

འགོ་བ་ཡོངས་སུ་སྐྱོབ་པར་བྱེད་པའི་ཡོངས་སུ་བསྐྱོབ།

The Dedication “Protecting All Beings”

འཕགས་པ་འགྲོ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡོངས་སུ་སྐྱོབ་པར་བྱེད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་ཡོངས་སུ་བསྡོམ་བ།

'phags pa 'gro ba thams cad yongs su skyob par byed pa zhes bya ba'i yongs su bsngo ba

The Noble Dedication “Protecting All Beings”



Toh 286
Degé Kangyur, vol. 68 (mdo sde, ya), folios 79.b–81.b.

Translated by the Alexander Csoma de Kőrös Translation Group
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

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co.

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SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 This text is a prayer of dedication that strongly resonates with the later Tibetan literature of mind training (*blo sbyong*). In addition to the classic element of dedication of merit to all beings, a substantial part of the text comprises a passage that enumerates the many faults, shortcomings, and afflictions that burden sentient beings, as well as the many possible attainments that they consequently may not have realized, and culminates in the wish that everything negative that would otherwise ripen for sentient beings may ripen instead for the reciter, so that all sentient beings may thus be liberated and purified.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.

- ac.1 This text was translated from the Tibetan, introduced, and edited by the translator Zsuzsa Majer in collaboration with Karma Dorje (Rabjampa), a native Tibetan speaker and Tibetan language expert; Beáta Kakas, the Sanskrit expert for checking Sanskrit terms; and Nathaniel Rich, the English-language editor, in the framework of the Alexander Csoma de Kőrös Translation Group. The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 This short text and *The Dedication “Fulfilling All Aspirations”* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-068-019.html>) (Toh 285) that precedes it appear to constitute a pair, and this for several reasons. First, the two texts, both of which lack Sanskrit titles, appear side by side both in the Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) imperial catalog and in the extant Kangyurs of the Tshalpa and Thempangma lines. In the Tshalpa Kangyurs, the two are placed at the very end of the Mahāyāna division of the General Sūtra (*mdo sde*) section, and in the Thempangma Kangyurs toward the end of the entire General Sūtra section. Their function as dedications therefore seems to be reflected in that placement, and—in the Tshalpa Kangyurs at least—the two appear to be dedications meant specifically to seal the sections of Mahāyāna sūtras.

i.2

Furthermore, since the two texts are dedications, it is perhaps not surprising that they are neither called sūtras, nor show features typical of sūtras, such as the opening “Thus did I hear” or an introductory passage describing the setting and audience of the discourse. What is somewhat surprising is that both are nonetheless included in the sūtra section of the Kangyur, indicating that they are to be considered discourses of the Buddha.¹ Along those lines, the lack of features that typically distinguish sūtras led the fifteenth-century scholar Pekar Sangpo (*pad dkar bzang po*), in his analytical survey of all the sūtras found in the Kangyur, to conclude that the two texts are extracts from another, longer sūtra—though he does not say which,² and our own search for matches (at least in the Tibetan corpus) has not yet identified any such text, sūtra or otherwise. What can be said with a reasonable degree of confidence is that, regardless of their exact provenance, the two texts were translated from Sanskrit or another Indic language in the late eighth or early ninth century. The short colophon to the present text³ attests to that, providing the names of the two translators, the Indian abbot Vidyākara-prabha and the Tibetan translator Bandé Yeshé Nyingpo, and the senior editor-translator Bandé Paltsek, who

edited and finalized the text. The text is also listed in both the Denkarma and Phangthangma (*'phang thang ma*) catalogs. This confirms the dating of the Tibetan translation to the early ninth century at the latest.⁴

i.3 There is no extant Sanskrit text of this sūtra, and there are no known canonical or Tibetan commentaries. There is no known English translation of it nor any translation into any European language, and no academic research or scholarly studies of it are known. A translation of the Tibetan text is, however, available in the Mongolian Kangyur.⁵ The translation presented here is based on the Tibetan version in the Degé Kangyur and consultation of the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) as well as the Stok Palace manuscript.

i.4 The structure of the present text partly reflects the liturgy of “seven branches” or “seven limbs” (*yan lag bdun pa*), a set of practices that came to serve as the basic structure of many Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhist prayers, sādhanas, and pūjās. The seven branches are commonly as follows: prostration or homage, offering, confession, rejoicing in virtue, requesting the buddhas to teach, requesting the buddhas not to pass into nirvāṇa, and dedication of merit. Not all of these seven are present in this text, which suggests that perhaps the set was formalized only later. The structure of the present text also partly reflects the structure of the preceding text. For example, here there is also only a single line of homage at the very beginning, which might indicate that the line was intended only as the customary line of homage found at the beginning of all Kangyur works. Also in common with the preceding text, the line of homage is followed by a request that the buddhas and bodhisattvas pay heed to the reciter. And what immediately follows are four brief lines, each of them devoted to a single act in the order in which they appear in the preceding text: confession, rejoicing, supplicating the buddhas, and dedicating all merits.

i.5 What sets this short text apart, however, is the extensive dedication that follows, comprising the bulk of the prayer. This features an enumeration of the many faults, shortcomings, and afflictions that burden sentient beings, as well as the many possible attainments that they may have consequently not realized, with the reciter expressing the wish that everything negative that would otherwise ripen for sentient beings may instead “ripen for me” (*bdag la smin*), so that all sentient beings would thus be liberated and purified. This strongly resonates with the much later Tibetan mind training (*blo sbyong*) teachings, especially their central contemplative exercise of “giving and taking” (*gtong len*). Considering how pervasive the mind training teachings became, and still remain, in the Tibetan Buddhist world, it might come as a surprise to learn that other sūtra sources in the Kangyur for the development of that specific aspiration—that the suffering and negative karma of sentient beings “ripen for me”—are practically nonexistent. In fact, it would appear that

this hitherto unnoticed dedication contains the only explicit articulation to be found in the Kangyur of the paradigmatic aspiration of mind training—the wish that the suffering of others instead “ripen for me.”

tr.

THE TRANSLATION

The Noble Dedication

Protecting All Beings

- 1.1 [F.79.b] [F.80.a] I prostrate to the Buddha, to the Teaching, and to the entire Assembly.
- 1.3 Blessed buddhas and all bodhisattva great beings, please pay heed to me!
- 1.4 I confess all sins.
I rejoice in all merits.
I pray to all buddhas.
I dedicate all merits so that all sentient beings attain the unsurpassed wisdom of omniscience.
- 1.5 Just as by their truth and true words the blessed buddhas who teach the truth have dedicated their perfect roots of virtue, in the same way do I, too, make this dedication. By that truth and those true words: whatever sins, nonvirtuous deeds, and evils that all sentient beings have committed; whatever falsehoods they have spoken and harmful thoughts they have had; whatever obscurations—afflictive obscurations, karmic obscurations, ripened obscurations, and cognitive obscurations—have obscured, veiled, and fettered them; that they have not correctly known their own and others' aspirations, latent dispositions, constituents, or intrinsic nature; that they have not correctly known their differences in faculties and diligence or in their virtues and nonvirtues; that they have not correctly known those qualities that are blameworthy, not blameworthy, to be relied upon, or not to be relied upon; that they have not succeeded in encountering holy beings, listening to the holy Dharma, directing their minds appropriately, or practicing in accordance with the Dharma; that they have not correctly known the various methods of taming by which beings

may be tamed however they are obscured, veiled, and fettered by obscurations: the taming of sentient beings, the taming of self, the taming of others, the taming of both, taming gently, [F.80.b] taming wrathfully, taming with equanimity, taming threateningly, taming by exorcism, taming with censure, taming by means of acts of service, veneration, and worship, taming by explaining the Dharma, taming by smiling, taming by going into seclusion to meditate, taming by means of the ascetic disciplines and having few possessions, taming through the practice of the perfections of generosity, ethical discipline, endurance, diligence, meditative absorption, and wisdom, and taming by faith, ethical discipline, learning, renunciation, wisdom, and meditative cultivation; that they have not given rise to the causes of ethical discipline; that they have not made pure the causes of meditative concentration, the causes of mental focus, the causes of meditative absorption, the causes of calm abiding, the causes of transcendent insight, the causes of the superknowledges, the causes of the exhaustion of defilements, or the causes of the discernments; that they have not actualized the meditative absorptions, the liberations, the meditative concentrations, and the meditative attainments, and that when appearances arise they have allowed what has arisen to decline; that they have given rise in their minds to the wish for gain, the wish to be honored, the wish for fame, and the wish for followers; that they have harbored in their minds thoughts of desire, malevolent thoughts, violent thoughts, thoughts about immortality, thoughts about children, thoughts about relatives, and thoughts about the requisites of clothing, food, bedding, and medicines for treating illness; that they have experienced short lives, much ill health, bad complexions, poor figures, weakness, low status, [F.81.a] meagre resources, stupidity, being reborn in the lower realms among the hell beings, in the animal realms, and in the realm of the Lord of the Dead, and that they have experienced many such kinds of suffering deriving from their bodies and mental unhappiness deriving from their minds; and that they have delighted in wrong aspirations and have not realized rightful aspirations—may everything that will ripen for sentient beings obscured and fettered by these and any other obscurations ripen for me! And may all sentient beings thus be liberated and purified.

- 1.6 Whatever extent the Buddha element may have, whatever extent the Dharma element may have, whatever extent the Saṅgha element may have, whatever extent the very limit of reality may have, whatever extent nonduality may have, whatever extent suchness may have, whatever extent sameness may have, whatever extent the elements of desire, anger, and ignorance may have, and whatever extent those who are bound and will be bound in saṃsāra may have

—to that very extent may all sentient beings’ primary afflictions, all their secondary afflictions, and whatever elements of affliction itself there may be, all ripen for me! And may all sentient beings thus be liberated and purified.

1.7 However many roots of virtue I have created and accumulated from cyclic existence’s undiscoverable beginning, I dedicate them to all sentient beings. Attached to desire, tormented by anger, confused by ignorance, and yoked to the primary afflictions, secondary afflictions, and affliction itself, I do not correctly know, see, or understand how to dedicate the roots of virtue. But the blessed buddhas do know, see, and understand such things, and just as they dedicated their roots of virtue, so too do I dedicate mine. [F.81.b] I dedicate them in accordance with the mind of the tathāgatas. Just as they tamed sentient beings; just as they ripened their roots of virtue; just as they multiplied their roots of virtue; and just as they knew suffering, abandoned its origin, realized cessation, cultivated the path, attained the unsurpassed wisdom of omniscience, abandoned all roots of nonvirtue, possessed all roots of virtue, vanquished the latent tendencies, and attained the state of non-forgetfulness and the knowledge of all aspects—in just the same way that all the buddhas appearing in the past, the present, and the future dedicated their roots of virtue when they were bodhisattvas, so too do I dedicate mine. I dedicate them through sameness; I dedicate them through nonduality; I dedicate them by means of the dedication that completely protects all beings; and thus I recite a second time, and thus a third time.

1.8 May sentient beings see me in whatever manner will tame them,⁶ without their having any such thoughts in mind. And may I always engage in physical, verbal, and mental actions in whatever ways sentient beings will be purified.

1.9 In whatever time, whatever place, and whatever way sentient beings will be tamed, may the sphere of reality be thus revealed to them without confusion!

The Noble Dedication “Protecting All Beings” is concluded.

c.

COLOPHON

c.1 Translated by the Indian abbot Vidyākaraprabha and the translator Bandé Yeshé Nyingpo, and edited and finalized by the senior editor-translator Bandé Paltsek.⁷

NOTES

n.

- 1 Most Kangyurs include one or more sections of dedication and aspiration texts, designated as such in the catalogs, and containing both extracts from longer texts and standalone works, all of them being canonical texts translated into Tibetan. In the Degé Kangyur, two such sections are found, one (Toh 809–827) at the end of the main Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*), and the other (Toh 1094–1108) at the end of the Compendium of Incantations (*gzungs 'dus*). It is in these sections that we would perhaps most expect to find these texts placed.
- 2 Pekar Sangpo (2006), pp. 383–90. In this regard, it is worth noting that Pekar Sangpo gives both texts titles that include the word “sūtra.”
- 3 To the extent that the two texts may constitute a pair with a common origin, there is a distinct possibility that this colophon is intended to apply to the preceding text, *The Dedication “Fulfilling All Aspirations”* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh285.html>) (Toh 285) as well.
- 4 The present text is found in the Denkarma catalog in the Various Prayers (*smon lam sna tshogs*) section under the title *'gro ba thams cad yongs su skyob par byed pa'i bsngo ba* and in the Phangthangma catalog in the One Hundred and Eight Names, Praises, Blessings, and Various Prayers (*mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad dang stod ra dang bkra shis dang smon lam sna tshogs*) section under the title *'gro ba thams cad yongs su skyob par byed pa zhes bya ba'i bsngo ba*; its length is said to be forty ślokas. See Denkarma, folio 304.a; Herrmann-Pfandt (2008), p. 268, no. 467; Phangthangma, p. 33.
- 5 It is located in the Various Sūtras (Mongolian *eldeb*, Tib. *mdo sna tshogs*) section. Mongolian Kangyur vol. 84, folios 92.b–94.b; cf. Ligeti (1942), p. 279.
- 6 See, for example, Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans., *The Jewel Cloud*, Toh 231 (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2019), 1.597 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh231.html#UT22084-064-001-736>).
- 7 See note 3.

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Affliction itself

kun nas nyon mongs pa

ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

sankleśa

A term referring to all the primary and secondary afflictive emotions that completely disturb the mind.

g.2 Anger

zhe sdang

ཞེ་སྟངས།

dveṣa

Hatred, aggression, and/or aversion. One of the affective behavior patterns known as the three poisons.

g.3 Aspiration

smon lam

སློན་ལམ།

praṇidhāna

A declaration of one's aspirations and vows, and/or an invocation and request of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, etc.

g.4 Bandé Paltsek

ban de dpal brtsegs

བན་དེ་དཔལ་བརྟེན།

The senior editor-translator who edited and finalized this text.

g.5 Bandé Yeshé Nyingpo

ban de ye shes snying po

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྟིང་པོ།

Translator of this text.

g.6 Blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavat · bhagavān

An epithet of a buddha.

- g.7 **Bodhisattva**
byang chub sems dpa'
 བྱང་ལྷན་སེམས་དཔལ།
bodhisattva
 Someone who vows to achieve the complete enlightenment of a buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings.
- g.8 **Bodhisattva great being**
byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po
 བྱང་ལྷན་སེམས་དཔལ་སེམས་དཔལ་ཆེན་པོ།
bodhisattva-mahāsattva
 Those “great beings” who have the intention to achieve the complete enlightenment of a buddha in order to liberate all sentient beings from cyclic existence. An epithet of a bodhisattva.
- g.9 **Calm abiding**
zhi gnas
 ཞི་གནས།
śamatha
 Sometimes also translated as “mental quiescence.” Refers to a calm state without thought, or the meditative practice of calming the mind to rest free from the disturbance of thought. One of the two basic forms of Buddhist meditation, the other being transcendent insight (*vipaśyanā, lhag mthong*).
- g.10 **Dedication**
bsngo ba · yongs su bsngo ba
 བསྐྱོ་བ། . ཡོངས་སུ་བསྐྱོ་བ།
pariṇāma · pariṇāmana
 Dedication of the merit at the end of a spiritual practice or virtuous action, usually for the attainment of full enlightenment by all sentient beings. In this way the actions thus dedicated contribute to the purpose of attaining enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.
- g.11 **Defilements**
zag pa
 ཟག་པ།
āsrava
 Literally “outflows,” these are mental defilements that “flow out” toward the objects of cyclic existence, binding us to them.
- g.12 **Desire**
'dod chags
 འདོད་ཆགས།
rāga · lobha
 Passion, attachment, and/or lust. One of the affective behavior patterns known as the three poisons.
- g.13 **Diligence**
brtson 'grus
 བརྩོན་འགྲུས།
vīrya
 Also “perseverance.” One of the six perfections of the bodhisattva.
- g.14 **Discernment**
so so yang dag par rig pa

སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ།

pratisaṃvid · pratisaṃvedanā

Correct and unhindered discriminating knowledge.

g.15 Element

kham

ཁམས།

dhātu

A word that can refer, in different formulations, to the fundamental constituents of material and/or mental phenomena, or to the realms of existence, it also has the general meaning of the nature of something.

g.16 Endurance

bzod pa

བཟོད་པ།

kṣānti

Forbearance, patience, and/or tolerance. One of the six perfections of the bodhisattva.

g.17 Ethical discipline

tshul khrims

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

śīla

Morally virtuous or disciplined conduct and the abandonment of morally undisciplined conduct of body, speech, and mind. One of the six perfections of the bodhisattva.

g.18 Generosity

sbyin pa

སྤྱིན་པ།

dāna

The practice of giving or making offerings to others. One of the six perfections of the bodhisattva.

g.19 Holy Dharma

dam pa'i chos

དམ་པའི་ཚོས།

saddharma

The Buddhadharma or the Buddha's teachings.

g.20 Ignorance

gti mug

གཏི་མུག

moha

Delusion, stupidity, closed-mindedness, and/or mental darkness. One of the affective behavior patterns known as the three poisons.

g.21 Intrinsic nature

rang bzhin

རང་བཞིན།

svabhāva

The inherent nature of a phenomenon; in the present text, this is possibly a reference to the buddha-nature, *tathāgatagarbha*.

g.22 Karmic obscuration

las kyi sgrib pa

ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱོབ་པ།

karmāvaraṇa

Obscurations or obstructions caused by past deeds.

g.23 Latent disposition

bag la nyal

བག་ལ་ཉལ།

anuśaya

Habitual impulses or subconscious habit patterns that underlie emotions such as desire and hatred.

These are also causes of the perpetuation of cyclic existence.

g.24 Latent tendencies

bag chags

བག་ཆགས།

vāsanā

Karmic traces or residues imprinted by past actions and constituting tendencies that predispose one to particular patterns of behavior.

g.25 Learning

thos pa

ཐོས་པ།

śruti · śruta

Hearing or listening to teachings, this refers to receiving oral instructions and studying scriptures.

g.26 Liberations

rnam par thar pa

རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ།

vimokṣa

In this context, this refers to a category of advanced meditative attainments.

g.27 Meditative absorption

bsam gtan

བསམ་གཏན།

dhyāna

One of the synonyms for meditation, referring specifically to states of mental stability or one-pointed abiding in an undistracted state of mind free from afflicted mental states. *bsam gtan / dhyāna* can refer to the specific states of absorption of the form and formless realms (eight in total). One of the six perfections of the bodhisattva.

g.28 Meditative attainment

snyoms par 'jug pa

སྟོབས་པར་འཇུག་པ།

samāpatti

Meditative equipoise or evenness of mind. Another synonym for meditation, this refers to a category of advanced meditative attainments.

g.29 Meditative concentration

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

samādhi

A general term for states of deep concentration. One of the synonyms for meditation, referring in particular to a state of complete concentration or focus.

g.30 Merit

bsod nams

བསོད་ནམས།

punya

Virtuous thoughts, words, and actions that produce positive results, or merit. In Mahāyāna practice, these are to be dedicated for the benefit of all sentient beings.

g.31 Nonvirtuous deed

mi dge ba

མི་དགེ་བ།

akuśala

There are ten nonvirtuous deeds, being the opposites of the ten virtuous deeds. The three physical misdeeds are killing, taking what is not given, and engaging in sexual misconduct. The four verbal misdeeds are lying, divisive talk, harsh speech, and gossiping. The three mental misdeeds are covetousness, ill will, and false views.

g.32 Obscuration

sgrib pa

སྒྲིབ་པ།

āvaraṇa · nivaraṇa

Defilements that obstruct liberation and omniscience. This term refers both to affective and cognitive obscurations.

g.33 Omniscience

thams cad mkhyen pa · thams cad mkhyen pa nyid

ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྲེན་པ། . ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྲེན་པ་ཉིད།

sarvajñatā

This refers to the gnosis or omniscience of the Buddha, the “All-Knowing” or “Omniscient” One.

g.34 Primary afflictions

nyon mongs pa

ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

kleśa

Afflictive emotions, such as the three poisons, that bind one to cyclic existence.

g.35 Realm of the Lord of the Dead

gshin rje'i 'jig rten

གཤིན་རྗེའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

yamaloka

The preta realm, or the realm of ghosts, where Yama, the Lord of Death, is the ruler and judges the dead. Yama is also said to rule over the hells. This term is also the name of the Vedic afterlife inhabited by the ancestors (*pitr*).

g.36 Sameness

mnyam pa nyid

མཉམ་པ་ཉིད།

samatā

(The state of) “equality,” “equal nature,” “equanimity,” or “equality.”

g.37 Secondary afflictions

nye ba'i nyon mongs pa

ཉེ་བའི་ཉོན་མོངས་ས།

upakleśa

Literally, “near-afflictions,” or subsidiary afflictive emotions derivative of or related to the primary afflictions.

g.38 Sentient being

sems can

སེམས་ཅན།

sattva

Any living being in one of the six realms.

g.39 Sphere of reality

chos kyi dbyings

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

dharmadhātu

A synonym for emptiness, the ultimate reality, or the ultimate nature of things. This term is interpreted variously due to the many different meanings of *dharma* (*chos*) as element, phenomena, reality, truth, and/or the teaching.

g.40 Suchness

de bzhin nyid

དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད།

tathatā

A synonym for emptiness, this term refers to the ultimate nature of things, the way things are in reality.

g.41 Superknowledges

mngon par shes pa

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་ས།

abhijñā

Traditionally there are six modes of supernormal cognition or ability, namely, clairvoyance, clairaudience, knowledge of the minds of others, remembrance of past lives, the ability to perform miracles, and the knowledge of the destruction of all mental defilements. The first five are considered mundane or worldly and can be attained to some extent by non-Buddhist yogis as well as Buddhist arhats and bodhisattvas. The sixth is considered to be supramundane and can be attained only by Buddhist yogis.

g.42 Tathāgata

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་ས།

tathāgata

“Thus-gone one,” an epithet of a buddha. A buddha is one who has “gone” to thusness, suchness, or ultimate reality.

g.43 Three poisons

dug gsum

དུག་གསུམ།

triviṣa

The three main affective behavior patterns, namely ignorance, desire, and anger.

Transcendent insight

- g.44 *lhag mthong*
ལྷག་མཐོང།
vipaśyanā
Often translated as “insight meditation,” referring to the liberating insight into the nature of reality or the meditative practice of developing insight into the nature of reality. One of the two basic forms of Buddhist meditation, the other being calm abiding (*śamatha*).
- g.45 **Very limit of reality**
yang dag pa'i mtha'
ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།
bhūtakoti
A synonym for ultimate reality, and also a near-synonym for nirvāṇa.
- g.46 **Vidyākaraprabha**
bidyA ka ra pra bha
བིདྲཱ་ཀ་ར་པ་བ།
Vidyākaraprabha
Indian abbot, a translator of this text.
- g.47 **Wisdom**
shes rab
ཤེས་རབ།
prajñā
Transcendent or discriminating awareness; the mind that sees the ultimate truth. One of the six perfections of the bodhisattva.