment of all. Such an attainment is much greater than any of those other achievements. This attainment by the bodhisattva great beings is unequalled; it is the attainment of the state of a thus-gone one. [F.16.b] One should not be concerned with any objects that are apprehended conceptually, such as clothes, food, bedding, seats, medicines, or other implements. Why is that? Because they belong to the realm of concepts. Anyone who gives away their clothes, food, bedding, seats, medicines, and other implements while skillfully dedicating the merit will attain omniscience. Therefore, one should recognize that the attainment of a bodhisattva great being is supreme. One should address

such bodhisattvas with these words, ‘You are bound to become omniscient. Why is that? Because all inner and outer entities are devoid of an essence, and thus you scarcely apprehend any objects conceptually. This is why you will attain omniscience. Anyone who ever attained this mind state, as well as all those who attain it now, and those who ever will attain this state, are certain to attain omniscience.’ ”

1.77 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable One, which classification of the bodhisattvas does this refer to? This relates to the category of the bodhisattvas’ skillfulness. Why is that? Because if these beings understood how to attain omniscience, all beings would attain omniscience. Nevertheless, none of them are interested in omniscience; none of them arouse that attitude. Therefore, as they do not engender the mind set upon omniscience, neither do any of them attain that state. It is those who are devoted to the state of omniscience and set their mind upon it [F.17.a] who attain that state. After they set their mind upon omniscience, they also come to understand that any object that they give away does not truly exist. So they tell themselves, ‘These entities that I perceive are an illusion. They are not actually the way that I perceive them conceptually.’ In this way they further develop their charitable attitude and generosity and do not cling to things. However, even though the object is illusory, other beings do not understand that and so they continue to cling so intensely to things and are unable to give them away. Being unable to give anything away, they are gripped by miserliness. And due to miserliness they take birth in the lower realms where they end up destitute. In this way, if one is unable to give away or make use of an object, that object can become the cause of miserliness and birth in the lower realms. Whenever skillful bodhisattva great beings understand this, they will tell themselves, ‘This object is illusory and the act of giving it away is also illusory. That which is illusory does not really belong to me, nor can it truly be given away. Why is that? Because it is illusory. Nonetheless, I will now make an extensive gift of it!’

1.78 “By being generous in this manner, those bodhisattvas will begin to emulate the blessed buddhas. They are amazed by the statement of the blessed buddhas—who only explain well and free from any error—that the mark of giving away illusory objects is full awakening to perfect buddhahood. In this regard, as bodhisattva great beings then begin to emulate the blessed buddhas, [F.17.b] they will not develop any clinging to these objects but will be inclined to offer them to others in a similar way. They should also appreciate the hardship their teachers underwent to show bodhisattva great beings that the objects and circumstances they encounter are without characteristics. Venerable Pūrṇa, you should think, ‘This is how

bodhisattva great beings seek to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, thereby attaining the state of omniscience.’ Venerable Pūrṇa, in case you should think, ‘This teaching is due to Śāradvatīputra’s eloquence,’ that is not the case, since I have delivered this teaching due to the blessings of the Thus-Gone One.”

1.79 Then the Blessed One spoke to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, please pay attention to the discourse of the elder Śāradvatīputra. You should remember it, retain it, recite it, and master it.”

1.80 *This concludes the fourth chapter from “The Perfection of Generosity” entitled “Nonconceptuality.”*

· CHAPTER 5: SHOWING GENEROSITY TO BE ILLUSORY ·

1.81 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings give in this manner, what sort of giving is that?”

1.82 The Blessed One replied, “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattva great beings give in this manner, it is not actually giving. Just as there is no act of giving, so there is also nothing to attain.” The Blessed One continued, “Pūrṇa, just as bodhisattva great beings do not give any real objects away, so there is nothing to attain even by awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.

1.83 “Pūrṇa, the dwelling place of a bodhisattva great being is just like a Dharma treasury. [F.18.a] If a bodhisattva great being were to give away any truly existing objects, that bodhisattva would also attain a real result of awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. However, Pūrṇa, since there are no real phenomena that the bodhisattva great being can give away, there is also not any truly existent object that the bodhisattva great being could attain when awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.

1.84 “Pūrṇa, consider this analogy. If a magician, or the apprentice of a magician, sells an illusory sweet to another magician, that magician can also conjure up a coin and pay for the sweet. Pūrṇa, in that case both the payment and the sweet would be the same. Similarly, the gift offered by a bodhisattva great being and his full awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood are identical. Pūrṇa, what is laid out is just the same as what is amassed. And similarly, the value of the bodhisattva’s gift would be just the same as that which is to be gained.

1.85 “Pūrṇa, consider this analogy. A magician might conjure up a tree with one hundred thousand animals living at its foot. As the animals then eat the fruits of the tree, Pūrṇa, both the fruits and those who eat them are the same. In the same way, the gifts of a bodhisattva great being are just like revenues

being collected. Pūrṇa, in this way, when bodhisattva great beings give away their belongings, the wealth given away is identical to the gain made and the gain made is identical to the wealth that is given away.

1.86 “Pūrṇa, think of this analogy. [F.18.b] A magician, or the skilled apprentice of a magician, might conjure up a woman at a large intersection where everyone could see her. He might then create the illusion that the woman was pregnant and that she gave birth to a son. Once the son was born, the magician might create the illusion that the son died. Pūrṇa, tell me, when the son died, would that woman think that her son had passed away?”

Pūrṇa replied, “No, Blessed One, she would not.”

1.87 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, in that case the mother and the son are alike. In the same way, the generosity of a bodhisattva great being and the state of omniscience are exactly alike. Pūrṇa, therefore, in this case the Dharma treasury is nondual. Pūrṇa, tell me, do you see me as having desire for any phenomena?”

1.88 Pūrṇa replied, “No, Blessed One, I do not. Why is that? Blessed One, because the Thus-Gone One has realized that phenomena are empty.”

1.89 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, likewise, just as the Thus-Gone One now does not feel any desire for phenomena, I had no problem giving away everything when I was a bodhisattva. Therefore, the blessed buddhas do not entertain any form of desire or anger. Why is that? Because the blessed buddhas have given up all desire and anger.”

1.90 Pūrṇa said, “Blessed One, it is wonderful how bodhisattva great beings are able to give away any object, seeing them to be essentially empty, hollow, without substance, and unreal. As I understand the meaning of the teaching spoken by the Blessed One, [F.19.a] even if a bodhisattva were to fill as many worlds as there are grains of sand in the Ganges with gold and riches and give it all to a beggar, that bodhisattva must still be skillful when giving. Otherwise, it would only be a limited gift, rather than the perfection of generosity. When bodhisattva great beings give, they do so thinking, ‘I will give up all my possessions.’ ”

1.91 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “You should have the courage to explain the meaning of this teaching. Even though this is the time for me to speak, I would like you to explain this.”

1.92 So Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable Pūrṇa, in this regard, bodhisattva great beings wishing to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood should consider all phenomena to be empty and practice generosity. While keeping their focus on the state of omniscience, they should give away all their belongings. They should definitely give up any form of not relinquishing, not giving, and not

offering any object, whether in their own possession or not. Venerable Pūrṇa, in this way bodhisattva great beings should give with a mind set upon omniscience.”

- 1.93 *This concludes the fifth chapter from “The Perfection of Generosity” entitled “Showing Generosity to Be Illusory.”*

· CHAPTER 6: THE ACTIVITY OF BODHISATTVAS AND THE ·
TEACHINGS OF BUDDHAS IN COUNTLESS WORLDS

- 1.94 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Excellent, Śāradvatīputra, excellent! Śāradvatīputra, it is like that. Bodhisattva great beings should practice generosity while keeping their focus on the state of omniscience. Śāradvatīputra, would you like to witness the bodhisattva great beings’ practice of generosity as it occurs in all the worlds in the eastern direction?” [F.19.b]

- 1.95 Śāradvatīputra replied, “Yes, Blessed One, please grant me a vision of how the bodhisattva great beings in all the worlds in the eastern direction practice generosity!”

- 1.96 Then, through the Buddha’s power, Venerable Śāradvatīputra and the other great hearers and the entire retinue were transported directly to a world known as Illusory. There they saw the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Great Assemblage teaching the Dharma to the hearers. They also saw a bodhisattva by the name Unhindered, who was sitting in his residence, generously distributing a mountain of his belongings and gold. To the people who were carrying the gifts away he would shout, “Please be generous!” He was also donating a mountain of fabrics and distributing food and drinks to others, likewise the size of a mountain. To everyone who carried his gifts away he would call out, “Please be generous!”

- 1.97 The Blessed One spoke to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “The bodhisattva Unhindered has also lined up several hundred thousand chariots filled with the seven precious substances. On each chariot he has placed a lady who is adorned with thousands of colors. In the market street he offers all of these as gifts, calling out, ‘Whoever desires these chariots and these women can carry them off!’ And along with each of the women follows a retinue of hundreds of maidens. He gives away all of these chariots loaded with riches as well as all the ladies and their retinues of maidens. Śāradvatīputra, do you see the bodhisattva Unhindered practicing generosity in this way?”

Śāradvatīputra replied, “Yes, Blessed One, I see it! Well-Gone One, I see it!” [F.20.a]

- 1.98 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, this is how bodhisattva great beings should practice generosity.”

Through the Buddha's power, the great hearers also witnessed the practice of generosity.

1.99 At that point the Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, tell me, is this an immense act of generosity?"

Śāradvatīputra replied, "Oh my, Blessed One! It is truly immense!"

1.100 The Blessed One said, "Śāradvatīputra, comparatively, other acts of generosity do not constitute even one percent of this generosity and liberality. Nor do they measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice."

1.101 Through the Buddha's power, Venerable Śāradvatīputra witnessed how the bodhisattva, after having given away all the gifts, dedicated the merit with the words, "By these roots of virtue may all bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle reach the state of nonregression! And may all nonregressing bodhisattva great beings swiftly perfect the state of omniscience!"

1.102 Venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, what is meant by 'bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle?' "

1.103 The Blessed One replied, "Śāradvatīputra, it refers to bodhisattvas who arouse the mind of awakening for the first time. As they form the mind of awakening for the first time, they transcend the attitude of the worthy ones. By forming the mind of awakening for the second time, they transcend the attitude of the solitary buddhas. When the mind of awakening has become nonregressing, they transcend the mind of uncertain and indeterminate bodhisattvas. When bodhisattvas sit at the seat of awakening, they are omniscient. Śāradvatīputra, whoever sits at the seat of awakening has attained omniscience from which they cannot possibly regress. There is no chance or basis for regressing from it; [F.20.b] it has never happened and it never will. Śāradvatīputra, whenever bodhisattva great beings sit at the seat of awakening, the world, with its gods, demons, Brahmā, divine beings, humans, and asuras, is aware that the Thus-Gone One sits at the seat of awakening. Why is that? Because at that time bodhisattva great beings are fulfilling their goal and have become worthy of awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood."

1.104 Through the Buddha's power, Venerable Śāradvatīputra and all the hearers witnessed how, in all the worlds in the eastern direction, countless bodhisattva great beings were sitting at the seat of awakening, awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. They saw countless bodhisattvas leaving their homes in order to go forth. They saw countless bodhisattvas living as householders and practicing generosity. They saw that countless bodhisattvas would give away their own heads when requested by beggars.

They saw how countless bodhisattvas, when requested by beggars, would pierce their own bodies and give away their blood. They saw that countless bodhisattvas would give away their children, wives, and their household possessions, everything in their fields, and their horses, oxen, male and female servants, workers, and advisers. They saw countless bodhisattvas become Śakra, lord of the gods. They saw that countless bodhisattvas took birth in the divine realm of the Heaven of Joy. [F.21.a] They saw that countless bodhisattvas who had taken birth in the Heaven of Joy died and were reborn in the womb of a human mother. They saw that countless bodhisattvas were born and taught the Dharma. They saw that countless bodhisattvas took suffering upon themselves for the sake of others. They saw that countless bodhisattvas, for the sake of others, would travel one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, or one thousand leagues, and even farther than that. These bodhisattvas would even travel throughout countless worlds in order to inspire others to practice the path of the ten virtuous actions; to take refuge in the Three Jewels; to keep one, two, three, four, or five of the foundations for training; and to dwell in awakening. They also saw countless bodhisattvas appearing among wandering non-Buddhist mendicants, living among them for hundreds of thousands of eons, sharing previously unheard and unseen teachings on the perfections with these mendicants who had never before heard of or seen such teachings, and then eventually attaining the state of omniscience. They also saw countless bodhisattvas teaching the perfections to other bodhisattvas. They saw countless bodhisattvas who did not meet with the perfections, even though they searched for them. They also saw countless bodhisattvas who did meet with the perfections as they searched for them. [F.21.b] They also saw countless bodhisattvas who awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. They saw countless blessed buddhas who taught the Dharma. They saw countless blessed buddhas who, for the sake of the bodhisattvas, inspired them to arouse the mind of awakening over many trillions of eons. They saw countless blessed buddhas who matured other beings and inspired them to arouse the mind set upon awakening. They saw countless blessed buddhas who matured as many beings as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. They saw countless blessed buddhas who went to countless worlds, teaching the Dharma for the sake of others. In this way the blessed buddhas undertook many hardships.

1.105 Through the Buddha's power, Venerable Śāradvatīputra and the saṅgha of monks beheld all the bodhisattvas living in as many worlds in the eastern direction as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. They also saw all the blessed buddhas present in all of those worlds in the eastern direction. And then they saw the same thing in the south, the west, the north, all the

intermediate directions, as well as below and above. In this way they saw all the bodhisattva great beings and all the blessed buddhas present everywhere in the ten directions.

1.106 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, the blessed buddhas truly possess a vast Dharma. I say this because [F.22.a] I have seen all the countless bodhisattvas and the countless blessed buddhas present in all the boundless worlds in the eastern direction. Likewise, I have witnessed all the countless bodhisattvas and the boundless blessed buddhas present in the countless worlds in the south, the west, the north, below and above, and in all the intermediate directions. It was amazing!”

1.107 Venerable Śāradvatīputra now told the Blessed One, “Blessed One, in this way, the blessed buddhas and the bodhisattvas possess vast qualities. It is wonderful when someone arouses the mind set upon the vast object of unsurpassable awakening!”

1.108 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, that is correct. The bodhisattva great beings should engender such a vast attitude set upon unsurpassed awakening.”

1.109 Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, if one desires to become a human, one should look to one such as a universal monarch. If one seeks to become a god, one should look to one such as Śakra, lord of the gods. If one wishes for a long life, one should look to the gods living in the field of neither perception nor non-perception. Blessed One, likewise, if one desires to become a recipient of the world’s offerings and spread the message of the Dharma throughout the worlds of the great trichiliocosm as a buddha, one should set one’s mind on the state of omniscience.”

1.110 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, that is correct. That is how it is. If one desires to become a supreme recipient of the world’s offerings, [F.22.b] one should arouse the attitude set upon the state of omniscience.”

1.111 Venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how much better and more vast is the arousal of the mind of the bodhisattva great beings as compared to those who fail to arouse this attitude for the first time?”

1.112 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, it is excellent that you think to ask the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha this question. Śāradvatīputra, the undefiled mind of the worthy ones merely abandons those disturbing emotions that are present in their personal mind stream by means of a relinquishing attitude. However, that state of mind is not produced for the sake of boundless beings. Śāradvatīputra, the mind of awakening is aroused for the sake of countless beings and not for just a limited number of beings. Śāradvatīputra, the attitude of the solitary buddhas merely counters the

disturbing emotions in one's personal mind stream, but the mind of awakening counters the disturbing emotions of countless beings. Śāradvatīputra, if one becomes greatly accustomed to relying on, and attending to, the mind of awakening, one will attain omniscience by means of the six perfections. As one attains the state of omniscience, one will become exalted over the hearers and the solitary buddhas.

1.113 “Whoever produces roots of virtue in this regard and becomes accustomed to the mind of awakening will receive a prophecy by the blessed buddhas, saying, ‘You will become a solitary buddha. In such and such number of eons you will take birth among gods or men and attain the state of a solitary buddha.’ However, Śāradvatīputra, the solitary buddhas do not make a prophecy to the bodhisattvas, saying, ‘In the future you will become a thus-gone one, a worthy, perfect buddha.’ [F.23.a] Nor do the hearers offer a prophecy to the bodhisattvas. Even if the hearers were to offer such a prophecy, they would do so because of having heard it from the Thus-Gone One. Śāradvatīputra, even if someone were to establish all beings in the state of a hearer, that person would not have taken hold of the state of omniscience. Still, Śāradvatīputra, whoever offers a bodhisattva the teachings on the six perfections will take hold of the state of omniscience. And why is that? Śāradvatīputra, the reason is that the awakening of the blessed buddhas does not manifest among the hearers; rather, the awakening of the thus-gone ones occurs among the bodhisattvas.”

1.114 *This concludes the sixth chapter from “The Perfection of Generosity” entitled “The Activities of Bodhisattvas and Teachings of Buddhas in Countless Worlds.”*

. CHAPTER 7: THE LEVEL OF NONREGRESSION .

1.115 Then Venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how should one understand the term *bodhisattva*?”

The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, the term *bodhisattva* refers to someone who trains in the six perfections. Such a being is given the name ‘bodhisattva.’”

1.116 Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, how is it that the mind set upon awakening is said to be more exalted than the mind that is free of defilements? I would like to understand this point based on the explanation given by the Blessed One.”

1.117 The Blessed One asked, “Śāradvatīputra, tell me, is the mind of a bodhisattva involved in attachment, anger, and delusion?”

Śāradvatīputra replied, “Yes, Blessed One, it is involved in attachment, anger, and delusion.”

- 1.118 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, tell me, [F.23.b] is the mind of a worthy one free of attachment, anger, and delusion?”
- 1.119 Śāradvatīputra replied, “Yes, Blessed One, it is. The mind of a worthy one is free of attachment, anger, and delusion.”
- 1.120 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, tell me, if a worthy one who has exhausted defilements were to embrace all limitless beings with love and compassion, would they all become filled with happiness at that point?”
- 1.121 Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, since the worthy ones are not skillful, how would they be able to embrace all limitless beings with love? Blessed One, as long as they rest in equipoise, their love might secure the happiness of some beings but others would continue to suffer. Blessed One, when bodhisattvas attain the state of omniscience, they neither accomplish, nor practice, love for a single instant in their mind. Blessed One, let me try to give an analogy for this non-abiding. Imagine, Blessed One, that this entire world was filled entirely with beings who, like me, were absorbed in the eight liberations. Even if all of them practiced the attainment of love, or even just attempted such an attainment, they would still not be fit for such an attainment.”
- 1.122 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, in this way, compared to an undefiled mind, the mind of a bodhisattva is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, suppose all beings became worthy ones in possession of the six superknowledges and each of them could conjure displays of demonic hordes numbering into the trillions. Śāradvatīputra, tell me, would those trillions of demons not be numerous?” [F.24.a]
- Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, yes, they would be numerous. Well-Gone One, they would be numerous.”
- 1.123 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, tell me, would those worthy ones and those armies be able to resist a bodhisattva’s mind of awakening?”
- Śāradvatīputra said, “No, Blessed One, they would not.”
- 1.124 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, tell me, between these two, which would be more powerful? If all beings exhausted their defilements, would their undefiled minds be more powerful, or would the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva be of greater power?”
- Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, the mind of a bodhisattva would be much more powerful.”
- 1.125 The Blessed One said, “Yes, the mind of awakening of a nonregressing bodhisattva would be more powerful. Śāradvatīputra, even though the undefiled mind may be able to perform miracles that display limitless trillions of demonic armies, that mind, which is without attachment, would be unable to measure up to the mind that is involved with attachment, anger,

and delusion. Śāradvatīputra, tell me, between these types of mind, which is the one that is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled?”

1.126 Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. And why? Because the undefiled mind is incapable of measuring up to it.”

1.127 The Blessed One said, “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, let me ask you a question. Please reply as best you can. Śāradvatīputra, tell me, if one places a beryl gemstone next to several semiprecious stones, can the semiprecious stones compete with the luster and value of the beryl gemstone?” [F.24.b]

1.128 Śāradvatīputra said, “No, Blessed One, they cannot. Even a large collection of semiprecious stones would be unable to compete with a single beryl gemstone.”

1.129 The Blessed One asked, “Why is that?”

Śāradvatīputra replied, “Blessed One, because semiprecious stones are not pure, their color is not fine, their value is low, and they are common. Moreover, Blessed One, semiprecious stones are also not extracted from an expansive source. Blessed One, on the other hand, beryl gems are of an especially fine nature. They appear from the oceans due to the ripening of beings’ karma. Even a great number of semiprecious stones would be unable to compare with that.”

1.130 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, that is correct. The mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva great being outshines the minds of all hearers. The Thus-Gone One sees this situation very clearly and therefore states that the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva great being is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. All the hearers and worthy ones together could not extinguish the loving and compassionate mind of a bodhisattva.

1.131 “Śāradvatīputra, the worthy ones who have exhausted the defilements and possess the six superknowledges may be able to miraculously hurl this world into another realm, but they would be unable to extinguish the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva.

1.132 “Śāradvatīputra, the worthy ones who have exhausted the defilements and possess the six superknowledges may be able to dry out the oceans with a single gulp, but they would be unable to overpower or extinguish the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva great being.

1.133 “Śāradvatīputra, the worthy ones who have exhausted the defilements [F.25.a] and possess the six superknowledges may be able to extinguish as many great and blazing fires as there are grains of sand in the Ganges in a

single puff, but they would be unable to overpower or extinguish the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva great being.

1.134 “Śāradvatīputra, as shown in these analogies, the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva great being is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled.”

1.135 Venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, it is amazing how vast the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva great being is—and also how impossible it is to extinguish or resist that mind.”

1.136 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, that is true. The reason it is true, Śāradvatīputra, is that the blessed buddhas do not speak in uncertain terms. The thus-gone ones speak definitively, conclusively, and with certainty. Śāradvatīputra, imagine that all beings in all the limitless and countless worlds, which are as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges, were to appear here, and along with them, as many beings as there are particles of the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the wind element. Now, Śāradvatīputra, tell me, would that not be a lot of beings?”

Śāradvatīputra replied, “Blessed One, that would be a lot. Well-Gone One, that would be a lot indeed.”

1.137 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, imagine then if all those beings mastered the six superknowledges and had miraculous abilities, just like Mahāmaudgalyāyana, and all those beings with miraculous abilities then emanated an amount of evil Māras equal in number to the beings themselves, [F.25.b] each demon possessing that same number of elephants, horses, chariots, and infantrymen. Then, imagine if each of these worthy ones with miraculous abilities were to further project an identical set of emanations from each of the already emanated displays. Now tell me, Śāradvatīputra, would anyone be able to count that number of emanations?”

Śāradvatīputra replied, “No, Blessed One, certainly not!”

1.138 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, imagine if all those beings were to miraculously manifest a conflagration to consume the trichiliocosm wherever a nonregressing son or daughter of noble family lived. Tell me, Śāradvatīputra, would that be a great miraculous manifestation on the part of those beings?”

1.139 Śāradvatīputra replied, “Blessed One, that would be a great manifestation! It would be a great manifestation—and also a terrifying one!”

1.140 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, even if those countless and limitless worlds were to remain ablaze for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, that intensely terrifying display would not be able to discourage, overwhelm, or shake the mind of those nonregressing bodhisattva great beings. Śāradvatīputra, tell me, if you compare the

miraculous manifestations of those limitless beings and demons to the miraculous ability of a nonregressing bodhisattva, which of them is the greatest and most powerful?"

1.141 Śāradvatīputra replied, "Blessed One, between these two types of miraculous ability, the miracles and the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva are greater and more powerful."

1.142 The Blessed One said, "Śāradvatīputra, tell me then, should those who possess this type of miraculous ability and strength [F.26.a] be considered supreme and perfect?"

1.143 Śāradvatīputra replied, "As far as I understand the meaning expounded by the Blessed One, according to this teaching, except for the mind of omniscience, the mind of a bodhisattva is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. Why is that? Because the mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva is impossible to resist."

1.144 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, that is correct. That is true. The mind of a nonregressing bodhisattva cannot possibly be resisted."

1.145 *This concludes the seventh chapter from "The Perfection of Generosity" entitled "The Level of Nonregression."*

· CHAPTER 8: ENGAGING IN BODHISATTVA TRAINING ·

1.146 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, which teaching makes it impossible for the minds of nonregressing bodhisattva great beings to become exhausted?"

1.147 Śāradvatīputra replied, "Venerable Pūrṇa, whenever bodhisattva great beings practice generosity, they always do so with a focus on the state of omniscience. Therefore, the bodhisattva great beings' minds cannot be exhausted or surpassed. Venerable Pūrṇa, imagine a merchant who is doing business involving many hundreds of thousands of goods. To conduct his business he has, for many hundreds of thousands of years, taken loans from wealthy merchants or traders. If his business were to turn out unsuccessfully, he could approach the royal quarters and petition the king. If he in this way were to receive the protection of the royal troops, none of the merchants or traders would be able to cause him any harm. Why is that? Because he would be supported by the group that controls the army; he would rely on the faction that enjoyed the royal army's support. [F.26.b]

1.148 "Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, the minds of bodhisattva great beings—whether they are those who have just aroused the mind of awakening for the first time or are nonregressing bodhisattvas—also rely on the faction that controls the army. Why is that? Because they rely on the

faction that controls the army of omniscience. In that way, none of the hearers are able to overpower them. Venerable Pūrṇa, even if the wealth of the man who relied on the king were to be depleted, no one would be able to harm him. In the same way, when bodhisattva great beings rely on the side of omniscience, no hearer or demon is able to harm them.”

1.149 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, how can bodhisattvas be harmed by the hearers?”

Śāradvatīputra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, they can be harmed by the hearers if they hear explanations of the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas and think, ‘May I develop their attitude and become like them!’ Any bodhisattva who relishes such discourse and delights in it will be harmed by cultivating such inappropriate thoughts.

1.150 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, why are these called ‘inappropriate thoughts’?”

Śāradvatīputra replied, “Because they serve to impede the omniscience of bodhisattva great beings, they do not serve to develop it, and they make this omniscience take a long time. Therefore, they are called the inappropriate thoughts of bodhisattva great beings. Venerable Pūrṇa, if a practitioner wishes to actualize the limit of reality by means of spiritual practice and wishes to enter into the ascertainment of the real, any occurrences of desire, anger, or delusion will postpone his attainment of the state of a worthy one. [F.27.a] Thus, they are called inappropriate thoughts. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, when a bodhisattva seeks to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, any type of thinking associated with the hearers and solitary buddhas hinders the attainment of omniscience. If such thoughts occur, the bodhisattva great being has become overpowered by the hearers.”

1.151 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, in that case the bodhisattva will have become overpowered by the hearers. Whoever thinks like a hearer or a solitary buddha does not deserve the name *bodhisattva*. Why is that? Because such thoughts do not occur in those we classify as bodhisattvas. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, for example, if a stream enterer entertains disturbing emotions, he is no longer a suitable recipient of generosity. If someone has attained the consciousness that abandons disturbing emotions, that person is recognized as a *stream enterer*. However, if he has disturbing emotions, he is not recognized as such. Therefore, a stream enterer is someone who has attained knowledge and become familiar with abandonment. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, likewise, if a bodhisattva arouses and entertains the mind state of a hearer or a solitary buddha, that person cannot be recognized as a bodhisattva. On the other hand, whoever keeps omniscience foremost in mind and engenders such mind states is recognized as a bodhisattva.

- 1.152 “When bodhisattvas maintain the mind of awakening they cannot be harmed. Venerable One, to give an analogy, regardless of whether a master archer sits or moves about, it will be hard for his enemies to harm him, since he can intercept the arrows of others and protect himself. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, likewise, [F.27.b] when bodhisattvas maintain the mind of awakening, it is difficult to harm them. Even if they should hear of the activities of hearers and solitary buddhas, they will form the aspiration, ‘May I swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and teach the Dharma to the hearers, just as the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Śākyamuni is teaching the Dharma to the hearers at present.’ Venerable One, in this way skillful bodhisattvas who maintain the mind of awakening cannot be harmed. Even if they hear the instructions of the hearers and solitary buddhas, they will think, ‘These Dharma instructions appeared from the Thus-Gone One.’ In this way they will bring the Thus-Gone One to mind without developing any attachment to the vehicle of the hearers. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, it is therefore hard to match bodhisattvas who maintain the mind of awakening. Similarly, Venerable One, for example, when practitioners become focused in spiritual practice and well trained in absorption, thoughts are no longer able to harm them. Why is that? Because they have become greatly familiar with that focus. Likewise, it is hard to match bodhisattvas who maintain the mind of awakening. Why is that? Because they are never apart from the mind of omniscience.”
- 1.153 Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, if it should be understood that it is hard to match bodhisattvas, does that refer to all bodhisattvas, including those who have newly entered this vehicle, those who have become nonregressing, and those who sit at the seat of awakening?”
- 1.154 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, yes, all of those bodhisattvas are hard to match. And why? Because those bodhisattvas cannot be swayed from their vows. And therefore, all those bodhisattvas who keep their vows [F.28.a] and maintain the mind of awakening are hard to match. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, for example, those bodhisattvas who awaken at present and those thus-gone ones who awaken one billion years from now are equally omniscient. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, in the same way, those bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle, those bodhisattvas who have become nonregressing, and those bodhisattvas who attain the final state of mind as they are sitting at the seat of awakening are all equal in terms of focusing on the state of omniscience.”
- 1.155 Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, how is it they are not different?”
- Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, although there is a difference in terms of the speed of their progress, there is no difference with regard to the mind of awakening itself. As such, all of these types of mind are

equal with regard to accomplishing awakening. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, they are nonregressing from abiding in the mind of a bodhisattva. Now tell me, could someone who has strayed from the state of a worthy one and maintains a defiled state of mind be considered a worthy one?"

Śāradvatīputra said, "No, Venerable Pūrṇa, one would be very arrogant to say so."

1.156 Pūrṇa said, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, likewise, it would be pretentious for a bodhisattva who leaves behind the mind of awakening to claim to be awakened. Such a person is no longer a bodhisattva, but rather a defamed bodhisattva. That person can no longer be called a bodhisattva."

1.157 Śāradvatīputra said, "Venerable Pūrṇa, that is correct. That is how it is. Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, if a man at first has a functioning sex organ [F.28.b] but later loses that organ, so that he becomes unable to act with a functioning male sex organ, that person is classified as a neuter. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, if the mind of bodhisattvas becomes sluggish, they can no longer be classified as bodhisattvas."

1.158 *This concludes the eighth chapter from "The Perfection of Generosity" entitled "Engaging in Bodhisattva Training."*

. CHAPTER 9 .

1.159 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, what kind of mindset should they engender?"

1.160 Śāradvatīputra said, "They should develop a mindset intent on the state of omniscience. In this way bodhisattvas will practice the bodhisattva teachings. Bodhisattvas who practice in this manner will dedicate any form of generosity toward the state of omniscience. If they dedicate toward the state of omniscience, they are embracing the perfection of generosity. However, if they do not dedicate in that manner, they may be generous, but it will not be the perfection of generosity.

1.161 "Moreover, Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas who are practicing generosity might think, 'I will give some, but not all,' or, 'I should give this, but not that,' or, 'I will give to this one, but not to that one,' or, 'I should give what is inferior, but not what is excellent,' or, 'I will give to those who maintain their discipline, but not to those who don't.' If bodhisattvas think like that, it will create obstacles for their attainment of omniscience. Likewise, they should not think, 'Omniscience is only attained after a very long time; it will be so

long before I will attain omniscience.’ [F.29.a] It is by giving evenly to everyone with an impartial attitude that they swiftly attain the state of omniscience.

1.162 “Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, that is how they should practice generosity. They should go beyond common generosity and complete the perfection of generosity. Imagine bodhisattvas who might feed as many beings as there are grains of sand in the Ganges and, after they have enjoyed their meal, distribute golden coins to them along with clothes to wear and fabrics made of golden threads. They may do so in the morning and then repeat this action at noon, in the afternoon, in the evening, at midnight, and also late in the night. And during all these times they may feed as many beings as there are grains of sand in the Ganges and shower them with gifts, continuing with their act of generosity in this way for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. Still, unless they know how to dedicate the merit toward the state of omniscience, they may be generous, but they will not be practicing the perfection of generosity. On the other hand, if they know how to dedicate the merit in this way, bodhisattvas can take hold of the perfection of generosity.

1.163 “As bodhisattvas, they should not just give a lot to those around them. Why is that? Because if they are hoping to attain limitless qualities as well as the qualities of the bodhisattvas, a limited act of giving will be unable to bring about omniscience. If their generosity is limited, it cannot be the perfection of generosity. However, if their generosity is boundless, it becomes the perfection of generosity. Venerable Pūrṇa, in this way bodhisattva great beings should practice generosity that knows no bounds. And they should give while thinking that they will do so again and again. By means of this method, bodhisattvas [F.29.b] will eradicate miserliness and take hold of omniscience. For that, they should think to themselves, ‘I will practice generosity in a boundless manner until I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. When I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will benefit other beings with the gift of the Dharma that is beyond worldly goods. Right now, and until I attain awakening, I will benefit them with material gifts. However, when I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I shall benefit others with the gift of the Dharma that is beyond worldly goods.’

1.164 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, consider a servant of a king. He may attend on the king and offer his service. In return the king offers him meals and worldly gifts. As the servant attends on the king and offers his service, the king may be pleased with his service and offer him many hundreds of thousands of gemstones. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, bodhisattvas wish to

awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and, in their attempt to make that happen, benefit limitless beings by offering them worldly goods. As they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will guide and teach others by means of the gift of the Dharma that is beyond worldly goods. In this way they will liberate countless beings from the sufferings of cyclic existence.

1.165 “Venerable Pūrṇa, consider, as a further analogy, a royal prince. There may be many people who attend upon and serve such a prince. If he is pleased with their service, the prince may help them in return by having food prepared for them. One day the time will arrive for the prince to take over the kingdom and he will be anointed as the leader of the country. At that point [F.30.a] he will look at his old servants, thinking, ‘These people stayed by me when I was a prince. At that time, I trained them and cared for them. But they also trained me and cared for me. So now I should grant them all types of benefits. I will install some of my servants as heads of villages, others as foremen, market managers, and city elders, and others in high posts in the villages.’

1.166 “Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood benefit countless beings as they strive to attain awakening, showering them with worldly gifts such as clothes, food, bedding, mats, medicine, and medicaments. Just as the prince satisfied the needs of his servants by giving them food and drinks, so, Venerable Pūrṇa, do bodhisattvas engage in bodhisattva activity, thereby benefiting others with the gift of worldly goods. As they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and receive the anointment of nectar, they offer counsel and teachings by means of the gift of the Dharma, which is beyond worldly goods, according to the inclinations and intelligence of the listeners. As they explain and teach by means of the Dharma, which is beyond worldly goods, they establish some people in the state of a worthy one, some in the fruition of a non-returner, some in the fruition of a once-returner, some in the fruition of a stream enterer, some on the level of forbearance, some on the level of seeing, and some on the path of the ten virtuous actions.

1.167 “Venerable Pūrṇa, just as a crown prince grants benefits to his supporters at the time when he is anointed to rule the kingdom, [F.30.b] so bodhisattva great beings will grant others whatever they desire when they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. If bodhisattva great beings act in such an awakened manner, they will provide for others and, once they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, grant them everything they need. In that case, bodhisattva great beings will be providing for others

through their awakened activity and also provide for their livelihood after they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Even as they pass into nirvāṇa, they will provide for others.

1.168 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, think of a person who serves a king. In return for that person’s services, the king will give him his fair share of food and clothing. Whenever the servant offers exceptional service to the king, the king will be pleased and delighted. In his delight, he will adorn the servant with hundreds of thousands of fine fabrics and gemstones and shower him with enjoyments. Likewise, Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings who are striving for awakening and wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood will benefit limitless beings with gifts. Even as they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will offer counsel and teachings to others by means of the gift of the Dharma, which is beyond worldly goods, thus freeing them from cyclic existence.”

1.169 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra replied to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, what you have said is true. [F.31.a] Venerable One, as another analogy, people may live right next to a large deposit of gold ore, yet the gold ore on its own does not provide them a livelihood. It is only when it is mined that, before long, it can provide a livelihood to those people. When it is purified and refined, the actual gold emerges, and then it can provide people with a livelihood. As the gold is mined and smelted, the gold that is produced can now sustain the community, even if it is only a third or a fourth of the original ore. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings are never unable to sustain others. They provide for others as they practice for the sake of awakening. When they wish to dwell at the seat of awakening, they are providing beings with what they need. As bodhisattvas awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they are providing sustenance for others. Even as they pass into nirvāṇa, they sustain others. Such capacities are lacking in the hearers and the solitary buddhas. It is because of such abilities that the bodhisattva great beings are said to be supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled.”

1.170 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, please make sure you remember, retain, and understand the elder Śāradvatīputra’s instructions on the perfection of generosity, including how bodhisattva great beings don heavy armor, enter the Great Vehicle, perfect their noble intention, and give away all their possessions!” [F.31.b]

1.171 After the Blessed One had said this, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, Venerable Ānanda, the hearers, and the entire world, including its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.172 *This concludes the ninth chapter from "The Perfection of Generosity" as well as "The Perfection of Generosity" itself. [B3]*

2.

The Perfection of Discipline

· CHAPTER 1 ·

- 2.1 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park at Śrāvastī, along with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks. All of the monks were worthy ones who had exhausted their defilements. They were without afflictions and self-controlled. Their minds were liberated and their insight was liberated. They were of noble birth. They were great elephants. They had accomplished their tasks and completed their work. They had laid down their burden and reached their goal. They had destroyed the bondages of existence and, due to their perfect knowledge, their minds were liberated. They had obtained supreme perfection in mastering all mental states. Also present there were bodhisattva great beings who had gathered from buddhafi elds in all the ten directions, as well as splendid orous gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and others who attended on and served the Blessed One. At that time, the Blessed One taught the Dharma to the four assemblies on the topic of the six perfections.
- 2.2 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, please give a teaching on the perfection of discipline of those bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood." [F.32.a]
- 2.3 Thus, through the power of the Buddha and because the Blessed One had encouraged him to do so, Śāradvatīputra began to teach the bodhisattva great beings' perfection of discipline.
- 2.4 At that point, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, how can we identify those bodhisattvas who have genuine discipline? How can we identify bodhisattvas with faulty discipline? What is the domain of bodhisattvas? And what is not the domain of bodhisattvas?"

- 2.5 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas are involved with any attitudes of the hearers or solitary buddhas, that is not the domain of bodhisattvas. Any bodhisattvas who have such involvement are bodhisattvas with a lapse in discipline; they are involved in that which is not the domain of bodhisattvas. They are not upholding the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline. Since they are not upholding the perfection of discipline, they have broken their bodhisattva commitment. Since they have broken their bodhisattva commitment, they have a lapse in discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, if bodhisattvas practice generosity and dedicate the merit toward the levels of the hearers or solitary buddhas, they are engaging in an improper domain. Engaging in an improper domain in itself is a lapse in discipline. If bodhisattvas live in a household and enjoy the five sense pleasures, that in itself is not a lapse in discipline. However, when they practice generosity and dedicate the merit toward the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, that in itself is a lapse in discipline. [F.32.b]
- 2.6 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, a prince who pays heed to the king’s advice will undertake all the trainings that are fitting for a royal prince, such as elephant riding, horse riding, chariot driving, swordsmanship, archery, javelin toss, running, marching, jumping, wrestling, and combat. While he trains in this way, although he is away from the king, he is also not dishonoring the king.
- 2.7 “Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, bodhisattvas may live as householders, enjoying the five sense pleasures. Although their lifestyle is to delight in pleasures in this way, it is still assisting the bodhisattvas toward the attainment of omniscience. However, if they dedicate the merit of generosity toward attaining the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, that in itself is an incorrect attitude that renders them unsuitable to attain omniscience. The more unsuitable they render themselves, the more incapable they will be of upholding the perfection of discipline. The more incapable they are of upholding the perfection of discipline, the more removed from omniscience they will be. In that way they will not engage in the domain of bodhisattvas. Straying from the domain of the bodhisattvas in itself entails a lapse in the bodhisattvas’ discipline.
- 2.8 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, bodhisattvas may go forth from home and keep pure discipline. However, unless they dedicate the merit toward omniscience, those bodhisattvas will not possess the discipline of bodhisattvas. Whoever lacks the discipline of bodhisattvas cannot be called a bodhisattva. Bodhisattvas may live as householders, [F.33.a] taking refuge in the Three Jewels and dedicating the merit toward omniscience. This in itself means they are keeping the discipline of bodhisattvas and should be known

as disciplined, even though they may be enjoying the five sense pleasures. Bodhisattvas who keep the discipline of bodhisattvas are never apart from the perfection of discipline. Whoever does not part from the perfection of discipline should also be understood to be inseparable from omniscience. Moreover, even if those bodhisattvas were to have improper and desirous thoughts, they would all be overcome through a single contemplation of omniscience.

2.9 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, if you take a beryl gemstone and place it among a hundred thousand semiprecious stones, the uniqueness, brilliance, and luster of the beryl will outshine all those semiprecious stones. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, you should know that all improper thoughts of a bodhisattva are eclipsed by a single contemplation of the roots of virtue of omniscience, just as beryl eclipses semiprecious stones and makes them look dull. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, if bodhisattvas are generous simply because of wishing for special marks, they are engaging in an improper domain. In fact, all such cases of engaging in an improper domain constitute a lapse in discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas should not practice generosity out of a desire for special marks. Instead, they should be generous because of wishing for omniscience. Why is that? Because whoever is omniscient will also have the marks. They will also have the types of fearlessness. They will also have the eighteen unique features of a buddha [F.33.b] and all the other qualities of a buddha. Therefore, they should not think of generosity as being supreme in itself. It is when they do not think of generosity as being supreme that they master the perfection of discipline.”

2.10 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas who wish for omniscience practice generosity, do they not view omniscience as being supreme? When something is viewed as supreme, the discipline and practice related to that are also viewed as supreme.”

2.11 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, omniscience does not remain anywhere, nor is it found in a particular place. Omniscience does not exist within form, feeling, perception, formation, or consciousness. It is not compounded, nor is it un-compounded. It cannot be measured. It is therefore impossible to apprehend it as supreme. Omniscience does not take anything as a reference point. Whatever is beyond reference point does not exist, nor is it absent. That which neither exists, nor is absent, cannot be viewed as being supreme. Therefore, Venerable Pūrṇa, when bodhisattva great beings dedicate their practice of generosity and their observance of discipline toward omniscience, it is not the case that they view their discipline and practice as supreme. If, however, they were to dedicate the merit toward the

levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, they would be assuming their discipline to be supreme. That would entail the bodhisattvas having damaged their bodhisattva discipline.”

2.12 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, are bodhisattvas able to repair such damages?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Yes, they can be repaired unless they have realized the limit of reality and unless they see the truths. Venerable One, when bodhisattvas wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, [F.34.a] they should not realize the limit of reality.”

2.13 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Why is that?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Because to do so would lead them to fall to the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas. When they are on the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas they do not have the fortune of arousing the mind set upon omniscience. Then, if it should happen that the Dharma disappears, they would end up manifesting awakening on their own rather than attaining omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, for this reason they should not realize the limit of reality until they sit at the seat of awakening. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattvas practice the perfection of discipline, they will only be upholding the perfection of discipline if they practice in order to benefit all beings. Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas practice generosity, or maintain discipline, for the sake of a limited number of beings, they are not upholding the perfection of discipline. Why is that? Because the perfection of discipline is boundless.”

2.14 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “What is the bodhisattva discipline for bodhisattvas?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “If they dedicate the merit of any practice of generosity or any observance of discipline toward omniscience, that is the bodhisattva discipline for bodhisattvas. If bodhisattvas practice discipline for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, yet fail to dedicate the merit toward omniscience, they do not uphold the perfection of discipline. However, though bodhisattvas may not dedicate their merit toward becoming a hearer or a solitary buddha, that in itself also does not constitute the perfection of discipline. Still, neither is it considered a lapse in discipline. It is when bodhisattvas dedicate their merit toward becoming a hearer or a solitary buddha that their discipline is said to be faulty. [F.34.b] Why is that? Because that is no longer the domain of bodhisattvas.

2.15 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, what is the domain of bodhisattvas like?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “It refers to any state of mind that involves the six perfections and the state of omniscience—such is the domain of bodhisattva great beings. If bodhisattvas remain as householders

for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, involved with the five sense pleasures and enjoying them, yet have no thoughts of attaining the level of a hearer or a solitary buddha, that in itself is not said to be faulty bodhisattva discipline. Why is that? Because it does not disturb their determination to attain omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, an innocent man may be thrown in jail for a long time. He may even be incarcerated for many hundreds, thousands, or hundreds of thousands of years. Yet his determination to be free is not shaken thereby, nor will he develop any criminal inclinations in the process. He may be locked up, but that does not make him a thief. Venerable One, likewise, bodhisattvas may live as householders and enjoy the five sense pleasures, but that does not make their discipline faulty. If certain people practice pure conduct for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges yet dedicate the merit toward becoming a hearer or a solitary buddha and thus are swayed from their determination to attain omniscience, their pure conduct alone does not make them disciplined. Whoever attempts to practice the perfection of discipline by observing the discipline of the hearers is not called a bodhisattva. Why is that? Because they are at odds with the perfection of discipline.”

2.16 *This is the first chapter from “The Perfection of Discipline.”*

. CHAPTER 2 .

2.17 Venerable Śāradvatīputra continued, “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, bodhisattvas should think in the following way: [F.35.a] ‘I will remain in existence, taking rebirth for endless eons, in order to develop the mind of omniscience and attain the state of omniscience.’ ”

2.18 Venerable Pūrṇa asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, why would it be wrong if bodhisattvas were to decide, ‘I wish to attain omniscience after such-and-such many eons’?”

2.19 Venerable Śāradvatīputra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas are afraid or anxious about cyclic existence, their eagerness to leave saṃsāra will limit the ripening of their roots of virtue. In that way this practice becomes like the practice of the hearers and solitary buddhas. Limited in that way, they will be unable to benefit limitless beings. Venerable Pūrṇa, the perfection of generosity is limitless and boundless. Therefore, the perfection of generosity is only mastered with the attainment of omniscience. Even if one were to train in the perfection of generosity for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, the perfection of generosity would not be perfected. Since the perfection of generosity is boundless, it is accomplished with the attainment of omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, therefore, the longer

bodhisattvas who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood take rebirth in existence, the more proficient they will become in the perfection of generosity.

2.20 “Venerable Pūrṇa, the longer you set aside a fresh clay container filled with a medicinal elixir, the more the elixir will infuse and fortify the container. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, the longer bodhisattva great beings remain taking rebirth in existence, the more proficient they will become in the perfection of generosity and the more they will gain stability and fortitude. Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, [F.35.b] the longer you leave a fresh clay jar filled with ghee or sesame oil, the more the oil will permeate the jar until finally it pervades the entire jar. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, the longer bodhisattva great beings remain taking rebirth in existence, the more they will be able to encounter the buddhas and the noble hearers. The more buddhas and noble hearers they meet, the more teachings on the perfections they will hear. The more teachings on the perfections they hear, the more proficient they will become in the perfections. The more proficient they become in the perfections, the closer they will be to omniscience.

2.21 “Venerable Pūrṇa, no matter what state of mind that bodhisattva great beings experience, they will always experience omniscience. In fact, no other state of mind could possibly occur to them. When no other state of mind can occur, the minds of the bodhisattva great beings have become suffused with the six perfections. Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, wherever you smell a jar filled with ghee, the smell of the ghee will be present. Likewise, no matter what state of mind that bodhisattva great beings experience, they will always experience omniscience. Even if the evil Māra himself should try to harm such bodhisattva great beings, he would be unsuccessful. The reason is that no matter which angle the bodhisattvas are being attacked from, they will take any opportunity to meditate on omniscience. In that way no type of demon will be able to harm them.

2.22 “Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, the longer bodhisattva great beings remain taking rebirth in existence, the more they will be able to encounter the buddhas and the noble hearers. [F.36.a] The more buddhas and noble hearers they meet, the more teachings on the perfections they will hear. The more teachings on the perfections they hear, the more they will strive for suchness and acquaint themselves with that state. The more they strive for suchness and acquaint themselves with that state, the closer they will be to omniscience.

2.23 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattvas encourage another person to observe discipline, at first the discipline of the other person will be based merely on mind and mental events. Only later will the other person engage genuinely in discipline. When that happens, bodhisattvas will

dedicate all the mind states involved in encouraging that person toward the attainment of omniscience and thereby surpass the son or daughter of noble family who is actually observing discipline. If a person who belongs to the vehicle of the hearers introduces a person from the bodhisattva vehicle to the perfection of discipline, bodhisattvas will dedicate those pure intentions toward the state of omniscience. In that case bodhisattvas will surpass the person of the vehicle of the hearers who gave the instruction. Why is that? Because bodhisattvas dedicate the merit toward omniscience.

2.24 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, if someone carries with them a golden statue, that statue will surpass anything else that they may be carrying in terms of color, shape, and luster. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, even if as many hearers as there are grains of sand in the Ganges introduce bodhisattvas to the perfection of discipline, all of those hearers will be surpassed by those bodhisattvas. Why is that? Because they will dedicate the six perfections toward the state of omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, as a further analogy, if someone walks while holding aloft a crystal statue, any other object that that person may be carrying will be outshone by that crystal statue in terms of color, shape, and luster. [F.36.b] Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, even if as many hearers as there are grains of sand in all the Ganges rivers in all the worlds in the great trichiliocosm were to instruct and teach the perfection of discipline to bodhisattvas, all of them would be surpassed by those bodhisattvas because they dedicate the perfection of discipline toward attaining the state of omniscience. The more the hearers instruct them, the more those bodhisattvas will surpass them. Even if those hearers were to instruct and teach those bodhisattvas for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, the bodhisattvas would just excel that much more through their practice of the perfection of discipline. By dedicating the merit toward omniscience, they would surpass the hearers.

2.25 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, the more gold is smelted and treated, the more it shines and the more refined its color. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, the more people from the vehicle of the hearers instruct and teach the perfection of discipline to bodhisattvas, the purer the bodhisattvas’ discipline becomes. The purer their discipline becomes, the more they dedicate the perfection of discipline toward attaining omniscience, thus surpassing those from the vehicle of the hearers. Venerable Pūrṇa, as a further analogy, the more a jeweler polishes a beryl gemstone, the purer it gets and the more it shines. Likewise, the more people from the vehicle of the hearers instruct and teach the perfection of discipline to bodhisattvas, the purer the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline becomes. The purer their discipline, [F.37.a] the more the bodhisattvas dedicate the perfection of discipline toward attaining omniscience. In this way they surpass all the hearers.

- 2.26 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, the more a master painter, or a very experienced apprentice, makes use of the five colors to draw and paint various hues and shapes in exquisite and colorful ways, that much more beautiful and captivating the painting becomes. In this way, in terms of color and shape, the painting surpasses anyone else’s. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, when countless hearers instruct and teach the perfection of discipline to bodhisattvas, the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline becomes purer and purer as the bodhisattvas surpass and outshine the hearers more and more. By dedicating the entire perfection of discipline toward omniscience, they surpass all of them. The perfection of discipline of the bodhisattvas will increase day by day while the hearers, on the other hand, will only possess a little discipline.
- 2.27 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, if a man plants a tree, he should clear the area around it and water the tree. The more he does so, the more the tree will grow in both width and height. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, when limitless hearers instruct and teach the perfection of discipline to bodhisattvas, the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline only increases the more they instruct and teach them. The more their discipline increases, the more the bodhisattvas dedicate the perfection of discipline toward attaining omniscience. [F.37.b] In this way they surpass and outshine all the hearers and assimilate the perfection of discipline. Because they dedicate the perfection of discipline toward the state of omniscience, they even surpass those who instruct and teach them.
- 2.28 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, if a person throws grass, wood, and cow dung on a fire, the more of these he throws on the fire, the more they cause the fire to blaze up. The more the fire blazes, the more the mass of fire will expand, gradually setting alight and incinerating several leagues, or even hundreds or thousands of leagues. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, when countless hearers instruct and teach the perfection of discipline to bodhisattvas, the more these countless hearers instruct and teach the perfection of discipline to bodhisattvas, the more boundless their experience of the perfection of discipline becomes as they dedicate the merit toward the state of omniscience. The more boundless their experience of the perfection of discipline becomes, the less any hearers who teach them the perfection of discipline will be able to surpass them, since they dedicate the merit toward the state of omniscience.
- 2.29 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, suppose certain people extract gold from a gold mine and proceed to sell the gold as well as their services. In that case the value of the gold will be very high, but the value of those who excavated the gold will not. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, when countless hearers instruct and offer teachings on the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline, it only

makes this perfection of discipline become more boundless and priceless. [F.38.a] In this way, since the bodhisattvas dedicate the merit toward the state of omniscience, the hearers are unable to surpass their discipline. The bodhisattvas, on the other hand, will surpass the hearers through their discipline.”

2.30 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, the fact that bodhisattva great beings are able to surpass people from the vehicles of the hearers and the solitary buddhas who teach and instruct them shows that bodhisattva great beings possess vast qualities, derived from dedicating the perfection of discipline to the state of omniscience.”

2.31 Venerable Śāradvatīputra rejoiced in Venerable Pūrṇa’s remarks and said, “Venerable One, that is correct. Bodhisattva great beings do indeed possess vast qualities.”

2.32 *This is the second chapter from “The Perfection of Discipline.”*

. CHAPTER 3 .

2.33 Once again, Venerable Śāradvatīputra spoke to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattva great beings perceive an agent while practicing the perfection of discipline, they are not following the Dharma of the bodhisattvas. Rather, they have abandoned the Dharma of the bodhisattvas and are engrossed in incorrect thinking. That type of incorrect thinking should be recognized as a lapse in discipline.”

2.34 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, if bodhisattva great beings do not perceive any agent while observing the perfection of discipline, can that perfection of discipline either benefit or harm anything?”

2.35 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, [F.38.b] the perfection of discipline neither benefits nor harms any phenomenon. When bodhisattvas can perceive neither benefit nor harm being done to any phenomenon, that is the supreme observance of discipline of a bodhisattva. If bodhisattvas perceive any phenomenon that their perfection of discipline can either benefit or harm, then those bodhisattvas are not upholding the perfection of discipline. When no agent is perceived, that is the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline. Moreover, as their discipline is dedicated toward omniscience, it is called the perfection of discipline.

2.36 “Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas dedicate any act of generosity toward omniscience, those bodhisattvas should be recognized as observing discipline. Also, Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas dedicate any discipline that they observe toward omniscience, those bodhisattvas should be recognized as observing discipline. Moreover, Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas remain patient whenever they are criticized or rebuked, and subsequently dedicate

the merit from that patience toward omniscience, those bodhisattvas should be recognized as observing discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, if bodhisattvas work hard for the sake of others and subsequently dedicate the merit from that diligence toward omniscience, those bodhisattvas are said to be observing discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, bodhisattvas may develop concentration and thereafter [F.39.a] accomplish miraculous abilities. With these miraculous abilities they will be able to know and perceive the mental acts of others. If in this way they attempt to make them suitable recipients for the teaching and dedicate the merit toward omniscience, those bodhisattvas should be recognized as observing discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas may practice insight and may think they should teach the Dharma in order to make others learned about the aggregates, elements, sense fields, dependent origination, or the correct and the incorrect, and to make them give up all notions by means of the notion of sameness. If, at that point, they dedicate all such intentions to the state of omniscience, those bodhisattvas should be recognized as observing not just discipline, but unsurpassed discipline. If bodhisattvas dedicate all six perfections of the bodhisattvas toward the state of omniscience, no hearer anywhere will be able to surpass them in terms of discipline.

2.37 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if all beings were to follow the path of the ten virtuous actions, the entire discipline that they would observe would not constitute even one percent of the discipline practiced by a bodhisattva who had just entered the Great Vehicle and developed the mind of awakening for the very first time. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

2.38 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if all beings possessed the five superknowledges, the entire discipline that they would observe would not constitute even one percent of the discipline practiced by a bodhisattva who had just entered the Great Vehicle and developed the mind of awakening for the very first time. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

2.39 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if all beings were filled with love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, [F.39.b] the entire discipline that they would observe would not constitute even one percent of the discipline practiced by a bodhisattva who had just entered the Great Vehicle and developed the mind of awakening for the very first time. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

2.40 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if all beings possessed the patience that is in harmony with emptiness, the entire discipline that they would observe would not constitute even one percent of the discipline practiced by a bodhisattva who had just entered the Great Vehicle and developed the mind of awakening for the very first time. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

2.41 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if all beings possessed the patience that is in harmony with signlessness, the entire discipline that they would observe would not constitute even one percent of the discipline practiced by a bodhisattva who had just entered the Great Vehicle and developed the mind of awakening for the very first time. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

2.42 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if all beings possessed the patience that is in harmony with wishlessness, the entire discipline that they would observe would not constitute even one percent of the discipline practiced by a bodhisattva who had just entered the Great Vehicle and developed the mind of awakening for the very first time. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

2.43 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, even if all beings reached the eighth-lowest level, the entire discipline that they would observe would not constitute even one percent of the discipline practiced by a bodhisattva who had just entered the Great Vehicle and developed the mind of awakening for the very first time. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.”

2.44 At that point, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, if you would be so kind as to address my inquiries, then, Venerable One, I would like to ask you some questions.”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, please ask! Then I shall tell you what I have heard.”

2.45 Venerable Pūrṇa then asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, do you assert the results of the eighth-lowest level to be form?” [F.40.a]

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “No, Venerable Pūrṇa, I do not.”

2.46 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, do you assert the eighth-lowest level to be feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “No, Venerable Pūrṇa, I do not.”

2.47 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Is there any other phenomenon that you would assert to be the eighth-lowest level?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “No, Venerable Pūrṇa, there is not.”

2.48 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, well, what then do you assert the eighth-lowest level to be? How should I understand the meaning of what you have said, Śāradvatīputra?”

2.49 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, the knowledge that understands sameness—the sameness of all these phenomena, which is unknown to all beings—is the attainment of having done what needs to be done. Those at the eighth-lowest level do not properly perceive this. If you attain such a level, there is no examination or transcendence associated with the knowledge of sameness.”

2.50 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “So, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, how can you relate the former and the latter? You said that the discipline related to those at the eighth-lowest level does not constitute even one percent of the discipline of the bodhisattvas. Nor does it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.”

2.51 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, I did say that ‘the discipline related to the eighth-lowest level does not even constitute one percent of the discipline of the bodhisattvas. Nor does it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy or comparison would suffice.’ When I said that, I was teaching it in the way that it is introduced to beings. I was teaching it in a way that many beings would understand. I was teaching it that way so that the Great Vehicle and the vehicle of the buddhas will flourish. So that is why I said that the discipline related to the eighth-lowest level does not constitute even one percent of the discipline of the bodhisattvas. Nor does it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.

2.52 “Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, the discipline of all the stream enterers, once-returners, [F.40.b] non-returners, worthy ones, and solitary buddhas does not constitute even one percent of the discipline of the bodhisattvas. Nor does it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when the hearers wish to surpass the discipline of the bodhisattvas, it is the same as hoping to surpass the discipline of the Thus-Gone One. It is the same as wishing to argue with the Thus-Gone One. Venerable Pūrṇa, similarly, if someone decides to argue with a prince, it is just like starting an argument with the

king. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, wishing to surpass the discipline of the bodhisattvas is just like wishing to surpass the discipline of the Thus-Gone One. Why is that? Because bodhisattvas are hard to match. Venerable Pūrṇa, suppose someone who is missing both legs and arms tells you, 'I will jump across the entire ocean to the other shore.' As soon as he says that, it is immediately obvious that he is boastful and conceited. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, when the hearers and solitary buddhas say, 'I will surpass the discipline of the bodhisattvas,' it should, Venerable Pūrṇa, be understood similarly. Why is that? Because the bodhisattva great beings are like an ocean with its monsters. Like the person who is missing his limbs, yet wishes to jump across the ocean, so outrageous are the followers of the vehicles of the hearers and solitary buddhas who seek to surpass the discipline of the bodhisattvas while not possessing the Dharma of the bodhisattvas. Why is that? [F.41.a] Because bodhisattva great beings possess boundless discipline."

2.53 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, why is the discipline of the bodhisattvas boundless?"

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, "Venerable Pūrṇa, because they wish to free all the boundless beings, who practice a lapsed discipline through their mistaken ways, and establish them in proper discipline."

2.54 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, what does 'a lapsed discipline' refer to?"

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, " 'A lapsed discipline' refers to clinging to a self and personal belongings as well as having beliefs concerning reference points, beings, life, persons, existence, and nonexistence. Having such mental afflictions as these is said to be a lapsed discipline. That is why bodhisattva great beings aim to establish boundless beings in proper discipline and inspire them to enter this vehicle. Such boundless discipline is not easily surpassed by the hearers or the solitary buddhas. In fact, since the bodhisattvas dedicate the entire perfection of discipline to omniscience, even their mere names surpass the hearers and solitary buddhas."

2.55 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, how is it possible for defiled discipline to surpass undefiled discipline?"

2.56 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, "Venerable Pūrṇa, in this regard, undefiled discipline is observed for the sake of one's own personal benefit. The discipline of the bodhisattvas, on the other hand, is observed for the sake of boundless beings. Therefore, the discipline of the bodhisattvas surpasses undefiled discipline. [F.41.b] Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, if the discipline of the bodhisattvas could be measured, it would not surpass undefiled

discipline. As such, that discipline would not be the perfection of discipline. So, it is due to the fact that merit is dedicated toward boundless beings that the discipline of the bodhisattvas surpasses undefiled discipline.

2.57 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, when the sun rises in the sky, it outshines the light of every fireflies. Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way, when the discipline of the bodhisattvas is dedicated toward omniscience, it outshines the light of discipline that shines from all the non-Buddhists, such as the mīmāṃsakas, the parivrājakas, and the nirgranthas, as well as the noble hearers and the solitary buddhas. Venerable Pūrṇa, as a further analogy, when the moon rises, it eclipses the light of all the stars in the sky. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, when the discipline of the bodhisattvas is dedicated toward omniscience, it outshines the discipline of all the hearers and solitary buddhas. Venerable Pūrṇa, it is when bodhisattva great beings bring to mind the Thus-Gone One and engender the unique state of mind that is aimed at omniscience that they engage in the unique experience of bodhisattvas. That is when the bodhisattvas attain the perfection of discipline.

2.58 “Venerable Pūrṇa, when bodhisattvas fail to arouse the mind set upon omniscience, what should they be called? Venerable Pūrṇa, those bodhisattva great beings are called ‘those who observe a discipline in which the mind is undetermined.’ By dedicating their merit toward the state of the hearers and solitary buddhas, [F.42.a] they abandon the unique domain of the bodhisattvas. Thus, when bodhisattvas dedicate their merit with good intentions toward the levels of the hearers or solitary buddhas, that in itself makes the bodhisattvas become like corpses. Venerable Pūrṇa, imagine if a magician, or the skilled apprentice of a magician, were to grab a child, tie it to a tree, and pretend to tear it to pieces, throwing the body parts on the ground. In that case all the family members, kinsmen, and relatives of the child would become upset, thinking with great despair that the child had died and that they would never see it alive again. Venerable Pūrṇa, although the child had not really died, they all thought so. Likewise, Venerable Pūrṇa, in the same way one should understand that bodhisattvas who forsake the gem of omniscience are dead, even as they find themselves on the levels of the hearers or solitary buddhas.”

2.59 Venerable Pūrṇa asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Would you claim that the discipline of the bodhisattvas, the hearers, and the solitary buddhas are distinct from one another?”

2.60 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, from the perspective of reality and suchness, I would not claim that there is any difference whatsoever between them.”

2.61 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Well then, in what way would you say that they are different?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “I will say that the discipline of the bodhisattvas is different from the others in that it causes bodhisattvas to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. It is from that perspective that the discipline of the bodhisattvas surpasses the disciplines of all childish and ordinary beings, hearers, and solitary buddhas. It is due to the fact that they dedicate merit toward omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, it is due to the fact that the discipline of the bodhisattvas [F.42.b] surpasses and subdues the entire great trichiliocosm. And why is that? Because the discipline of the bodhisattvas tames beings. Venerable Pūrṇa, that is why the discipline of the bodhisattvas is said to be supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled.

2.62 “Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, the properties of the Himālayas, the kings of mountains, are not shared by other mountains. That is why, among all mountains, they have received the name ‘kings of mountains.’ It is only the Himālayas, the kings of mountains, that bear such a title. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, the discipline of the hearers and solitary buddhas lacks any dedication of merit toward the state of omniscience, while the discipline of the bodhisattvas is always combined with the dedication of merit toward omniscience. That is why the discipline of the bodhisattvas is called the perfection of discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, the discipline of the bodhisattvas surpasses the discipline of the hearers and solitary buddhas.”

2.63 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, in what way does it surpass that?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, the discipline of the bodhisattvas surpasses the discipline of the hearers and solitary buddhas because the bodhisattvas dedicate all forms of discipline toward the state of omniscience.”

2.64 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, excellent, excellent! It is excellent that you, Śāradvatīputra, praise and uplift the bodhisattvas in this way, exclusively due to the power of the Thus-Gone One. Śāradvatīputra, that is how it is. Śāradvatīputra, so it is. The discipline of the bodhisattvas [F.43.a] surpasses the discipline of the hearers and the solitary buddhas.”

2.65 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, please adopt, understand, and remember this teaching on the perfection of discipline, just as the elder Śāradvatīputra has delivered it! Ānanda, if it is true and a true statement that the discipline of bodhisattvas surpasses the discipline of the non-Buddhists, of childish ordinary beings, of hearers, and of solitary buddhas, then by that truth and true statement, were Mount Meru the king

of mountains to be hurled up into the Brahmā realm and be suspended in midair, it would stay suspended there due to that true statement. And why is that? Ānanda, it is because, apart from the discipline of a thus-gone one, the discipline of the bodhisattvas is said to be supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled in comparison to any other form of discipline, whether defiled or undefiled.”

2.66 *This is the third chapter from “The Perfection of Discipline.” [B4]*

· CHAPTER 4 ·

2.67 By the power of the Buddha, Venerable Śāradvatīputra now saw a blessed buddha teaching the Dharma in a world that was one hundred thousand worlds away. The Blessed One then asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, do you see that thus-gone one teaching the Dharma in that world, which is one hundred thousand worlds away?”

2.68 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, yes, I see him. But, Blessed One, who is he? And what is that buddhafield called?”

2.69 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, that world is called Torch and the blessed buddha who teaches there is called Moonlight. In that world there is also a hearer [F.43.b] known as Head, who possesses miraculous abilities. With these abilities he lifted up from another realm Mount Meru, the king of mountains, with his bare hands and hurled it up into the Brahmā realm. However, while he was doing so, one bodhisattva remarked, ‘Apart from the discipline of a thus-gone one, the discipline of the bodhisattvas is supreme when compared to any other form of discipline, whether defiled or undefiled! By this statement, just as the Thus-Gone One speaks the truth, may the truth, the true statements, and the blessings of the truth cause Mount Meru, the king of mountains, to stay suspended in the sky just where it is.’ Accordingly, Mount Meru, the king of mountains, has remained suspended in that very place in the sky.”

2.70 Then the Blessed One asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, do you see Mount Meru, the king of mountains, suspended in midair there in the sky?”

Śāradvatīputra said, “Yes, Blessed One, I see it.”

2.71 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, that bodhisattva has consecrated Mount Meru, the king of mountains, by means of the truth, saying, ‘May Mount Meru, the king of mountains, not fall to earth! May it go to the very place it came from!’ ”

2.72 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, if one intends to surpass the discipline of the bodhisattvas, that amounts to intending to abandon the discipline of the Thus-Gone One. Why is that?”

Because the discipline of the bodhisattva great beings cannot be surpassed.”

2.73 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, is it not possible to surpass the discipline of a bodhisattva who has regressed?”

2.74 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, since bodhisattvas maintain the mind of awakening, they cannot regress. If one regresses, [F.44.a] that person should not be called a bodhisattva. Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, if a master archer fails to hit a target with his arrow, he should not be called a master archer. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, if the mind and thoughts of bodhisattvas are not directed toward the state of omniscience, or if they practice generosity, observe discipline, cultivate patience, apply diligence, rest in concentration, or cultivate insight without dedicating the merit toward the state of omniscience, such bodhisattvas should not be described as observing discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, even if bodhisattvas do not know how to dedicate toward the state of omniscience and accordingly do not perform any dedication of merit, it could still be said that they observe discipline as long as they abstain from any dedication aimed at the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas. However, it is by proper dedication that bodhisattva great beings genuinely uphold the perfection of discipline.

2.75 “Venerable Pūrṇa, that said, some bodhisattvas only awaken after a long time while others, who are skilled in means, can awaken in a short time. Nevertheless, Venerable Pūrṇa, the first type of bodhisattva, who is not skilled in means and therefore takes a long time to awaken, is not like those beings who fall easily into the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas. As such, they are not like someone who easily and swiftly escapes the threat of bandits. Venerable Pūrṇa, in that way, bodhisattvas who take a long time to awaken are different from those who fall easily into the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas.

2.76 “The bodhisattvas who are skilled in means and wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood can be of two kinds. [F.44.b] Either they actualize the limit of reality or they swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Venerable Pūrṇa, think of the analogy of a burning house that contains a collection of gemstones. If the people who live in that house are fond of gemstones, two scenarios are possible: either they remain in the house and die in the fire or they pick up the gemstones and escape. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, for the bodhisattvas who are skilled in means and wish to swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, two scenarios are possible: either they actualize the limit of reality or they swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.”

2.77 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, are bodhisattvas who actualize the limit of reality considered skilled in means?”

2.78 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, no, bodhisattvas who actualize the limit of reality are not considered skilled in means. Why is that? Because falling into the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas does not make bodhisattvas skilled in means. In fact, it means that they are not skilled in means. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattvas are practicing for the sake of awakening, it is improper to think, ‘May I awaken to unsurpassed perfect buddhahood swiftly, but not other bodhisattvas!’ This type of improper attitude is a fault in their discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, it is improper for bodhisattvas to think, ‘I practice vast generosity, I observe discipline, [F.45.a] I cultivate patience, I apply diligence, I rest evenly in concentration, and I apply the perfection of insight. But other bodhisattvas do not.’ Such an improper attitude is a fault in their discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, it is improper for bodhisattvas to think, ‘I know how to genuinely dedicate merit, yet other bodhisattvas do not.’ Such an improper attitude is a fault in their discipline. Venerable Pūrṇa, moreover, it is improper for bodhisattvas to think, ‘With just a single offering of a meal and a single arousal of the mind of awakening I can surpass all other bodhisattvas, even if they were to live for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, constantly offering food worthy of a universal monarch.’ Such an improper attitude is a fault in their discipline. Even though such bodhisattvas may generally be skilled in means, they should not be described in that way as long as they have such thoughts. Why is that? Because bodhisattvas do not conflict with other bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas do not despise other bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas do not mistreat other bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas respect other bodhisattvas, just as they would respectfully serve the Thus-Gone One.”

2.79 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, why should only bodhisattvas be served with respect? Should we not attend to other beings respectfully?”

2.80 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Yes, Venerable Pūrṇa, indeed we should respect all beings and serve them devotedly, just as we would serve the Thus-Gone One. [F.45.b] Likewise, when bodhisattvas see another bodhisattva, they should serve that person with respect. Likewise, if they see a practitioner who observes pure conduct, they should also serve that person with respect. In the same way, they should serve all other beings with respect. Thus, bodhisattvas should serve others with an attitude of humbleness, respect, politeness, and humility. They should do so while forming the resolve, ‘Once I have awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will bring these beings to the state beyond suffering and teach them the Dharma so that they may be free of afflictions.’ Venerable Pūrṇa, in this way bodhisattva great beings should be humble and loving

toward others. They should be the best among beings. They should also bring out the best in them. Why is that? Because the best is buddhahood. Thus, bodhisattvas should love all other beings while inspiring them to take the Lord of the Dharma as their master.”

2.81 *This is the fourth chapter from “The Perfection of Discipline.”*

. CHAPTER 5 .

2.82 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, do all beings venerate them as masters of the Dharma, so that they explain and teach them? Venerable Śāradvatīputra, as an analogy, if a magician, or the skilled apprentice of a magician, were to conjure up an army with four divisions along with a magically created king, would the illusory soldiers not think [F.46.a] that they had a king to rule them?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “No, Venerable One, they would not.”

2.83 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Well, would that king not think that the four divisions of his army existed?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “No, Venerable One, he would not.”

2.84 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “All of the four divisions of the army are immaterial and unreal. Since they are immaterial and unreal, no one would install himself as their ruler. When the Blessed One says that all phenomena are illusory, then what is to be looked upon as being supreme? Which phenomena do bodhisattvas view as supreme? And what is it that establishes itself as being supreme?”

2.85 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas observe phenomena, they are not engaged in the perfection of insight. It is whenever they do not observe any phenomena that bodhisattvas become inseparable from the perfection of insight. That is the bodhisattvas’ skill in means. The bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline is to not regard any phenomenon as supreme, and then to become nonregressing from that state. Those who are nonregressing masters of illusory phenomena, and who strive and perceive the results yet do not observe any phenomena whatsoever, are called bodhisattvas who don the great armor of diligence because they are nonregressing from that state. In general, the worlds of gods, humans, and asuras will all perish. Within this state, however, nothing comes to an end. In this way, as they realize this identity and attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening, [F.46.b] they will expound on the nature of peace using names, words, and letters.

2.86 “The nature of all phenomena is ineffable. Venerable Pūrṇa, while all phenomena are clearly visible, they are nonetheless indescribable. When bodhisattvas awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they announce to beings, ‘I clearly perceive reality! Although it may be realized, it cannot be shown. Still, I teach it the way I have realized it. Even so, it cannot be taught to anyone, nor will it ever be taught to anyone.’ Therefore, the minds of bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood are nonregressing and never discouraged. If they are diligent at all times and dedicate that perfection of diligence toward the state of omniscience, then that is the perfection of discipline. If they dedicate that perfection of diligence toward the state of omniscience, then the perfection of discipline will be a pure form of discipline. Merely by dedicating toward the state of omniscience the discipline of bodhisattvas becomes pure.”

2.87 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, how does one dedicate illusory phenomena toward the state of omniscience?”

2.88 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, if these phenomena were not illusory, it would be utterly impossible to dedicate them toward omniscience. It is precisely because these phenomena are illusory that it is possible to dedicate them toward omniscience. That is why the bodhisattvas’ effort is so powerful and their diligence so complete.”

2.89 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “That powerful effort, [F.47.a] what does it support?”

Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “It is the basis for being skilled in means. On the basis of such skill in means, they think, ‘In this way should I skillfully relate to these phenomena.’ Thus they do not habituate themselves to them, nor fall into the limit of reality. As an analogy, think of a man standing on top of a tall cliff, holding an umbrella tightly in his two hands. Even if he were to step right up to the edge, look down into that terrifying abyss, and extend his foot into the empty sky, the wind would hold up the umbrella and, due to its strength, prevent him from falling. In this way the man standing at the edge of the cliff would be supported by the umbrella, which would be pushed up by the wind, even as he stepped into the void. In this way he would be able to look into the abyss without falling.

2.90 “Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, bodhisattva great beings who are skilled in means rely on skillful means and, with great compassion, behold illusory phenomena and understand them precisely as they are. As they employ skillful means, they do not fall into cultivating these phenomena, and do not become discouraged. They also do not have realization with regard to these phenomena. Why is that? The terrifying abyss from the analogy represents realizing the emptiness of all phenomena. You should understand that this is how bodhisattva great beings don the great armor and, employing skillful

means, come to possess the sacred accumulation of the perfection of discipline. The discipline of bodhisattvas refers to not perceiving any phenomena, whether actually formed or realized. You should know that this is the bodhisattvas' perfection of discipline. Bodhisattva great beings who are upholding the perfection of skillful means [F.47.b] are also upholding all of the other perfections. Bodhisattva great beings who are never apart from any of the perfections are standing at the gateway to omniscience from where they proceed, having surpassed the hearers and the solitary buddhas. That is because they have set their mind on the precious gem of omniscience.

2.91 "Venerable Pūrṇa, as an analogy, consider a man who goes into a cave only to discover that everywhere the walls are filled with gems, gold, and silver. The farther he goes into the cave, the more gems, gold, and silver he discovers and now he even notices clusters of pearls. If he should become attached to his discovery, he would miss out on the truly priceless gems in the cave. If, however, he does not get attached to all the gems, gold, silver, and clusters of pearls, he could set those aside, find where the truly priceless gems are, and take possession of them. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, if bodhisattvas who are not skillful praise the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas as well as their miraculous and supernatural abilities, they might begin to long for those states. In that case they will have been diverted away from the precious gem of omniscience. Venerable Pūrṇa, when skillful bodhisattvas praise the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas, they do so without any mental involvement and while continuing to surpass them. They do not even feel the slightest attachment to them, nor any clinging or desire for them. Without any desire or concern for them, they are able to surpass them. And why must they do that? Because the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas [F.48.a] present an obstacle to attaining omniscience. It is by going beyond these two states that they can gradually attain the precious gem of omniscience.

2.92 "Venerable Pūrṇa, if that man is able to rise above his attachment to the gems, gold, silver, and clusters of pearls, he can stay in the cave and enjoy the truly priceless valuables that he now possesses. In fact, he can even share them all with others. Venerable Pūrṇa, likewise, skillful bodhisattva great beings do not savor their experiences and thus they are able to rise above these two levels and gradually attain the state of omniscience. However, if bodhisattva great beings should become attached to those two levels, they would no longer possess skillful means. Therefore, it is due to embracing skillful means that they do not place any trust in those two levels. As long as they have not awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, bodhisattvas do not place their trust elsewhere."

2.93 Venerable Pūrṇa asked, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, what does it mean that nonregressing bodhisattva great beings do not place their trust elsewhere?”

2.94 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “It is not that they should distrust the six perfections. It is by becoming familiar with the six perfections that they soon shall awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Therefore, bodhisattvas think, ‘I will engage in the six perfections with the same urgency as if my hair and clothes were on fire, so that I can awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood in a short span of time.’ Moreover, Venerable Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood might get the thought, ‘May this discipline of mine [F.48.b] enable me to possess all the marks of a buddha!’ If that happens, it means that the bodhisattvas are engaged in thinking. And any type of thinking should be acknowledged as a fault in the bodhisattvas’ discipline. It is therefore not appropriate for bodhisattva great beings to strive for unsurpassed and perfect awakening simply for the sake of attaining these marks. If bodhisattvas think of the marks as being supreme, it means that they cling excessively to discipline.”

2.95 *This is the fifth chapter from “The Perfection of Discipline.”*

. CHAPTER 6 .

2.96 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, do you understand what it means to say, ‘This bodhisattva clings excessively to discipline while this one does not?’ ”

2.97 Śāradvatīputra replied, “As I have understood the meaning expressed by the Blessed One, in whom I trust, bodhisattvas should be known as clinging excessively to discipline if they develop aspirations for the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas. Why is that? Because if they aspire to attain the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, then they are no longer within the domain of a bodhisattva. Instead, those bodhisattvas are excessively clinging to discipline. If bodhisattvas focus on form, sound, smell, taste, or texture, that should be considered unfounded attention by bodhisattvas. Why is that? Because such unfounded attention is classified as a disturbing emotion and all that belongs under that category that leads to taking on a physical body in this and other lives. However, the more they take on physical bodies, [F.49.a] the more they can practice and engage in the six perfections. The more they are able to practice and engage in the six perfections, the closer they come to omniscience. Blessed One, that is how I understand it. Blessed One, in this way even disturbing emotions can be of benefit for bodhisattva great beings in their pursuit of omniscience. Thus,

Blessed One, whenever bodhisattvas see that even disturbing emotions can be of benefit, that is when those bodhisattva great beings become truly skilled in means. Moreover, in this way bodhisattvas also observe discipline and do not excessively cling to it.”

2.98 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Excellent! Śāradvatīputra, that is excellent! Śāradvatīputra, what you have just said is precisely what the Thus-Gone One has taught. It is a true Dharma statement and a reply that fully conforms with the Dharma. Śāradvatīputra, in this regard, when bodhisattva great beings observe the perfection of discipline, they will form the wish, ‘By this practice of the perfection of discipline, may all beings in all the endless and limitless worlds who practice a lapse in discipline, each attain proper discipline as a result of my training in the perfection of discipline! May they abandon their lapse in discipline and may this discipline of mine be of benefit to everyone!’ If bodhisattvas think in this way, they should be regarded as being skilled in means. The more they are able to dedicate their discipline, the more their perfection of discipline will flourish. [F.49.b] The more their perfection of discipline flourishes, the more those bodhisattvas come to uphold the boundless Dharma. By not limiting their discipline, bodhisattvas come to uphold the boundless Dharma. Moreover, bodhisattvas should dedicate their merit by focusing on other bodhisattvas, saying, ‘May all beings in all the limitless worlds who have newly entered the bodhisattva vehicle become nonregressing by means of my discipline, and may all nonregressing bodhisattvas quickly perfect the state of omniscience!’ The more bodhisattvas are able to dedicate merit in this way, the more they avoid straying from the mind of omniscience and the closer they are to that state. In this way those bodhisattvas’ boundless perfection of discipline will increase endlessly.

2.99 “The dedication made by bodhisattvas who dedicate the perfection of discipline to other bodhisattvas can be compared with the dedication of someone who makes the wish, ‘May all the lapse in discipline of beings in as many worlds as there are grains of sand in the Ganges be consummated as the perfection of discipline!’ In that case, the latter dedication does not amount even to one percent of the dedication of the perfection of discipline made by the bodhisattvas who dedicate their perfection of discipline toward other bodhisattvas. Nor does it count for one thousandth or a hundred thousandth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. Why is that? Because, Śāradvatīputra, those bodhisattvas embrace and support the state of omniscience. Any bodhisattvas who uphold the practice of omniscience and teach it to others will benefit and support countless and limitless beings.

- 2.100 “Śāradvatīputra, imagine [F.50.a] a mansion with ten or twenty halls, supported by just a single pillar. In the shade inside that mansion there might be several hundred, several thousand, or even several hundred thousand beings. If for some reason a man wanted to tear down that single pillar, someone might warn him, saying, ‘Hey! If you tear down the pillar that supports the mansion, many hundreds of beings will lose their lives.’ Since such a well-meaning and caring person would be able to stop the other person from tearing down the pillar of the mansion, others might begin to praise him, saying, ‘Hey, you have given the gift of life to many hundreds, thousands, even hundreds of thousands of beings!’
- 2.101 “Likewise, Śāradvatīputra, if bodhisattvas, who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, teach and explain the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas yet do not teach and explain the six perfections, then they create obstacles to attaining the state of a worthy one for a limitless number of beings. Śāradvatīputra, if someone teaches and explains the six perfections as well as the way to omniscience out of a wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, then they are granting beings the gift of becoming a worthy one. Therefore, Śāradvatīputra, if bodhisattvas encounter my teaching, form the wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, and subsequently teach and explain the six perfections to others, then they are bringing benefit and happiness to limitless beings.
- 2.102 “Śāradvatīputra, other bodhisattva great beings who practice the perfection of discipline may dedicate their merit toward all beings, saying, [F.50.b] ‘May this discipline cause all beings to observe discipline!’ When others hear those words, they will be happy and joyful, and being free of ill will, they will instead adopt discipline. In that way they engender a single attitude of resting in the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline. However, that does not amount even to one percent of the stream of merit of the former bodhisattvas. Nor does it count for a thousandth or a hundred thousandth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. The more bodhisattvas dedicate their discipline for the sake of all beings, the more those bodhisattva great beings are advanced by the perfection of discipline. That is why bodhisattvas should practice the perfection of discipline.”
- 2.103 *This is the sixth chapter from “The Perfection of Discipline.”*

2.104 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how can we identify bodhisattvas? How long must bodhisattvas practice in order to be known as bodhisattvas? Say they explain and teach to all beings about the perfection of generosity, the perfection of discipline, the perfection of patience, the perfection of diligence, the perfection of concentration, and the perfection of insight. Starting with the perfection of generosity, all the way through to the perfection of insight, they dedicate toward omniscience for the sake of all beings. In the proper sequence, they dedicate by saying, ‘Through my generosity may all miserly beings become generous. Through my perfection of discipline may everyone with a lapse in discipline become disciplined. Through my perfection of patience [F.51.a] may all malicious and furious beings develop patience. Through my perfection of diligence may all lazy beings become diligent. Through my perfection of concentration may all beings who are lost in thought and those who are distracted attain concentration. Through my perfection of insight may all deluded beings with faulty insight gain proper insight!’ Blessed One, how many eons will it take for those bodhisattva great beings to reach their goal?”

2.105 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva great beings dedicate in this way, they will realize their goal within five hundred eons. Moreover, if bodhisattvas possess such skillfulness, wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood within the era of the one thousand buddhas of this excellent eon, and moreover can make aspirations such as, ‘Whatever it takes, may the lower realms be emptied,’ and ‘When my hearers first assemble, may there be billions of worthy ones,’ then, Śāradvatīputra, I promise that their awakening will be accomplished within one thousand eons. By delighting in such aspirations, there will be signs, indications, and marks that they will be fulfilled within five hundred eons. Thus, they shall be known as nonregressing bodhisattvas.”

2.106 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings hear this teaching on the perfections, it fills them with joy. [F.51.b] That is because they know that bodhisattvas are not abandoned by the blessed buddhas. Thus, if bodhisattva great beings hear this teaching on the perfections, they will be filled with joy and delight. Even if these feelings last for just a single day, they will cause them to enter this vehicle and remain there for a long time. If the joy lasts for two days, those bodhisattvas will enter the vehicle and stay there for an exceedingly long period. If the joy lasts for seven days, those bodhisattvas will enter this vehicle and remain there for an even longer time. As they remain within this vehicle, they will stay there for an exceedingly long time.”

- 2.107 Venerable Śāradvatīputra then continued addressing the Blessed One: “Blessed One, please let me explain the meaning of what the Blessed One has taught. The roots of virtue gathered henceforth by bodhisattva great beings will thus increase greatly and, being skilled in means, they will actualize within seven eons the teachings on the perfections that they receive. I have the confidence to articulate this teaching of the blessed ones on the perfections due to the blessings of the Thus-Gone One.”
- 2.108 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, that is correct. That is true. These signs and indications foretell that the bodhisattva great beings will enter this vehicle and remain for the entire duration. That is why those bodhisattvas are known to be nonregressing bodhisattvas. However, if bodhisattvas do not become elated when the perfections are being explained, you should understand that those bodhisattvas have only newly entered this vehicle. Śāradvatīputra, I declare that bodhisattvas gradually attain omniscience by entering this vehicle, listening to the perfections, [F.52.a] and then training in them.”
- 2.109 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, the degree to which the blessed buddhas do not abandon the bodhisattvas is amazing!”
- 2.110 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, tell me, do you think that it is only the bodhisattvas whom the blessed buddhas do not abandon? Śāradvatīputra, you should not think that way. Why is that? Because the blessed buddhas do not abandon anyone. Rather, they keep in their hearts a constant concern to liberate all beings from the sufferings they experience in saṃsāra. Śāradvatīputra, a thus-gone one is just as concerned with all beings as he is with the thus-gone ones. Śāradvatīputra, if the Thus-Gone One discriminated in his concern for the thus-gone ones, the bodhisattvas, the solitary buddhas, the worthy ones, the non-returners, the once-returners, the stream enterers, the followers of the Dharma, the faithful ones, the non-Buddhists in possession of the five superknowledges, those who practice the path of the ten virtuous actions, and least of all with murderers and outcasts, then, Śāradvatīputra, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha would have preferences. However, Śāradvatīputra, the Thus-Gone One is just as concerned with all beings as he is with other thus-gone ones; [F.52.b] thus the blessed buddhas dwell within the sameness of all phenomena. Śāradvatīputra, I do not see any entity or object that causes the Thus-Gone One to feel any attachment or anger. In fact, there could not possibly be such a thing. Why is that? Because the blessed buddhas have relinquished all attachment and anger. Still, Śāradvatīputra, we do say that the Thus-Gone One does not abandon bodhisattvas. Why is that? Because the Thus-Gone One continues to train bodhisattva great beings in the six perfections and steadily spreads the light of the Dharma in the world. Śāradvatīputra, since

the blessed buddhas perceive this ultimate perspective, they decide to instruct and teach the bodhisattvas. Therefore, even when the Thus-Gone One passes away, bodhisattvas can still gradually awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and spread the light of the Dharma in the world.”

2.111 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, that is true. Well-Gone One, that is true. Once the Thus-Gone One is no more, the bodhisattvas will eventually awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and spread the light of the Dharma in the world.”

2.112 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, think of a tree that falls over in the forest. A seed from that tree might sprout at the edge where the tree fell. Gradually the tree grows and eventually develops a lush canopy where many hundreds, [F.53.a] thousands, and even hundreds of thousands of beings can find shelter from the torments of heat, wind, sun, and hail. Sitting in the shade of that tree they feel happy and at ease. These beings come to appreciate the shade to the extent that the thought of going somewhere else never occurs to them. Whatever functions the former tree fulfilled are now taken over by that new tree. Likewise, Śāradvatīputra, as the bodhisattva great beings gradually train in the six perfections and awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood within this very buddha realm, they fulfill the same functions as the other thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas, teaching the Dharma in order to eradicate the disturbing emotions of limitless beings. Thus, intelligent beings come to experience the Dharma and Vinaya and later have no wish to abandon that Dharma and Vinaya.

2.113 “Śāradvatīputra, just as people who are plagued by the torments of heat, wind, sun, and hail have no desire to leave the shade of the tree, so, Śāradvatīputra, intelligent beings have no wish to seek out non-Buddhist teachers once they have experienced the nectar-like taste of the Dharma and Vinaya that the Thus-Gone One teaches. It is because the blessed buddhas perceive this ultimate perspective that they decide to instruct and teach the bodhisattvas. Thus, when the Thus-Gone One passes away so that no Thus-Gone One remains, the bodhisattva great beings awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, [F.53.b] remaining in the world and offering shade to others.”

2.114 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, please allow me to explain the meaning of what the Blessed One has taught. One might teach a hundred, a thousand, a trillion, or even more followers of the vehicle of the hearers and establish them in the state of a worthy one. However, if one compares that Dharma teaching to bodhisattvas who just once set their mind on the state of omniscience in order to practice these

perfections, then these latter ones will be supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. That single occurrence of the mind of awakening would be superior.”

2.115 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Excellent, Śāradvatīputra, excellent! As a hearer of the teacher you are learned, bright, gentle, and fearless. You are an intelligent being who acts according to the teaching.”

2.116 Then the Blessed One spoke to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, please make sure to remember, master, and retain the elder Śāradvatīputra’s instructions on the bodhisattvas’ perfection of discipline.”

2.117 Venerable Ānanda replied to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, I will uphold this teaching on the bodhisattva great beings’ perfection of discipline and, in order that those who have newly entered this vehicle as well as all nonregressing bodhisattvas may reach the state of omniscience, Well-Gone One, I will master this teaching and remember it.”

2.118 Once the Blessed One had spoken, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, [F.54.a] Venerable Ānanda, the great hearers, the bodhisattva great beings who had gathered from all directions, and the entire world, including its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

2.119 *This is the seventh chapter from “The Perfection of Discipline.”* [B5]

3.

The Perfection of Patience

· CHAPTER 1 ·

- 3.1 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada’s park at Śrāvastī, along with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks. At that time the Blessed One said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Pūrṇa, could you please elucidate the perfection of patience practiced by those bodhisattva great beings who seek to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.”
- 3.2 Encouraged in this way, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings strive to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they should be tolerant with those who speak harshly and negatively of them. Instead, without wishing to retaliate, they should remain loving toward them. Even though bodhisattva great beings may strive to embrace the perfection of patience and develop a loving mind in this way, it is, however, by dedicating the merit toward omniscience that they come to observe the perfection of patience.”
- 3.3 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable Pūrṇa, could you please explain the differences and the distinctions between the patience of the bodhisattvas and the patience of the hearers.” [F.54.b]
- 3.4 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, the patience of the hearers is limited, while the patience of the bodhisattvas is boundless. The patience of the bodhisattvas is boundless because it is aimed at accomplishing the welfare, benefit, and happiness of boundless beings. To that end they don their armor and free limitless and countless beings from suffering. The patience of the hearers is merely aimed at abandoning their personal disturbing emotions and therefore, Venerable One, it is a limited form of patience, while the patience of the bodhisattvas is boundless. Anyone who becomes hostile,

disrespectful, or impatient toward an individual who has adopted the bodhisattvas' perfection of patience will produce a great deal of nonvirtue. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, moreover, even if the Thus-Gone One were to scold bodhisattva great beings, they should not get hostile. Similarly, if they should be criticized and rebuked by people such as outcasts, bamboo workers, and those of the lower castes, they must not become hostile or angry, even at such people. If they can avoid becoming hostile and angry, those bodhisattva great beings will uphold the perfection of patience. Then they can gradually train in the perfection of patience until they finally accomplish it. If they observe the perfection of patience in this way, they become able to have patience in the face of harshly delivered words."

3.5 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, "Venerable Pūrṇa, suppose someone were to rub the body of a bodhisattva great being with sandalwood oil while another were to hurl fire at him. How would he feel about these two people?" [F.55.a]

3.6 Venerable Pūrṇa replied, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood should not have any fondness for the person who rubbed their body with sandalwood oil, nor should they feel any hostility toward the person who hurled fire at them. Rather, they should be impartial with regard to both of these people. If bodhisattva great beings can do that, practicing in that manner, they are training in the perfection of patience. Bodhisattva great beings who are practicing the perfection of patience are engaged in the sphere of experience of a bodhisattva. When bodhisattva great beings practice in that way, they find themselves in the realm of bodhisattvas. Bodhisattva great beings should not be hostile. Instead, they should be genuinely patient, mindful, and grounded. They should be benevolent, be unaggressive, hold no grudges, and love everyone. Whenever they should come across people who are hostile, aggressive, confrontational, or argumentative, bodhisattvas should be conciliatory and try to make peace. They should think to themselves, 'I will not quarrel with or provoke you. Nor will I be confrontational or divisive. And when I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will teach you the Dharma.' When that karmic act ripens, the signs of a great being will manifest on the bodhisattva great beings' body in the form of teeth that are well arranged, perfect, and even.

3.7 *This is the first chapter from "The Perfection of Patience."*

- 3.8 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Venerable Pūrṇa, when comparing the patience of the bodhisattva great beings [F.55.b] and the patience of the hearers, which of these two should be regarded as greater and more excellent, naturally radiant, and powerful?”
- 3.9 Venerable Pūrṇa replied, “Venerable One, let me ask you about this instead, and you will find your answer about patience. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, as an analogy, when comparing the gold of the Jambu River to brass, which of these two is greater and more excellent, radiant, and valuable?”
- 3.10 Śāradvatīputra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, the gold in the Jambu River is greater and more excellent, radiant, and valuable.”
- 3.11 Pūrṇa replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, you should view the patience of the hearers like the luster of brass while the patience of the bodhisattvas is like the luster of gold from the Jambu River. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, moreover, if someone were to cut off all of a bodhisattva great being’s major and minor body parts, he should tell himself, ‘It may be possible to comprehend the number of grains of sand in the great Ganges but it is impossible to calculate the number of bodies I have had in the past. If the body parts that have been severed from my past bodies were to be piled up, the heap would be larger than Mount Meru.’ Bodhisattva great beings who understand the implications of this should therefore not feel any hostility even when their body is cut up or pierced. Instead, they should develop love and dedicate it all for the sake of omniscience. If they can do so, those bodhisattvas will never be apart from the perfection of patience. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, moreover, bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood should make their minds similar to the earth, water, fire, [F.56.a] wind, and space.”
- 3.12 Śāradvatīputra replied, “Venerable Pūrṇa, what does it mean that bodhisattva great beings’ minds should be similar to the earth, water, fire, wind, and space?”
- 3.13 Pūrṇa replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, as an analogy, if you anoint the earth with a beautiful ointment, it feels no attachment toward that. Alternatively, if you smear the earth with a repulsive ointment, there is no anger. Similarly, bodhisattvas do not feel any attachment to beautiful sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or textures. Nor do they feel hostility toward repulsive sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or textures. They do not lose their patience, lessen in their enthusiasm, or develop any hostility. Therefore, the minds of the bodhisattvas are similar to the earth as well as to water, fire, and wind. How are their minds similar to space? Well, space does not feel attachment to any ointment, no matter how delightful, nor does it feel any aversion to repulsive excrement or urine. In just the same way, bodhisattva great beings

do not develop any attachment to beautiful forms, nor do they feel aversion to ugly forms. Similarly, neither do they develop any attachment to pleasant sounds, smells, tastes, or textures, nor aversion to repulsive ones. They do not lose their patience or lessen in their enthusiasm. This is why the minds of bodhisattva great beings are like space. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, this is how the minds of bodhisattva great beings are like the earth, [F.56.b] water, fire, wind, and space.”

3.14 Śāradvatīputra asked, “Venerable Pūrṇa, anything that is like space must be infinite, so does that mean that bodhisattvas are infinite?”

3.15 Pūrṇa replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas should consider the mind within their body to be like space. If they can reason and think in this way, then the bodhisattva great beings will have the strength and skill to bear the blows of sticks, clubs, and weapons. Likewise, by means of the perfection of wisdom, they should understand all bodies in this way. Then the bodhisattvas can uphold the perfection of patience. Since they embrace the perfection of wisdom, they will have the strength to bear all the sufferings experienced by beings in the hells, including the fires and the blows of the hell beings’ weapons and sticks. The ability to bear hardship is itself the perfection of patience. Why is that? Since beginningless time in saṃsāra, bodhisattvas have experienced all of these sufferings. However, even though they had to suffer in this way, they did not attain the result of a stream enterer, nor the result of a once-returner, nor the result of a non-returner, nor the state of a worthy one, nor did they attain awakening by themselves. However, as bodhisattva great beings perceive the implications, they should be able to bear those sufferings. As an analogy, if a man has a delicious meal, he will feel satisfied, delighted, happy, pleased, joyful, and content. He might even feel exhilarated. Likewise, when bodhisattvas see a beggar, even if it is someone who wants to harm those bodhisattvas, they should feel the same joy, deference, and respect for the beggar as a worthy one who has exhausted all defilements [F.57.a] would feel if he saw the Thus-Gone One. They should then dedicate the entire mental process involved toward omniscience. Doing so, those bodhisattva great beings are upholding the perfection of patience.”

3.16 *This is the second chapter from “The Perfection of Patience.”*

. CHAPTER 3 .

3.17 Pūrṇa continued, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, moreover, if bodhisattva great beings are being scolded, they should not retaliate but remain patient. Why is that? Because that way they do not abandon omniscience. Even if they are struck, they should not fight back. When people are hostile, they should not

get angry. When they are abused, they should not repay in kind. When people revile them, they should not reciprocate. Instead, they should simply remain forbearing. And why is that? Because that way they do not abandon omniscience. Even if others stab them with spears or arrows, they should not become angry, impatient, disturbed, or short-tempered. If they can succeed in that manner, those bodhisattvas will be practicing the perfection of patience and even their body will begin to shine with a golden complexion. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, in this way bodhisattva great beings should possess the strength of patience and the willingness to joyfully accept difficult situations. That is because with patience and joyful acceptance they can uphold the perfection of patience, approach the omniscient state, and distance themselves from the sufferings of saṃsāra. However, if bodhisattvas are attracted to the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, their practice of the perfection of patience is weakened. Why is that? Because, if they are attracted to the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, no matter how much suffering they take upon themselves, [F.57.b] those bodhisattvas have abandoned their proper experience and strayed into a different domain.”

3.18 Śāradvatīputra asked, “Venerable Pūrṇa, what does it take for bodhisattvas to stray into a different domain?”

Pūrṇa replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, whether bodhisattvas are attracted to the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, or the mindset of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, or the paths of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, that in itself causes the bodhisattvas to stray into a different domain.”

3.19 Śāradvatīputra asked, “Venerable Pūrṇa, what is the proper domain of bodhisattvas?”

Pūrṇa replied, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas should be concerned with the six perfections and the state of omniscience. The domain of the bodhisattvas consists of the perfection of generosity, the perfection of discipline, the perfection of patience, the perfection of diligence, the perfection of concentration, and the perfection of insight. When bodhisattvas are practicing these perfections, they engage in the proper domain of bodhisattvas. For such people, even the evil Māra will find no opportunity to cause any harm. As an analogy, a fox is unable to harm a tortoise and when it realizes that, it tires and leaves. In the same way, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas train in the six perfections, the evil Māra can find no chance to harm them and, realizing that, he tires and leaves. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, even if the evil Māra were to emanate as many evil demons as there are beings in the entire trichiliocosm and equip each of those demons with a retinue of that same number of demons, they would find no

opportunity to harm the bodhisattva great beings who are practicing the six perfections. Not having any success, they would tire and leave, just like the fox leaves the tortoise. [F.58.a] Venerable Śāradvatīputra, therefore, bodhisattva great beings should tell themselves, 'Whatever happens, I will never relinquish the six perfections. If I succeed in that, the evil Māra shall have no chance to harm me.' "

3.20 Śāradvatīputra asked, "Venerable Pūrṇa, how can one tell if bodhisattvas are influenced by demons?"

Pūrṇa replied, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, one can tell that bodhisattva great beings are influenced by demons if they do not listen to the perfections. Likewise, one can tell that bodhisattvas are influenced by demons if they are not accomplishing the perfections. Bodhisattvas should not become hostile or lose their patience even if they realize, 'This demon is approaching me in order to create obstacles for my attainment of omniscience.' If bodhisattva great beings can act like that, they are practicing the perfection of patience. The bodhisattvas should then think, 'When I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will teach the Dharma to all beings in order to eradicate their attachment, anger, and delusion.' If bodhisattva great beings can be mindful at that time, they will overcome the evil Māra. Whenever bodhisattvas lose sight of the state of omniscience, they should tell themselves, 'I have strayed into an incorrect domain.' Why is that? Because in that way they can reprimand themselves saying, 'I have lost sight of omniscience.' "

3.21 Śāradvatīputra asked, "Venerable Pūrṇa, how do bodhisattvas waste their time?"

Pūrṇa replied, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, if bodhisattvas are practicing any of these six perfections but lose sight of omniscience, or fail to dedicate toward omniscience, then those bodhisattvas are wasting their time [F.58.b] by involving themselves in craving and dullness. However, if the bodhisattvas spend two, three, or four days contemplating generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight, and also dedicate these perfections toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening, then their time becomes meaningful. All of their meditations on generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight will bear fruit."

3.22 Śāradvatīputra asked, "Venerable Pūrṇa, what is the difference between the patience of the bodhisattvas and the patience of those worthy ones who have exhausted defilements? How are they dissimilar?"

3.23 Pūrṇa replied, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, think of the central mountain and a mustard seed. How are they different in terms of size, height, and weight? How are they dissimilar?"

- 3.24 Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, the difference between Meru, the central mountain, and a mustard seed in terms of size, height, and weight is boundless. Their dissimilarity is boundless.”
- 3.25 Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, that is correct. The difference between the patience of the bodhisattvas and the patience of the worthy ones is boundless. Their dissimilarity is boundless. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, if you compare the water in the ocean to the water contained in a single drop that is lifted from the ocean using the tip of a hair, which of these two is greater and infinitely larger?”
- 3.26 Śāradvatīputra said, “Venerable Pūrṇa, the water contained in a single drop that is lifted from the ocean with the tip of a hair would not constitute even one percent of the water in the ocean. Nor would it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a millionth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.”
- 3.27 Pūrṇa said, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, in the same way the patience of the hearers does not constitute even one percent of the patience of bodhisattvas. [F.59.a] Nor does it measure a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, or a trillionth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice.”
- 3.28 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Pūrṇa, due to the power of the Buddha you have eloquently explained the bodhisattva great beings’ perfection of patience. Excellent, excellent! Pūrṇa, if one wishes to grasp the extent of the bodhisattva great beings’ patience this amounts to wishing to grasp and understand the extent of the Thus-Gone One’s patience. Why is that? Because, Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas possess boundless patience.”
- 3.29 After the Blessed One had said this, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, the great hearers and the entire world, including its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.
- 3.30 *This is the third chapter from “The Perfection of Patience.”*

4.

The Perfection of Diligence

· CHAPTER 1 ·

4.1 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park at Śrāvastī, along with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks. At that time Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to the Blessed One, "Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings strive to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, how should they practice the perfection of diligence?"

4.2 The Blessed One said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, [F.59.b] "Pūrṇa, bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood should first enter this vehicle and arouse the mind of awakening. To arouse the mind of awakening they should think, 'I shall devote this body and mind of mine to the welfare and needs of others. I will fulfill the dreams of all beings, just like a servant who fetches water.' Such a servant thinks, 'I shall forfeit my own independence, without sitting around or resting. If I should wish to leave this house to go to the market, I will only do so with the permission of my master and my lady. Even when it is time for meals and drinks, I shall postpone them if I am called for. I will remain under my Lord's command.' Pūrṇa, in the same way bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood should engender the mind of awakening, thinking, 'I am not the master of my own body. Instead, I will use it to benefit others with their work and needs.' Pūrṇa, in this way bodhisattva great beings should avoid straying from the perfection of diligence. In this way they should practice the perfection of diligence.

4.3 "Pūrṇa, as an analogy, when someone owns a precious horse and takes it riding, the precious horse will protect the rider, thinking, 'I will do my best to avoid shaking or injuring any part of the rider's body.' Forsaking its own independence, the horse will think, 'I must strive to avoid any missteps that could harm the rider.' Pūrṇa, in the same way, when bodhisattvas wish to focus on the perfection of diligence they should think, 'I will not be

governed by selfish thoughts. Instead, I will focus on other beings [F.60.a] and people to ensure that no harm befalls them.’ Such are the qualities that bodhisattva great beings possess. Pūrṇa, in that way, bodhisattvas should protect others and assist them, because it is by assisting and protecting others that they uphold the perfection of diligence.

4.4 “When bodhisattvas have become nonregressing from the state of omniscience, that is the perfection of diligence of bodhisattva great beings. It is also the perfection of diligence of the bodhisattvas when bodhisattvas apply themselves to prolonged circling in saṃsāra, while pondering, ‘How can I purify this buddha realm?’ It is also the perfection of diligence of the bodhisattvas when bodhisattva great beings—whether they are held back in this trichiliocosm by one, two, or three births, or whether they are bodhisattvas who have newly entered this vehicle—say, ‘May you awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood first! Then I will awaken later.’ It is also the perfection of diligence of the bodhisattvas when bodhisattvas who see a beggar, without turning away or getting distracted, think, ‘This person is helping me attain omniscience.’ It is also the perfection of diligence of the bodhisattva great beings when bodhisattvas, who wish to help another person, think, ‘To make this person happy, I will be glad to roast in hell for an eon, or even longer.’ [F.60.b]

4.5 “Bodhisattvas should think, ‘Even if a normal day were to last for an entire eon and there were as many eons consisting of days that long as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, may I be burned in the great hells for that long, so that those who live in the hells may be free instead!’ If such could be achieved thereby, bodhisattvas would take such an oath. If they do so, that is also the perfection of diligence of the bodhisattvas. However, if they should become discouraged and lose optimism, they would be lazy bodhisattvas. If they should equalize their minds with others’ minds, they would be bodhisattva great beings who practice diligence. Lazy bodhisattvas are those who travel to the end of the world and, upon arrival, think, ‘It took me a long time to arrive here.’ Should they, however, think, ‘I arrived here quickly,’ they would be practicing diligence. That is also the perfection of diligence of the bodhisattva great beings.

4.6 “Lazy bodhisattvas are those who, while traveling during the day to pay their respects to a stūpa or to the saṅgha, think, ‘Oh my, this day is so long and passes so slowly!’ On the other hand, bodhisattva great beings who practice diligence will think, ‘This day is passing as quickly as a finger snap.’ Such people are persistently practicing the perfection of diligence. Moreover, not only should they view an entire year’s work as a single day’s work, they should also complete an entire year’s work in a single day. They should even consider more than an eon’s work to be achievable in just a single day, and

carry it out. They should regard an eon as merely a day. [F.61.a] If they cannot consider an eon's work to be doable in a single day and regard it as such, those are lazy bodhisattvas. However, if they are able to adopt that perspective, those bodhisattva great beings are practicing diligence.

4.7 "Bodhisattvas who are working for the sake of awakening should not put a limit on the number of eons this may take by saying, 'Due to my clairvoyance, I can say that I will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood after such and such many eons.' If they proclaim such a fixed number of eons, those are lazy bodhisattvas. Instead of that, they should rather think, 'Even if it takes me a limitless number of eons to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will never turn my back on saṃsāra.' That would make them bodhisattva great beings who are practicing diligence. Such bodhisattva great beings are practicing the perfection of diligence. They are genuinely engaged in the perfection of diligence. They are near to omniscience and are distancing themselves from cyclic existence.

4.8 "Suppose someone told a bodhisattva, 'You have just one day to dig through Mount Meru, the king of mountains.' If any bodhisattva were then to inquire about the size of the mountain, that would be a lazy bodhisattva. Rather, even if they were only able to make a dent the size of a mustard seed in Mount Meru, the king of mountains, they should think to themselves, 'My job of digging through Mount Meru, the king of mountains, is as good as done. This single day is passing as quickly as a finger snap.' If they can adopt such an attitude, those bodhisattva great beings are practicing diligence. Likewise, suppose a day lasted as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. And suppose that one would need limitless eons of such days [F.61.b] to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. If bodhisattva great beings then were to look at the attainment of perfect awakening as if it were basically already attained, they would be practicing diligence.

4.9 "If bodhisattvas should become discouraged or worried when the practice of diligence is praised, then those are lazy bodhisattvas and they will not be entering the field of omniscience. When the perfection of diligence is praised, lazy bodhisattvas will think to themselves, 'When will I ever have such qualities?' On the other hand, bodhisattvas who are practicing diligence will recognize, 'I already have these qualities! I just need to perfect my qualities of diligence.' Lazy bodhisattvas will think, 'If I oblige someone who is asking for my hands, feet, or head, I will no longer have any hands, feet, or head.' However, bodhisattvas who practice diligence will tell themselves, 'If I give away my hands, feet, or head, I shall take rebirth as a god, human, or asura with extraordinary hands, feet, and head,' and then act

accordingly. Lazy bodhisattvas are those who, when asked to give away their eyes, think to themselves, 'If I give away my eyes, I will no longer have any eyes.' However, bodhisattva great beings who practice diligence will think, 'If I give away my eyes, I shall take rebirth as a god, human, or asura with extraordinary eyes, [F.62.a] as well as the peerless eye of wisdom.' In this way, they will distance themselves from the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas and approach the state of omniscience.

4.10 "Lazy bodhisattvas are those who, when asked to give away their various body parts, think to themselves, 'If I give away my body parts, I will no longer have any.' However, when bodhisattvas who are practicing diligence give away their body parts, they will tell themselves, 'I shall take rebirth as a god, human, or asura in possession of perfect limbs. Moreover, I shall also receive the qualities of a buddha.' Thinking like that, they will also act accordingly. Lazy bodhisattvas are those who, when approached by beggars, think, 'There are so many beggars around me; how could I possibly give them what they ask for? Who could possibly satisfy them all?' On the other hand, bodhisattva great beings who are practicing diligence will reason and think, 'There are not too many beggars here. Even if all the beggars in as many worlds as there are grains of sand in the Ganges were to arrive here on the same day, that would still not be too many.' In this way their insight will increase and they will think, 'There are not so many here. I would be happy if there were more,' and thinking in this way, they would act accordingly. Why is this? Because bodhisattvas have to accomplish the boundless qualities of a buddha. If they limit their diligence and generosity, they will not be able to obtain the boundless qualities of a buddha. On the contrary, it is by forming a boundless resolve [F.62.b] that bodhisattvas become able to obtain the boundless qualities of a buddha. As an analogy, if a man intends to cross the great ocean, he must equip himself with a resolve that lasts for thousands of miles. Likewise, if bodhisattvas wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they must prepare themselves with a resolve that lasts for limitless billions of eons. Lazy bodhisattvas are those who think, 'Within one countless eon I will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.' On the other hand, bodhisattva who are practicing diligence will think, 'After boundless eons I will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.' Such bodhisattvas have formed a great resolve."

4.11 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, do bodhisattvas undergo hardships?"

The Blessed One asked in return, "Pūrṇa, what do you think? Do bodhisattvas undergo any hardships?"

- 4.12 Venerable Pūrṇa replied, “No, Blessed One, bodhisattvas experience no hardships, because all phenomena are illusory, as you, Blessed One, have said. Thus, all phenomena that involve feelings of pleasure or pain are merely illusory phenomena.”
- 4.13 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, in this way, one should understand that bodhisattva great beings do undergo hardships. They are delighted by illusory phenomena and avoid mental and physical laziness. This form of delight is also the bodhisattva great beings’ perfection of diligence.” [F.63.a]
- 4.14 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, this understanding of how bodhisattva great beings undergo hardships is amazing! Blessed One, you have explained it so well! When someone awakens to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they teach the Dharma in order to eradicate the ignorance of limitless and countless beings. However, that ignorance does not actually belong to anyone. ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are merely conceptualizations made by beings who cling to a personal self, due to their own ignorance. This ignorance emerges in dependent origination; it is not created by anyone. It arises when its causes come together, and when the causes are no longer present, it will cease once again. And since phenomena naturally come to an end by themselves, no one can terminate them.”
- 4.15 The Blessed One said, “If bodhisattva great beings can reflect in this manner and apply it accordingly without changing their minds, then that is the perfection of diligence of bodhisattvas. As such, these are bodhisattvas who practice diligence. However, lazy bodhisattvas think, ‘If these phenomena are empty, my practice of diligence will lose its power.’ On the other hand, the perfection of diligence of bodhisattva great beings is to think, ‘It is because these phenomena are empty that I am able to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood by means of emptiness. Why is that? Because all beings within the five types of existence are bound by emptiness, which prevents them from passing beyond saṃsāra. However, when I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will teach the Dharma to these beings within the five types of existence, so that they can be freed from saṃsāra. [F.63.b] I will teach them extensively.’
- 4.16 “Lazy bodhisattvas will think, ‘If saṃsāra has neither beginning nor end, how could anyone be circling there? This leaves me no joy, so I will pass into nirvāṇa.’ Rather than that, they should think, ‘As long as I take rebirth and circle in saṃsāra, for that long others will also transition and circle in saṃsāra. So I will have to continue taking rebirth and circling in saṃsāra. However, while they will not awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.’ They may also think, ‘Actions follow after intentions. Even the sun appears through a mere wish.’ Those who think in this way will come to possess the

state of omniscience and not even notice or realize the passing of the seasons, years, months, or fortnights. As they purify their minds by means of the perfections of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight, they do not notice or realize the passing of the seasons, years, months, or fortnights. As an analogy, when a merchant obtains a jewel worth many hundreds of thousands of coins, he will forget all about his domestic chores, his finances, as well as any meetings he may have. If there is any chance that he can obtain that jewel worth so many hundreds of thousands of coins, he will even forget to eat. Likewise, [F.64.a] as bodhisattvas purify their minds by means of the perfections, they have no concern for the passing of the seasons, years, months, or fortnights. Instead, they will only think, ‘When will I attain the jewel of omniscience?’ ”

4.17 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Blessed One, if bodhisattvas wish to proclaim all these qualities, they must have a strong armor of diligence.”

4.18 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, that is correct. Bodhisattva great beings who proclaim all these qualities have a strong armor of diligence. Pūrṇa, within the world of gods, humans, and asuras, I do not see anyone who possesses these qualities of a bodhisattva or anyone in whom such qualities are present, apart from the Thus-Gone One.”

4.19 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra rose up from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms together he bowed toward the Blessed One, and supplicated, “Blessed One, in all of the boundless worlds in the eastern direction, may all bodhisattva great beings who have newly entered this vehicle reach the state of nonregression! And may all non-returning bodhisattva great beings swiftly perfect the state of omniscience! Likewise, in the south, west, north, below, above, and in all the intermediate directions, may all bodhisattva great beings who have newly entered this vehicle reach the state of nonregression! And may all nonreturning bodhisattva great beings swiftly perfect the state of omniscience!”

4.20 The Blessed One said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, [F.64.b] “Pūrṇa, it is because you understand the implications that you say, ‘May those bodhisattvas swiftly perfect the state of omniscience.’ ”

4.21 Venerable Pūrṇa said, “Honorable Blessed One, if there were no bodhisattvas, no buddhas would appear in the world. And if no buddhas appear, there can be no saṅgha of the Blessed One’s hearers, nor can there be any bodhisattvas. Blessed One, therefore, if there are bodhisattva activities, the buddhas will appear in the world. If buddhas appear, the saṅgha of the Blessed One’s hearers can also appear, as can the bodhisattvas. Blessed One, as an analogy, a tree that has a trunk with sap running through it can grow flowers, and from those flowers fruits can

appear. From those fruits other tall trees can grow. Blessed One, likewise, when a buddha is present, there can also be activities of the hearers and the bodhisattvas. From them the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas will also appear.”

4.22 At this point the Blessed One praised Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra’s comments: “Pūrṇa, excellent, excellent!” He then said to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, please remember and understand the perfection of diligence, which is for those bodhisattva great beings who wear a great armor of diligence.”

4.23 When the Blessed One had spoken, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, Venerable Ānanda, the entire retinue, and the world, including its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, [F.65.a] rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

4.24 *This concludes “The Perfection of Diligence.”*[B6]

5.

The Perfection of Concentration

· CHAPTER 1 ·

5.1 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park at Śrāvastī, along with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks. At that time Venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings strive to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, how should they train in the perfection of concentration? Blessed One, how should they practice the perfection of concentration?"

5.2 The Blessed One said to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva great beings who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood rest evenly in the first concentration, they should think to themselves, 'Previously I have also rested in this concentration, and as I rested in this first concentration, I nevertheless took birth in saṃsāra, which is without beginning or end.' Contemplating in this manner, they should refrain from resting in this equipoise and instead use it as a basis for awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Likewise, when resting evenly in the second, third, and fourth concentrations, those bodhisattvas should think, 'In the past I likewise rested in this concentration and, although I did so, I nevertheless took birth in saṃsāra, which is without beginning or end. In the past I already developed these concentrations.' As they consider this, they should avoid resting in these concentrations and instead utilize them for awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. [F.65.b] Based on the fourth concentration, they must then accomplish the five superknowledges.

5.3 "Furthermore, bodhisattvas should think, 'Just as the bodhisattvas of the past trained by resting evenly in the perfection of concentration, so I will also train now.' When bodhisattvas wish in this way to practice the perfection of concentration, they must also accomplish the perfection of insight. Śāradvatīputra, using the fourth concentration as a basis, bodhisattva great beings should not rest within it in order to actualize the

exhaustion of defilements, but rather regard it as their foundation for attaining unsurpassed and perfect awakening. When bodhisattvas rest in the fourth concentration, they should never savor the experience of concentration, the bliss of concentration, or the related results of concentration. Nevertheless, they should still use the concentration as a basis. With the fourth concentration as a basis, they should rest evenly in the attainment of the field of limitless space and accomplish that state. Gradually, they should then rest in and accomplish the attainments of the field of limitless consciousness, the field of nothing whatsoever, and the field of neither perception nor non-perception. However, even though they use these attainments of the formless realm as a basis, they should not savor these experiences.”

5.4 Venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings perceive the significance of this, they will not rest evenly in the attainment of the state of cessation.”

5.5 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, because bodhisattva great beings are afraid to fall into the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas, [F.66.a] they should not rest in the blissful attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings. They should recognize that if they come to rest in the blissful attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings, they will actualize the result of a worthy one. Śāradvatīputra, if bodhisattva great beings see these implications, they will avoid resting in the attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings.”

5.6 Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, it is amazing how bodhisattva great beings use these states of attainment as a foundation, yet do not savor the experience of attainment, nor have any attachment to these states.”

5.7 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, that is correct. That is how it is. It is amazing how bodhisattvas use these states of attainment as a foundation without savoring the experience of attainment and without developing any attachment to these states. It is truly amazing. Śāradvatīputra, therefore, I shall give you an analogy in order to elaborate on and clarify this point. Śāradvatīputra, for this analogy, imagine if a person from this Jambu continent, who is not free of desire and craving, were to travel to the Unpleasant Sound continent to the north. Upon arrival there, he would witness all the available riches of the northern continent, such as the unclaimed women, the fabrics that emerge from the wish-fulfilling tree, the fruits that appear without being cultivated, the ornamented trees, along with all the other pleasures and enjoyments and all the unclaimed gold and gems. Śāradvatīputra, although he would see the full extent of the scenery of the Unpleasant Sound continent, since he had to return, he would feel no attachment or craving. Even though he had seen all the pleasures and

enjoyments of those living in the Unpleasant Sound continent, [F.66.b] he would nevertheless return here to the Jambu continent. Śāradvatīputra, likewise, even though bodhisattva great beings practice the four concentrations as well as the four attainments of the formless realm, they do not savor the experience of them. When bodhisattva great beings cultivate the four concentrations and the four attainments of the formless realm as foundations, they focus on the world of those who experience desire. In doing so, they will once again manifest a physical body in the realm of desire when their current body disintegrates. Śāradvatīputra, this is how bodhisattvas adopt and practice the six perfections.”

5.8 Venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, why do the bodhisattva great beings abandon such special abodes and such unique levels, only to take birth in the desire realm once again?”

5.9 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva great beings do not take birth among the long-lived gods. Why is that? Because they fear that it will delay their practice of the perfections and postpone their full awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.”

5.10 Śāradvatīputra said, “Blessed One, it must be very difficult for bodhisattvas to abandon such a sublime place and instead turn their attention to this awful place. Honorable Blessed One, as an analogy, when a person who is not free of desire and craving sees a fine woman, beautifully adorned with all sorts of jewelry, he will surely observe her and scan her entire appearance, but he would nevertheless not act lasciviously toward her. At another time, he might come across a repulsive female servant or laborer in a deserted area. Looking at her [F.67.a] he will of course not find her very beautiful or attractive and yet he might act lasciviously toward her. Blessed One, I think this is a suitable analogy to illustrate how bodhisattva great beings abandon the blissful and joyful abodes of the four concentrations and the four attainments of the formless realm and once again turn their attention to the desire realm.”

5.11 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva great beings turn their attention from these abodes and focus on the desire realm instead, that, Śāradvatīputra, is the skillful means of the bodhisattvas. Why is that? Because this is how they avoid abandoning omniscience.”

5.12 *This is the first chapter from “The Perfection of Concentration.”*

· CHAPTER 2 ·

5.13 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra, why are bodhisattva great beings permitted to practice the attainment of the first concentration state and why are they

likewise permitted to undertake the second, third, and fourth concentrations, and yet not dwell in them?"

5.14 Venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, "Venerable Pūrṇa, because they fear taking birth among the long-lived gods once their body disintegrates. Venerable Pūrṇa, since the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha perceives these consequences, he does not allow them to take birth among the long-lived gods. Why is that? Because if they are born in the desire realm they can more swiftly perfect the state of omniscience."

5.15 Venerable Pūrṇa said, "Venerable Śāradvatīputra, it is amazing how bodhisattva [F.67.b] great beings practice these concentration levels, only to later abandon these levels and turn their attention to this lowly world so filled with hardships. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, as an analogy, if a man finds a treasure filled with many different jewels, he will evaluate it, pick it up, and then proceed. Another time, he may see a kākaṇi coin or a kārṣāpaṇa coin and, stretching out his arm, pick it up and proceed. Likewise, Venerable One, once bodhisattva great beings have rested blissfully and leisurely in the four concentrations and the four attainments of the formless realm, they will at first evaluate them and then rest within those states. However, they will subsequently turn their attention to the phenomena of the desire realm and, as their body disintegrates, they will take birth in the desire realm. In this way the bodhisattva great beings will once again take up the practice of the six perfections. Venerable Śāradvatīputra, since the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha perceives the implications of all this, he does not allow bodhisattvas to take birth among the long-lived gods."

5.16 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, that which I have taught and explained here, is that taught by the Thus-Gone One and is it a Dharma statement? Is it a Dharma discourse that agrees with the Dharma?"

5.17 The Blessed One said, "Pūrṇa, what you have taught and explained is taught by the Thus-Gone One. It is a Dharma statement. It is a Dharma discourse that agrees with the Dharma. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattva great beings rest in the first concentration, as well as the second, third, and fourth concentrations, they must not think, 'I have produced these concentrations [F.68.a] and now I will take birth in the form realm or the formless realm.' However, neither should they think, 'I will go beyond the form realm and the formless realm.' "

5.18 Pūrṇa asked, "Honorable Blessed One, is the omniscience of the Thus-Gone One beyond, and separate from, the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm?"

- 5.19 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, that is correct. That is how it is. The omniscience of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha is beyond the desire realm, beyond the form realm, and beyond the formless realm. It is beyond, and separate from, these three realms.”
- 5.20 Pūrṇa said, “Blessed One, if the omniscience of the Thus-Gone One is separate from the three realms, then, as the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha sees the implications of doing so, he should not allow the bodhisattvas to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and, practicing the perfection of concentration, transcend the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm.”
- 5.21 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas who wish to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and practice the perfection of concentration were allowed to transcend the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm, they would abandon their bodhisattva vow and end up on the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas. Pūrṇa, [F.68.b] when bodhisattva great beings sit at the seat of awakening, that is the time and occasion for the bodhisattva great beings to abandon the desire realm and the form realm. Pūrṇa, it is when bodhisattvas have aroused the mind of awakening and dedicated all that arises toward omniscience that they remove themselves from the third realm and bring themselves closer to omniscience.”
- 5.22 Pūrṇa asked, “Honorable Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas who are practicing the perfection of concentration and who uphold the perfection of insight avoid savoring the experience of concentration and its subcategories without being apart from them either?”
- 5.23 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration, they maintain the concentrations and their subcategories while applying the notion of egolessness. They then dedicate the resulting roots of virtue toward the state of omniscience. Pūrṇa, in this way bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of concentration and uphold the perfection of insight without savoring the experience of concentration or its subcategories, and yet without being apart from them either.”
- 5.24 Pūrṇa asked, “Honorable Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration and uphold the perfection of diligence?”
- 5.25 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattvas are practicing the perfection of concentration and have transcended the desire realm, they must abandon the concentrations and once again turn their attention to the desire realm. Pūrṇa, then those bodhisattva great beings are practicing the perfection of concentration [F.69.a] and upholding the perfection of diligence.”

- 5.26 Pūrṇa asked, “Honorable Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration and uphold the perfection of patience?”
- 5.27 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattva great beings are filled with love and compassion and practice that very same concentration, they will rest without any hostility. Pūrṇa, then those bodhisattva great beings are practicing the perfection of concentration and upholding the perfection of patience.”
- 5.28 Pūrṇa asked, “Honorable Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration and uphold the perfection of discipline?”
- 5.29 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration, they should avoid thinking of the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas as being supreme. Pūrṇa, then those bodhisattva great beings are practicing the perfection of concentration and upholding the perfection of diligence.”
- 5.30 Pūrṇa asked, “Honorable Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration and uphold the perfection of generosity?”
- 5.31 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration, they should engender compassion for all beings and think, ‘These beings are never free from the sufferings experienced in saṃsāra. Therefore, when I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will benefit these beings with the gift of the Dharma and teach them the Dharma, so that they can abandon all afflictions.’ [F.69.b] Pūrṇa, this is how bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of concentration and uphold the perfection of generosity.”
- 5.32 Pūrṇa asked, “Honorable Blessed One, what are such skillful bodhisattva great beings like?”
- The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, they are nonregressing bodhisattvas.”
- 5.33 Pūrṇa said, “Honorable Blessed One, when bodhisattva great beings don the great armor for the sake of limitless beings, they think, ‘I will bring limitless beings to nirvāṇa. I will ensure that the way of the Buddha remains uninterrupted.’ And they undertake hardship when all the while the one who passes into nirvāṇa, the act of passing into nirvāṇa, and the full awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood do not exist. That is amazing!”
- 5.34 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, that is certainly true. However, they do undergo suffering and they do bring suffering to an end. Therefore, in this way one should regard bodhisattva great beings as undertaking hardships.”
- 5.35 Pūrṇa said, “Honorable Blessed One, quite so, that is correct. One should understand that bodhisattvas do undertake hardships. That is because they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood for the sake of limitless beings without any focus on someone passing into nirvāṇa, the act of

passing into nirvāṇa, or the full awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Having done so, [F.70.a] they teach the Dharma in order to eradicate the attachment, anger, and delusion of all beings.”

5.36 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas rest without distraction and contemplate the state of omniscience, you should know that they possess concentration. Pūrṇa, if bodhisattvas contemplate the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas, you should know that they are distracted bodhisattvas. Why is that? Because those are to be feared. Pūrṇa, moreover, if it should happen that bodhisattva great beings begin to conceptualize by focusing on form, sound, smell, taste, or texture, that may certainly become the basis for their mind to become distracted. Nevertheless, these phenomena do not pose an obstacle for the state of omniscience, and any phenomenon that does not pose an obstacle for the state of omniscience belongs at the level of the absorption of bodhisattva great beings.”

5.37 *This is the second chapter from “The Perfection of Concentration.”*

. CHAPTER 3 .

5.38 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, why does the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha, who sees the truth, praise the abandonments of the bodhisattvas but not those of the hearers?”

5.39 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, since you ask that, let me ask you a question in return. Bear with me as I give you a reply. Pūrṇa, tell me, do fireflies perform the same function as the sun when it comes to shining on the people of this earth?” [F.70.b]

Pūrṇa said, “Honorable Blessed One, no, they do not.”

5.40 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, similarly, the actions of the hearers cannot compare to the actions of the bodhisattva great beings. Pūrṇa, tell me, what types of action are the bodhisattvas engaged in?”

5.41 Pūrṇa said, “Blessed One, bodhisattva great beings are engaged in thoughts like, ‘I will bring all countless and limitless beings to nirvāṇa. I will make sure that the lineage of the Buddha remains uninterrupted.’ The hearers are not like that.”

5.42 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, tell me, within this community of hearers, do you see even a single monk who is engaged in the actions that the bodhisattvas engage in?”

Pūrṇa said, “No, Blessed One, I do not.”

5.43 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, it is because the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha perceives the power of these facts that he exclusively praises the abandonments of the bodhisattva great beings but not those of the hearers. Pūrṇa, as an analogy, the sun bathes all the people of this earth in a

boundless light, whereas fireflies merely shine with a very limited glow that only illuminates themselves. Pūrṇa, in the same way, those who are following the vehicle of the hearers merely act to repel the trifling afflictions of their own being. On the other hand, Pūrṇa, bodhisattvas engage in actions aimed at bringing themselves and others to nirvāṇa, securing the welfare of countless and limitless beings, and repelling all afflictions. Pūrṇa, as an analogy, a master archer, [F.71.a] who is familiar with weaponry and skilled in its use, may collect a yearly salary of one hundred thousand kārṣāpaṇa coins from the king. Whenever the time comes for the king to go into battle, the master archer will always wield his sword and loose his arrows without any hesitation, in a manner that no elephant rider, horse rider, or soldier can. Pūrṇa, in the same way, bodhisattva great beings will don armor for the sake of others who are involved in attachment, anger, and delusion, so that they can awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood for the sake of everyone else. Having awakened in this manner, they will also teach the Dharma so that others can abandon their attachment, anger, and delusion. Pūrṇa, thus the bodhisattva great beings don the great armor.”

5.44 Pūrṇa said, “As I understand the meaning expressed by the Blessed One, bodhisattva great beings never cease to rest in equipoise. Even when bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of generosity, they rest in equipoise. Even when bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of discipline, the perfection of patience, the perfection of diligence, the perfection of concentration, or the perfection of insight, they are resting in equipoise. Blessed One, let me give an analogy. Even if a beryl gemstone were placed in a golden vessel, it would not lose its precious nature. Likewise, neither would it lose its precious nature if it were placed in a silver vessel, a crystal vessel, or even an iron vessel. Even if it were placed in a clay pot or put in the soil, it would not lose its precious nature. Blessed One, likewise, even when bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of generosity, [F.71.b] they are resting in equipoise. Even when they practice the perfection of discipline, the perfection of patience, the perfection of diligence, the perfection of concentration, and the perfection of insight do they rest in equipoise. This is how I understand the meaning expressed by the Blessed One.”

5.45 Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Pūrṇa, excellent, excellent! Pūrṇa, that is correct! If bodhisattva great beings are free of desires and unwholesome wicked ways and possess conceptual and discursive thought, that freedom will cause them to accomplish and rest in the first concentration in which they feel well-being and bliss. However, as they maintain that first concentration level, should they wish for the levels of

the hearers or the solitary buddhas, those bodhisattva great beings are distracted and should be known as bodhisattva great beings who are on the level of not resting in equipoise.

5.46 “Pūrṇa, moreover, if bodhisattva great beings are free from conceptual and discursive thought, have an inner lucidity and a one-pointed mind, the absorption in which there is no conceptual and discursive thought will cause them to accomplish and rest in the second concentration in which they feel well-being and bliss. However, as they maintain that second concentration level, should they wish for the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, those bodhisattva great beings are distracted and should be known as bodhisattva great beings who are on the level of not resting in equipoise.

5.47 “Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattva great beings are without attachment to joy, they can rest in equipoise while mindful, aware, and with an experience of physical pleasure. The noble ones [F.72.a] describe this as a state of mindful and blissful equipoise. Thus they accomplish and rest in the third concentration, which is without joy. However, as they maintain that third concentration level, should they wish for the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, those bodhisattva great beings are distracted and should be known as bodhisattva great beings who are on the level of not resting in equipoise.

5.48 “Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattvas have abandoned both happiness and suffering, they are beyond happiness and suffering, since both happiness and unhappiness have subsided. At that point, as their equipoise and mindfulness are pure, they accomplish and rest in the fourth concentration. However, as they maintain that fourth concentration level, should they wish for the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas, those bodhisattva great beings are distracted and should be known as bodhisattva great beings who are on the level of not resting in equipoise.”

5.49 Pūrṇa asked, “Blessed One, what are bodhisattvas like who rest in equipoise?”

The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, when bodhisattva great beings observe anyone, regardless of who they are, they will think, ‘When I awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, I will guide this being.’ If they form this resolve, they are bodhisattvas who rest in equipoise. Pūrṇa, moreover, when bodhisattvas cause another being to take refuge in the three objects of refuge and dedicate the roots of virtue to the state of omniscience, they are bodhisattvas who rest in equipoise. Pūrṇa, moreover, if bodhisattvas establish another being in the five foundations for training and dedicate the roots of virtue toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening, they are bodhisattvas who rest in equipoise. [F.72.b] Pūrṇa, moreover, if bodhisattvas establish another being on the path of the ten virtuous actions and dedicate

the roots of virtue toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening, they are bodhisattvas who rest in equipoise. Pūrṇa, moreover, if bodhisattvas cause another son or daughter of noble family to take up, continue with, and remain in the practice of generosity as well as the practices of discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight, and dedicate the roots of virtue to the state of omniscience, they are bodhisattvas who rest in equipoise. Pūrṇa, moreover, even if bodhisattvas only rejoice in those who practice the perfections and dedicate the roots of virtue of rejoicing toward the state of omniscience, they are bodhisattvas who rest in equipoise and bodhisattvas who practice the perfection of concentration. Why is that? Because by doing so, they avoid forsaking their engagement with omniscience.

5.50 “Whenever they are not failing to be engaged with omniscience, they are practicing the bodhisattva great beings’ perfection of concentration. This is how bodhisattvas practice the perfection of concentration. When bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of concentration and rely on concentration, they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. It is also by resting in the unwavering abode and relinquishing the continuation of life that the Thus-Gone One passes into nirvāṇa beyond further craving. Pūrṇa, in this way the perfection of concentration [F.73.a] benefits the bodhisattvas who seek to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Pūrṇa, apart from the concentration of a thus-gone one, the concentration of the bodhisattvas is said to be the best in comparison to any other form of concentration. It is supreme, foremost, superior, preeminent, sublime, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. Why is that? Because, Pūrṇa, the concentration of the bodhisattvas is always concerned with the state of omniscience, whereas the concentration of the hearers lacks any concern with omniscience.”

5.51 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, when the hearers practice concentration, they do actualize the suchness that is the suchness of the blessed buddhas. So, Blessed One, why is the concentration of the hearers not the mind of omniscience?”

5.52 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, since you ask that, let me ask you a question in return. Bear with me as I give you a reply. Pūrṇa, tell me, if a hearer practices concentration and actualizes the suchness that is the suchness of the blessed buddhas, is that hearer called a ‘Thus-Gone One’?”

Pūrṇa said, “No, Blessed One, he is not.”

5.53 The Blessed One said, “Let me give you another analogy, Pūrṇa. Since some dull-witted persons may understand what I am talking about by means of an analogy, let me use one. Pūrṇa, if, for example, a normal person takes a seat on a royal throne, does that act in itself make him a king?”

5.54 Pūrṇa said, “No, Blessed One, it does not. Why is that? Blessed One, because that man would still lack the characteristics of a king.” [F.73.b]

5.55 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, that is correct. The hearers may rest in equipoise in the first concentration as well as the second, third, and fourth concentrations. They may also rest in equipoise in the four attainments of the formless realm. They may even have actualized the suchness that is the suchness of the blessed buddhas. However, Pūrṇa, the hearers do not possess the qualities of the Buddha, such as the ten powers and the four types of fearlessness, nor do they have omniscient wisdom. It is because they lack these qualities of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha that they are called ‘the Thus-Gone One’s hearers.’ The hearers’ concentrations lack the qualities of the Buddha and they do not amount even to one percent of the concentrations of the bodhisattvas. Nor do they count for a thousandth or a hundred thousandth of that. In fact, no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or comparison would suffice. Why is that? Because, Pūrṇa, when bodhisattva great beings rest in the perfection of concentration, they do not lose sight of the state of omniscience and they purify the buddha realms. As the bodhisattvas practice and rest in attainment in this way, there is no one among the hearers or solitary buddhas who can comprehend the way they practice and the way they rest in attainment.”

5.56 Pūrṇa asked, “Blessed One, what is this practice of the bodhisattva great beings called?”

The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, this practice of the bodhisattvas is called ‘the inconceivable practice.’ Why is that? Pūrṇa, it is called this since this practice brings about the qualities of omniscience. Pūrṇa, therefore [F.74.a] this practice is also called ‘the practice that aims to benefit all worlds.’ Why is that? Because, Pūrṇa, the bodhisattva great beings rest in equipoise in this practice for the sake of limitless beings. It is due to this practice of resting that the bodhisattvas, as they awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, attain the undefiled concentrations that allow them to instruct, teach, and guide limitless and endless beings. Pūrṇa, in this way, this practice of resting by which the bodhisattva great beings practice is called ‘the practice that aims to benefit all worlds.’ Pūrṇa, in this way, since the bodhisattva great beings seek to awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they must train in the perfection of concentration and accomplish the perfection of concentration.”

5.57 *This is the third chapter from “The Perfection of Concentration.”*

· CHAPTER 4 ·

5.58 Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, compared to the attainments of the bodhisattvas, those of the hearers are more exalted. Blessed One, that is because the hearers have nine gradual attainments whereas the bodhisattvas only rest in eight attainments. In this way the hearers have one more absorption, and so, compared to the bodhisattvas, the hearers are superior in terms of their attainments.”

5.59 When he had said this, the Blessed One replied to Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, “Pūrṇa, the bodhisattvas also have the attainment of the state of cessation. Pūrṇa, although bodhisattvas [F.74.b] certainly master the attainment of the state of cessation, they do not enter that attainment. And why? Because the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha does not grant his permission, fearing that they would fall into the levels of the hearers or the solitary buddhas. Pūrṇa, let me provide you some analogies for this, since some dull-witted people may better understand this point by means of an analogy.

5.60 “Pūrṇa, as an analogy, a universal monarch is greater than the many petty rulers in the outlying districts. Although the universal monarch does not travel to those places himself and even though he does not live there, he reigns in those countries and the people of those areas abide by his command. In this way the universal monarch is in control of his realm. Pūrṇa, likewise, bodhisattva great beings do not enter the attainment in which perceptions and feelings have ceased and yet they have full control over that attainment. It is only when bodhisattvas take their place at the seat of awakening that the time is right for them to rest in that absorption. And why? Because otherwise they fear abiding in the state of a hearer, or remaining at the level of a hearer, or becoming like a hearer.

5.61 “Pūrṇa, as another analogy, when a king, who has been crowned within the royal family, visits a market and expresses the wish to have a drink of wine, a skilled chamberlain will tell him, ‘Your Majesty, this is not a suitable time to drink. It is not the proper occasion. Instead, Your Majesty, you should enjoy your drink when you visit the royal harem.’ Now, Pūrṇa, tell me, does the king not have any wine to drink?”

Pūrṇa said, “Yes, Blessed One, he does.”

5.62 The Blessed One said, “The king [F.75.a] certainly does have wine that he could drink, but the chamberlain does not give him any. And why? Because, as the ruler of many hundreds of cities as well as many regions with several hundreds of thousands of people, it would not be proper for him to drink wine in the middle of a marketplace. Pūrṇa, likewise, with the consciousness that bodhisattva great beings possess, they certainly do have the capacity to rest in the attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings, yet the blessed buddhas do not grant them permission. And why? Because for the time being this is not the proper context or occasion to rest in the attainment

of the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Pūrṇa, the bodhisattva great beings eventually will rest in the attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings, when they have abandoned all perceptions and all conceptuality and thus actualize the sphere of immortality. However, that time and occasion will come in the future at the time and occasion when they sit at the seat of awakening. Because they then transcend all perceptions, they accomplish the attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings. As they thus awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they turn the wheel of Dharma with its twelve features.”

5.63 When the Blessed One had spoken thus, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, bodhisattva great beings have the strength and power to actualize the exhaustion of defilements, yet they do not actualize that state. It is amazing that they have such forbearance! Blessed One, this is so that they can act altruistically to benefit others for a long time.”

5.64 The Blessed One said, “Pūrṇa, that is correct. That is how it is. When bodhisattva great beings perceive the implications of doing so, [F.75.b] they will not rest in these gradual states of attainment. Why is that? Because, Pūrṇa, the skill of bodhisattva great beings entails mastering these attainments without resting in them. Whether one is a bodhisattva who has newly entered this vehicle, or a bodhisattva who has become nonregressing, it is by practicing the perfection of concentration in this manner that one is known as a bodhisattva.”

5.65 Venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattva great beings practice the perfection of concentration? How do they rest in equipoise in concentration?”

5.66 The Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas are free of desire and unwholesome wrongdoing, possess conceptual and discursive thought, and enjoy the happiness that arises from such freedom, then they can accomplish and rest in the first concentration. In the same way they accomplish and rest in the second, third, and fourth concentrations. Thus they also accomplish and rest in the attainments of the field of limitless space, the field of limitless consciousness, the field of nothing whatsoever, and the field of neither perception nor non-perception. Thus, they rest in the concentrations and attainments related to the form and formless realms. However, once they have become acquainted with and reveled in these states, they once again turn their attention to the desire realm. Why is that? Due to fear of taking birth among the gods of the form or formless realms. By resting in the concentrations of the form or formless realms, one may take rebirth there, and therefore one should be on guard to prevent that by turning away from such rebirths. Thus, skillful bodhisattvas should tell

themselves, 'If I am born among the gods of the form or formless realms, many thousands of beings will be displeased and I risk becoming far removed from any vision of, [F.76.a] or meeting with, the Buddha. I will be born as a senseless being in a place of senseless beings.' Thinking in this way allows the bodhisattvas skillfully to attain the attainments of the form and formless realms and become familiar with them, while, also due to their skillful means, once again taking rebirth in the desire realm.

5.67 "Śāradvatīputra, suppose a man wishes to sleep with one of the king's consorts. He may then ponder, 'How can I sleep with the chief royal consort without the king and his assistants finding out? And how can I safely slip away afterward?' Being a skilled person, he will then search for a medicinal remedy that temporarily removes his male organ. Having found such a remedy, he can then approach the king without a male organ and say, 'Your Majesty, please listen to me! I have no male organ and because of this unfortunate situation I request the position of guarding Your Majesty's royal harem.' Having verified this, the king may then assign the man to his harem. Once in the harem, the man can then apply another remedy that makes his male organ reappear, thus enabling him to sleep with the chief royal consort for one, two, or even three months straight. However, at that point the man might begin to worry, thinking, 'If the king finds out about this, he will surely have me killed! So, I must find a way to escape surely and safely from this royal palace.' He will then address the king once more, saying, 'Your Majesty, please listen to me! My male organ has suddenly reappeared and so it is no longer fitting that I remain in Your Majesty's royal harem.' The king will then think to himself, 'Oh, this is certainly a virtuous man! Since he arrived here, he has lived in my harem in such an honorable manner!' The king will then reward the man with fine clothing and gifts before finally letting him go. Due to his skillfulness and knowledge of medicinal remedies, at first he was able to infiltrate the royal harem and later, again because of medicinal remedies and his skills, [F.76.b] he managed to get out without any suffering any harm.

5.68 "Śāradvatīputra, likewise, skillful bodhisattva great beings attain and rest in the first concentration as well as the second, third, and fourth concentrations. They also attain and rest in the attainments of the field of limitless space, the field of limitless consciousness, the field of nothing whatsoever, and the field of neither perception nor non-perception. Once they have gained familiarity with these states, they skillfully descend to the desire realm once again. As they focus on the desire realm, they are able to constantly behold and serve the Buddha. They also avoid manifesting the limit of reality. Why is that? Because in this way they do not abandon the state of omniscience, nor do they abandon any sentient being. Therefore,

Śāradvatīputra, skillful bodhisattva great beings are those who practice the perfection of concentration, avoid manifesting the limit of reality, and do not fall into the attainment of the state of cessation.”

5.69 When the Blessed One had spoken thus, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, Venerable Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, the great hearers, and the world, including its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

5.70 *This concludes the fourth chapter from “The Perfection of Concentration.”*

5.71 *This concludes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra “Teaching the Five Perfections.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Jinamitra, together with the translator-editor, Bandé Yeshé Dé, and others.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 See Bongard-Levin (1997) and Karashima (2004) for transliterations of the Sanskrit fragments. The fragments correspond to the following passages in the Degé Kangyur: 23.b.6–25.a.2 (Karashima 2004) and 36.a.7–37.a.3 (Bongard-Levin 1997).
- n.2 Taishō 220 (11–15).
- n.3 This is further corroborated by the fact that the Phukdrak and Gondhla Kangyur versions contain individual Tibetan translator colophons for each of the five sūtras, thus reflecting their status as separate texts in Tibet too, not just in China (Tauscher 2015: p. 380).
- n.4 Taishō 220 (16). In the Degé Kangyur, this sūtra is placed separately from the other five, in the Prajñāpāramitā section (Toh 14). See also Bongard-Levin 1997: pp. 93–94.
- n.5 The Denkarma catalog is dated to c. 812 CE. Denkarma, folio 297.b.1. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008: pp. 59–60, no. 104.
- n.6 Tib. *byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po phal cher gzhon nur gyur pa*; Skt. probably *bodhisattvā mahāsattvā bhūyas tena sarve kumārabhūtāḥ*, see *Mahāvīyutpatti* 883. Among standard descriptions of bodhisattvas in the introductory openings of sūtras, this is less frequent than some others. It may be directly or indirectly related to “the category of bodhisattvas who are still youths” (*gzhon nur gyur pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnam par gzhaq pa*), the eighth of the ten categories of bodhisattva (*byang chub sems dpa' rnam par gzhaq pa bcu*), successive stages described in the tenth chapter of the *Avatamsaka* and also in the *Ratnolkādhāraṇī* (Toh 145); see Jackson, D. (tr.), *The Dhāraṇī of the Jewel Torch* (2020), 1.78–1.79 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh145.html#UT22084-057-004-198>).

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Affliction

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

Literally “pain,” “torment,” or “affliction.” In Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit it literally means “impurity” or “depravity.” In its technical use in Buddhism it means any negative quality in the mind that causes continued existence in saṃsāra. There are said to be 84,000 of these negative mental qualities for which the 84,000 categories of the Buddha’s teachings serve as the antidote. These mental disturbances can be subsumed into the three or five poisons of attachment, anger, and ignorance plus arrogance and jealousy. Also translated here as “disturbing emotions.”

Links to further resources:

[58 related glossary entries](#)

g.2 Aggregate

phung po

ཕུང་པོ།

skandha

Five collections of similar phenomena, under which all compounded dharmas may be included: form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. On the individual level the five aggregates refer to the basis upon which the mistaken idea of a self is projected.

Links to further resources:

[55 related glossary entries](#)

g.3 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

Ānanda

The Buddha's cousin and principal attendant.

Links to further resources:

[78 related glossary entries](#)

g.4 Anāthapiṇḍada

mgon med zas sbyin

མགོན་མེད་བཟས་སྤྱིན།

Anāthapiṇḍada

A wealthy merchant in the town of Śrāvastī, famous for his generosity to the poor, who became a patron of the Buddha Śākyamuni. He bought Prince Jeta's Grove (Skt. *Jetavana*), to be the Buddha's first monastery, a place where the monks could stay during the monsoon. Although his Sanskrit name is Anāthapiṇḍada, he is better known in the West by the Pāli form of his name, Anāthapiṇḍika. Both mean "the one who gives food to the destitute."

Links to further resources:

[38 related glossary entries](#)

g.5 Asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

One of the six classes of sentient beings. The asuras are dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility and are incessantly embroiled in disputes with the gods. They are frequently portrayed in brahmanical and Buddhist mythology as having a disruptive effect on cosmic and social harmony.

Links to further resources:

[104 related glossary entries](#)

g.6 Attainment

snyoms par 'jug pa

སྟོབས་པར་འཇུག་པ།

samāpatti

A technical term referring to a meditative state attained through the practice of concentration. (The word “attainment” is also used here to translate non-technical words that have the sense of “obtain” or “acquire.”)

Links to further resources:

[26 related glossary entries](#)

g.7 Blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavat · bhagavān

A common epithet in Buddhist literature for Śākyamuni or any other buddha.

Links to further resources:

[115 related glossary entries](#)

g.8 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

Brahmā

A divine being who rules the Brahmā realm.

Links to further resources:

[122 related glossary entries](#)

g.9 Defilement

zag pa

ཟག་པ།

āsrava

Literally, “to flow” or “to ooze.” Mental defilements or contaminations that “flow out” toward the objects of cyclic existence, binding us to them.

Vasubandhu offers two alternative explanations of this term: “They cause beings to remain (*āsayanti*) within saṃsāra” and “They flow from the Summit of Existence down to the Unwavering, out of the six wounds that are the entrances” (*āsayanti saṃsāre āsravanti bhavāgrādyāvādvāḥiṇi ṣaḍbhir āyatana-vraṇair ityāsravāḥ*, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* on 5.40, Pradhan 1967, p. 308). The “Summit of Existence” is the highest point within saṃsāra, while the hell called “Unwavering” is the lowest; the six entrances here refer to the five sense faculties plus the mind, i.e., the six internal entrances in the scheme of twelve entrances.

Links to further resources:

25 related glossary entries

g.10 Dependent origination

rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་པར་འབྱུང་བ།

pratītyasamutpāda

The relative nature of phenomena, which arises in dependence upon causes and conditions. Together with the four truths of the noble ones, this was one of the first teachings given by the Buddha.

Links to further resources:

27 related glossary entries

g.11 Disturbing emotion

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

See “affliction.”

Links to further resources:

58 related glossary entries

g.12 Eight liberations

rnam par thar pa brgyad

རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭavimokṣa

A series of progressively more subtle states of meditative realization or attainment. There are several presentations of these found in the canonical literature. One of the most common is as follows: (1) One observes form while the mind dwells at the level of the form realm. (2) One observes forms externally while discerning formlessness internally. (3) One dwells in the direct experience of the body’s pleasant aspect. (4) One dwells in the realization of the sphere of infinite space by transcending all conceptions of matter, resistance, and diversity. (5) Transcending the sphere of infinite space, one dwells in the realization of the sphere of infinite consciousness. (6) Transcending the sphere of infinite consciousness, one dwells in the realization of the sphere of nothingness. (7) Transcending the sphere of nothingness, one dwells in the realization of the sphere of neither perception

nor nonperception. (8) Transcending the sphere of neither perception and nonperception, one dwells in the realization of the cessation of conception and feeling.

Links to further resources:

[15 related glossary entries](#)

g.13 Eighteen unique features of a buddha

sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa bcwa brgyad

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཚོས་མ་འདྲིས་པ་བཅུ་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭādaśāveṇīkabuddhadharma

They are as follows: (1) he never makes a mistake; (2) he is never boisterous; (3) he never forgets; (4) his concentration never falters; (5) he has no notion of distinctness; (6) his equanimity is not due to lack of consideration; (7) his motivation never falters; (8) his endeavor never fails; (9) his mindfulness never falters; (10) he never abandons his concentration; (11) his insight (*prajñā*) never decreases; (12) his liberation never fails; (13) all his physical actions are preceded and followed by wisdom (*jñāna*); (14) all his verbal actions are preceded and followed by wisdom; (15) all his mental actions are preceded and followed by wisdom; (16) his wisdom (*jñāna*) and vision perceive the past without any attachment or hindrance; (17) his wisdom and vision perceive the future without any attachment or hindrance; and (18) his wisdom and vision perceive the present without any attachment or hindrance.

Links to further resources:

[27 related glossary entries](#)

g.14 Eighth-lowest level

brgyad pa

བརྒྱད་པ།

aṣṭamaka

A person who is eight steps away in the arc of their development from becoming an arhat (Tib. *dgra bcom pa*). Specifically, this term refers to one who is on the cusp of becoming a stream-enterer (Skt. *srotaāpanna*; Tib. *rgyun du zhugs pa*), and is the first and lowest stage in a list of eight stages or classes of a noble person (Skt. *āryapudgala*). The person at this lowest stage in the sequence is still on the path of seeing (Skt. *darśanamārga*; Tib. *mthong lam*), and then enters the path of cultivation (Skt. *bhāvanāmārga*; Tib. *sgoms lam*) upon attaining the next stage, that of a stream-enterer (stage 7). From there they progress through the remaining stages of the śrāvaka path, becoming in turn

a once-returner (stages six and five), a non-returner (stages four and three), and an arhat (stages two and one). This same “eighth stage” also appears in set of ten stages (Skt. *daśabhūmi*; Tib. *sa bcu*) found in Mahāyāna sources, where it is the third step out of the ten. Not to be confused with the ten stages of the bodhisattva’s path, these ten stages mark the progress of one who sequentially follows the paths of a śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and then bodhisattva on their way to complete buddhahood. In this set of ten stages a person “on the eighth stage” is similarly one who is on the cusp of becoming a stream-enterer.

Links to further resources:

[11 related glossary entries](#)

g.15 Elder

gnas brtan

གནས་བརྟན།

sthavira

A senior student of the Buddha.

Links to further resources:

[12 related glossary entries](#)

g.16 Elements

khams

ཁམས།

dhātu

One way of describing experience and the world in terms of eighteen elements (eye, form, and eye consciousness; ear, sound, and ear consciousness; nose, odor, and nose consciousness; tongue, taste, and tongue consciousness; body, touch, and body consciousness; mind, mental objects, and mind consciousness).

Links to further resources:

[55 related glossary entries](#)

g.17 Emptiness

stong pa nyid

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

śūnyatā

One of the three gateways to liberation; the empty nature of phenomena.

Links to further resources:

34 related glossary entries

g.18 Faithful one

dad pas rjes su 'brang ba

དད་པས་རྗེས་སུ་འབྲང་བ།

śraddhānusārin

According to the Mahāyāna, one of the seven types of noble beings (*āryapudgala*), and also one of the twenty types of members of the saṅgha (*vimśatiprabhedasamgha*).

Links to further resources:

5 related glossary entries

g.19 Field of limitless consciousness

rnam shes mtha' yas skye mched

རྣམ་ཤེས་མཐའ་ཡས་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

vijñānānantyāyatana

Name of the second of the four formless realms and of the second formless meditative absorption, so termed because in its preparatory phase limitless consciousness is the object of meditation.

Links to further resources:

12 related glossary entries

g.20 Field of limitless space

nam mkha' mtha' yas skye mched

ནམ་མཐའ་མཐའ་ཡས་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

ākāśānantyāyatana

Name of the first of the four formless realms and of the first formless meditative absorption, so termed because in its preparatory phase limitless space is the object of meditation.

Links to further resources:

10 related glossary entries

g.21 Field of neither perception nor non-perception

'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched

འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་མིན་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

naiवासamjñānāsamjñāyatana

Name of the fourth of the four formless realms and of the fourth formless meditative absorption, so termed because conceptions are weak in it, but not entirely absent.

Links to further resources:

[15 related glossary entries](#)

g.22 Field of nothing whatsoever

ci yang med pa'i skye mched

ཅི་ཡང་མེད་པའི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

akiñcanyāyatana

Name of the third of the four formless realms and of the third formless meditative absorption, so termed because in its preparatory phase absolute nothingness is the object of meditation.

Links to further resources:

[10 related glossary entries](#)

g.23 Five superknowledges

mngon par shes pa lnga

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་ལྔ།

pañcābhijñā

Five extraordinary abilities that result from meditative concentration: divine sight, divine hearing, knowing others' minds, recollecting past lives, and the ability to perform miracles. See also "six superknowledges."

Links to further resources:

[29 related glossary entries](#)

g.24 Follower of the Dharma

chos kyi rjes su 'brang ba

ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྗེས་སུ་འབྲང་བ།

dharmānusārin

According to the Mahāyāna, one of the seven types of noble beings (*āryapudgala*), and also one of the twenty types of members of the saṅgha (*viṃśatiprabhedasaṅgha*).

Links to further resources:

[5 related glossary entries](#)

g.25 Formative factor

mngon par 'du byed pa

མངོན་པར་འདུ་བྱེད་པ།

abhisaṃskāra

Mental factors that perpetuate karmic activity.

Links to further resources:

[10 related glossary entries](#)

g.26 Foundations for training

bslab pa'i gzhi

བསྐྱབ་པའི་གཞི།

śikṣāpada

A basic precept observed as the foundation for one's spiritual life. Here it refers to the five precepts of abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and using intoxicants.

Links to further resources:

[9 related glossary entries](#)

g.27 Four assemblies

'khor bzhi po

འཁོར་བཞི་པོ།

catuḥpariṣad

The assemblies of monks (Skt. *bhikṣu*) and nuns (Skt. *bhikṣuṇī*), along with laymen (Skt. *upāsaka*) and laywomen (Skt. *upāsikā*).

Links to further resources:

[17 related glossary entries](#)

g.28 Four attainments of the formless realm

gzugs med pa'i snyoms par 'jug pa bzhi

གཟུགས་མེད་པའི་སྣོ་མས་པར་འཇུག་པ་བཞི།

caturārūpyasamāpatti

These are typically listed as follows: (1) the attainment of the sense field of limitless space, (2) the attainment of the sense field of limitless consciousness, (3) the attainment of the sense field of nothing whatsoever, and (4) the attainment of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception.

Links to further resources:

[7 related glossary entries](#)

g.29 Four concentrations

bsam gtan bzhi

བསམ་གཏན་བཞི།

caturdhyāna

The four progressive levels of concentration of the form realm that culminate in pure one-pointedness of mind, and are a requirement for cultivation of the five or six superknowledges, and so on. These are part of the nine gradual attainments.

Links to further resources:

[23 related glossary entries](#)

g.30 Four types of fearlessness

mi 'jigs pa bzhi

མི་འཇིགས་པ་བཞི།

caturabhaya · caturvaiśāradya

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

Links to further resources:

[26 related glossary entries](#)

g.31 Gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

The term generally refers to a class of non-human beings sometimes known as “celestial musicians.” In Abhidharma cosmology, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by any sentient being in the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*) during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

Links to further resources:

[113 related glossary entries](#)

g.32 Garuḍa

mkha' ldīng

མཁའ་ལྷིང་།

garuḍa

In Indian religious mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like sun bird with an enormous wingspan that is regarded as the king of all birds. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth.

Links to further resources:

[78 related glossary entries](#)

g.33 Go forth

rab tu 'byung ba

རབ་ཏུ་འབྱུང་བ།

pra + √vraj

To renounce settled, household life (“going forth from home into homelessness”) to become a monk or nun, or a wandering spiritual practitioner.

Links to further resources:

[16 related glossary entries](#)

g.34 Great Assemblage

phung po chen po

ཕུང་པོ་ཆེན་པོ།

—

A buddha in the world known as Illusory.

g.35 Great being

sems dpa' chen po

སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāsattva

An epithet of advanced bodhisattvas, often defined as having attained at least the seventh bhūmi and the path of vision. These bodhisattvas have several special qualities that bodhisattvas on the lower bhūmis do not have.

Links to further resources:

[15 related glossary entries](#) · [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article](#)

g.36 Head

mgo

མགོ།

—

The name of one of the hearers in the world known as Torch.

g.37 Hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

A person who practices according to the vehicle of the hearers, or the vehicle focusing on individual liberation from cyclic existence through attaining the state of a worthy one the monastic lifestyle and one's own liberation from cyclic existence.

Links to further resources:

[100 related glossary entries](#) · [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article](#)

g.38 Heaven of Joy

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྷན།

Tuṣita

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

Links to further resources:

[63 related glossary entries](#)

g.39 Illusory

sgyu ma

སྤྱུ་མ།

—

A buddha realm to the east.

g.40 Jambu

'dzam bu

འཛམ་བུ།

Jambu

A mythical, divine river.

Links to further resources:

[32 related glossary entries](#)

g.41 Jambu continent

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་

Jambudvīpa

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

Links to further resources:

[75 related glossary entries](#)

g.42 Jeta Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

Jetavana

A park in Śrāvastī, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kośala in northern India. It was owned by Prince Jeta, and the wealthy merchant Anāthapiṇḍada, wishing to offer it to the Buddha, bought it from him by covering the entire property with gold coins. It was to become the place where the monks could be housed during the monsoon season, thus creating the first Buddhist monastery. It is therefore the setting for many of the Buddha’s discourses.

Links to further resources:

[51 related glossary entries](#)

g.43 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇོ་ན་མི་བླ།

Jinamitra

A Kashmiri paṇḍita who was resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. He worked with several Tibetan translators on the translation of several sūtras. He is also the author of the *Nyāyabindupiṇḍārtha*

(Degé no. 4233), which is contained in the Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*).

Links to further resources:

[42 related glossary entries](#) · [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article](#)

g.44 Kinnara

mi 'am ci

མི་འམ་ཅི།

kinnara

A class of semidivine beings that resemble humans to the degree that their very name—which means “Is that a man?”—suggests some confusion as to their divine status. Kinnaras are mythological beings found in both Buddhist and Hindu literature, where they are portrayed as creatures half human, half animal (horse or bird). They are also usually depicted as highly skilled celestial musicians.

Links to further resources:

[78 related glossary entries](#)

g.45 Limit of reality

yang dag pa'i mtha'

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

bhūtakoti

This term has several meanings, depending on the context: (1) the dividing line between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, (2) the inferior realization of the hearers and solitary buddhas, (3) the nature of phenomena (emptiness), and (4) full realization of the ultimate truth. In this text it is the second meaning that should be understood.

Links to further resources:

[45 related glossary entries](#)

g.46 Mahāmaudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu chen po

མོ་དགལ་གྱི་བྱ་ཆེན་པོ།

Mahāmaudgalyāyana

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

Links to further resources:

[58 related glossary entries](#)

g.47 Mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འབྲེ་ཚེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Literally “large serpent.” A subterranean semidivine being that takes the form of a large serpent, sometimes with a human torso and head.

Links to further resources:

[69 related glossary entries](#)

g.48 Māra

bdud

བདུད།

Māra

A demonic being often bearing the epithet of the “Evil One” (*pāpīyān, sdiḡ can*), sometimes said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations, the highest paradise in the desire realm; also one of the names of the god of desire, Kāma in the Vedic tradition. He is portrayed as attempting to prevent the Buddha’s awakening.

Links to further resources:

[113 related glossary entries](#)

g.49 Mark

mtshan

མཚན།

lakṣaṇa

The thirty-two primary physical characteristics of a “great being,” *mahāpuruṣa*, which every buddha and cakravartin possesses.

Links to further resources:

[8 related glossary entries](#)

g.50 Meru

ri rab

རི་རབ།

Meru

According to ancient Indian cosmology, Meru is the great mountain forming the axis of the universe. At its summit lies Sudarśana, home of Śakra and his thirty-two gods, and on its flanks live the asuras. Meru has four sides facing

the cardinal directions, each of which is made of a different precious stone. Surrounding it are several mountain ranges and the great ocean where the four great island continents lie: in the south, Jambudvīpa (our world); in the west, Godānīya; in the north, Uttarakuru; in the east, Pūrvavideha. Above it are the abodes of the gods of the realm of desire.

Links to further resources:

[61 related glossary entries](#)

g.51 Mīmāṃsaka

spyod pa pa

ལྷོད་པ་པ།

mīmāṃsaka

The follower of the Mīmāṃsā non-Buddhist philosophical school in ancient India. The term *mīmāṃsā* means “thoroughgoing analysis or investigation.” The school is commonly divided into two groups, the first of which (*pūrvamīmāṃsā*, *karmamīmāṃsa*) focuses on the correct interpretation of the Vedic hymns and rituals, and the second of which (*uttaramīmāṃsā*, *brahmanīmāṃsā*, etc.) focuses on the nature of universal reality.

g.52 Moonlight

zla 'od

ཟླ་འོད།

—

A buddha in a far-away world.

g.53 Nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

A semidivine class of beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments and who are known to hoard wealth and esoteric teachings. They are associated with snakes and serpents.

Links to further resources:

[89 related glossary entries](#)

g.54 Nine gradual attainments

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

མཐར་གྱིས་གནས་པའི་སྣོ་མས་པར་འཇུག་པ་དགུ
navānupūrvavihārasamāpatti

Nine states of concentration that one may attain during a human life, corresponding to the four concentrations found in the form realm, the four concentrations found in the formless realm, and the attainment of the state of cessation.

Links to further resources:

[9 related glossary entries](#)

g.55 Nirgrantha

gcer bu pa

གཅེར་བུ་པ།

nirgrantha

In Buddhist literature this term often refers to followers of the Jain religion, but it can also refer to members of any other “naked ascetic” order.

Links to further resources:

[15 related glossary entries](#)

g.56 Non-Buddhist

mu stegs can

མུ་སྟེགས་ཅན།

tīrthika

An ascetic or mendicant follower of a non-Buddhist philosophy or religion.

Links to further resources:

[31 related glossary entries](#)

g.57 Non-returner

phyir mi 'ong ba

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བ།

anāgāmin

One who has achieved the third level of attainment on the path of the hearers, and who is free from further rebirth in the desire realm.

Links to further resources:

[30 related glossary entries](#)

g.58 Nonregression

phyir mi ldog pa

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བ།

ཕྱིར་མི་ལྷོག་པ།

avaivartika

A stage on the bodhisattva path where the practitioner will never turn back, or be turned back, from progress toward the full awakening of a buddha.

Links to further resources:

[17 related glossary entries](#)

g.59 **Once-returner**

lan cig phyir 'ong ba

ལན་ཅིག་ཕྱིར་འོང་བ།

sakṛdāgāmin

One who has achieved the second level of attainment on the path of the hearers, and who will only be reborn in saṃsāra once more.

Links to further resources:

[27 related glossary entries](#)

g.60 **Parivrājaka**

kun tu rgyu ba

ཀུན་ཏུ་རྒྱུ་བ།

parivrājaka

A class of traveling ascetics (both male and female) who held a variety of differing non-Buddhist views.

Links to further resources:

[19 related glossary entries](#)

g.61 **Perfection**

pha rol tu phyin pa

ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

pāramitā

This term is used to refer to the main trainings of a bodhisattva. Because these trainings, when brought to perfection, lead one to transcend saṃsāra and reach the full awakening of a buddha, they receive the Sanskrit name *pāramitā*, meaning “perfection” or “gone to the farther shore.” Most commonly listed as six: generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight.

Links to further resources:

[31 related glossary entries](#)

g.62 Piśāca

sha za

ཤ་ཟ།

piśāca

A flesh-eating demon, or a demon who can possess the body of a human and cause various illnesses or insanity. They are often depicted as red-eyed, dark-skinned, bulging-eyed creatures, although they seem to be able to assume many shapes.

Links to further resources:

[30 related glossary entries](#)

g.63 Pūrṇa

gang po

གང་པོ།

Pūrṇa

Same as Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra.

Links to further resources:

[14 related glossary entries](#)

g.64 Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra

byams ma'i bu gang po

བྱམས་མའི་བུ་གང་པོ།

Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha, known as the foremost in his ability to teach.

Links to further resources:

[14 related glossary entries](#)

g.65 Realm of the Lord of Death

gshin rje'i 'jig rten

གཤིན་རྗེའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

yamaloka

The realm of the Lord of Death is another name for the realm of hungry ghosts or *pretas*. This term is also the name of the Vedic afterlife inhabited by the ancestors (*pitṛ*).

Links to further resources:

[26 related glossary entries](#)

g.66 Roots of virtue

dge ba'i rtsa ba

དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ།

kuśalamūla

Wholesome actions that are conducive to happiness.

Links to further resources:

[14 related glossary entries](#)

g.67 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

Śakra

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

Links to further resources:

[105 related glossary entries](#)

g.68 Śākyamuni

shAkya thub pa

ཤཱཀ་ལུ་པ།

Śākyamuni

The current buddha of this age.

Links to further resources:

[50 related glossary entries](#)

g.69 Śāradvatīputra

sha ra dwa ti'i bu

ཤ་ར་དྲཱི་བུ།

Śāradvatīputra

Lit. “Son of Śāradvatī or Śāri,” more widely known as Śāriputra—the contracted version of his name—he was one of the Buddha’s foremost hearer disciples. Renowned for unparalleled wisdom and knowledge of the teachings.

Links to further resources:

[18 related glossary entries](#)

g.70 Seat of awakening

byang chub kyi snying po

བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་སྒྲིང་པོ།

bodhimanda

The place where the Buddha Śākyamuni achieved awakening and where countless other buddhas are said to have achieved awakening. This is understood to be located under the bodhi tree in present-day Bodhgaya, India. It can also metaphorically refer to the state of awakening itself.

Links to further resources:

[30 related glossary entries](#)

g.71 Sense field

skye mched

སྐྱེ་མཚན།

āyatana

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

Links to further resources:

[57 related glossary entries](#)

g.72 Signlessness

mtshan ma med pa

མཚན་མ་མེད་པ།

animitta

One of the three gateways to liberation; the ultimate absence of marks and signs in perceived objects.

Links to further resources:

[34 related glossary entries](#)

g.73 Six superknowledges

mngon par shes pa drug

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་དུག།

ṣaḍabhijñā

The same as the five superknowledges—divine sight, divine hearing, knowledge of the minds of others, remembrance of past lives, ability to perform miracles—plus the ability to destroy all mental defilements.

Links to further resources:

[16 related glossary entries](#)

g.74 Solitary buddha

rang sangs rgyas

རང་སངས་རྒྱལ།

pratyekabuddha

An individual who, in his or her last life, attains realization by realizing the nature of interdependent origination without relying upon a spiritual guide.

Links to further resources:

[77 related glossary entries](#)

g.75 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

སུན་ཡོད།

Śrāvastī

The capital of the ancient Indian kingdom of Kośala, and the setting for many sūtras, as the Buddha spent most rainy seasons in a park outside the city called the Jeta Grove. The city has been identified with the present-day Sāhet Māhet in Uttar Pradesh on the banks of the river Rapti.

Links to further resources:

[55 related glossary entries](#)

g.76 Stream enterer

rgyun du zhugs pa

རྒྱུན་དུ་ལྷག་ས་པ།

srotaāpanna

One who has achieved the first level of attainment on the path of the hearers, and who has entered the “stream” of practice that leads to nirvāṇa.

Links to further resources:

[33 related glossary entries](#)

g.77 Ten powers

stobs bcu

སྟོབས་བརྒྱ།

daśabala

One set among the different qualities of a thus-gone one. The ten powers can be listed as: (1) the knowledge of what is possible and not possible, (2) the knowledge of the ripening of karma, (3) the knowledge of the variety of aspirations, (4) the knowledge of the variety of natures, (5) the knowledge of the supreme and lesser faculties of sentient beings, (6) the knowledge of the destinations of all paths, (7) the knowledge of various states of meditation, (8) the knowledge of remembering previous lives, (9) the knowledge of deaths and rebirths, and (10) the knowledge of the cessation of defilements.

Links to further resources:

[36 related glossary entries](#) · [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article](#)

g.78 Ten virtuous actions

dge ba bcu

དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

daśakuśala

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

Links to further resources:

[26 related glossary entries](#)

g.79 Three groups of beings

phung po gsum

ཕུང་པོ་གསུམ།

triskandha

A division of all beings into three groups: noble beings, evil beings, and those in between.

Links to further resources:

[2 related glossary entries](#)

g.80 Thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

A frequently used synonym for *buddha*. According to different explanations, it can be read as *tathā-gata*, literally meaning “one who has thus gone,” or as *tathā-āgata*, “one who has thus come.” *Gata*, though literally meaning “gone,” is a past passive participle used to describe a state or condition of existence. *Tatha(tā)*, often rendered as “suchness” or “thusness,” is the quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Therefore, this epithet is interpreted in different ways, but in general it implies one who has gone in the same way that the buddhas of the past have gone, or one who has manifested the supreme awakening dependent on the reality that does not abide in the two extremes of existence and quiescence.

Here also used as a specific epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

Links to further resources:

[100 related glossary entries](#)

g.81 Torch

sgron ma

སྒོན་མ།

—

A distant world.

g.82 Trichiliocosm

stong gsum

སྟོང་གསུམ།

trisāhasralokadhātu

A universe containing one billion worlds.

Links to further resources:

[5 related glossary entries](#)

g.83 Unhindered

thogs pa med pa

ཐོགས་པ་མེད་པ།

—

A bodhisattva from the world known as Illusory.

g.84 Universal monarch

'khor los sgyur ba

འཇོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་བ།

cakravartin

The term “universal monarch” denotes a just and pious king who rules over the universe according to the laws of Dharma. Such a monarch is called a cakravartin because he wields a wheel (*cakra*) that rolls (*varṭana*) over continents, worlds, and world systems, bringing them under his power.

Links to further resources:

[55 related glossary entries](#)

g.85 Unpleasant Sound

sgra mi snyan

སྐྱུ་མི་སྒྲོན།

Uttarakuru · Kurava

The continent to the north of Mount Meru according to Buddhist cosmology. In the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is described as square in shape and its human inhabitants enjoy a fixed lifespan, namely a thousand years, and do not hold personal property or marry.

Links to further resources:

[19 related glossary entries](#)

g.86 Well-gone one

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. A recurrent explanation offers three different meanings for *su-* that are meant to show the special qualities of accomplishment of one’s own purpose (*svārthasampat*) for a complete buddha. Thus, the Sugata is “well” gone, as in the expression *su-rūpa* (“having a good form”); he is gone “in a way that he shall not come back,” as in the expression *su-naṣṭa-jvara* (“a fever that has utterly gone”); he has gone “without any remainder” as in the expression *su-pūrṇa-ghaṭa* (“a pot that is completely full”). According to Buddhaghosa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*) and where he went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*).

Links to further resources:

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g.87 Wishlessness

smon pa med pa

སློན་པ་མེད་པ།

apraṇihita

One of the three gateways to liberation; the absence of conceptual modes of mind.

Links to further resources:

[30 related glossary entries](#)

g.88 Worthy one

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཙེམ་པ།

arhat

One who has achieved the fourth and final level of attainment on the path of the hearers, and who has attained liberation with the cessation of all mental afflictions. It is also used as an epithet of the buddhas. The Skt. means either “worthy one” or “one who has killed their foes” (i.e., afflictions).

Links to further resources:

[94 related glossary entries](#)

g.89 Yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

A class of semidivine beings said to dwell in the north, under the jurisdiction of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa. They are associated with water, trees, fertility, and treasures, and are said to haunt or protect natural places as well as towns. Yakṣas can be malevolent or benevolent, and are known for bestowing wealth and other boons.

Links to further resources:

[96 related glossary entries](#)

g.90 Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

A prolific Tibetan translator active during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

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