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## Proper Dharma Conduct

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*Dharmanaya*

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*'phags pa chos kyi tshul zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “Proper Dharma Conduct”

*Āryadharmanayanāmahāyānasūtra*



Toh 244

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## SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 *Proper Dharma Conduct* takes place in the Jeta Grove at Śrāvastī. Knowing that many bodhisattvas are wondering about proper Dharma conduct, the Buddha Śākyamuni gives a teaching on this topic to a great number of bodhisattvas. The teaching follows a format in which the Buddha first makes a short cryptic statement that seems to go against the conventions of proper behavior for bodhisattvas. The bodhisattvas then inquire as to the meaning of this statement, and the Buddha proceeds to explain how to interpret the initial statement in order to decipher the underlying meaning. Because of his teaching, many gods and bodhisattvas are able to make great progress on the path.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.

- ac.1 This text was translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the supervision of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche. Yanneke Josephus Jitta translated the text from Tibetan into English and wrote the introduction. Andreas Doctor and Daniel Hirshberg compared the draft translation with the original Tibetan and edited the text.

This translation has been completed under the patronage and supervision of *84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha*.

## INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1

*Proper Dharma Conduct* takes place in the Jeta Grove at Śrāvastī, where the Buddha resides with a great gathering of bodhisattvas. Knowing that these bodhisattvas have questions regarding proper Dharma conduct, the Buddha decides to teach on this topic. The Buddha first makes a short cryptic statement that seems to go against the conventions of proper behavior for bodhisattvas. For example, at one point the Buddha says, “Noble sons, be terrified, be without joy, be without love, and be without compassion.” When the bodhisattvas inquire as to the meaning of this statement, the Buddha elaborates, “ ‘Terrified’ means being terrified by the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas. ‘Without joy’ means not finding any joy in the formless attainments. ‘Without love’ means relinquishing outer phenomena. ‘Without compassion’ means giving away personal body parts, such as the head. That is the proper conduct.” These statements are followed by explanations of their underlying meaning that, it becomes apparent, fully agree with the central conventions of the Bodhisattva Vehicle. As a result of listening to his teaching, many gods and bodhisattvas are able to progress on the path.

i.2

Very little is known about the literary history of this text. A Sanskrit version of this sūtra is no longer extant, and it appears that it was never translated into Chinese. Hence, the only witness of this sūtra available is the Tibetan translation included in the Kangyur. In the absence of any Sanskrit witness or Chinese translation, it is difficult to determine much about the history of this scripture in India and East Asia, apart from noting the fact that its absence in the Chinese canon may indicate a relatively narrow circulation in India. The colophon of the Tibetan translation states that it was produced by Prajñāvarman and Yeshé Dé, thus locating its translation in the late eighth or early ninth century. This dating is also confirmed by the text’s inclusion in the Denkarma Catalog of the early ninth century CE.<sup>1</sup> The translation presented here was based primarily on the Degé edition, in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace manuscript edition.

tr.

## THE TRANSLATION

### The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra

## Proper Dharma Conduct

- 1.1 [F.15.b] Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!
- 1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was at Prince Jeta's Grove at Śrāvastī, where he was residing in a pavilion made of bamboo. At that time, a great number of bodhisattvas, who were also gathered and assembled at the bamboo pavilion, had the following thought: "How are we to live? How are we to practice? How are we to train? How are we to ripen others?"
- 1.3 Knowing the thoughts of these many bodhisattvas, the Blessed One went before them and sat down on a seat by the pavilion in front of them. Sitting there, the Blessed One said to the many bodhisattvas, "Noble sons, excellent, excellent. Your intention is noble, your questions are beautiful, your eloquence is virtuous, and your concerns are proper. Therefore, noble sons, listen carefully and keep in mind what is said. I shall now explain proper Dharma conduct to you. This includes a presentation of the complete bodhisattva conduct—the proper conduct of bodhisattva great beings—and an explanation of all buddha qualities."
- 1.4 "Very well, Blessed One," the bodhisattvas replied, and they listened to the Blessed One with full attention.
- 1.5 The Blessed One said, [F.16.a] "Noble sons, maintain the thought of nirvāṇa and apply yourselves to saṃsāra. Do not dwell in either saṃsāra or in nirvāṇa."  
The bodhisattvas asked, "Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas maintain the thought of nirvāṇa and apply themselves to saṃsāra? How do they not dwell in either saṃsāra or in nirvāṇa?"



1.6 The Blessed One said, “They maintain the thought of nirvāṇa in order to reach the happiness of immortality. They apply themselves to saṃsāra in order to gather the roots of virtue. They do not dwell in either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa in order to attend to noble and ordinary beings. That is the proper conduct.

1.7 “Therefore, noble sons, train your minds, protect the minds of others, and be courageous.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas train their minds? How do they protect the minds of others? How are they courageous?”

1.8 The Blessed One said, “They train their minds by eliminating afflictions. They protect others’ minds by being without anger. They are courageous as they do not relinquish the mind of awakening. That is the proper conduct.

1.9 “Therefore, noble sons, do not go against what is proper, perceive what is improper, and do not hope to get anything in return for what has been done.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not go against what is proper? How do they leave behind what is improper? How do they not hope to get anything in return for what has been done?”

1.10 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Not going against what is proper’ means having confidence in the ripening of actions due to engaging with the Dharma of dependent origination. ‘Perceiving what is improper’ means being committed to great compassion. [F.16.b] ‘Not hoping to get anything in return for what has been done’ means not hoping for any benefit in return. That is the proper conduct.

1.11 “Therefore, noble sons, do not get up at inappropriate times. Do not sleep when the time has come. Rouse those who are sleeping. Sleep forever.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not get up at inappropriate times? How do they not sleep when the time has come? How do they rouse those who are sleeping? How do they sleep forever?”

1.12 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Not getting up at inappropriate times’ means not teaching the Dharma to those who are inappropriate recipients. ‘Not sleeping when the time has come’ means not passing over suitable vessels. ‘Rousing those who sleep’ means encouraging others in terms of the appropriate and inappropriate times. ‘Sleeping forever’ means never arising from attainment. That is the proper conduct.

1.13 “Therefore, noble sons, be without confidence, destroy confidence, and have confidence in those without confidence.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas without confidence? How do they destroy confidence? How do they have confidence in those without confidence?”

1.14 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being without confidence’ means not settling the mind in the formless attainments. ‘Destroying confidence’ means reversing the formless attainments. ‘Having confidence in those without confidence’ refers to those who are in error. That is the proper conduct.

1.15 “Therefore, noble sons, be endowed with wealth. Connect those who are without gratitude. Do not hope to get anything in return. Maintain a livelihood with great profit.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas endowed with wealth? How do they connect those who are without gratitude? [F.17.a] How do they not hope to get anything in return? How do they maintain a livelihood with great profit?”

1.16 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being endowed with wealth’ means being endowed with the seven riches. ‘Connecting those who are without gratitude’ means connecting the greedy with generosity and connecting those with distorted wisdom with wisdom. ‘Not hoping to get anything in return’ means diligently working toward one’s own purpose. ‘Maintaining a livelihood with great profit’ means dedicating toward unsurpassed and perfect awakening. That is the proper conduct.

1.17 “Therefore, noble sons, understand passion. Enjoy passion. Consider those who are attached to passion. Protect those who are without passion.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas understand passion? How do they enjoy passion? How do they consider those who are attached to passion? How do they protect those who are without passion?”

1.18 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Understanding passion’ means understanding the formless attainments. ‘Enjoying passion’ means cutting the six sense sources. ‘Considering those who are attached to passion’ means ripening ordinary beings. ‘Protecting those who are without passion’ means not entering the state that is free from faults. That is the proper conduct.

1.19 “Therefore, noble sons, be terrified, be without joy, be without love, and be without compassion.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas terrified? How are they without joy? How are they without love? How are they not compassionate?”

1.20 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Terrified’ means being terrified by the levels of the hearers and the solitary buddhas. ‘Without joy’ means [F.17.b] not finding any joy in the formless attainments. ‘Without love’ means relinquishing outer phenomena. ‘Without compassion’ means giving away personal body parts, such as the head. That is the proper conduct.

1.21 “Therefore, noble sons, understand the truth and do not give up lying.”

- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas understand the truth? How do they not give up lying?”
- 1.22 The Blessed One said, “They ‘understand the truth’ in order to tame hearers and solitary buddhas. They ‘do not give up lying’ in order to make use of conditioned phenomena. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.23 “Therefore, noble sons, cross over but look at the shore on this side. Look at the shore on the other side but do not cross over.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas cross over but look at the shore on this side? How do they look at the shore on the other side without crossing over?”
- 1.24 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Crossing over’ refers to the minds, conduct, and thoughts of all beings. They ‘look at the shore on this side’ in order to ripen all beings. They ‘do not cross over’ so that they can liberate others. ‘Looking at the shore on the other side’ means always leaning toward nirvāṇa. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.25 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand never conform, and on the other hand do take the lack of dispute to be supreme. On the one hand dwell in love, and on the other hand do see flaws.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas never conform and take the lack of dispute to be supreme? How do they dwell in love but also see flaws?”
- 1.26 The Blessed One said, “They ‘never conform’ in order to uphold the sacred Dharma. [F.18.a] They ‘take the lack of dispute to be supreme’ in order to purify thoughts. They ‘dwell in love’ in order to protect beings. ‘Seeing flaws’ means seeing all compounded entities.
- 1.27 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand do not exhaust what becomes exhausted, and on the other hand do not fall into what does not become exhausted. Understand the nature of exhaustion.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not exhaust what becomes exhausted? How do they not fall into what does not become exhausted? How do they understand the nature of exhaustion?”
- 1.28 The Blessed One said, “ ‘What becomes exhausted’ means the compounded. ‘What does not become exhausted’ means the un-compounded. In order to accumulate roots of virtue bodhisattvas must not exhaust compounded phenomena. Using their skill in means, they must not fall into the un-compounded. ‘Understanding the nature of exhaustion’ means knowing the fact of impermanence. That is the proper conduct.

1.29 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand dwell within darkness, and on the other hand seize the light. Do what should not be done. Set aside what should be done.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas dwell within darkness? How do they seize the light? How do they do what should not be done? How do they set aside what should be done?”

1.30 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Darkness’ means ignorance. Bodhisattvas must attain the truth for the benefit of ignorant beings. ‘Light’ means insight. By that insight they must clear away darkness. ‘What should not be done’ means passing beyond suffering. ‘What should be done’ means non-performance. That is what bodhisattvas must set aside. That is the proper conduct.

1.31 “Therefore, noble sons, dwell in the light of the profound Dharma. [F.18.b] Do not despise apparent phenomena. Do not dwell in either appearance or nonappearance.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas dwell in the light of the profound Dharma? How do they not despise apparent phenomena? How do they not dwell in either appearance or nonappearance?”

1.32 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Profound’ refers to dependent origination. By being free of all views, bodhisattvas must understand that all phenomena are dependent origination. Since all phenomena are dependent origination, in order to ripen beings they must not despise apparent phenomena. They ‘do not dwell in either appearance or nonappearance’ in order to be free from duality. That is the proper conduct.

1.33 “Therefore, noble sons, be without desire for what is to be accumulated, and yet, in order to accumulate, do not loosen your diligence.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas without desire for what is to be accumulated? How do they, in order to accumulate, not loosen their diligence?”

1.34 The Blessed One said, “ ‘What is to be accumulated’ are the roots of virtue. ‘Being without desire for that’ means freely giving them to sentient beings. ‘In order to accumulate, not loosening their diligence’ means applying effort while never feeling sated by roots of virtue. That is the proper conduct.

1.35 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be hard to fathom, and on the other hand manifest intelligible conduct.

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas hard to fathom? How do they manifest intelligible conduct?”

1.36 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being hard to fathom’ means resting in the profound, a state that not even the hearers and solitary buddhas [F.19.a] can fathom. ‘Manifesting intelligible conduct’ means blending with the phenomena of childish ordinary beings. That is the proper conduct.

1.37 “Therefore, noble sons, avoid the path. When the path is lost, illuminate. Do not reject the authentic path.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas avoid the path? How do they illuminate when the path is lost? How do they not reject the authentic path?”

1.38 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Avoiding the path’ means turning away from the paths of the hearers and the solitary buddhas. They ‘illuminate when the path is lost’ in order to mature sentient beings. ‘Not rejecting the authentic path’ refers to the path of the six perfections. That is the proper conduct.

1.39 “Therefore, noble sons, don the armor of non-regression. Turn away from everything. Be free after having turned away.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas don the armor of non-regression? How do they turn away from everything? How are they free after having turned away?”

1.40 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Donning the armor of non-regression’ means observing vows that are in accord with the Dharma. ‘Turning away from everything’ means turning away from vows that are not endowed with the Dharma. ‘Being free after having turned away’ means being free from all nonvirtuous qualities. That is the proper conduct.

1.41 “Therefore, noble sons, be united. Always divide. Be steadfast. Be both agitated as well as not agitated.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas united? How do they always divide? How are they steadfast? How are they both agitated and not agitated?”

1.42 The Blessed One said, “They are ‘united’ in order to overcome māras. [F.19.b] ‘Always dividing’ means knowing that a continuous succession is different from the non-abiding mind. ‘Steadfast’ means being steadfast in accomplishment. They are ‘both agitated and not agitated’ in order to observe the different virtuous qualities. That is the proper conduct.

1.43 “Therefore, noble sons, be affectionate. Always be hostile. Look for a long time. Do not respond in kind.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas affectionate? How are they always hostile? How do they look for a long time? How do they not respond in kind?”

1.44 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Affectionate’ means being affectionate toward the Great Vehicle. ‘Hostile’ means being hostile to the lower vehicle. They ‘look for a long time’ in order to accept saṃsāra. ‘Not responding in kind’ means not retaliating against those who commit evil acts. That is the proper conduct.

1.45 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be very generous, and on the other hand be miserly. Be free from a grasping attitude.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas very generous? How are they miserly? How are they free from a grasping attitude?”

1.46 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being very generous’ means being generous in order to not abandon anyone. ‘Being miserly’ means being miserly to those who are not proper recipients. They are ‘free from a grasping attitude’ so that teachers are not stingy with the teachings. That is the proper conduct.

1.47 “Therefore, noble sons, accept those who have been abandoned. Disregard those who have been accepted. Act like a sick person. Cure the sick.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas accept those who have been abandoned? How do they disregard [F.20.a] those who have been accepted? How do they act like a sick person? How do they cure the sick?”

1.48 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Accepting those who have been abandoned’ means that bodhisattvas must accept those beings who are fixed in error and have been abandoned by all the buddhas. ‘Disregarding those who have been accepted’ means disregarding all those on the paths of training and no training. ‘Acting like a sick person and curing the sick’ means intentionally demonstrating old age and sickness and then teaching the Dharma to ordinary beings. That is the proper conduct.

1.49 “Therefore, noble sons, cause the works of Māra to blaze, and pacify buddha qualities.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas cause the works of Māra to blaze? How do they pacify buddha qualities?”

1.50 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Causing the works of Māra to blaze’ means striving for virtuous qualities. ‘Pacifying buddha qualities’ means engaging with all phenomena while free from afflictions and secondary afflictions. That is the proper conduct.

1.51 “Therefore, noble sons, fight with the māras and do not investigate the teacher.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas fight with the māras? How do they not investigate the teacher?”

1.52 The Blessed One said, “They ‘fight with the māras’ because the māras work hard to create obstacles when bodhisattvas ripen sentient beings. They ‘do not investigate the teacher’ because he is endowed with all virtuous qualities. That is the proper conduct.

1.53 “Therefore, noble sons, do not slander what the hearers slander, and do not have fondness for what the hearers are fond of.”

- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not slander what the hearers slander? [F.20.b] And how do they not have fondness for what the hearers are fond of?”
- 1.54 The Blessed One said, “Hearers slander the modes of birth, but you should not slander them. Hearers find pleasure in their personal nirvāṇa, but you should not find pleasure in that. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.55 “Therefore, noble sons, abide in the world. Experience the phenomena of the world. Moreover, be unstained by the world, and free those who are bound in the world.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas abide in the world? How do they experience the phenomena of the world? How are they unstained by the world? How do they free those who are bound in the world?”
- 1.56 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Abiding in the world’ means abiding in the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. ‘Experiencing the phenomena of the world’ means experiencing the eight worldly concerns. ‘Being unstained by the world’ means being unmoved by happiness and suffering. ‘Freeing those who are bound in the world’ means releasing those who are in the prison of the three realms. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.57 “Therefore, noble sons, be light, be heavy, suffer, and be happy.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas light? How are they heavy? How do they suffer? How are they happy?”
- 1.58 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being light’ means worrying about the actions of all sentient beings. ‘Being heavy’ means being firm in their vows. They ‘suffer’ because they engage in unpleasant antidotes. They are ‘happy’ because they have produced merit. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.59 “Therefore, noble sons, be invisible. Appear everywhere. [F.21.a] Avoid mistakes. Do what remains to be done.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas invisible? How do they appear everywhere? How do they avoid mistakes? How do they do what remains to be done?”
- 1.60 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being invisible’ means having transcended all downfalls and mistakes. ‘Appearing everywhere’ means accomplishing the factors that are in harmony with awakening. ‘Avoiding mistakes’ means avoiding strife and dispute. ‘Doing what remains to be done’ means gathering sentient beings. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.61 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand dwell on what has not been done, and on the other hand dwell on what has been done. Have impartial minds with regard to both what has and has not been done.”

- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas dwell on what has not been done? How do they dwell on what has been done? How do they have impartial minds with regard to both what has and has not been done?”
- 1.62 The Blessed One said, “They ‘dwell on what has not been done’ in order to accomplish the roots of virtue. They ‘dwell on what has been done’ in order to reach the higher qualities of the roots of virtue that have been performed. ‘Having impartial minds with regard to both what has and has not been done’ means making no distinction between those who observe discipline and those who have faulty discipline. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.63 “Therefore, noble sons, strive for what has an essence instead of what has no essence. Give rise to the notion that the essence has no essence. Experience what both has an essence and has no essence.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas strive for what has an essence instead of what has no essence? [F.21.b] How do they give rise to the notion that the essence has no essence? How do they experience what both has an essence and has no essence?”
- 1.64 The Blessed One said, “ ‘What has no essence’ means the body, life force, and possessions. Instead of striving for that, they strive for what has an essence by perfecting the sacred Dharma. ‘Essence’ means the un compounded. In order to apprehend the qualities of buddhahood, one must give rise to the notion that they are without essence. ‘Experiencing what both has an essence and has no essence’ means abandoning the idea of both compounded and un compounded phenomena. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.65 “Therefore, noble sons, break your vows. Maintain unimpaired discipline. Pay attention to those who have faulty discipline. Disregard those who are disciplined.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas break their vows? How do they maintain unimpaired discipline? How do they pay attention to those who have faulty discipline? How do they disregard those who are disciplined?”
- 1.66 The Blessed One said, They “‘break their vows’ in order to aim for higher roots of virtue. They ‘maintain unimpaired discipline’ in order to aim for the mind of awakening. They ‘pay attention to those who have faulty discipline’ in order to connect them with discipline. They ‘disregard those who are disciplined’ because their work is done. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.67 “Therefore, noble sons, delight in the wealth of others, give away your own wealth, and be present.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas delight in the wealth of others? How do they give away their own wealth? How are they present?”



- 1.68 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Delighting in the wealth of others’ means rejoicing in the merit of [F.22.a] all bodhisattvas, hearers, and solitary buddhas, as well as that of all sentient beings. ‘Giving away one’s own wealth’ means giving one’s own roots of virtue to all beings. ‘Being present’ refers to the dedication to awakening. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.69 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be splendidous, and on the other hand be humble. On the one hand be lazy, and on the other hand always persevere.”  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas splendidous? How are they humble? How are they lazy? How do they always persevere?”
- 1.70 The Blessed One said, “They are ‘splendidous’ due to insight and wisdom. ‘Being humble’ means not having pride. ‘Being lazy’ refers to attaining the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas. ‘Always persevering’ means persevering in the perfections. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.71 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be wrathful, and on the other hand be gentle. On the one hand be fearful, and on the other hand subdue with the force of a lion.”  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas wrathful? How are they gentle? How are they fearful? How do they subdue with the force of a lion?”
- 1.72 The Blessed One said, “They are ‘wrathful’ in order to tame all māras. They are ‘gentle’ in order to tame beings of good origin. ‘Being fearful’ means being fearful of any wrongdoing. They ‘subdue with the force of a lion’ in order to suppress all adversarial disputes. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.73 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be attractive, and on the other hand be unattractive. On the one hand be free from reproach, [F.22.b] and on the other hand reproach.”  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas attractive? How are they unattractive? How are they free from reproach? How do they reproach?”
- 1.74 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Attractive’ means that through their wealth of good qualities they have arrived at the mind of all buddhas. ‘Unattractive’ refers to their manifestation of all the superknowledges, which are unattractive to all māras. They are ‘free from reproach’ because their body, speech, and mind are pure. They ‘reproach’ because they disparage all unwholesome qualities. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.75 “Therefore, noble sons, do not discourage those who are discouraged. Discourage those who are not discouraged. Search for wisdom. Avoid fondness for the actions of wisdom.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not discourage those who are discouraged? How do they discourage those who are not discouraged? How do they search for wisdom? How do they avoid fondness for the actions of wisdom?”

1.76 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Those who are discouraged’ means those who are on the levels of the hearers and solitary buddhas. They should not be discouraged. ‘Those who are not discouraged’ means all ordinary beings. They should be discouraged. ‘Searching for wisdom’ means searching for the knowledge of exhaustion and the unborn. ‘Avoiding fondness for the actions of wisdom’ means not straying into the un compounded. That is the proper conduct.

1.77 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand rest in composure, and on the other hand be distracted. On the one hand do not let your minds rest, and on the other hand always remain composed.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas rest in composure? How are they distracted? How do they not let their minds rest? How do they always remain composed?”

1.78 The Blessed One said, [F.23.a] “They ‘rest in composure’ by means of the mind of awakening. ‘Distracted’ means being distracted from the mind of the hearers. They ‘do not let their minds rest’ because they are unattached to that. They ‘always remaining composed’ because they maintain an unbiased mind toward all beings. That is the proper conduct.

1.79 “Therefore, noble sons, burn what must be burnt. Set things on fire. Abandon birth. Collect the extensive.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas burn what must be burnt? How do they set things on fire? How do they abandon birth? How do they collect the extensive?”

1.80 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Burning what must be burnt’ means burning all afflictions with the fire of wisdom. ‘Setting things on fire’ means skillfully apprehending the aggregates, elements, and sense sources. ‘Abandoning birth’ means having misgivings about all the activities of beings. ‘Collecting the extensive’ is synonymous with dedicating the merit. That is the proper conduct.

1.81 “Therefore, noble sons, know the wrong time to be the right time. Know the right time to be the wrong time. Be knowledgeable about the right time and the wrong time.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas know the wrong time to be the right time? How do they know the right time to be the wrong time? How are they knowledgeable about the right time and the wrong time?”

1.82 The Blessed One said, “The time for the attainment of the hearers is ‘the wrong time’ for bodhisattvas. When they have completed all the perfections and fully awakened to unexcelled and perfect buddhahood, that is ‘the right time’ for bodhisattvas. They are ‘knowledgeable about the right time and the wrong time’ in order to accomplish roots of virtue at the right time. That is the proper conduct. [F.23.b]

1.83 “Therefore, noble sons, separate from what has been attained, connect with what has not been attained, and do not be attached to attainment or non-attainment.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas separate from what has been attained? How do they connect with what has not been attained? How are they not attached to attainment or non-attainment?”

1.84 The Blessed One said, “ ‘What has been attained’ means the acquirement of the four misapprehensions and the swamp of saṃsāra. That is what a bodhisattva must separate from. ‘What has not been attained’ means the proper contemplation of nirvāṇa. That is what a bodhisattva must connect with. ‘Not being attached to attainment or non-attainment’ means not being attached to the conduct of the hearers and solitary buddhas or the conduct of ordinary beings. That is the proper conduct.

1.85 “Therefore, noble sons, do not relieve those who are relieved. Relieve those who have not been relieved.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not relieve those who are relieved? How do they relieve those who have not been relieved?”

1.86 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Not relieving those who are relieved’ means that one should not ripen beings who are already ripened. ‘Relieving those who have not been relieved’ means that one should ripen beings who have not been ripened. That is the proper conduct.

1.87 “Therefore, noble sons, get injured, avoid injury, heal wounds, and do not cause injury where there are no wounds.”<sup>2</sup>

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas get injured? How do they avoid injury? How do they heal wounds? How do they not cause injury where there are no wounds?”

1.88 The Blessed One said, “They ‘get injured’ in order to give away their major and minor limbs. ‘Avoiding injury’ means doing so mentally. [F.24.a] ‘Healing wounds’ means correcting downfalls according to the Dharma. ‘Not causing injury where there are no wounds’ means that they should not transgress their trainings even at the cost of their lives. That is the proper conduct.

1.89 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be without a livelihood, and on the other hand provide a livelihood for all beings. On the one hand collect what has not been collected, and on the other hand do not waste what has been collected.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas to be without a livelihood? How do they provide a livelihood for all beings? How do they collect what has not been collected? How do they not waste what has been collected?”

1.90 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being without a livelihood’ prevents all māras and non-Buddhists from getting an opportunity. ‘Providing a livelihood for all beings’ means being like a wish-fulfilling tree. They ‘collect what has not been collected’ in order to create roots of virtue. ‘Not wasting what has been collected’ means dedicating all virtuous thoughts to awakening. That is the proper conduct.

1.91 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be weak, and on the other hand be powerful. On the one hand be without support, and on the other hand be without a leader.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas weak? How are they powerful? How are they without support? How are they without a leader?”

1.92 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being weak’ means not retaliating against those who cause harm. ‘Being powerful’ means patiently helping those who cannot help themselves. They are ‘without support’ because they are self-reliant. ‘Being without a leader’ means not following others. That is the proper conduct.

1.93 “Therefore, noble sons, stain what is pure, purify what is stained. Be without stains, and always be pure.” [F.24.b]

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas stain what is pure? How do they purify what is stained? How are they without stains? How are they always pure?”

1.94 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Staining what is pure’ means defiling the mind of equipoise with roots of virtue. ‘Purifying what is stained’ means purifying the mind stained by afflictions so that it becomes the mind of awakening. ‘Being without stains’ means eliminating all afflictions. ‘Being always pure’ means having a pure attitude toward all beings. That is the proper conduct.

1.95 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand go against the grain, and on the other hand train with the grain, and know the continuum that is reversed.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas go against the grain? How do they train with the grain? How do they know the continuum that is reversed?”

- 1.96 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Going against the grain’ means that you turn away from the behavior of all childish ordinary people. ‘Training with the grain’ means training in all the practices of the bodhisattvas. ‘Knowing the continuum that is reversed’ means reverting from the attainment of the stage of neither thought nor no thought and then appearing in the desire realm.
- 1.97 “Therefore, noble sons, do not mix nectar and poison. Do not associate with those who are without poison. Offer nectar to those who are poisoned.  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not mix nectar and poison? How do they not associate with those who are without poison? How do they offer nectar to those who are poisoned?”
- 1.98 The Blessed One said, [F.25.a] “ ‘Nectar’ is conscientiousness and ‘poison’ is carelessness. Bodhisattvas should be conscientious and not mix that with a careless attitude. ‘Those who are without poison’ are the hearers, and they should not associate with them. ‘Those who are poisoned’ are ordinary beings, and bodhisattvas must teach the nectar to them. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.99 “Therefore, noble sons, do not be delighted by what delights. Be delighted by what does not delight. On the one hand be delighted and passionate, and on the other hand eliminate delight and passion.”  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas not delighted by what delights? How are they delighted by what does not delight? How are they delighted and passionate? How do they eliminate delight and passion?”
- 1.100 The Blessed One said, “ ‘What delights’ means grasping at *I* and grasping at *mine*, but they should not be delighted by that. ‘What does not delight’ refers to the way māras perceive buddha wisdom, but bodhisattvas should be delighted by that. ‘Being delighted and passionate’ means being a companion to those who crave cyclic existence. ‘Eliminating delight and passion’ means knowing cessation. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.101 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand tie with bonds, and on the other hand untie the bonds that bind. Serve those who are liberated. Follow those who are not liberated.  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas tie with bonds? How do they untie the bonds that bind? How do they serve those who are liberated? [F.25.b] How do they follow those who are not liberated?”
- 1.102 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Tying with bonds’ means tying the bonds of training. ‘Untying the bonds’ means untying the bonds of craving. ‘Serving those who are liberated’ means serving the hearers and solitary buddhas. ‘Following those who are not liberated’ means ripening childish ordinary beings. That is the proper conduct.

1.103 “Therefore, noble sons, desire the desirable. Do not desire the undesirable. Be without desire.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas desire the desirable? How do they not desire the undesirable? How are they without desire?”

1.104 The Blessed One said, “Desirable to the world and its gods are the blessed buddhas, so they should desire them. Undesirable to the bodhisattvas are the hearers and solitary buddhas, so they should not desire them. ‘Being without desire’ means being without desire toward birth as Śakra and Brahmā. That is the proper conduct.

1.105 “Therefore, noble sons, do not belittle a seed, however small. Have interest in a limitless field. Do not attain a great acquisition.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas not belittle a seed, however small? How do they have interest in a limitless field? How do they not attain a great acquisition?”

1.106 The Blessed One said, “ ‘A seed however small’ means that however small the root of virtue, they must not despise that. ‘Having interest in a limitless field’ means having interest in the immeasurable generosity of offering to the Buddha. ‘Not attaining a great acquisition’ means giving to all beings. That is the proper conduct. [F.26.a]

1.107 “Therefore, noble sons, understand attachment, engage with attachment, consider those who crave attachment, and do not fall into being without attachment.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas understand attachment? How do they engage with attachment? How do they consider those who crave attachment? How do they not fall into being without attachment?”

1.108 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Attachment’ means desiring the Lesser Vehicle, and it means the angry mind. Bodhisattvas must be on guard against these two. ‘Engaging with attachment’ means engaging with attachment in the desire, form, and formless realms. ‘Considering those who crave attachment’ means not falling into the unconditioned state that is without attachment. That is the proper conduct.

1.109 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand unburden yourselves, and on the other hand carry a great burden. Do not take up what has not been taken up. Bring what you have taken up into experience.”

The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas unburden themselves? How do they carry a great burden? How do they avoid lifting what has not been taken up? How do they bring what they have taken up into experience?”

- 1.110 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Unburdening’ means eliminating all afflictions. ‘Carrying a great burden’ means carrying all sentient beings. ‘Not taking up what has not been taken up’ means not taking up the vehicles of the hearers and solitary buddhas. ‘Bringing what they have taken up into experience’ refers to the Great Vehicle. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.111 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand condemn, and on the other hand praise. On the one hand approach, and on the other hand abandon.”  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas condemn? How do they praise? How do they approach? [F.26.b] And how do they abandon?”
- 1.112 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Condemning’ means condemning all nonvirtuous phenomena. ‘Praising’ means praising all virtuous phenomena. ‘Approaching’ means approaching the path of the noble ones. ‘Abandoning’ means abandoning all paths that lead in nonvirtuous directions. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.113 “Therefore, noble sons, demonstrate the power of concentration in villages, cities, kingdoms, and royal courts, and demonstrate few afflictions in the jungles and borderlands.”  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas demonstrate the power of concentration in villages, cities, kingdoms, and royal courts? How do they demonstrate few afflictions in jungles and borderlands?”
- 1.114 The Blessed One said, “When they reach villages, cities, kingdoms, and royal courts, many gross<sup>3</sup> types of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations will manifest, but these must be subdued through the power of concentration. When dwelling in jungles and borderlands, they must subdue those afflictions that arise with the qualities of disengagement. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.115 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand remain in water, and on the other hand always be thirsty. On the one hand quench your thirst, but do not be free from thirst.”  
The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas remain in water? How are they always thirsty? How do they quench their thirst? How are they not free from thirst?”
- 1.116 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Remaining in water’ means observing proper Dharma conduct. ‘Always being thirsty’ means thirsting for the Dharma. ‘Quenching their thirst’ means accomplishing Dharma activity by means of the Dharma. ‘Being free from thirst’ means not straying into the uncompounded state. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.117 “Therefore, noble sons, [F.27.a] on the one hand be alone and without friends, and on the other hand have many servants and attendants.”

- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas alone and without friends? How do they have many servants and attendants?”
- 1.118 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being alone and without friends’ means accomplishing all roots of virtue. ‘Having many servants’ means that those roots of virtue are the sustenance of all beings. As for ‘having many attendants,’ this refers to the factors that are in harmony with awakening. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.119 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand be free, and on the other hand enter prison. On the one hand cross to the other shore, and on the other hand remain in the great rivers.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how are bodhisattvas free? How do they enter prison? How do they cross to the other shore? How do they remain in the great rivers?”
- 1.120 The Blessed One said, “ ‘Being free’ means being free from all afflictions and bonds of the māras. ‘Entering prison’ means taking birth at will. ‘Crossing to the other shore’ means knowing the languages of all beings. They ‘remain in the great rivers’ in order to free those beings who are carried away by the four great rivers. That is the proper conduct.
- 1.121 “Therefore, noble sons, on the one hand contemplate what is measurable, and on the other hand understand the immeasurable to be sameness.”
- The bodhisattvas asked, “Blessed One, how do bodhisattvas contemplate what is measurable? How do they understand the immeasurable to be sameness?”
- 1.122 The Blessed One said, “Noble sons, ‘what is measurable’ is the compounded. ‘What is immeasurable’ is the un compounded. [F.27.b] In this regard, on the one hand bodhisattvas should not abandon the compounded, but they should also not associate with afflictions, which are part of the compounded. They should also examine the un compounded, but they should not enter the state that is free from faults. Through the insight that the compounded and the un compounded share a single characteristic, they must perfectly awaken within that sameness at the seat of awakening. That is the proper conduct.”
- 1.123 When these statements on proper conduct were taught, eight thousand gods gave rise to the mind of awakening. Five hundred bodhisattvas attained acceptance that phenomena are unborn. When the Blessed One had said this, the large number of bodhisattva great beings, as well as the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.124 *This concludes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra “Proper Dharma Conduct.”*



## COLOPHON

c.

c.1 This was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian scholar Prajñāvarman and the chief editor-translator Venerable Yeshé Dé and others.

## NOTES

n.

n.1 The Denkarma catalog is dated to ca. 812 CE. In this catalog, *Proper Dharma Conduct* is included among the “Miscellaneous Sūtras” (*mdo sde sna tshogs*) less than ten sections (*bam po*) long. See Denkarma, folio 299.a. See also Herrmann-Pfandt (2008), p. 92, no. 171.

n.2 Translated based on Stok: *rma ma dbyung shig* (folio 187.b). Degé: *rma dbyung shig*.

n.3 Translated based on Stok: *rags pa* (folio 191.b). Degé: *reg pa*.

b.

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## GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Acceptance that phenomena are unborn

*mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa*

མི་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་བཟོད་པ།

*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*

An attainment of effortless insight into emptiness and the lack of birth of phenomena. This attainment only occurs on the bodhisattva levels, variously said to occur on the first and eighth bodhisattva levels.

g.2 Affliction

*nyon mongs pa*

ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

*kleśa*

A type of mental imperfection; the most basic afflictions are attachment, aversion, and confusion.

g.3 Aggregates

*phung po*

ཕུང་པོ།

*skandha*

Five collections of phenomena under which all compounded phenomena may be included: form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness.

g.4 Attainment

*snyoms par 'jug pa*

སྟོབས་པར་འཇུག་པ།

*samāpatti*

A state of one-pointed mental equilibrium.

g.5 Brahmā

*tshangs pa*

ཚངས་པ།

*Brahmā*

A high-ranking deity, presiding over a divine world where other beings consider him the creator; he is also considered to be the “Lord of the Sahā World” (our universe).

- g.6 Dependent origination  
*rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba*  
 རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བ།  
*pratītyasamutpāda*  
 The relative nature of phenomena, which arises in dependence upon causes and conditions. Together with the four truths of the noble ones, this was the first teaching given by the Buddha.
- g.7 Desire realm  
*'dod pa'i khams*  
 འདོད་པའི་ཁམས།  
*kamadhātu*  
 One of the three realms of saṃsāra, characterized by a prevalence of desire.
- g.8 Eight worldly concerns  
*'jig rten gyi chos brgyad*  
 འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཚོས་བརྒྱད།  
*aṣṭalokadharmā*  
 Hoping for happiness, fame, praise, and gain and fearing suffering, insignificance, blame, and loss.
- g.9 Elements  
*khams*  
 ཁམས།  
*dhātu*  
 One way of describing experience and the world in terms of eighteen elements (eye, form, and eye consciousness; ear, sound, and ear consciousness; nose, odor, and nose consciousness; tongue, taste, and tongue consciousness; body, touch, and body consciousness; mind, mental objects, and mind consciousness).
- g.10 Factors that are in harmony with awakening  
*byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos*  
 བྱང་ཚུབ་གྱི་ཕྱོགས་གྱི་ཚོས།  
*bodhipakṣadharmā*  
 The set of practices that lead to awakening, traditionally listed as thirty-seven.
- g.11 Four misapprehensions  
*phyin ci log bzhi*  
 ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་བཞི།  
*caturviparyāsa*  
 Taking what is impermanent to be permanent, what is painful to be delightful, what is unclean to be clean, and what is no self to be a self.
- g.12 Gandharva  
*dri za*  
 དྷི་ཟ།

*gandharva*

Semidivine celestial musicians.

g.13 Hearer

*nyan thos*

ཉན་ཐོས།

*śrāvaka*

Someone who practices according to the Vehicle of the Hearers (those who hear the teachings from others) or someone who heard the Dharma from the Buddha.

g.14 Māra

*bdud*

བདུད།

*māra*

The deities ruled over by Māra who attempted to prevent the Buddha's awakening and who do not wish any being to escape from saṃsāra.

g.15 Māra

*bdud*

བདུད།

*Māra*

The principal deity in the highest heaven in the desire realm. He is also portrayed as attempting to prevent the Buddha's awakening. The name Māra is also used as a generic name for the deities in his realm and also as an impersonal term for the factors that keep beings in saṃsāra.

g.16 Mind of awakening

*byang chub kyi sems*

བྱང་ལྡན་གྱི་སེམས།

*bodhicitta*

The intent to obtain buddhahood to benefit all sentient beings; the practices toward buddhahood; the realization of emptiness.

g.17 Nirvāṇa

*mya ngan las 'das pa*

མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ།

*nirvāṇa*

The transcendence of suffering, the state of freedom from the suffering of saṃsāra.

g.18 Prajñāvarman

*pradz+nyA bar ma*

པར་མ་བློ་བར་མ།

*Prajñāvarman*

Prajñāvarman was a Bengali paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. He arrived in Tibet at the invitation of the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan*, 742–ca. 800 CE) and assisted in the translation of numerous canonical scriptures. He also authored a few philosophical commentaries himself, which were later included in the Tibetan Tengyur collection.

g.19 Prince Jeta's Grove

*rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal*

ཀླུ་བུ་ཀླུ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

*Jetavana*

The park donated to the Buddha by Anāthapiṇḍada.

g.20 Roots of virtue

*dge ba'i rtsa ba*

དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ།

*kuśalamūla*

Wholesome actions that are conducive to happiness. There are three fundamental roots of virtue from which the others arise: absence of desire, absence of hatred, and absence of delusion.

g.21 Śakra

*brgya byin*

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

*Śakra*

Another name for Indra, the god who rules the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

g.22 Sense sources

*skye mched*

སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

*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.23 Seven riches

*nor bdun*

ནོར་བདུན།

*saptadhana*

These are faith, diligence, discipline, modesty, learning, relinquishment, and insight.

g.24 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 knowledge.

g.25 Solitary buddha

*rang sangs rgyas*

རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

*pratyekabuddha*

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

g.26 Śrāvastī

*mnyan yod*

མཉམ་ཡོད།

*Śrāvastī*

The capital of the ancient Kosala kingdom in northern India during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.

g.27 Stage of neither thought nor no thought

*'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched pa*

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

*naiḥśaṃjñānāśaṃjñāyatana*

The highest of the four divine attainments (absorptions) of the formless realm.

g.28 Yeshé Dé

*ye shes sde*

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

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