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## Maitreya's Setting Out

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*Maitreyaprasthāna*

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*'phags pa byams pa 'jug pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “Maitreya’s Setting Out”

*Āryamaitreyaprasthānanāmamahāyānasūtra*



Toh 198  
Degé Kangyur, vol. 61 (mdo sde, tsa), folios 274.b–296.a.

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## SUMMARY

- s.1 In *Maitreya's Setting Out*, the Buddha Śākyamuni first narrates events from a past life of the bodhisattva Maitreya in which he was born as a king and for the first time gave rise to the mind set on awakening. Later, the Buddha recounts another past life of Maitreya—this time as a monk—and explains why he is known today as the bodhisattva Maitreya. These two narratives are interspersed with a series of Dharma teachings emphasizing the unborn nature of phenomena and the need to develop the view that transcends all reference points.

ac.

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ac.1 Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the guidance of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche. The translation was produced by Benjamin Collet-Cassart, who also wrote the introduction. Thomas Doctor compared the draft translation with the original Tibetan and edited the text. Khenpo Sherab from Pullahari Monastery, Khenpo Tsöndrü Sangpo from Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery, and James Gentry assisted by resolving several difficult passages.

i.

## INTRODUCTION

i.1

*Maitreya's Setting Out* narrates the stories of two previous lives of the bodhisattva Maitreya and explains the circumstances for his initial arousing of the mind set on awakening. The bodhisattva Maitreya is an important figure in many Buddhist traditions,<sup>1</sup> where he is unanimously regarded as the Buddha of the future era. He is the only bodhisattva widely accepted outside the Mahāyāna traditions, although his role there is much less central than in the Mahāyāna schools of India, China, Tibet, Japan, Vietnam, and Korea.<sup>2</sup> His future coming is predicted in the Pali canon, where he is mentioned in the *Cakkavattisihanādasutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, and in the *Mahāvastu*, a canonical text of the Lokottaravāda school of the Mahāsaṅghikas. The prophecy of the future awakening of Maitreya is told in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, the sixth chapter of the *Vinayavastu*.<sup>3</sup> Within the Mahāyāna sūtras, Maitreya is elevated to the same status as other central bodhisattvas, such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, and his name appears frequently in sūtras, either as the Buddha's interlocutor or as a preacher of the Dharma. Some of the most famous Mahāyāna sūtras in which Maitreya occupies a central role are *The White Lotus of the Good Dharma* (Toh 113),<sup>4</sup> *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (Toh 176),<sup>5</sup> *The Rice Seedling* (Toh 210),<sup>6</sup> *The Stem Array* (Toh 44), *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* (Toh 12), and *The King of Samādhis* (Toh 127).<sup>7</sup>

i.2

Despite his central role in the Mahāyāna tradition, there are very few canonical texts devoted exclusively to the bodhisattva career of Maitreya, and there are no extended hagiographies concerned with this figure. In the Tibetan Kangyur, we do however find a few short sūtras, such as *Maitreya's Rebirth in the Heaven of Joy* (Toh 199) and *The Prophecy of Maitreya* (*Maitreya-vyākaraṇa*),<sup>8</sup> describing the circumstances leading to his awakening, his future appearance in the world, and the methods to apply if one wishes to be reborn close to him at that time. Other sūtras in which previous lives of the bodhisattva Maitreya are recounted include *The White Lotus of the Good*



*Dharma, The Sublime Golden Light* (Toh 556–57), and *The Question of Maitreya* (Toh 85).<sup>9</sup> Considering his importance throughout the Buddhist traditions, as well as the scarcity of canonical materials focusing on his bodhisattva career, *Maitreya's Setting Out* is an important resource for anyone interested in Maitreya. In spite of this fact, it appears that this sūtra has previously received little mention in modern scholarship.

i.3 The sūtra takes place at Śrāvastī, within the park of Anāthapiṇḍada in the Jeta Grove, where the Buddha is residing with many monks and bodhisattvas. When Maitreya requests the Buddha to answer some questions, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī interposes himself, telling Maitreya that the Buddha will only speak if Maitreya can present his inquiries in a nonconceptual manner. When Maitreya confirms that he would never present his inquiries in any other way, the Buddha proceeds to teach.

i.4 The Buddha Śākyamuni first narrates in great detail the story of a past king, known as Golden Color, who worshiped the Buddha Pure Golden Light for millions of years. At the end of this period, through the skillful teaching of Pure Golden Light, the king gave rise to the mind of awakening, renounced his household, and became a monastic. At this point in the story, the Buddha dramatically reveals that King Golden Color was in fact a previous incarnation of the bodhisattva Maitreya and that all members of the present assembly at Śrāvastī were also present in the retinue at that time. Interestingly, the Buddha mentions here that he himself initially gave rise to the mind set on awakening eighty-four thousand eons after Maitreya did so.<sup>10</sup>

i.5 Next, the Buddha recounts the story of a monk, Dṛḍhamati, who lived long ago during the time of the Buddha Ratnacchatra. Absorbed within the meditation of loving kindness, the monk Dṛḍhamati could lead beings into that absorption by simply passing by their homes. Amazed by such miraculous displays, all the gods proclaimed in unison that this monk should be called Maitreya (the Loving One). Accordingly, the Buddha Ratnacchatra prophesied that henceforth the monk Dṛḍhamati would be known as the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, even after reaching awakening. The sūtra then comes to a close as everyone rejoices in the words of the Blessed One.

i.6 As this sūtra today appears to exist only in Tibetan, we have produced our translation exclusively from the versions contained in the Tibetan Kangyur, basing ourselves on the Degé block print with reference to the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*). The colophon to the Tibetan translation states that it was prepared by Yeshé Dé in collaboration with the Indian paṇḍitas Prajñāvarman, Jinamitra, and Surendrabodhi. We can therefore date the

Tibetan translation to the late eighth to early ninth centuries, a dating that is also attested by the text's inclusion in the early ninth-century Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) catalogue.<sup>11</sup>

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

**Maitreya's Setting Out**

1.

## The Translation

[F.274.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in the Jeta Grove, within the park of Anāthapiṇḍada at Śrāvastī, together with a great saṅgha of five thousand monks and a great saṅgha of ten thousand bodhisattvas. [F.275.a] All of them had developed the superknowledges, and all the bodhisattva great beings had reached the stage of irreversibility.

1.3 At that time, Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta was present in the assembly. The bodhisattva Pratibhānakūṭa, the bodhisattva Playfulness, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta, the bodhisattva Candraprabhakumārabhūta, and the bodhisattva great being Maitreya had also come together and were sitting in the retinue. At one point, the bodhisattva great being Maitreya stood up, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms joined together, he bowed down toward the Blessed One and said, “Blessed One, should I be granted the opportunity, I would like to ask a few questions to the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha, so that the Blessed One may settle the matter of my inquiries.” After the bodhisattva Maitreya made his request, the Blessed One remained silent.

1.4 Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta then said to the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, “Maitreya, if you proceed in the following way, the Thus-Gone One will grant you the opportunity so that the matter of your inquiries may be settled: If you do not ask him questions about the vehicle of the buddhas, the vehicle of the solitary buddhas, or the vehicle of the hearers, if you do not ask him questions about how to gain understanding about the aggregates, the elements, and the sense fields [F.275.b] or to bring an end to desire, anger, and ignorance, and if you do not ask him questions about the perfections and the way to master them, the Thus-Gone One will grant you the

opportunity so that the matter of your inquiries may be settled. If you do not ask him questions with the aim of transcending the karmic formations, achieving nirvāṇa, or comprehending the truths, if you do not ask him questions about the path and the way to meditate on the path, if you do not ask him questions with the aim of attaining the fruition, actualizing it, and reaching the state of nonabiding, and if you present your inquiries without using words, the Thus-Gone One will then give you the opportunity so that the matter of your inquiries may be settled. The reason for this, Maitreya, is that the more one imputes, the more attached one will be, and the Dharma teaching of the Buddha, the Blessed One, is nonattachment.”

1.5 At that moment the venerable Śāriputra said to Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta, “Mañjuśrī, you speak of ‘imputing.’ But Mañjuśrī, how does one impute?”

1.6 “Venerable Śāriputra,” answered Mañjuśrī, “all phenomena are the same in terms of the sameness of emptiness. They are the same in terms of the sameness of signlessness. They are the same in terms of the sameness of wishlessness. They are the same in terms of the sameness of how things really are. They are the same in terms of the sameness of suchness. They are the same in terms of the sameness of the sphere of reality. They are the same in terms of the sameness of the limit of reality. They are the same in terms of their sameness in being nonarising, unceasing, and nonabiding. They are the same in terms of their sameness in being unborn and unoccurring. All phenomena are the same in terms of the sameness of space. [F.276.a]

1.7 “Venerable Śāriputra, if, while all phenomena are the same, one thinks of them as not being the same, then one is imputing something that does not exist. Thus one might think, ‘This is the Buddha,’ ‘This is the Dharma,’ ‘This is the Saṅgha,’ ‘This is the self,’ ‘This is a sentient being,’ ‘This is a person,’ ‘This is a child of a man,’ ‘This is a human being,’ ‘This is a doer,’ ‘This is an experiencer,’ ‘This is interrupted,’ ‘This is permanent,’ ‘This is an ordinary being,’ ‘This is a hearer,’ ‘This is a solitary buddha,’ ‘This is a bodhisattva,’ ‘This is a wrongdoer,’ ‘This is someone free from wrongdoing,’ ‘This is defiled,’ ‘This is undefiled,’ ‘This is conditioned,’ ‘This is unconditioned,’ ‘This is thorough affliction,’ ‘This is complete purification,’ ‘This is virtue,’ ‘This is nonvirtue,’ ‘This is mundane,’ ‘This is supramundane,’ ‘This is saṃsāra,’ ‘This is nirvāṇa,’ ‘This is an entity,’ ‘This is a nonentity,’ ‘This is existent,’ ‘This is nonexistent,’ ‘This is attainment,’ ‘This is manifest realization,’ ‘This is actualization,’ ‘This is the path,’ or ‘This is the fruition of the path.’ All these are imputations. Why is it so? Because, Venerable Śāriputra, sameness is beyond thought. Those who think in terms of such concepts make imputations upon sameness. They do not make imputations upon a lack of sameness. Those who see sameness without seeing anything

are seeing sameness, but those who create imputations perceive things as not sameness. Those who do not reify sameness perceive sameness, but those who impute do not.”

1.8 When this teaching was uttered, [F.276.b] the minds of two hundred monks were liberated from their defilements with no further grasping. The Blessed One remained silent in order to train those monks.

1.9 The bodhisattva great being Maitreya then said to Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, I do not ask the Thus-Gone One any of these questions, from questions about the vehicle of the hearers, the vehicle of the solitary buddhas, and the vehicle of the perfect awakened ones to questions about the state of nonabiding. Mañjuśrī, I always present my inquiries to the Thus-Gone One in a way that does not contradict suchness. Mañjuśrī, I present my inquiries to the Thus-Gone One in a way that does not contradict suchness. Thus, I take into account the nonobservation of any phenomenon due to disengagement from all phenomena. I acknowledge freedom from the stains of desire, anger, and ignorance due to the immutability of the sphere of reality. I ask in the recognition that there is no transcending saṃsāra—because it cannot be observed—and no attaining nirvāṇa—because there is neither coming from nor going to anywhere at all. Mañjuśrī, I never use any words or verbal expressions. There is nothing to discern with insight, nor is there anything to understand. Here there is nothing at all that is liberated either. This is how I present my inquiries to the Thus-Gone One, since words are empty, and everything is unborn.”

1.10 At that point, the bodhisattvas who had gathered in the retinue thought, “Ah! The bodhisattva great being Maitreya only teaches in that way, using indirect and oblique statements, [F.277.a] and yet everything he says is in harmony with reality. His wisdom is indeed profound!”

1.11 The bodhisattva great being Playfulness then said, “Blessed One, the bodhisattva great being Maitreya’s certainty about the acceptance of the profound and his skills in teaching it with wisdom and eloquence are amazing! Blessed One, Thus-Gone One, in order to provide assistance and happiness to numerous beings, and to bring benefit and healing to gods and humans, please tell us how much time has passed since the bodhisattva great being Maitreya first gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. If you do so, the noble sons and daughters of the bodhisattva vehicle will, having heard about such events and this setting out, renew their exertion in order to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening.”

1.12 “Noble son,” replied the Blessed One, “the bodhisattva great being Maitreya has observed pure conduct for a long time. Noble son, the bodhisattva great being Maitreya has served the victorious ones of the past

and accumulated roots of virtue. He has reached the acceptance of the profound. Noble son, I gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening for the first time eighty-four thousand eons after the bodhisattva great being Maitreya had genuinely set out on the path."

1.13 "Blessed One," said the bodhisattva great being Playfulness, [F.277.b] "what is the name of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha in the presence of whom the bodhisattva great being Maitreya gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening? Thus-gone, worthy and perfect Buddha, please tell us about this!"

1.14 "Noble son," replied the Blessed One, "listen carefully and keep in your heart what I will explain to you." Receiving the full attention of the bodhisattva great being Playfulness and the entire retinue, the Blessed One began his account, "Playfulness, in the past, countless eons ago, so long ago that the amount of time cannot be measured, conceived, or fathomed, a thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha appeared in the world. He was endowed with perfect knowledge and conduct. He was a bliss-gone one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed guide who tames beings, a teacher of both gods and humans. This buddha, this blessed one was named Pure Golden Light. Noble son, many trillions of light rays shone from each pore of his hair. The light rays of that thus-gone one were pure like golden light, and each of them illuminated a great trichiliocosm. Each light ray filled the eastern, southern, western, northern, and intermediate directions, as well as above and below, with many trillions of lotuses. In each of these directions, many trillions of buddha fields were filled with thus-gone ones, [F.278.a] each one of them cultivating many trillions of beings to the Buddha and the Dharma and establishing them in the state of irreversibility. Noble son, the light rays of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light illuminated the world at all times. In his buddha field, the words *sun* and *moon* did not exist. Even the words *heavenly bodies*, *planets*, *stars*, and *fire light* were unknown."

1.15 "Venerable One, Blessed One," asked the bodhisattva great being Playfulness, "if this is so, how were the days and nights distinguished in that buddha field?"

1.16 "Noble son," replied the Blessed One, "in the buddha field of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light, the ground was made of the seven precious substances. It was smooth like the palm of the hand. Lotuses made of the seven precious substances and about the size of a chariot wheel grew out of that ground. They were beautiful, pleasant to look at, sweet smelling, fragrant, and delightful. The sweet and fragrant smell of each of these lotuses permeated a great trichiliocosm. Those who experienced these fragrances were certain to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Those lotuses blossomed in the morning and withered in the

afternoon, enabling beings to know the time of day. Noble son, there was therefore a visible distinction between day and night in the buddha field of the Blessed One, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light. [F.278.b] Noble son, in that buddha field, even the names of the eight unfree states did not exist, and even the words *suffering*, *hearers*, and *solitary buddhas* were unknown. That buddha field was exclusively filled with bodhisattvas who were celibate and free from foul odors. Each assembly consisted of one thousand two hundred billion bodhisattvas. On top of these, the number of bodhisattvas who had gathered around that blessed one was uncountable.

1.17 “The thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light did not teach anything other than *The Irreversible Wheel of the Bodhisattva Collection*. What is this Dharma teaching? No phenomena whatsoever can be divorced from suchness. No phenomena whatsoever can be divorced from the sphere of reality. No phenomena whatsoever can be divorced from the limit of reality. Desire cannot be divorced from the essential nature of desire. Anger cannot be divorced from the essential nature of anger. Ignorance cannot be divorced from the essential nature of ignorance. Form cannot be divorced from the essential nature of form. Feeling, perception, karmic formations, and consciousness cannot be divorced from their essential nature. The eye cannot be divorced from the essential nature of the eye. The ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculties cannot be divorced from their essential nature. The essential nature is the absence of entity, and this absence of entity cannot be divorced from anything, nor can it engage in anything. Noble son, in that buddha field, [F.279.a] the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light thus genuinely taught to the bodhisattvas the Dharma teaching called *The Irreversible Wheel of the Bodhisattva Collection*.

1.18 “At that time appeared a righteous Dharma king, a ruler of the four continents, a universal monarch named Golden Color. Noble son, for eight hundred forty million years that king Golden Color revered the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light and his great saṅgha of bodhisattvas, through all possible forms of offerings and respectful services. He honored, venerated, and worshiped them. Noble son, when the Four Great Kings, as well as Śakra, lord of the gods, and Brahmā, lord of the Sahā world, together with their retinues, saw the attitude of the king Golden Color, they joined him and enthusiastically revered the blessed Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light.

1.19 “Noble son, the king Golden Color created a courtyard with the length of eighty-four leagues. He draped it with silken fringes and covered it with flowers up to the knees. He adorned the space above with garlands of red pearls and fumigated it with the finest essential fragrances. Within the courtyard, he arranged for the Thus-Gone One a throne supported by legs



decorated with precious substances. On that throne, he spread many trillions of cotton fabrics of inestimable value.<sup>12</sup> He also prepared seats of tremendous value<sup>13</sup> for each of the bodhisattvas. At that time, the Thus-Gone One was residing two thousand leagues away. Noble son, the king Golden Color ornamented majestically the path along these two thousand leagues to be traversed. On each side of the path, he built platforms adorned with various precious substances. He covered the path with so many flowers that they reached to the knees, and he hung canopies consisting of garlands of precious gems in the space above it. [F.279.b] On the platforms, he planted precious trees about the distance of a bowshot apart and hung strings of precious gems between each of them. Between each pair of precious trees, he built ponds surrounded by platforms made of precious gems and plastered with gold dust. The steps to these ponds were made of beryl, and the ponds themselves were filled with blue lotus flowers, pink lotus flowers, water lilies, and white lotus flowers, and with singing wild geese. Such ponds were created between each of the precious trees.

1.20 “In front of each tree, he placed five hundred people carrying flower petals, five hundred people carrying vases filled with precious incense, five hundred people carrying various types of musical instruments such as great drums, clay drums, wooden kettledrums, kimpalas, lutes, and cymbals, and five hundred people carrying parasols, victory banners, and flags. Having placed in that way hundreds of people in front of each precious tree, he ordered them, ‘When the blessed Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light walks along this path, strew these flower petals and these sandalwood powders, make fumigations with these incense burners, play these cymbals, and raise up these parasols, victory banners, and flags!’ He also placed five hundred people carrying vases filled with precious flowers in front of every precious tree. Everyone remaining was also given the same role. He ordered them, ‘When the Thus-Gone One walks along this path, strew these precious flowers!’

1.21 “Noble son, the blessed [F.280.a] Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light, then came out of his temple and began to walk toward that courtyard. As soon as he appeared from the temple, light began to shine from there, illuminating the bodhisattvas. Noble son, the two thousand leagues along the path were filled with bodhisattva great beings standing about one fathom away from one another. Noble son, when the Thus-Gone One walked along that path, through the power of the buddhas, white silver parasols with golden handles, covered with garlands of red pearls and surrounded by nets of small golden bells, followed the bodhisattvas in the space right above their heads, without anyone holding them. Each bodhisattva was followed by such a parasol. Shaken by the wind, the webs of small bells covering the

precious parasols emitted beautiful and pleasing melodies, more delightful than the sounds of the cymbals that can produce a hundred thousand different tunes.

1.22 “Through the power of that buddha, the melodies of different types of Dharma gateways were heard from the precious parasols, the small bells, the leaves of the precious trees, the strings of precious gems, the precious platforms, the cymbals, and the songs. Beings inclined toward generosity heard the melodies of generosity. Those inclined toward discipline heard the melodies of discipline. Those inclined toward patience, diligence, concentration, and insight heard the melodies of patience, diligence, concentration, and insight. Similarly, the melodies of emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, nonarising, and noncessation, as well as the melodies of the faculties, the powers, the branches of awakening, [F.280.b] the paths, the superknowledges, the powers, the fearlessnesses, the genuine discriminations, and the unique attributes of a buddha were heard. Those melodies manifested and were perceived in accordance with the different inclinations of sentient beings. When they heard these Dharma tunes, an uncountable number of sentient beings became certain to achieve unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

1.23 “Noble son, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light walked along that path, a divine precious parasol adorned with hundred thousands of precious gems rose up in the space right above his head and accompanied him along the way, without anyone holding it. Shaken by the wind, the precious parasol and its tiny bells emitted beautiful and pleasing melodies. These were the melodies of the Dharma teaching called *The Seal of the Thus-Gone Ones*.”

1.24 “Blessed One,” asked the bodhisattva great being Playfulness, “what is the Dharma teaching called *The Seal of the Thus-Gone Ones* that was heard from the precious parasol of the Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light? Blessed One, Thus-Gone One, please tell us about this!”

1.25 “Noble son,” replied the Blessed One, “listen carefully and keep these words in your heart. I shall but commence for you the explanation of *The Seal of the Thus-Gone Ones*. Noble son, all phenomena are marked by the seal of emptiness, the seal of signlessness, the seal of wishlessness, the seal of nonarising, noncessation, and nonabiding, the seal of the absence of entity, the seal of the sphere of reality, the seal of suchness, the seal of the limit of reality, [F.281.a] the seal of how things are, the seal of nonattachment, the seal of voidness, the seal of complete liberation, the seal of the absence of characteristics, the seal of the absence of doing and going, the seal of nonapprehension, and the seal of baselessness. Noble son, all phenomena are marked by the seal of space. Noble son, for example, carving a seal out of

space is not easy—there is nothing there that is a seal, and no imprint can be made. Why is it so? Because there is no basis, there are no causes and no conditions, nothing is produced, and there is no support. Noble son, similarly, a bodhisattva great being truly knows that all phenomena are similar to space, that they have the attributes of space and the essential nature of space, and that they display space. Phenomena cannot be affixed to space; they are mere imputations. As phenomena of space cannot be affixed and are mere imputations, a bodhisattva truly understands that all phenomena cannot be observed and are mere imputations. Someone who understands that all phenomena are mere imputations does not contradict suchness. Someone who does not contradict suchness understands *The Seal of the Thus-Gone Ones*. This is *The Seal of the Thus-Gone Ones*. With such an understanding, one will not be deluded about suchness.”

1.26 When they heard this teaching, five hundred bodhisattvas reached the acceptance of the unborn nature of phenomena.

1.27 The Blessed One then said to the bodhisattva great being Playfulness, “Noble son, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light, arrived in the courtyard with his saṅgha of bodhisattvas, hundreds of thousands of gods worshiped them enthusiastically by strewing [F.281.b] blue lotus flowers, pink lotus flowers, water lilies, and white lotus flowers, scattering a rain of divine mandāra flowers, and playing a trillion cymbals. Noble son, when the Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light was staying in that courtyard, the Four Great Kings, as well as Śakra, lord of the gods, and Brahmā, lord of the Sahā world, stayed in attendance to worship him, revere him, and honor him. What kinds of offerings were made to please the Thus-Gone One and his saṅgha of bodhisattvas? Each bodhisattva was attended by a white elephant decorated with all the ornaments. Staying behind them, these royal elephants held splendid and majestic precious parasols in their trunks, protecting the bodhisattvas from the wind and the sun. Necklaces of shining blue pearls dangled from their trunks. Cool drinking water resembling blue beryl and endowed with the eight qualities flowed from these pearl necklaces. Thus, the water performed its full function. As soon as the bodhisattvas took their seats, the gods caused alms bowls of precious gems to materialize in their right hands, and the gods would then hold the bodhisattvas’ alms bowls. Brahmā himself sat behind the Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light, carrying for him a precious parasol draped with pearl necklaces. Cool drinking water resembling blue beryl and endowed with the eight qualities flowed from these pearl necklaces, performing the full function of water for the Thus-Gone One. Śakra, the lord of the gods, carried the alms bowl of the Blessed One.

1.28

“Noble son, when the Thus-Gone One and his retinue of bodhisattvas sat down, [F.282.a] a goddess stood in front of each of them and ground various types of divine fragrant substances into powder. During that process, a small breeze started to blow to and fro, covering the bodies of the bodhisattvas with these fragrant substances. Those holy beings were free from unpleasant odors, and since they did not even operate with the idea of goddesses or entertain the notion of perfumes, how could they become attached to any of that? That would be impossible.

1.29 “Noble son, when the king Golden Color saw that the Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light had taken his seat, he was joined by one thousand boys, eighty-four thousand women, eighty-four thousand kings, eighty-four thousand householders, eighty-four thousand merchants, eighty-four thousand ministers, eighty-four thousand girls, and many other groups of people, as he personally applied himself to feeding the Thus-Gone One and the bodhisattvas to their full satisfaction, offering them plenty of the finest and most delicious foods and drinks. After they finished eating and were satiated, their plates were removed, and they concealed their hands. When the king saw this, he offered cotton fabrics of inestimable value<sup>14</sup> to the Thus-Gone One and cotton fabrics of tremendous value<sup>15</sup> to each of the bodhisattvas. Having made those offerings, the king, those great groups of beings, and all the prominent citizens joined their palms together and sat down respectfully in front of the Thus-Gone One to listen to the Dharma.

1.30 “Noble son, understanding that the great assembly of devoted people and the gathering of bodhisattvas wished for the Dharma, the Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light taught them the Dharma teaching called *The Individual Gateways*.”

1.31 “Blessed One,” asked the bodhisattva great being Playfulness, [F.282.b] “what is this Dharma teaching taught by the Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light and called *The Individual Gateways of the Bodhisattvas*? Blessed One, Thus-Gone One, please tell us about this! If you do so, the noble sons and daughters of the bodhisattva vehicle will also train in this Dharma teaching of *The Individual Gateways*.”

1.32 “Noble son,” replied the Blessed One, “listen carefully and keep these words in your heart. I shall but commence for you the explanation of the Dharma teaching of *The Individual Gateways*. Noble son, the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas are nothing other than the six perfections: 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. Noble son, these are the six individual gateways of the bodhisattvas. Why is it so? Because the thus-gone ones of the past have awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood by training in these six

perfections. They have then turned the Dharma wheel, brought beings to maturity, and finally passed into nirvāṇa. The future thus-gone ones will also awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood by training in these individual gateways. Right now, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas residing and remaining present in an uncountable number of worlds [F.283.a] are also turning the Dharma wheel after having awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood by training in this Dharma teaching of *The Individual Gateways*.

- 1.33 “Noble son, the true teaching of the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas is the true teaching of the six perfections. What are the particularities of these individual gateways? What are the faults associated with those? What is the subjugation of these faults? What is the definitive emancipation?”
- 1.34 “Miserliness is a fault for bodhisattvas. Strong clinging is a fault for bodhisattvas. Intense grasping is a fault for bodhisattvas. Guarding one’s wealth without sharing it is a fault for bodhisattvas. When bodhisattvas have subjugated and defeated their miserliness, and when they have given rise to a generous mindset, then these faults have been subjugated. Bodhisattvas who practice generosity must share their possessions, whether they are few or many, with mendicants, priests, and beggars. With an enthusiastic and joyful attitude, and without any sense of clinging or hope for reward, they must develop the charitable attitude of giving away beneficial things out of compassion for all sentient beings. Such bodhisattvas are training in the individual gateways. This is the definitive emancipation of the bodhisattvas.
- 1.35 “Noble son, corrupted discipline is a fault for a bodhisattva, as are damaged discipline, adulterated discipline, broken discipline, torn discipline, and polluted discipline. What is meant by ‘corrupted discipline,’ ‘damaged discipline,’ ‘adulterated discipline,’ ‘broken discipline,’ ‘torn discipline,’ and ‘polluted discipline’? A bodhisattva who develops the attitude of the hearers and the solitary buddhas [F.283.b] or a frame of mind that adheres to concepts, who wishes for the vehicles of the hearers, the solitary buddhas, or conceptual views, and who enjoys the discourses of the hearers, the solitary buddhas, or other conceptual discourses, is said to have ‘corrupted discipline,’ ‘damaged discipline,’ ‘adulterated discipline,’ ‘broken discipline,’ ‘torn discipline,’ and ‘polluted discipline.’ Not applying or training in the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas is the worst form of corrupted discipline.”
- 1.36 “Blessed One,” asked the bodhisattva great being Playfulness, “why is it that the discipline of a bodhisattva great being who transgresses the other trainings of the thus-gone ones is not considered corrupted, but a

bodhisattva who develops the attitude of the hearers and the solitary buddhas, or a frame of mind that involves concepts, is said to observe the worst form of corrupted discipline?”

1.37 “Noble son,” replied the Blessed One, “even if bodhisattvas have transgressed the other trainings of the thus-gone ones, have engaged in the four types of transgression causing downfall that I have taught, have completely taken up the path of the ten nonvirtues, or have committed the five acts of immediate retribution, if those bodhisattvas do not give up the mind set on awakening but maintain it continuously, and if they do not develop a frame of mind that involves concepts, then they are observing genuine discipline. You should understand that these bodhisattvas maintain undamaged, unadulterated, [F.284.a] unbroken, intact, and unpolluted discipline. They apply and train in in the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas. Why is it so? Because these do not create obstacles to the bodhisattvas’ awakening. Even if such bodhisattvas have engaged in negative actions and thus generated new rebirths in cyclic existence, all such rebirths in existence will bring accomplishment of the practices of the six perfections. On the other hand, even if they train in accordance with the thus-gone ones’ trainings but adopt the attitude of the hearers and the solitary buddhas or involve concepts, the discipline of a bodhisattva will still become corrupted. Noble son, for these reasons bodhisattvas who do not give up the mind set on awakening and do not develop a frame of mind that involves concepts apply and train in the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas.

1.38 “Noble son, furthermore, the harmful and negative attitude of ill will is a fault for a bodhisattva. The lack of equanimity toward sentient beings is a fault for a bodhisattva. Perceiving sentient beings and phenomena as being distinct is a fault for a bodhisattva. Biased, conceptually based loving kindness toward sentient beings is a fault for a bodhisattva. Nonacceptance of emptiness is a fault for a bodhisattva. Thinking ‘I will be generous to this person but not to that one’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. Thinking ‘I will make offerings to this person but not to that one’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. [F.284.b] Thinking ‘I will explain the Dharma to this person but not to that one’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. Thinking ‘I will revere this person but not that one’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. Judging and looking down on others’ discipline, thinking ‘This person’s discipline is pure but that one’s is corrupted’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. Why is it so? Because bodhisattvas must maintain an attitude of equanimity toward all sentient beings and all phenomena. Bodhisattvas must be impartial in the manner of the sun and the moon, or like earth, water, fire, wind, and space. They must also have acceptance of emptiness. Bodhisattvas do not abandon any sentient being.

With a baseless mind that does not set up definite limits, they must be dedicated to the benefit of all sentient beings out of compassion and loving kindness. Bodhisattvas who observe such all-embracing practice, and who can also bear to think that all phenomena are empty, apply and train in the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas.

1.39 “Furthermore, conceiving of definite limits to saṃsāra is a fault for a bodhisattva. Thinking ‘I shall circle in saṃsāra for such and such a number of eons’ or ‘For such and such an amount of eons I shall not circle in saṃsāra’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. Thinking, ‘I will liberate so and so many sentient beings’ or ‘So and so many sentient beings I will not liberate’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. Thinking ‘This is diligence, I am diligent, I shall awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood’ is a fault for a bodhisattva. How does a bodhisattva subjugate those faults? Noble son, a bodhisattva must put on the armor of diligence, thinking, ‘I have continuously circled in saṃsāra since beginningless time. [F.285.a] Even if, for the benefit of every single sentient being, I must continue to circle in saṃsāra for the same number of eons, I will do that happily. Likewise, for the sake of all sentient beings, I will happily continue to circle in saṃsāra until the end of time if necessary. I will give up clinging to diligence, pride, and awakening, and I will joyfully wear the armor of diligence beyond reference point.’ A bodhisattva who puts on the armor of diligence in that way applies and trains in the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas.

1.40 “Noble son, furthermore, if bodhisattvas go to villages, cities, towns, countries, and royal palaces and, in those places, have the ability to benefit beings and are capable of handling that task, then going to those places is appropriate. On the other hand, if, while staying in solitude, they enjoy this isolation, become attached to the experience of concentration, and remain absorbed in that bliss, this is a fault for bodhisattvas. If bodhisattvas do not get tired of practicing generosity, do not rely on conceptual references, develop their qualities while resting inwardly, and are not attached to the experience of concentration but cultivate baseless concentration, they apply and train in the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas.

1.41 “Noble son, furthermore, take the case of bodhisattvas who practice the perfection of insight and understand all phenomena to be empty of intrinsic nature, thinking, ‘Here there is no self, no sentient being, no life force, and no person at all.’ Those bodhisattvas may put effort into taming themselves and into the practice of tranquility, yet if the bodhisattvas do not speak of, point out, or use symbols to communicate this mode of emptiness and selflessness to other sentient beings caught by the mistaken habit of clinging to reference points, then understand that such bodhisattvas have no skill in means. [F.285.b] This is, however, not considered to be a fault.

Take now the case of bodhisattvas who practice the perfection of insight and understand all phenomena to be devoid of and empty of essential nature, thinking, 'Here there is no self, no sentient being, no life force, and no person at all.' When those bodhisattvas have a physical experience of all these phenomena that are empty of essential nature, their minds do not fixate on any of them. On the other hand, so that sentient beings who are possessed of errors and adhere to concepts may be freed from their errors and focal points, those bodhisattvas teach them the Dharma—explaining that all phenomena are devoid of essential nature and leading them to the realization that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic nature. You should understand that bodhisattvas are skilled in means and that they apply and train in the individual gateways of the bodhisattvas.

1.42 “Noble son, in that way, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light had eaten his meal, he explained in detail this Dharma teaching called *The Individual Gateways of the Bodhisattvas* within the courtyard. When that blessed one uttered this Dharma teaching, countless sentient beings became certain to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Noble son, if I were to teach the Dharma of *The Individual Gateways of the Bodhisattvas* for an eon, or even longer than that, my inspiration and these Dharma gateways would never be exhausted. Nevertheless, here I have at least commenced this Dharma teaching.

1.43 “Noble son, in that way, for eight hundred forty million years, the king Golden Color served, honored, venerated, and worshiped the Thus-Gone One and his immeasurable saṅgha of bodhisattvas, offering them such arrangements and such reverence and respectful service.” [F.286.a] [B2]

1.44 Then the bodhisattva great being Playfulness asked, “Venerable, Blessed One, did the king Golden Color not build a temple for the Thus-Gone One and the bodhisattvas? Where did the thus-gone one and the bodhisattvas reside?”

1.45 “Noble son,” replied the Blessed One, “the Thus-Gone One and the bodhisattvas resided in pavilions that they had emanated themselves. Noble son, after these eight hundred forty million years had passed, on the very last day, the king Golden Color offered food and presents to the Thus-Gone One. Afterward, when he saw that the Thus-Gone One was about to depart, he wondered, ‘Should I dedicate my roots of virtue to become Śakra, to become Brahmā, or to reach the level of a universal monarch?’ The blessed Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light knew the thought that had arisen in the mind of the king. Hence, in front of the king and those many groups of beings, the Thus-Gone One emanated in the sky an exact replica of his body, perfect in all aspects. From the sky, he uttered these verses to the king Golden Color:



- 1.46 “ ‘Like a childish man  
Who, guided by corrupted insight,  
Pleases a king through reverent services  
But requests an insignificant reward for his acts, [F.286.b]
- 1.47 “ ‘Some persons worship the buddhas  
In ways that cannot be conceived,  
Then long for the kingdom of Śakra  
And other inferior abodes.
- 1.48 “ ‘These life experiences as a king,  
As Śakra or Brahmā,  
Are impermanent—they do not last forever.  
They cannot be relied upon—they are perishable.
- 1.49 “ ‘Give rise to the mind set on awakening  
For the benefit of all beings!  
Such an attitude is extolled  
By the buddhas and the wise ones in the world.
- 1.50 “ ‘King, you and your subjects  
Have made extensive offerings.  
Now give rise to the mind set on awakening,  
The unsurpassed and vast attitude.
- 1.51 “ ‘Do not give rise to inferior aspirations—  
That is what childish beings do.  
Become an adept in genuine insight,  
And enter the path of supreme awakening.
- 1.52 “ ‘Compared to someone who, longing for nirvāṇa,  
Makes offerings to the buddhas, the thus-gone ones,  
By filling an entire trichiliocosm  
With precious substances,
- 1.53 “ ‘Someone who joins their palms together  
And dedicates this act mentally to the attainment of awakening  
Creates much more merit,  
Even without pronouncing a single word.
- 1.54 “ ‘Even if someone were to reverently serve all sentient beings  
For an uncountable number of eons,  
This could not match  
Even a sixteenth of that merit.

- 1.55 “ ‘Longing for merit, someone may have joined their palms together  
And for ten million eons in saṃsāra made offerings  
To the great leaders, the buddhas of the ten directions,  
Who have given rise to the mind of awakening and who benefit the worlds,
- 1.56 “ ‘Yet an intelligent and wise person  
Who trusts the teachings of the bliss-gone ones,  
Firmly gives rise to the mind set on awakening,  
And offers a flower to the stūpa of a bliss-gone one,
- 1.57 “ ‘Will create a much greater amount of merit.  
The merit created in the former example cannot be compared  
To the merit created by offering a flower with the mind set on awakening,  
Just as a drop of water cannot be compared to an ocean.
- 1.58 “ ‘In this buddha field, all sentient beings, as many as they are, [F.287.a]  
Will become buddhas, eon after eon.  
Even if someone were to try to describe this merit for many eons  
Without doing anything else, this task could never be completed.
- 1.59 “ ‘These verses illustrate the karmic maturation of the mind set on  
awakening,  
Yet even if this were to be explained for countless eons,  
Not even a bit could be described—  
It would be like trying to count all the particles of the earth.
- 1.60 “ ‘Therefore, king, supreme being,  
Having heard the benefits of the mind set on awakening,  
Quickly discard all inferior thinking,  
And give rise to this vast mind set on awakening!
- 1.61 “ ‘The leaders of the world,  
The lights of golden shrines endowed with inconceivable qualities,  
Have taught in that way  
The benefits and karmic maturation of the mind set on awakening.
- 1.62 “ ‘If the merit of teaching the karmic maturation  
Of the mind set on awakening had a form,  
It could fill universes as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges  
And still not even be partially depleted.<sup>16</sup>
- 1.63 “ ‘Having heard such a teaching,  
The chief among kings was delighted.  
Joining his palms together, he said,

- I pay homage to the Buddha,
- 1.64 “ I give rise to the mind set on awakening.  
May I reach the level of the Dharma Lord, the Buddha.  
After reaching stainless and unconditioned awakening,  
I shall liberate sentient beings as numerous as the grains of sand in the  
Ganges.’
- 1.65 “When the emanated body of the buddha had spoken those verses,  
The chief among kings was delighted and understood.  
At that point the entire trichiliocosm began to shake,  
And the buddha descended from the sky like the king of swans.
- 1.66 “With a mind filled with faith, the king Golden Color  
Called on the boys, girls, wives,  
Kings, merchants, and householders  
To go and prostrate to the Buddha.
- 1.67 “Surrounded by sixty billion beings,  
They came one after the other to the place where the buddha was residing,  
Carrying with them flowers, garlands, and incense,  
And having prostrated at the feet of the Buddha, they took their place in the  
gathering.
- 1.68 “Similarly, other boys, girls, wives, ministers, merchants, [F.287.b] and  
householders,  
As well as other kings and their retinues,  
Prostrated to the Buddha and sat respectfully to his side.  
Gods similarly filled the entire sky,
- 1.69 “Playing cymbals and scattering a rain of flowers.  
Golden Color, surrounded by the people of that land,  
Joined his palms together and asked the Buddha,  
‘Possessor of the ten powers, boundless god of gods,
- 1.70 “ ‘Tamer of men, great guide,  
How much merit is created by someone  
Who firmly gives rise to the mind set on awakening?  
Blessed One, what is the conduct to adopt
- 1.71 “ ‘To become truly happy, at ease,  
And contented for many eons without experiencing any suffering,  
And so realize the ambrosia of awakening that is free from misery?
- 1.72 “ ‘Without having to sacrifice my limbs,

- My head, or my flesh,  
How may I always remain happy and at ease?  
Lord, please tell us the method.
- 1.73 “ ‘May I always be free from physical pain.  
Observing loving kindness, patience, discipline, and keeping my vows,  
May I reach supreme awakening.  
Without becoming lazy, I shall train in the precepts
- 1.74 “ ‘And never break them—  
Guide, I make this firm commitment.  
I shall never pay mere lip service to these teachings.  
Please teach about the self-arisen fruition of merit.
- 1.75 “ ‘Thus-Gone One, please teach about the blissful vehicle.  
Please tell us how to train in the conduct.  
After hearing these teachings, we shall practice accordingly.’  
‘Hey, hey!’ exclaimed Pure Golden Light,
- 1.76 “ ‘Listen, ruler of the world!  
I will explain to you the merit that is the cause of happiness  
And how to train in it, so listen to me!  
Compared to someone who makes offerings
- 1.77 “ ‘To those who have gained the ten powers  
By filling a trichiliocosm with precious substances,  
Someone who aspires to reach awakening  
Will create much more merit. [F.288.a]
- 1.78 “ ‘Compared to someone who makes donations by filling universes  
As numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges river with precious  
substances,  
Someone who aspires to reach awakening  
Will create much more merit.
- 1.79 “ ‘Compared to someone who makes offerings  
To all sentient beings for myriads of eons,  
Someone who aspires to reach awakening  
Will create much more merit.
- 1.80 “ ‘Imagine that all beings have become worthy ones  
And gained mastery of wisdom,  
And that someone, wishing for merit,  
Makes offerings to them for a hundred million eons.

- 1.81 “ ‘Compared to that, the merit created by someone  
Who walks seven steps  
After having developed compassion  
And given rise to the supreme mindset,
- 1.82 “ ‘The vast attitude set on awakening,  
Will be far superior.  
Imagine now that all sentient beings have become buddhas  
Endowed with boundless eloquence
- 1.83 “ ‘And that a single being makes offerings to all of them  
For as many eons as those that have already passed in saṃsāra.  
Compared to that, the merit created by a wise person  
Who offers a single flower
- 1.84 “ ‘After having given rise to the mind set on supreme awakening  
Will be far superior.  
Even if someone were to explain  
The character of such merit for myriads of eons,
- 1.85 “ ‘The account of the fruition of that merit  
Would never be completed.’
- 1.86 “Noble son, the blessed Thus-Gone One Pure Golden Light then said to the king Golden Color, ‘Great king, if bodhisattva great beings possess a single quality, they will, through the blissful vehicle, swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, and never experience any kind of suffering or discomfort. What is this single quality? It is conscientiousness. [F.288.b] Great king, a conscientious bodhisattva will swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. What is conscientiousness? It is never giving up the training, not transgressing one’s commitments, observing loving kindness toward all sentient beings, never giving up on any sentient being, keeping the firm aspiration to reach awakening, not giving up diligence, relying on spiritual friends and serving them reverently, respecting the Dharma, never being satisfied with studies, sharing the Dharma with others, teaching the Dharma without concern for material things, not giving up the practices of austerity and a modest lifestyle, having few desires, being content, conquering one’s pride, listening to the Dharma with attention, respecting the master, observing patience, completely abandoning the harmful and negative attitude of ill will, being inspired by the Dharma teachings on profound emptiness, completely abandoning all adherence to concepts, having the strong aspiration to inner composure, not neglecting to bring beings to maturity, stopping opinions, abandoning any

form of gossip, physical and mental disengagement, remaining in solitude, having a flexible mind, not holding discipline as supreme, not praising oneself or criticizing others, gaining definitive emancipation from all forms of regrets, always being delighted by the approach of renunciants and mendicants, speaking honestly, abstaining from frowning, understanding that all phenomena are nonarising and nonceasing, and realizing that they are similar to space. This set of qualities is known as *the bodhisattva's conscientiousness*. [F.289.a] Great king, the conscientiousness of a bodhisattva also involves refraining, even in dreams, from adopting the attitude of the hearers, the solitary buddhas, or a frame of mind that adheres to focal points. Great king, this is the bodhisattva's conscientiousness.

“ ‘Great king, bodhisattvas who possess the following four qualities will swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Those bodhisattvas will give away all their possessions without needing to give away their heads, legs and arms, eyes, limbs, flesh, blood, bones, marrow, fat, complexions, skin, or entire bodies. Through the blissful vehicle, they will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. What are these four qualities? Great king, the first is a bodhisattva’s firm commitment to pursue virtuous qualities. That bodhisattva firmly engages in the activity of generating roots of virtue, never feels disheartened, and is strongly rooted in the path of the Great Vehicle. Great king, the second quality is the complete purity of a bodhisattva’s discipline. Such a bodhisattva is praised by the noble and the wise ones, is embraced by unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and experiences the joy of Dharma through the awareness of observing pure discipline. Great king, the third quality concerns a bodhisattva who observes loving kindness, who focuses on concentration but remains absorbed in baseless concentration. Great king, there is no other form of bliss that compares to the bliss experienced by a bodhisattva who does not fixate on anything while remaining in absorption and who has developed an attitude of equanimity toward all sentient beings. Great king, the fourth quality is a bodhisattva’s genuine understanding of the Dharma. That bodhisattva understands phenomena as they really are, thinking, [F.289.b] “All these karmic formations are empty. They are devoid of a self, a sentient being, a life force, someone giving, the act of giving, and someone taking, someone being patient, the situation toward which one is patient, and the object of that patience, someone practicing diligence and the aim of that diligence, someone training in concentration and the object of that training, and someone meditating and the object of that meditation.” When bodhisattvas understand phenomena genuinely in that way, they see that all conditioned phenomena are empty of intrinsic nature. Then, without holding on to any reference points, they remain within the experience of bliss. Great king, a bodhisattva great being who possesses those four Dharma qualities will experience all forms of bliss and swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.’<sup>17</sup>

1.88 “Noble son, after donating cloth of inestimable value<sup>18</sup> to the Thus-Gone One, the king Golden Color said to the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light, ‘Blessed One, I give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening so that I may change the minds of all sentient beings!’

1.89 “At that moment, he uttered these verses:

1.90 “ ‘With a dauntless mind,  
I will utter these words in your presence, supreme among men.

- Great leader, having given rise to compassion for all sentient beings,  
I will diligently pursue awakening.
- 1.91 “ ‘My mind is completely free from deceit.  
Possessor of the ten powers, you know my intentions.  
The famed qualities of gods and humans  
Are not for me.<sup>19</sup>
- 1.92 “ ‘I will be a refuge, a protector, and a close friend for those who suffer,  
And I will liberate them from their misery. [F.290.a]  
Foremost of men, while I remain in bliss,  
I shall establish other beings in bliss.
- 1.93 “ ‘Great leader, I will follow the training  
Of the Dharma teachings taught by the well-gone ones.  
Great leader, may I become a support for humans’ worship,  
Just as you are worshiped by gods and humans.
- 1.94 “ ‘I will pursue the supreme form of awakening  
And practice generosity for many eons.  
I will donate many types of food, drinks, clothes,  
Chariots, vehicles, gold, silver, and precious gems.
- 1.95 “ ‘Great leader, I will practice the precepts respectfully,  
And I will genuinely guard them.  
I will not transgress them and will not abide anywhere.  
Great leader, I will keep my discipline pure.
- 1.96 “ ‘I will love all beings,  
With an attitude of equanimity toward everyone.  
I will not regard as superior and inferior  
Those who respect me and those who do not.
- 1.97 “ ‘For as long as the countless millions of eons  
I have been circling in saṃsāra,  
I will, relying upon you, great hero,  
Joyfully pursue the benefit of even just a single being.
- 1.98 “ ‘Leader of gods and humans, I will remain within the bliss  
Of the concentration taught by the well-gone ones.  
“ ‘Great leader, I will stay in contact with the bliss of concentration  
And always stay in isolated places.
- 1.99 “ ‘I will resolve the meaning of emptiness,  
Without relying on any kind of view.



I will completely abandon inferior types of conduct  
And adopt the stainless, supreme form of conduct.'

1.100 "Noble son, as soon as the king Golden Color gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening, this great trichiliocosm started to shake in six different ways. The eighty-four thousand kings also gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. The eighty-four thousand householders, [F.290.b] the eighty-four thousand merchants, the boys, the girls, the wives, those great groups of beings, and eighty-four thousand sons of gods also followed the example of the king Golden Color, and all of them gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Noble son, the king Golden Color then enthroned his eldest son as king, and surrounded by ten million beings, he and the boys, girls, wives, merchants, householders, ministers, and vassal kings all faithfully renounced their households to become monastics. For ten thousand years, they all observed pure conduct. The king Golden Color developed the superknowledges, mastered extensive studies, and practiced the absorption on loving kindness. Through those roots of virtue and his superior intent, he was reborn as a universal monarch and pleased twenty thousand buddhas. He revered and honored all those buddhas, those blessed ones, by offering clothes, food, bedding, cushions, medicines, and useful appliances. Then, in front of all of them, he faithfully renounced his household to become a monastic.

1.101 "Noble son, at that time, this bodhisattva great being Maitreya was born as the king Golden Color. Noble son, do not be skeptical; do not have any hesitation or doubts about that fact, thinking that this was someone else. Noble son, at that time, you, Playfulness, were born as Brahmā, and you enthusiastically worshiped the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden light. Noble son, do not be skeptical; do not have any hesitation or doubts about that fact, thinking that this was someone else. Noble son, at that time, I myself was born as Śakra, the lord of the gods, and I enthusiastically revered and venerated the Blessed One Pure Golden light. [F.291.a] Noble son, do not be skeptical; do not have any hesitation or doubts about that fact, thinking that this was someone else. I revered the Thus-Gone One without having given rise to the mind set on awakening and with a baseless mind. Noble son, among all the beings who, at that time, gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening together with the king Golden Color, I have not seen a single one of them who has turned away from that unsurpassed and perfect awakening. All of them without exception possessed great insight and great diligence. They practiced the factors of awakening genuinely, and after mastering the six perfections, all of them became thus-gone ones under different names, in different buddha

fields. They all appeared in the world, turned the Dharma wheel, and then passed into nirvāṇa. I, you, the bodhisattva Maitreya, and all these bodhisattva great beings who have gathered in this retinue have seen, worshiped, and revered all those thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas. We have all upheld their sacred Dharma teachings.” [F.291.b]

1.102 “Blessed One,” exclaimed the bodhisattva great being Playfulness, “it is amazing that it takes such a long time to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and that it is so hard to give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening! What do I mean by this? At that time such myriads of beings gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening under the teachings of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light, but the Blessed One did not do so.”

1.103 “Thus it is, noble son,” replied the Blessed One. “As you said, it takes a long time to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and it is also hard to give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Noble son, I remember that before and after the time of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Pure Golden Light, I venerated, worshiped, served, and honored myriads of buddhas. However, during all that time I never gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Thinking, ‘It is amazing how these buddhas, these blessed ones, are beautiful, pleasant to look at, and attractive,’ I merely developed attraction, delight, and respect toward them, but I did not give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Therefore, noble son, you should understand this point along these lines: although bodhisattvas may worship countless myriads of buddhas, solitary buddhas, [F.292.a] and hearers, they may not necessarily give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. They will then only later, after having gathered sufficient roots of virtue, give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening.”

1.104 At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:

1.105 “First, I respectfully worshiped countless myriads  
Of beings who realized the ultimate,  
Famed bodhisattvas who had reached the shore of insight,  
And buddhas, supreme among men.

1.106 “Although I worshiped these sources of all excellent qualities,  
During all that time, I never gave rise to the thought,  
‘May I become a supreme, omniscient sage,  
A support for the world’s worship, a buddha.’

1.107 “Although beings may respectfully worship  
Many millions of solitary buddhas,  
During all that time, they might never give rise to the thought,

- 'May I become a tamer of humans, a guide, a perfect buddha.'
- 1.108 "Although they may worship with intense and sincere respect  
Many millions of beings who have gained mastery,  
They might, throughout that time, never give rise to the mind set on  
awakening  
In the way that the wisdom oceans, the supreme among men, have done.
- 1.109 "At the sight of beings who have realized the ultimate,  
The intensity of the joy they feel is inconceivable,  
But during all that time, they might still never give rise to the thought,  
'May I become a sage, a tamer of humans, a perfect buddha.'
- 1.110 "At some point, when they have accumulated vast amounts of merit  
And cultivated the truth with body and mind,  
They will give rise to the mind set on awakening, thinking,  
'May I become a great leader, the supreme among men.'
- 1.111 "Having practiced the accumulation of merit  
Throughout many millions of eons of reverent service,  
They will then, within their virtuous, gentle, and flexible minds,  
Give rise to the mind set on awakening [F.292.b]
- 1.112 "And make these aspirations:  
'Through the roots of virtue I have accumulated,  
May I also reach the level of omniscience.  
May my aspiration prayers never weaken.
- 1.113 " 'Through the roots of virtue I have accumulated,  
May all beings reach the other shore of cyclic existence.  
May I free myself from the unbearable results  
Of all the nonvirtuous actions I have committed in the past.
- 1.114 " 'Having developed stable strength and diligence,  
May I give rise to the mind set on awakening  
And never become disheartened.  
May I reach the level of infinite joy.'
- 1.115 "A wise one does not rely on conceptual references.  
Since awakening is beyond reference points, I do not fixate on anything.  
Those who know that all phenomena are empty  
Will not forget the mind set on awakening."
- 1.116

When the Blessed One had uttered these verses, the bodhisattva great being Playfulness asked, “Blessed One, why is the bodhisattva great being Maitreya named ‘Maitreya’? How did he receive this name?”

1.117 “Noble son,” replied the Blessed One, “in the past, countless eons ago, so long ago that the amount of time cannot be measured, a thus-gone, worthy, and perfect buddha appeared in the world. He was endowed with perfect knowledge and conduct. He was a well-gone one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed guide who tames beings, a teacher of both gods and humans. That buddha, that blessed one, was named Ratnacchatra. Noble son, when the Thus-Gone One Ratnacchatra walked seven steps just after being born, [F.293.a] the gods of the pure abodes held a parasol made of the seven precious substances in the sky above him. That precious parasol illuminated the entire great trichiliocosm. The Thus-Gone One Ratnacchatra received his name from these gods who proclaimed, ‘Oh! This child will be known as the Thus-Gone One Ratnacchatra!’

1.118 “At that time, there was a monk named Dṛḍhamati who had renounced life as a member of his merchant caste to become a monastic under the teachings of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Ratnacchatra. Noble son, at the time of the Thus-Gone One Ratnacchatra’s doctrine, when the monk Dṛḍhamati went begging for alms, there were in this world eighty-four thousand villages, eighty-four thousand cities, eighty-four thousand towns, eighty-four thousand countries, and eighty-four thousand marketplaces. The monk Dṛḍhamati wandered around in all those villages, cities, towns, countries, and marketplaces to beg for alms. During his wanderings, he promised himself, ‘I will not eat any food until I establish a total of one hundred beings in the five fundamental precepts.’ Noble son, with such a commitment, the monk Dṛḍhamati wandered around in those villages, cities, towns, countries, and marketplaces to beg for alms, and he never ate any food before he had established a total of one hundred beings in the five fundamental precepts. Noble son, on some occasions it took him one day to establish one hundred beings in the five fundamental precepts. On other occasions it took him two days. [F.293.b] In the latter case, he would fast until the third day, when he would then eat again. Sometimes it took him three days to establish one hundred beings in the five fundamental precepts. Noble son, sometimes it took him four, five, six, or seven days. Even if he had to fast for seven full days, he never lost courage due to his compassion for sentient beings. He would simply eat food on the eighth day. Noble son, for eighty-four thousand years the monk Dṛḍhamati followed this principle and wandered in those big towns, villages, cities, towns, countries, and marketplaces, establishing sentient beings in the five fundamental precepts

without ever losing courage. Noble son, when those eighty-four thousand years had passed, the monk Dṛḍhamati had established thirty-six quintillion men, women, boys, and girls in the five fundamental precepts.

1.119 “Noble son, the monk Dṛḍhamati then thought, ‘I have established all those beings in the five fundamental precepts. Now, I must definitely lead them to the level of unsurpassed and perfect awakening.’ For forty-two thousand years, he proclaimed in front of them the praises of the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha, and the Great Vehicle. Among those sentient beings who had been established in the five fundamental precepts, there were three hundred million who had generated roots of virtue with the buddhas of the past and were inspired by the vast approach. Over another eighty-four thousand years he led those three hundred million [F.294.a] into unsurpassed and perfect awakening. The rest of them were inspired by the inferior approach, and by the power of such conditions they gave rise to the mind set on the solitary buddhas’ awakening and the vehicle of the hearers.

1.120 “Noble son, the monk Dṛḍhamati then thought, ‘I have inspired those sentient beings to engage with the three vehicles. Now I will teach them how to enter into absorption so that they can observe conscientiousness.’ Noble son, for twenty-one thousand years, the monk Dṛḍhamati conferred transmissions on how to remain in absorption to all thirty-six quintillion beings. Noble son, the monk Dṛḍhamati gave them oral instructions to make sure they would all practice the absorption on loving kindness. Noble son, when the monk Dṛḍhamati went to a town, he would enter absorption on loving kindness. Within that absorption, he would go for alms in the villages, cities, towns, countries, and marketplaces. The very moment he stepped onto a threshold, those beings observing loving kindness would enter absorption on loving kindness. Noble son, this was due to the special qualities of an extraordinary resolve, trust in the roots of virtue, and interest in emptiness. Therefore, whenever the monk Dṛḍhamati placed his feet on the steps of an entrance, those sentient beings entered the absorption on loving kindness, just as he had shown them. [F.294.b]

1.121 “Then, seeing the miraculous displays of the monk Dṛḍhamati’s absorption on loving kindness, the gods residing above the earth proclaimed aloud, ‘How wonderful! This bodhisattva great being is Maitreya, because sentient beings enter the absorption on loving kindness when he passes through their villages, cities, towns, countries, and marketplaces!’

1.122 “The celestial gods heard the proclamation of the gods residing above the earth, and they repeated the message. Thus, the gods of the Heaven of the Four Great Kings, the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, the Heaven Free from Strife, the Heaven of Joy, the Heaven of Delighting in Emanations, and the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations, up to the gods of the pure

realms, successively passed the message that they had heard from one to the other: 'How wonderful! This bodhisattva great being is Maitreya, because sentient beings enter the absorption on loving kindness when he passes through their villages, cities, towns, countries, and marketplaces!'

1.123 "When he heard that name, the blessed one, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Ratnacchatra, rejoiced and made this prophecy: 'Throughout the entire succession of his deaths, transmigrations, and rebirths in cyclic existence, this bodhisattva, this monk *Dr̥ḍhamati*, will be known everywhere as the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, and he will keep the same name when he reaches awakening. In the world, within the gathering of an immeasurable saṅgha of hearers and of sentient beings endowed with all the bliss of the buddha field of the Buddha Ratnavyūha, he will become the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Maitreya.'

1.124 "Noble son, [F.295.a] you might be skeptical and have hesitations or doubts about this, thinking that the monk named *Dr̥ḍhamati* at that point and time was someone else. Yet from now on and throughout all his lifetimes, he will be known exclusively by the name Maitreya. When he reaches awakening, he will also be known precisely as the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Maitreya. Noble son, these are the causes and conditions due to which the bodhisattva great being Maitreya received his name."

1.125 As soon as the Blessed One had told the story of the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, this great trichiliocosm started to shake in six different ways. Divine songs were heard, and a rain of flowers fell from the sky. At that moment, the Four Great Kings, Śakra, lord of the gods, Brahmā, lord of the Sahā world, and many hundreds of thousands of sons of gods strewed the divine mandārava flowers they were carrying in the direction of the bodhisattva great being Maitreya. They said, "Oh! The bodhisattva great being Maitreya has engaged himself for the benefit of many beings. He brings them happiness and has love for the world. He has donned the great armor of diligence to provide tremendous benefit, assistance, and happiness to gods and humans. Even without having reached the level of omniscience, he has accomplished the objectives of myriads of sentient beings. If those who merely hear the name of the bodhisattva great being Maitreya obtain such supreme gains, there is no need to mention the joy of those who see him directly with their own eyes. Venerable One, Blessed One, [F.295.b] we pay homage to the bodhisattva great being Maitreya!"

1.126 As soon as the divine sons of gods had said those words, the great assembly of beings and the world with its gods, humans, and asuras exclaimed in unison, "We pay homage to the bodhisattva great being

- Maitreya! We pay homage to the bodhisattva great being Maitreya! We pay homage!”
- 1.127 When this Dharma teaching was uttered, twelve thousand beings’ Dharma eyes with respect to phenomena were purified, becoming immaculate and stainless. The minds of five thousand monks were liberated from their defilements with no further grasping. The Blessed One also made this prophecy: “The roots of virtue of many thousands of beings have been brought to maturity, and they will actualize the level of worthy ones within the second retinue of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Maitreya.”
- 1.128 At that point, the venerable Ānanda stood up, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms joined together, he bowed down toward the Blessed One and asked, “Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma teaching? How should we remember it?”
- 1.129 “Ānanda,” replied the Blessed One, “remember this Dharma teaching as *The First Time Maitreya Gave Rise to the Mind Set on Awakening, The Questions of the Bodhisattva Playfulness, The Prophecy of the Bodhisattva, The Teaching on the Seal of the Thus-Gone Ones, and The Individual Gateways of the Bodhisattvas*. Ānanda, [F.296.a] I entrust this Dharma teaching to you so that you may uphold it and teach it to others on a vast scale.
- 1.130 “Ānanda, take the example of a noble son or daughter who makes offerings to the thus-gone ones by filling this great trichiliocosm with the seven precious substances. Compared to that, others will create much more merit if, after hearing this teaching on the first time the bodhisattva great being Maitreya gave rise to the mind set on awakening, they diligently set their minds on awakening, and with such an aspiration dedicate themselves to this teaching, keep it in mind, hold it, master it, meditate on it, and teach it to others on a vast scale.”
- 1.131 At that moment, the Blessed One uttered these verses:
- 1.132 “It is difficult to obtain a precious human body.  
It is rare for a buddha to appear.  
It is difficult to have faith in the Buddha.  
It is difficult to give rise to the mind set on awakening.
- 1.133 “Even in many millions of eons,  
These four circumstances are difficult to find.  
Now that you have found them, do not give them up—  
Do not waste such a powerful potential!
- 1.134 “If you have obtained a precious human body,  
If a buddha has appeared,  
If you have faith in the Buddha,

- And if you have given rise to the mind set on awakening,
- 1.135 “Develop your diligence  
And always be conscientious!  
All the great sages  
Have reached awakening through conscientiousness.
- 1.136 “Of all the Buddha’s Dharma teachings,  
The main gateways and approaches  
Are conscientiousness and diligence.  
These are also the training of the wise ones.”
- 1.137 When the Blessed One had said those words, the bodhisattva Playfulness,  
the bodhisattva Maitreya, and their entire retinues, as well as the world with  
all its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised the words  
of the Blessed One.
- 1.138 *This concludes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra “Maitreya’s Setting Out.”*



c.

## Colophon

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

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 For detailed information about the career of the bodhisattva Maitreya as it is presented in the different Buddhist traditions, see Jaini 1988.
- n.2 See Sponberg 1988.
- n.3 See Bhaiṣajyavastu Translation Team, trans., *The Chapter on Medicines* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh1-6.html>) (*Bhaiṣajyavastu*, Toh 1, ch. 6), 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.
- n.4 See Peter Alan Roberts, trans., *The White Lotus of the Good Dharma* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh113.html>) (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Toh 113), 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2018.
- n.5 See Robert A. F. Thurman, trans., *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh176.html>) (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, Toh 176), 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2017.
- n.6 See Dharmasāgara Translation Group, trans., *The Rice Seedling* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh210.html>) (*Śālistamba*, Toh 210), 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2018.
- n.7 See Peter Alan Roberts, trans., *The King of Samādhis Sūtra* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh127.html>) (*Samādhirājasūtra*, Toh 127), 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2018.
- n.8 It seems that this text was considered apocryphal in India but was later included within the sūtra section of some Tibetan (Peking and Narthang) and Chinese collections. It is, however, not found in the Degé Kangyur (see Hartmann 2006 and Levi 1932).
- n.9 Interestingly, the bodhisattva qualities listed in *Maitreya's Setting Out* are comparable to those found in *The Question of Maitreya*

(<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh85.html>) and *The Question of Maitreya on the Eight Qualities* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh86.html>) (Toh 86). See Liljenberg 2016a and 2016b.

- [n.10](#) Note that the explanation of why the Buddha gained awakening faster than Maitreya, although he had originally given rise to the mind set on awakening only after Maitreya had done so, differ from what is recounted in *The Question of Maitreya* (Toh 85).
- [n.11](#) The Denkarma catalogue is dated to c. 812 CE. Denkarma, 298.a.5. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 76–77, no. 140.
- [n.12](#) Lit. “cotton fabrics worth ninety-nine trillion.”
- [n.13](#) Lit. “worth a trillion.”
- [n.14](#) Lit. “cotton fabrics worth ninety-nine trillion.”
- [n.15](#) Lit. “worth a trillion.”
- [n.16](#) At this point in the text, the king Golden Color answers by giving rise to the mind set on awakening, and we are then back to listening to the narration of the Buddha. Although the Buddha Pure Golden Light has concluded his verses, the text continues in a verse format.
- [n.17](#) Comparable lists of bodhisattva qualities are found in *The Question of Maitreya* and *The Question of Maitreya on the Eight Qualities* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh86.html>). There, Maitreya himself asks the Buddha to teach on these qualities. See Liljenberg 2016a and 2016b.
- [n.18](#) Lit. “cloths worth ninety-nine trillion.”
- [n.19](#) This is a tentative translation based on the general context of the verse. We have not been able to make sense of the Tibetan, which reads *yon tan mnga’ ba grags chen ’dra ba ni / lha mi gzhan la bdag gis dbang ma mchis*.

b.

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## GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Aggregates

*phung po*

ཕུང་པོ།

*skandha*

The five constituents of a living entity: form, feeling, perception, karmic formation, and consciousness.

g.2 Ānanda

*kun dga' bo*

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

*Ānanda*

The Buddha's cousin and principal attendant.

g.3 Anāthapiṇḍada

*mgon med zas sbyin*

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན།

*Anāthapiṇḍada*

Anāthapiṇḍada was 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 the Jeta Grove from Prince Jeta and built there a monastery for the Buddha. He is also well known by the Pali rendering of his name, Anāthapiṇḍika.

g.4 Avalokiteśvara

*spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug*

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱུག།

*Avalokiteśvara*

Bodhisattva embodying the compassion of all the buddhas.

g.5 Blessed one

*bcom ldan 'das*

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

*bhagavān · bhagavat*

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generically means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to “subduing” the four *māras*, *ldan* to “possessing” the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to “going beyond” *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted as “one who destroys the four *māras*.” This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root  $\sqrt{bhañj}$ , “to break.”

g.6 Brahmā

*tshangs pa*

ཚེངས་པ།

*Brahmā*

One of the primary deities of the Brahmanical pantheon, Brahmā occupies an important place in Buddhism as one of two deities (the other being Śakra) that are said to have first exhorted Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma. Among his epithets is “Lord of Sahā World” (*Sahāṃpati*).

g.7 Branches of awakening

*byang chub kyi yan lag*

བྱང་ལྷན་གྱི་ཡན་ལག།

*bodhyaṅga*

The seven branches of awakening are mindfulness, analysis of the dharmas, diligence, joy, pliability, absorption, equanimity. These are included in the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment.

g.8 Candraprabhakumārabhūta

*zla 'od gzhon nur gyur pa*

ཟླ་འོད་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ།

*Candraprabhakumārabhūta*

The name of a bodhisattva present in the Buddha’s retinue.

g.9 Concentration

*bsam gtan*

བསམ་གཏན།

*dhyāna*

The fifth of the six perfections.

g.10 Conscientiousness

*bag yod pa*

བག་ཡོད་པ།

*apramāda*

A set of qualities of the bodhisattvas. These are explained in detail by the Buddha at 1.86.

g.11 Diligence

*brtson 'grus*

བརྩོན་འགྲུས།

*vīrya*

The fourth of the six perfections.

g.12 Discipline

*tshul khrims*

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

*śīla*

The second of the six perfections.

g.13 Dṛḍhamati

*blo gros brtan po*

བློ་གྲོས་བརྩན་པོ།

*Dṛḍhamati*

Name of a monk and bodhisattva who was the previous incarnation of the bodhisattva Maitreya.

g.14 Eight qualities (of water)

*yan lag brgyad*

ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད།

—

Eight qualities of water: sweet, cool, pleasant, light, clear, pure, not harmful to the throat, and beneficial for the stomach.



g.15 Eight unfree states

*mi khom pa brgyad*

མི་ཁོམ་པ་བརྟུན།

*aṣṭākṣana*

A set of circumstances that do not provide the freedom to practice the Buddhist path: being born in the realms of (1) the hells, (2) pretas, (3) animals, and (4) long-lived gods; in the human realm among (5) barbarians or (6) extremists, and (7) in places where the Buddhist teachings do not exist; and (8) without adequate faculties to understand the teachings where they do exist.

g.16 Elements

*kham*

ཁམས།

*dhātu*

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

g.17 Emptiness

*stong pa nyid*

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

*śūnyatā*

The absence of independent, singular, and permanent existence; one of the three gateways to liberation; the other two are signlessness and wishlessness.

g.18 Factors of awakening

*byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos*

བྱང་ལྷན་གྱི་ཕྱོགས་གྱི་ཚོས།

*bodhipakṣadharmā*

The thirty-seven factors of awakening are the four applications of mindfulness, the four thorough relinquishments, the four bases of miraculous power, the five faculties, the five powers, the eightfold path, and the seven branches of awakening.

g.19 Faculties

*dbang po*

དབང་པོ།

*indriya*

These are spiritual capacities to be developed: faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and insight. These are included in the thirty-seven factors of awakening. They are the same as the five powers at a lesser stage of development.

g.20 Fearlessnesses

*mi 'jigs pa*

མི་འཇིགས་པ།

*abhaya*

Refers to the fourfold fearlessness or the four assurances proclaimed by the thus-gone ones: fearlessness in declaring that one has awakened, that one has ceased all illusions, that one has taught the obstacles to awakening, and that one has shown the way to liberation.

g.21 Five acts of immediate retribution

*mtshams med pa lnga*

མཚམས་མེད་པ་ལྔ།

*pañcānantarya*

Acts for which one will be reborn in hell immediately after death, without any intervening stages; they include killing one's mother, one's father, or an arhat, causing a dissention in the saṅgha, and causing the blood of a thus-gone one to flow.

g.22 Five fundamental precepts

*bslab pa'i gzhi lnga*

བསྐྱབ་པའི་གཞི་ལྔ།

*pañcaśikṣāpada*

Abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication.

g.23 Four Great Kings

*rgyal po chen po bzhi*

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཚེན་པོ་བཞི།

*Caturmahārāja*

The powerful nonhuman guardian kings of the four quarters—Virūḍhaka, Virūpākṣa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and Vaiśravaṇa—who rule, respectively, over kumbhāṇḍas in the south, nāgas in the west, gandharvas in the east, and yakṣas in the north.

g.24 Four types of transgression causing downfall

*ltung bar 'gyur ba'i chos bzhi*

ལུང་བར་འགྱུར་བའི་ཚོས་བཞི།

—

The four root downfalls are roughly synonymous with the four transgressions (*pham pa, pārājika*) that require expulsion from the monastic community. These four transgressions are applicable to the maintenance of monastic and lay vows alike, though their interpretations might differ depending on context. The four transgressions are (1) violating the vow of chastity (*mi tshangs pa spyod pa, abrahmacarya*); (2) stealing / taking what is not given (*mi byin par len pa, adattadāna*); (3) taking a life (*srog gcod pa, prāṇātīpāta*); and (4) lying (*rdzun du smra ba, mṛṣāvāda*).

g.25 Generosity

*sbyin pa*

སྤྱིན་པ།

*dāna*

The first of the six perfections.

g.26 Genuine discriminations

*so so yang dag par rig pa*

སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ།

*pratisamvid*

Genuine discrimination with respect to dharmas, meaning, language, and eloquence.

g.27 Golden Color

*gser mdog*

གསེར་མདོག་

—

Name of a king who was the previous incarnation of the bodhisattva Maitreya.

g.28 Great trichiliocosm

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

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཚེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

*trisāhasra-mahāsāhasra-lokadhātu*

The largest universe spoken of in Buddhist cosmology, consisting of one billion smaller world systems.

g.29 Hearer

*nyan thos*

ཉན་ཐོས།

*śrāvaka*

A follower of those teachings of the Buddha that focus on the monastic lifestyle and liberating oneself from suffering, in contrast to followers of the bodhisattva vehicle who seek buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

g.30 Heaven Free from Strife

*'thab bral*

འཐབ་བྲལ།

*Yāma*

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.31 Heaven of Delighting in Emanations

*'phrul dga'*

འཕྲུལ་དགའ།

*Nirmāṇarati*

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.32 Heaven of Joy

*dga' ldan*

དགའ་ལྷན།

*Tuṣita*

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.33 Heaven of Making Use of Others' Emanations

*gzhan 'phrul dbang byed pa*

གཞན་འཕྲུལ་དབང་བྱེད་པ།

*Paranirmitavaśavartin*

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.34 Heaven of the Four Great Kings

*rgyal chen bzhi'i ris*

རྒྱལ་ཆེན་བཞི་འི་རིས།

*Caturmahārājakāyika*

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.35 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

*sum cu rtsa gsum*

སུམ་རུ་སྩ་གསུམ།

*Trāyastriṃśa*

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.36 Individual gateways

*sgo so so ba*

སྒོ་སོ་སོ་བ།

—

The six perfections: 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.

g.37 Insight

*shes rab*

ཤེས་རབ།

*prajñā*

The sixth of the six perfections. In the context of this sūtra, this term can also denote insight in general.

g.38 Jeta Grove

*rgyal bu rgyal byed kyī tshal*

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་གྱི་ཚལ།

*Jetavana*

A grove that was given to the Buddha. Prince Jeta sold the so-called garden of Prince Jeta in Śrāvastī to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, who built a monastery there and offered it to the Buddha.

g.39 Jinamitra

*dzi na mi tra*

ཇོ་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

*Jinamitra*

An Indian Kashmiri paṇḍita who was resident in Tibet during the late 8th and early 9th centuries. He worked with several Tibetan translators on the translation of several sūtras. He is also the author of the *Nyāyabindupinḍārtha* (Toh 4233), <Reference Toh 4233> which is contained in the Tibetan Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) collection.

g.40 Kimpala

*kim pa la*

ཀིམ་པ་ལ།

*kimpala*

A type of cymbal.

g.41 Limit of reality

*yang dag pa'i mtha'*

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

*bhūtakoṭi*

A synonym for ultimate reality, and also a near-synonym for nirvāṇa.

g.42 Mahāsthāmaprāpta

*mtshu chen thob*

མཐུ་ཚེན་ཐོབ།

*Mahāsthāmaprāpta*

The name of a bodhisattva present in the Buddha's retinue.

g.43 Maitreya

*byams pa*

བྱམས་པ།

*Maitreya*

Lit. "the Loving One." Bodhisattva of loving kindness; the next buddha to follow Śākyamuni.

g.44 Mañjuśrī

*'jam dpal*

འཇམ་དཔལ།

*Mañjuśrī*

Bodhisattva embodying wisdom. Also rendered here as Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta.

- g.45     Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta  
           *'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa*  
           འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ།  
           *Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta*  
           One of the names of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī which means, “the youthful  
           Mañjuśrī.”
- g.46     Patience  
           *bzod pa*  
           བཟོད་པ།  
           *kṣānti*  
           The third of the six perfections.
- g.47     Perfections  
           *pha rol tu phyin pa*  
           ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།  
           *pāramitā*  
           See “six perfections.”
- g.48     Perfections  
           *pha rol tu phyin pa*  
           ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།  
           *pāramitā*  
           See “six perfections.”
- g.49     Playfulness  
           *rnam par rtse ba*  
           རྣམ་པར་རྩེ་བ།  
           —  
           Name of a bodhisattva, the main interlocutor of *Maitreya’s Setting Out*.
- g.50     Powers  
           *stobs*  
           སྟོབས།  
           *bala*  
           Can refer to the five powers—faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and  
           insight—or to the ten powers.

- g.51 **Prajñāvarman**  
*pradz+nyA warma*  
 བརྗོ་འཕྲིམ།  
*Prajñāvarman*  
 An Indian Bengali paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late 8th to early 9th centuries. Arriving in Tibet on an invitation from the Tibetan king, he assisted in the translation of numerous canonical scriptures. He is also the author of a few philosophical commentaries contained in the Tibetan Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) collection.
- g.52 **Pratibhānakūṭa**  
*spobs pa brtsegs pa*  
 སྤྱོད་པ་བརྟེན་པ།  
*Pratibhānakūṭa*  
 The name of a bodhisattva present in the Buddha's retinue.
- g.53 **Pure conduct**  
*tshangs par spyod pa*  
 ཚངས་པར་སྦྱོད་པ།  
*brahmacarya*  
 Can refer to celibacy in its narrowest sense; in a broader sense it refers to the conduct of those who have renounced worldly life to devote themselves to spiritual study and practice.
- g.54 **Pure Golden Light**  
*gser bzangs 'od*  
 གསེར་བཟངས་འོད།  
 —  
 Name of a buddha of the past.
- g.55 **Ratnacchatra**  
*rin chen gdugs*  
 རིན་ཆེན་གདུག་པ།  
*Ratnacchatra*  
 Lit. "Jewel Parasol." Name of a buddha of the past.
- g.56 **Ratnavyūha**  
*rin po che bkod pa*  
 རིན་པོ་ཅེ་བཀོད་པ།



རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བཀོད་པ།

*Ratnavyūha*

A future buddha under whom the bodhisattva Maitreya is prophesied to attain buddhahood.

g.57 Sahā world

*mi mjed*

མི་མཇེད།

*Sahā*

A name for the “world” in which we live.

g.58 Śakra

*brgya byin*

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

*Śakra*

The lord of the gods. Alternatively known as Indra, the deity that is called “lord of the devas” 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.

g.59 Śākyamuni

*shA kya thub pa*

ཤཱ་ཀྱ་ཐུབ་པ།

*Śākyamuni*

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

g.60 Śāriputra

*sha ra dwa ti'i bu*

ཤཱ་ར་དྲཱ་ཏི་ཡི་བུ།

*Śāriputra*

One of the closest disciples of the Buddha, known for his pure observance of discipline.

g.61 Seal  
*phyag rgya*  
ཕྱག་གྱི།  
*mudrā*

g.62 Sense fields  
*skye mched*  
སྐྱེ་མཚེད།  
*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).

g.63 Seven precious substances  
*rin po che sna bdun*  
རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྣ་བདུན།  
*saptaratna*

The list of seven precious materials vary. Either they are gold, silver, turquoise, coral, pearl, emerald, and sapphire; or else they are ruby, sapphire, beryl, emerald, diamond, pearls, and coral.

g.64 Signlessness  
*mtshan ma med pa*  
མཚན་མ་མེད་པ།  
*animitta*

The ultimate absence of marks and signs in perceived objects. One of the three gateways to liberation; the other two are emptiness and wishlessness.

g.65 Six perfections  
*pha rol tu phyin pa drug*  
ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ་དུག  
*ṣaṭpāramitā*

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

g.66 Solitary buddha  
*rang sangs rgyas*  
རང་སངས་རྒྱལ།

*pratyekabuddha*

Someone who has attained liberation entirely through their own contemplation as a result of progress in previous lives but, unlike a buddha, does not have the accumulated merit and motivation to teach others.

g.67 Sphere of reality

*chos kyi dbyings*

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

*dharmadhātu*

g.68 Śrāvastī

*mnyan du yod pa*

མཉན་དུ་ཡོད་པ།

*Śrāvastī*

The capital of the ancient Indian kingdom of Kośala during the sixth–fifth centuries BCE ruled by one of the Buddha’s royal patrons, King Prasenajit. It was the setting for many sūtras as the Buddha spent many rains retreats outside the city, in the Jeta Grove. It has been identified with the present-day Sahet Mahet in Uttar Pradesh on the banks of the river Rapti.

g.69 Suchness

*de bzhin nyid*

དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད།

*tathatā*

g.70 Superknowledges

*mngon par shes pa*

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ།

*abhijñā*

Traditionally listed as five: divine sight, divine hearing, the ability to know past and future lives, the ability to know the minds of others, and the ability to produce miracles.

g.71 Surendrabodhi

*su ren dra bo dhi*

སུ་རེན་བྲ་བོ་ནྱི།

*Surendrabodhi*

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

g.72 Ten powers

*stobs bcu*

སྟོབས་བརྒྱ།

*daśabala*

The ten knowledges of a buddha or bodhisattva: (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 different levels of capabilities, (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.

g.73 Thus-gone one

*de bzhin gshegs pa*

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

*tathāgata*

A frequently used synonym for buddhas. According to different explanations, it can be read as *tathā-gata*, literally meaning “one who has thus gone,” or as *tathā-agata*, “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 departed in the wake of the buddhas of the past, or one who has manifested the supreme enlightenment 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.

g.74 Trichiliocosm

*stong gsum*

སྟོང་གསུམ།

—

See “great trichiliocosm.”

g.75 Unique attributes of a buddha

*sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa*

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཚོས་མ་འདྲིས་པ།

*āveṇīkabuddhadharma*

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

g.76 Well-gone one

*bde bar gshegs pa*

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

*sugata*

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. 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*).

g.77 Wishlessness

*smon pa med pa*

སྲོན་པ་མེད་པ།

*apraṇihita*

The ultimate absence of any wish, desire, or aspiration, even those directed towards buddhahood. One of the three gateways to liberation; the other two are emptiness and signlessness.

g.78 Worthy one

*dgra bcom pa*

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ།

*arhat*

According to Buddhist tradition, one who has conquered the enemies, i.e. mental afflictions or emotions, (*kleśa-ari-hata*) and reached liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. It's the fourth and highest of the four fruits attainable by hearers. Also used as an epithet of the Buddha.

g.79 Yeshé Dé

*ye shes sde*

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

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