

TEACHING THE RELATIVE AND ULTIMATE TRUTHS

ཀུན་རྫོབ་དང་དོན་དམ་པའི་བདེན་པ་བསྟན་པ།

Teaching the Relative and Ultimate Truths

Samvṛtiparamārthasatyanirdeśa

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*'phags pa kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i bden pa bstan pa zhes bya ba
theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra, Teaching the Relative and Ultimate Truths

Āryasamvṛtiparamārthasatyanirdeśanāmamahāyānasūtra

Toh 179, Degé Kangyur, vol. 60 (mdo sde, ma), folios 244b–266b

Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee



version 1.2
Published by 84000 (2014)
www.84000.co



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Summary

In *Teaching the Relative and Ultimate Truths*, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is summoned by Buddha Śākyamuni from a faraway buddha realm to teach in a way that demolishes all dualistic experience. As Mañjuśrī begins to teach, the main message of the sūtra unfolds as an explanation of the two truths. The general theme of Mañjuśrī's discourse is centered on the particular circumstances in Ratnaketu's buddha realm, but the message is equally applicable to the experiences of beings here in this world.

Acknowledgments

Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the guidance of Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche. Miguel Sawaya and Andreas Doctor produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Catherine Dalton compared the draft translation with the original Tibetan and edited the text. The translators are grateful to Khenpo Trokpa Tulku, Lama Karma Oser, and Lama Tenzin Sangpo from Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery for their assistance in resolving several difficult passages.

Introduction

The sūtra on *Teaching the Relative and Ultimate Truths* is a scripture significant in the canon of the Great Vehicle, being concerned with one of the key themes of Buddhist philosophy, the two truths. These two principles are (1) the relative truth (understanding the world as it appears); and (2) the ultimate truth (understanding the world as it is). Since this bifurcation of reality is one of the frameworks underlying the entirety of Buddhist thought, the message of this sūtra is of importance for all Buddhist traditions, and for the Great Vehicle in particular.

Some readers may be surprised that most of the teaching delivered in this sūtra is spoken not by the Buddha himself, but by his disciple Mañjuśrī. However, as readers familiar with the Great Vehicle sūtras will have noticed, in this literature the Buddha often encourages his students to teach, and subsequently endorses their lectures as *bona fide* “words of the Buddha” (*buddhavacana*). In this way Mañjuśrī’s teaching becomes authentic scripture through the awakened activity of the Buddha himself. Still, before Mañjuśrī can deliver his eloquent teaching, he must first arrive in this world, as it turns out that he has temporarily taken up residence in a distant buddha realm, known as Jewel World.

The sūtra, which takes place on Vulture Peak Mountain—a hill just outside the ancient city of Rājagṛha, capital of what was then the state of Magadha—begins with a bodhisattva named “Lord of Peace and Calm” asking the Buddha where Mañjuśrī might be found. The Buddha announces that Mañjuśrī has moved to a buddha realm many thousands of world systems away. There, the Buddha explains, Mañjuśrī lives in the

assembly of another buddha, Ratnaketu. Lord of Peace and Calm politely requests the Buddha to send a signal to Mañjuśrī summoning him to this world, since Mañjuśrī is the only bodhisattva who is able to teach in a way that demolishes all dualistic experience or, as the text describes it, experience that involves “reference points.”

The Buddha obliges and immediately sends forth a light from the magical hair between his eyebrows. The light inspires Mañjuśrī to return to this world, this time joined on his travels by an enormous assembly of bodhisattvas from the buddha realm of Ratnaketu. They arrive and, accompanied by much pomp and festivity, they offer proper worship to Buddha Śākyamuni. Once they have settled here in this world, Mañjuśrī is asked to give the assembly a teaching just like the instructions offered by Buddha Ratnaketu in his far-off buddha realm.

As Mañjuśrī begins to teach, the main message of the sūtra unfolds in the form of an explanation of the two truths. The general theme of Mañjuśrī’s discourse is centered on the particular circumstances in Ratnaketu’s buddha realm, but the message is equally applicable to the experiences of beings here in this world.

There are two truths, Mañjuśrī teaches. There is the relative truth in which all types of experiences unfold—good and bad, virtuous and nonvirtuous, pleasant and painful, awakened and confused. This truth also includes all the spiritual trainings that take an ordinary being along the path to the state of awakening itself. And then there is the ultimate truth, in which it is realized that all the phenomena experienced on the relative level are, in their most fundamental state, in Mañjuśrī’s words, “unborn, unarisen, and unreal.” This is the truth that is experienced by awakened beings. Still, even though awakened beings perceive the unborn, unarisen, and unreal nature of all phenomena, they actively participate in the relative aspect of things. In relative terms, awakened beings carry out the trainings on the path, guide confused beings toward the liberated state, and perform a multitude of services to beings in general. Nevertheless, as Mañjuśrī teaches again and again in this sūtra, they train without training, they guide without guiding, and they serve without

serving. Through such paradoxical expressions, Mañjuśrī describes the experiences of those who have direct understanding of both the ultimate and relative truths.

The teaching unfolds organically as Mañjuśrī responds to a series of questions put by several of the bodhisattvas in Buddha Śākyamuni's retinue. Although the recurring theme of the teaching remains the nature of the two truths, Mañjuśrī covers a variety of topics specific to the questions asked. In this way he describes the qualities of both the hearers and bodhisattvas in Buddha Ratnaketu's circle and the moral trainings (*vinaya*) that they observe.

Interestingly, Mañjuśrī teaches that the very same acts that the hearers in the assembly avoid, the bodhisattvas adopt as their core training, although with a twist. For example, while the hearers seek to avoid miserliness at all cost, the bodhisattvas engage precisely in "miserliness," albeit with the understanding that it is the welfare of other beings that they refuse to relinquish, rather than any worldly mammon.

Toward the latter half of the sūtra, the teaching takes on a more personal character as the bodhisattvas interview Mañjuśrī concerning his own personal attainments and practice. In this way we find Mañjuśrī describing his own insights and spiritual prowess, although in somewhat cryptic language. Accordingly, when the bodhisattva Lord of Peace and Calm asks him whether he directly comprehends the unarisen nature of phenomena on the ultimate level, Mañjuśrī replies, "Divine son, the utterly unarisen does not comprehend the utterly unarisen. And why? Because, divine son, all phenomena are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal."

At the end of Mañjuśrī's teaching, the Buddha praises and approves what he has taught. Here, the Buddha is asked by several bodhisattvas to elaborate on some of the themes raised by Mañjuśrī. In general, throughout the sūtra, it is clear that the teachings and trainings of the bodhisattvas are considered preferable, superior, and far vaster in scope than those of the hearers. This is here confirmed by the Buddha, using a series of analogies that illustrate the superiority of the bodhisattva vehicle. For example, the conceptual wisdom of the hearers is

compared to a single drop of water, while the nonconceptual wisdom of the bodhisattvas is taught to be infinitely greater, like the great ocean. The superiority of the Great Vehicle is of course extolled in all Great Vehicle sūtras, but here it seems that particular attention is devoted to the subject. The reader is left in no doubt as to where the protagonists in this sūtra stand in terms of their devotional allegiance.

Toward the end of the sūtra, in a final display of his superior spiritual abilities, Mañjuśrī enters an absorption that allows him to alter the perceptions of everyone present, so that they now perceive this world as the buddha realm of Ratnaketu. Encouraged by the Buddha, Mañjuśrī reveals his magically created illusion to everyone, before departing for that distant buddha realm from whence he first arrived.

At the very end of the sūtra, we find the customary inquiry by Ānanda to the Buddha regarding the title of the sūtra, its benefits to potential devotees, and the right way to propagate it.

The translation was made based on the Degé block print, with reference to other recensions of the sūtra as listed in the CTRC *Comparative Edition of the Kangyur*. Unfortunately, it appears that no Sanskrit manuscript remains extant.¹

THE TRANSLATION

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

Teaching the Relative and Ultimate Truths

[B.1] Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus have I heard at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in Rājagṛha, on Vulture Peak Mountain, together with a large monastic saṅgha of 8,000 monks, 72,000 bodhisattvas, as well as the divine sons living in the desire and form realms. There, the Blessed One taught the Dharma, surrounded and honored by a retinue of many hundreds of thousands of beings.

Present in the assembled retinue was the divine son, Lord of Peace and Calm. He prostrated at the feet of the Blessed One and, bowing with joined palms in the direction of the Blessed One, asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, where is [F.245.a] Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta now? Blessed One, I myself and everyone here would like that sublime being to teach the Dharma.”

The Blessed One replied, “Divine son, if one travels east of this buddha realm and passes beyond 18,000 buddha realms, there is a buddha realm called Jewel World. There, the Thus-

Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Ratnaketu currently lives and teaches the Dharma. Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta is also there now.”

The divine son Lord of Peace and Calm said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, it would be wonderful if a sign were made such that Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta, upon seeing it, would want to return here. The reason is, Blessed One, that one does not hear Dharma teachings such as those of Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta from any of the hearers, solitary buddhas, or those bodhisattvas who rely on reference points. Except for the Thus-Gone One, no one else at all is capable of teaching the Dharma in that manner. Blessed One, when Mañjuśrī teaches the Dharma, all the dwellings of the demons lose their luster. Moreover, all demons become unable to inflict any harm. All opposition is utterly defeated. Those with reference points are left without reference. The sacred Dharma also remains for a long time. The Thus-Gone One will also rejoice in this and approve of it.”

The Blessed One knew that the divine son Lord of Peace and Calm would make this request, and sent out a beam of light from the *ūrṇa* hair on his brow. That ray of light illuminated the great trichiliocosm with its intense luminescence [F.245.b] and, passing through those 18,000 buddha realms, its intense radiance spread throughout the Jewel World, the buddha realm of the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Ratnaketu.

Witnessing this radiance, some bodhisattva great beings asked the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Ratnaketu who resided there, “Blessed One, there was such a bright light just now; who caused that sign?”

“Son of noble family,” replied the Blessed Ratnaketu, “to the west of this buddha realm, past 18,000 buddha realms, is the Sahā world. There, the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni currently lives and teaches the Dharma. The Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni sent out a beam of light from the *ūrṇa* hair on his brow, and the luminescence of that beam of light passed through 18,000 buddha realms and illuminated this world with its intense radiance.”

“Blessed One,” asked those bodhisattva great beings, “why did that blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha emit this beam of light?”

The Blessed Ratnaketu replied, “He did so in order to summon Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta. And why? To make him return there. In that buddha’s retinue there are numerous bodhisattva great beings as well as many gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, and so forth. They all want to behold Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta and [F.246.a] hear him teach the Dharma.”

The Thus-Gone Ratnaketu then said to Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta, “Mañjuśrī, since the Blessed, Thus-Gone Śākyamuni and all those in his retinue would like to see you, you should go to that Sahā world.”

“Yes, Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī. “I had also noticed that sign.”

So Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta, along with ten thousand bodhisattvas, bowed at the feet of the Thus-Gone Ratnaketu. They circumambulated the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Ratnaketu three times, and then instantaneously traveled to this Sahā world, arriving as quickly as it takes a strong person to extend and retract his arm. Remaining in midair with their bodies invisible, they sent down a great shower of fragrant, colorful, and delightful flowers, such as had never been seen or heard of before, in order to honor the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni. This great shower of flowers filled the whole great trichiliocosm to knee height.

Seeing these flowers, everyone assembled there was amazed and asked, “Blessed One, who caused this great shower of blossoms, so pleasant to behold, to fall?”

The Blessed One replied, “Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta, accompanied by ten thousand bodhisattvas, has come from the Jewel World to this Sahā world. With their bodies invisible, [F.246.b] they all sent down this great shower of flowers to honor the Thus-Gone One.”

Those in the retinue said, “Blessed One, we would like to see Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta and those bodhisattva great beings.”

At that point, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta and the ten thousand bodhisattvas descended from the sky. Having prostrated at the

Blessed One's feet, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta and the bodhisattva great beings each sat down on their own miraculously emanated seat.

Then the divine son Lord of Peace and Calm bowed to the Blessed One and said, with joined palms, "Blessed One, all of us would like to listen, so please ask Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta to teach."

The Blessed One replied, "Divine son, you yourself should make that request."

So the divine son said, "Mañjuśrī, it would be wonderful if you could give us a Dharma teaching similar to what is taught in the buddha realm of the blessed one, the Thus-Gone Ratnaketu."

Mañjuśrī replied, "Ultimately, the Dharma is not about generating attachment; nor is it about bringing attachment to an end. Ultimately, it is not about generating anger; nor is it about bringing anger to an end. Ultimately, it is not about generating delusion; nor is it about bringing delusion to an end. Ultimately, it is not about generating wisdom; nor is it about bringing wisdom to an end."

The divine son said, "Mañjuśrī, how is that?"

Mañjuśrī replied, "Divine son, in the unborn, there is no birth or ending whatsoever. Ultimately, divine son, the bodhisattva [F.247.a] great beings have no thoughts at all, none that have arisen, none that are arising, and none that will arise. And why is that? Because ultimately all phenomena are inherently unborn."

The divine son asked, "Mañjuśrī, what does the Thus-Gone One wish to see abandoned through his teaching the Dharma?"

Mañjuśrī said, "That Thus-Gone One teaches the Dharma because ultimately things are neither inherently born, nor do they inherently end. And why? Because bodhisattva great beings apply themselves assiduously to the ultimate truth. However, they do not apply themselves diligently to the relative truth."

The divine son said, "Mañjuśrī, what is the ultimate truth?"

Mañjuśrī said, "Divine son, if, on the ultimate level, ultimate truth becomes an object of body, speech, or mind, that is not 'ultimate truth' but relative truth itself. Rather, divine son, on

the ultimate level, ultimate truth transcends all conventions. It is without specific instances; it does not arise, does not cease, and is free from something to be expressed, an expression, something to be known, and knowledge. Divine son, the ultimate truth transcends everything up through the domain of omniscient wisdom that is endowed with the supreme of all aspects. Divine son, it has no engagement with, nor any turning back of, concepts and thoughts. Ultimately, there is no ‘far shore,’ there is no ‘this shore,’ nor is there a middle. Divine son, although one indeed makes the exaggerated claim, ‘This is ultimate truth,’ that is not the same as saying ‘Ultimate truth is like this.’ Divine son, ultimately, reality is unborn; thus, no conventions apply to it. That to which, on the ultimate level, no conventions apply, divine son, is ultimate truth. Thus, that is not like saying, ‘Ultimate truth is like this.’ [F.247.b] Divine son, the Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha also says that ultimately all phenomena and all terms are false and deceptive phenomena.”

The divine son said, “How is it then, Mañjuśrī, that the Dharma taught by the Thus-Gone One is not false?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, on the ultimate level, the Thus-Gone One does not speak falsely. Nor does he speak truly. And why is that? Ultimately, divine son, the Thus-Gone One has not arisen. And so, ultimately he speaks neither falsely nor truly. Divine son, what do you think? Are explanations given by magical creations of the Thus-Gone One true or false?”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, explanations given by magical creations of the Thus-Gone One are not true, nor are they false. Why is that? Mañjuśrī, ultimately there is nothing truly established in that which is emanated by the Thus-Gone One.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, so it is. The Thus-Gone One knows that all phenomena are unestablished in the ultimate sense. Whatever is unestablished in the ultimate sense should not be called *true* nor should it be called *false* in the context of the ultimate. Why is that? Because ultimately all phenomena are unborn.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how does the Thus-Gone One teach the ultimate truth?”

Mañjuśrī said, “The ultimate truth, divine son, cannot be taught. And why? Because the topic, the teacher, the method of teaching, the student, and the reason for teaching are all ultimately utterly unborn. Phenomena that are utterly unborn cannot themselves express utterly unborn phenomena.”

When Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta had given this teaching on the ultimate truth without teaching, the minds of five hundred monks were freed from defilements without further clinging. [F.248.a] Countless bodhisattva great beings developed, without developing it, the acceptance that phenomena are unborn.

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, it is difficult to feel conviction in the ultimate truth.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, it is difficult for anyone who relies on reference points to feel conviction in the ultimate truth.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, it is difficult to understand the ultimate truth.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, it is difficult for those who do not exert themselves to understand the ultimate truth.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how do monks exert themselves?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, ultimately, when they are without exertion that aims to understand, relinquish, cultivate, or actualize, that is how monks exert themselves without exerting themselves. And why? Because one might think, ‘Ultimately, this is to be understood, this is to be relinquished, this is to be cultivated, and this is to be actualized.’ However, such thinking involves conceptual marks and elaborations. It involves reference points and disturbing emotions. It involves tumult and fear. It involves illness and suffering. It involves pain and poison. Thus, engagement of that type is not authentic.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what is authentic engagement?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, whatever is the same as suchness, the sphere of reality, and the utterly unborn on the ultimate level

is also the same as the five acts with immediate consequence on the ultimate level.

“Whatever is the same as suchness, the sphere of reality, and the utterly unborn on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as views. [F.248.b]

“Whatever is the same as suchness, the sphere of reality, and the utterly unborn on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as the dharmas of ordinary beings.

“Whatever is the same as suchness, the sphere of reality, and the utterly unborn on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as the dharmas of those who are training.

“Whatever is the same as suchness, the sphere of reality, and the utterly unborn on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as the dharmas of those who are no longer training.

“Whatever is the same as suchness, the sphere of reality, and the utterly unborn on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as the dharmas of the completely perfect Buddha.

“Whatever is the same as the dharmas of the completely perfect Buddha on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as suchness, the sphere of reality, and the utterly unborn.

“Whatever is the same as the dharmas of the completely perfect Buddha on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as nirvāṇa.

“Whatever is the same as nirvāṇa on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as saṃsāra.

“Whatever is the same as saṃsāra on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as affliction.

“Whatever is the same as affliction on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as purification.

“Whatever is the same as purification on the ultimate level is also ultimately the same as all phenomena.

“A monk who genuinely engages in the equality of all phenomena on the ultimate level in this way, divine son, is called one with *authentic engagement* on the ultimate level. However, it is not like the way it is expressed.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what is the sameness by which everything up to purification is said to be ultimately the same, and also to be ultimately the same as all phenomena?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Ultimately, all phenomena are the same in that they are unarisen. [F.249.a] Ultimately, all phenomena are the same in that they are unborn. Ultimately, all phenomena are the same in that they are unreal. Therefore, divine son, ultimately all phenomena are the same. And why is that? Since ultimately, divine son, all phenomena are unarisen, they cannot be distinguished.

“Divine son, it is like this analogy. The space within a clay vessel and the space within a precious vessel are both the element of space; ultimately, not the slightest distinction can be made between them. Divine son, in the very same way, disturbing emotions are themselves unarisen on the ultimate level. Purification itself is also unoriginated on the ultimate level. Ultimately, saṃsāra itself is also unarisen. Ultimately, all phenomena up through nirvāṇa itself are unarisen. Ultimately, not even a slight distinction can be made with respect to these. And why? Because ultimately all phenomena are unarisen.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how should bodhisattva great beings exert themselves with respect to the truths of the noble ones?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, if bodhisattva great beings did not apply themselves to the truths of the noble ones, how could they teach, without teaching, the Dharma to the hearers? Yet, divine son, although indeed that is the case, the bodhisattva great beings’ meditation on the truths involves consideration, while the hearers’ meditation on the truths does not involve consideration. Why is that? Divine son, on the relative level the bodhisattva great beings consider all sentient beings. Although they do meditate on the truths without meditating, they do not actualize the limit of reality by focusing on lack of substance. On the relative level, in order to acquire skill in means, the bodhisattva great beings [F.249.b] meditate on the truths without meditating. On the relative level they do not discard the truths of saṃsāra, nor of nirvāṇa. On the relative level, in order to

individually discriminate the wisdoms of the buddhas, the bodhisattva great beings meditate on the truths without meditating.

“Divine son, it is as in the following analogy. A person who had been caught by many strangers² flees. He escapes from among those many strangers and enters a jungle. But he becomes frightened, panics, and leaves the jungle, never to return. Divine son, in the same way the hearers are frightened of saṃsāra and flee in panic. They do not return to this world but meditate one-pointedly on the truths in solitude. Thus, since they lack the intelligence of various methods, they do not consider all sentient beings, and so forth up to not considering the wisdom of omniscience.

“Divine son, it is like the following analogy. A leader acquires many servants and all necessary provisions. Thinking that he should set out to gather many goods, he rounds up many people and, without fear or panic, he leaves the wild forest. Similarly, divine son, the bodhisattva great beings resemble that great leader as they engage in worldly conduct on the relative level. Thereby, they provide for all sentient beings and engage with great compassion, which can be likened to the many servants. They acquire all the roots of virtue, which are the provisions. They possess the great profit that is comprised of the six perfections, the means of attracting disciples, and unsurpassed merit and wisdom. They act for the welfare of all realms of sentient beings and proceed from buddha realm to buddha realm. Thus, they provide for sentient beings and meditate on the truths through being skilled in means.

“Divine son, consider this analogy. If one were to infuse a hempen cloth with the *campaka* and *vārṣika* flowers, their scent would fade quickly. [F.250.a] Divine son, similarly, the hearers’ meditation on the truths is observed for just a short period of time. Passing quickly into nirvāṇa, they do not bring forth the fragrance of the buddhas’ discipline, hearing, absorption, knowledge, and wisdom. Furthermore, they are unable to relinquish the disturbing emotions that are conjoined with the habitual tendencies.

“Divine son, consider this analogy. If one were to infuse a cloth of precious Benares silk with the perfume of men and of gods and the scent of flowers for hundreds of thousands of great aeons, its divine fragrance would be experienced in perpetuity, and that pure aroma would overwhelm both gods and men. Divine son, similarly, the bodhisattva great beings without meditating meditate on the truths for incalculably many hundreds of thousands of eons. They do not relinquish doing so until they have attained omniscient wisdom endowed with the supreme of all aspects and pass into complete nirvāṇa. And so, without reference points, they become exceedingly fragrant with the scent of omniscient wisdom endowed with the supreme of all aspects. In terms of worldly conventions, they abandon all habitual tendencies of the disturbing emotions and attract the worlds of gods, men, and demigods.”

Then the divine son Lord of Peace and Calm asked Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta, “Mañjuśrī, how is the spiritual community of hearers that belong to the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Ratnaketu?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Ultimately, they are not devoted followers, but they are also not devotedly turning to someone else. Ultimately, they are not followers of the family, but neither do they ultimately abandon the family of the Thus-Gone One. Ultimately, they are not following the Dharma; indeed, ultimately they do not observe any Dharma at all. Ultimately, they do not possess the eight mistaken dharmas, but neither are they relatively free from them. [F.250.b]

“Ultimately they are not stream-enterers, yet in terms of the conventional truth of the world, they are beyond all the lower realms. Ultimately they are not once-returners, yet relatively they do return in order to ripen beings. Ultimately they are not non-returners, yet relatively from all phenomena there is no return. Ultimately they are not worthy ones, yet according to worldly conventions they are supremely worthy of veneration by the world along with its gods. Ultimately they are not hearers, yet, without conceptually apprehending them, they do listen to all the blessed buddhas.

“Ultimately they are not without attachment, yet relatively they are unharmed by the torments of attachment. Ultimately they are not without anger, yet relatively they are unharmed by the torments of anger. Ultimately they are not without delusion, yet relatively all phenomena are free from darkness. Ultimately they are not without disturbing emotions, yet relatively they endeavor to tame the disturbing emotions of all beings. Ultimately they have abided definitively in non-origination from the very beginning, yet relatively they consciously take up existence. Relatively they embrace cyclic existence, yet ultimately there is no grasping to or abandoning of any phenomenon.

“Ultimately, without intense mindfulness regarding all phenomena, they see without seeing. Relatively, however, they train in the foundations of mindfulness. Ultimately, without knowing, they know that all phenomena are unborn and unceasing. In terms of worldly experience, however, they train in the thorough relinquishments. Ultimately, they have neither body nor mind yet, in the relative truth of the world, they have accomplished the bases of miraculous power. [F.251.a] Ultimately they are without any faculties, yet relatively they have accomplished all the faculties. Ultimately, without seeing, they see that all phenomena are unreal. However, in order to eradicate the conceit and conceptual apprehension of everyone who is conceited and engages in conceptual apprehension, they train, without training, in the powers. Ultimately, in order to make it understood that all phenomena are unreal, they train, without training, in the branches of awakening. Although ultimately utterly unreal, relatively they train in the path by means of not training. Ultimately, they accomplish tranquillity within the limit of reality. Ultimately, by not training, they see insight to be utterly unarisen. Ultimately, their knowledge is born through not apprehending ignorance as something to be exhausted. Ultimately, neither exhaustion nor arising is observed.

“Although they see all beings and all buddha realms with their physical eye, ultimately they see nothing whatsoever. Although they see all the deaths, transmigrations, and rebirths of all beings

so clearly with their divine eye, ultimately they see nothing whatsoever. Although they know all the experiences and movements of the minds of all beings with their eye of wisdom, ultimately they know nothing whatsoever. Although they see all dharmas with their dharma eye, ultimately they see nothing whatsoever. Although they perform all the acts of a buddha with their buddha eye, ultimately they perform nothing whatsoever. Although with their divine ear they hear the teachings of all the blessed buddhas, ultimately they hear nothing whatsoever. Although with their single mind they view the minds of all beings, ultimately they view nothing whatsoever. Although with their wisdom of recollection they surely recollect the very dawn of time, ultimately they recollect nothing whatsoever. Although they visit the inconceivable buddha realms by means of their miraculous powers, ultimately there is no coming or going. Although their defilements are exhausted, [F.251.b] ultimately there is nothing to be exhausted.

“Although they appear as beings, ultimately their bodies are devoid of true existence. Although they speak, ultimately their speech is not pronounced in the form of syllables. Although they think, ultimately thought is not something that can be expressed as mind or mental phenomena. Ultimately they do not appear as form, but relatively they are adorned with the thirty-two marks and ornamented with the excellent signs of great beings. They are adorned with the accumulations of merit and wisdom. Their splendor is dazzling. Their speech resounds. They have been anointed with the unguent of discipline. Words spoken with ill intent cause them no disturbing emotions. They sport in clairvoyant powers. Their learning sets them free.³ With their eloquence they make declarations.

“Relatively, they produce emanations by means of wisdom; with the light of wisdom they dispel all darkness; with knowledge they illuminate; their teaching knows no limit, and is assimilated as realization. Relatively, for all beings they are the refuge, and beings, who are continuously beheld by the blessed buddhas—but who are not considered by the hearers, solitary buddhas, and the extremists with reference points—they constantly consider because of their awakening; and so, relative-

ly, their teaching knows no exhaustion, their mindfulness is like the ocean, their absorption is comparable to the central mountain, and their patience is like the earth.

“Relatively, they are courageous when it comes to clearing away all thoughts; they shine like the sun to dispel the deep darkness of ignorance; they shine like the moon in order to illuminate the world. Relatively, they are like a ruler in order to attract others. Relatively, they are like Brahmā in order to master the mind. Relatively, they are incomparable in order to master space. Relatively they have followed, but ultimately there is no one who goes, comes, or remains. Why is that? Because ultimately all phenomena are utterly unarisen.

“Divine son, such is the spiritual community of hearers belonging to the blessed one, the thus-gone one, [F.252.a] the worthy one, the perfect and complete buddha Ratnaketu. Moreover, the dharma that they possess is even more inconceivable than that.”

When Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta delivered this teaching in a manner beyond reference point, five hundred monks, five hundred laypeople, and five thousand divine sons who held reference points all made this supplication: “Blessed One, may we also become hearers belonging to the blessed one, the thus-gone one, the worthy one, the perfect and complete buddha Ratnaketu.”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Well, my friends, in that buddha realm no one with reference points is born! My friends, only bodhisattva great beings who are free from reference points are born there without being born. My friends, if you aspire to that realm, you must strive in the perfection of knowledge in a manner free from reference points. My friends, when you strive in the perfection of knowledge in a manner that is free from reference points, then, my friends, it will not be difficult to discover omniscient wisdom that is endowed with the supreme of all aspects. So what need is there to mention that you will also be born in the pure buddha realms!”

The divine son Lord of Peace and Calm then asked Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta, “Mañjuśrī, what is the vinaya of the hearers like? And how is the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine son, the vinaya that is well known in the three worlds is the vinaya of the hearers. However, on the relative level, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings gathers all accumulations of roots of virtue, comforts all beings, and tames them by taking birth in the three realms.

“The vinaya of the hearers opposes all disturbing emotions. [F.252.b] However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings goes further in order to eliminate the disturbing emotions of all beings.

“The vinaya of the hearers is aware of just one place. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings is aware of all the limitless and boundless worlds in the ten directions.

“The vinaya of the hearers maintains equanimity with regard to all demons. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings disturbs all classes of demons in all the limitless and boundless worlds in the ten directions, and conquers all hostile forces.

“The vinaya of the hearers clarifies one’s own mind stream. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings clarifies the mind streams of all beings, causes the wisdom of omniscience to manifest, and causes the vision of stainless wisdom with regard to all phenomena to manifest.

“The vinaya of the hearers is contemplated by individual minds. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings is the intent of all the buddhas in the past, the present, and the future.

“The vinaya of the hearers is like a stone that cannot be repaired when broken. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings is like gold and silver, which can be mended when broken.

“The vinaya of the hearers does not contain all the teachings of the Buddha, and it also lacks skillful means. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings has great skillful means and comprises all the teachings of the Buddha.

“The vinaya of the hearers does not embody the ten powers, the various types of fearlessness, the unique qualities, or omniscient wisdom. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings contains the ten powers, the various types of fearlessness, the unique qualities, or omniscient wisdom. [F.253.a]

“The vinaya of the hearers is like escaping from being burned by a fire. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings is to be delighted by the joy of Dharma, just as one would enjoy a park or a palace.

“The vinaya of the hearers does not interrupt the stream of habitual patterns. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings overcomes all habitual patterns.

“Divine son, in short, the vinaya of the hearers is derived from a Dharma that is limited and confined. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings follows a Dharma that is limitless and beyond measure.

“The vinaya of the hearers brings the attainment of limited discipline, learning, absorption, knowledge, liberation, and vision of the wisdom of liberation. However, relatively, the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings knows no bounds, possesses limitless qualities, and makes one attain limitless discipline, learning, absorption, knowledge, liberation, and vision of the wisdom of liberation.”

At this point, the Blessed One expressed his approval of Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta: “Well said, Mañjuśrī! You have explained the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings well on the relative level. Well done, well done. Now, Mañjuśrī, in order to illustrate the meaning of this, I will give you some examples. Mañjuśrī, imagine two men: one of them praises the hoofprints of an ox, while the other man praises the ocean. Mañjuśrī, what do you think? How extensively would the first man be able to praise the hoofprints of an ox?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Blessed One, since all ox hoofprints are so small, what is even the use of praising them?”

The Blessed One said, “Just as the ox hoofprints [F.253.b] are small, so you should view the vinaya of the hearers. Now,

Mañjuśrī, what do you think? Would the other man be able to express a fitting praise of the ocean?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Blessed One, the praises of the ocean could be incredibly numerous, limitless, and inconceivable.”

The Blessed One said, “Mañjuśrī, just as the praises of the ocean are boundless, so you should view the vinaya of the bodhisattvas on the relative level.”

As he delivered this teaching without teaching, 12,000 divine sons, without ultimately forming anything, formed the wish for unexcelled and completely perfect awakening. They all declared, “Blessed One, without training, we will practice the trainings of the bodhisattvas.”

The divine son Lord of Peace and Calm asked Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta, “Mañjuśrī, do you train in the vinaya of the hearers or in the vinaya of the bodhisattvas?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Divine son, what do you think? Is there any water that cannot be contained in the ocean?”

The divine son replied, “No, Mañjuśrī, there is no water anywhere that cannot be contained in the ocean.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, in the same way the vinaya of the bodhisattva great beings is like the ocean.”

The divine son asked, “Mañjuśrī, that word *vinaya*, what does that mean?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Divine son, on the relative level vinaya refers to taming the disturbing emotions. *Vinaya* also means understanding disturbing emotions.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how does one tame the disturbing emotions? How does one understand disturbing emotions?” [F.254.a]

Mañjuśrī said, “Ultimately, all phenomena are unborn, unarisen, and unreal. Yet this absence is misunderstood on the relative level. Misunderstanding this absence produces concepts and thoughts. Out of concept and thought appears mistaken conceptual activity. Mistaken conceptual activity then gives rise to the superimposition of a self. From the superimposition of a self comes the manifestation of views. Based on the manifestation of views, disturbing emotions appear.

“Divine son, whoever knows, without knowing, that ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal, is unmistaken in terms of the ultimate. Whoever is unmistaken in terms of the ultimate does not form concepts or thoughts. Whoever does not form concepts or thoughts is applying himself correctly. Whoever applies himself correctly does not ultimately form superimpositions of a self. When superimpositions of a self do not ultimately arise, manifest views also do not arise, and ultimately even the views related to passing beyond suffering do not arise. In that way one comes to experience the unborn, and pacifies disturbing emotions in a manner free from views. Divine son, this is what is meant by taming disturbing emotions.

“Divine son, disturbing emotions are ultimately utterly empty, utterly signless and utterly wishless due to the insight and wisdom to which no disturbing emotions ever appear. When one has the insight that ultimately they are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal, then, divine son, one knows disturbing emotions in a manner free from knowing.

“Divine son, consider this analogy. If you chant an incantation against a viper’s venom, it is possible to neutralize the snake’s poison. Divine son, in the same way, whoever understands the types of disturbing emotions [F.254.b] will neutralize his disturbing emotions in a manner that is beyond reference point.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what are the types of disturbing emotions?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal. Any conceptualization of that state is a form of disturbing emotion. Ultimately, there are no conceptualizations, so therefore there are also no disturbing emotions whatsoever. Divine son, because there are no disturbing emotions, there is no all-ground.⁴ Because there is no all-ground, there is ultimately no abiding. Because there is no abiding, there is ultimately no scorching. Because there is ultimately no scorching, there is said to be peace. On the ultimate level, things are not as they are expressed in words. Still, divine son, relatively this is how disturbing emotions are tamed.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how are disturbing emotions tamed? Are they something? Or nothing?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, this is how it is. Imagine a man who has a nightmare in which he is bitten by a venomous viper. Although he is suffering, he is treated with an antidote and recovers. As the poison is neutralized, his pain disappears. Divine son, what do you think? Was this man actually bitten or not?”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, ultimately it did not truly happen.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, how was the poison neutralized?”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, just as the bite was not truly real, the neutralization of the poison was also not truly real.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, in the same way the noble ones view, without viewing, all disturbing emotions on the ultimate level. Divine son, you ask how disturbing emotions are tamed. Well, divine son, just as the ego ultimately is egoless, so, divine son, disturbing emotions are not ultimately disturbing emotions. Divine son, ultimately this self is suchness. Therefore, divine son, disturbing emotions also ultimately become suchness. Divine son, in this way, the self is not ultimately the self. [F.255.a] Therefore, divine son, disturbing emotions are also not ultimately disturbing emotions. Divine son, whoever focuses on taming disturbing emotions on the ultimate level is not ultimately focusing on anything. Why? Divine son, because on the ultimate level nothing manifests, and therefore all phenomena are pacified. Divine son, on the ultimate level, there is no grasping, and therefore all phenomena are fully pacified. Divine son, on the ultimate level, all phenomena are free from superimposition, and therefore all phenomena are completely pacified. Divine son, on the ultimate level, all phenomena are utterly unborn, and therefore they are also beyond ceasing. Divine son, the ultimate level is utterly unreal and therefore all phenomena are utterly unborn.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what is the gateway to all dharmas?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, the relative truth, which employs all forms of statements, speech, cognition, objects of cognition, activities, conventions, and acts, is a gateway to all dharmas. The ultimate truth, which is so because it is the opposite of all forms of speech, statements, cognition, objects of cognition, activities, conventions, and acts, is a gateway to all dharmas.

“Moreover, divine son, on the relative level, the incorrect conceptual workings of the mind are a gateway to saṃsāra. On the relative level, the correct conceptual workings of the mind are a gateway to nirvāṇa.

“On the relative level, doubt is a gateway to obscurations. On the relative level, liberation is a gateway to the absence of obscurations.

“On the relative level, conceptuality is a gateway to disturbing emotions. On the relative level, non-conceptuality is a gateway to the absence of disturbing emotions.

“On the relative level, distraction is a gateway to thought. On the relative level, tranquility is a gateway to peace.

“On the relative level, holding views is a gateway to pride. On the relative level, emptiness is a gateway to the absence of pride.

“On the relative level, relying on evil company is a gateway to all roots of non-virtue. On the relative level, relying on a virtuous spiritual friend is the gateway to all roots of virtue.

“On the relative level, wrong view is a gateway to all suffering. [F.255.b] On the relative level, correct view is a gateway to all happiness.

“On the relative level, miserliness is a gateway to poverty. On the relative level, generosity is a gateway to great wealth.

“On the relative level, a bad character is a gateway to all lower realms. On the relative level, discipline is a gateway to all human and divine births.

“On the relative level, ill will is a gateway to an ugly appearance. On the relative level, patience is a gateway to a beautiful appearance.

“On the relative level, laziness is a gateway to a lack of realization. On the relative level, diligence is a gateway to realization.

“On the relative level, thought is a gateway to agitation. On the relative level, concentration is a gateway to pliability of mind.

“On the relative level, faulty knowledge is a gateway to a lack of understanding. On the relative level, knowledge is a gateway to the thirty-seven branches of awakening.

“On the relative level, love is a gateway to not becoming angry. On the relative level, great compassion is a gateway to an altruistic mind. On the relative level, an altruistic mind is a gateway to the absence of deceit. On the relative level, joy is a gateway to conviction in the Dharma. On the relative level, equanimity is a gateway to being free from all faults.

“On the relative level, the applications of mindfulness are a gateway to not letting any roots of virtue diminish. On the relative level, the thorough relinquishments are a gateway to genuine perseverance. On the relative level, the bases of miraculous power are a gateway to pliancy of body and mind. On the relative level, the faculties are a gateway to attaining faith. On the relative level, the powers are a gateway to conquering all disturbing emotions. On the relative level, the branches of awakening are a gateway to realizing omniscience. On the relative level, the eightfold path of the noble ones is a gateway to transcending all unwholesome paths.

“Moreover, divine son, on the relative level, the mind of awakening is a gateway to all buddha qualities. On the relative level, upholding the sacred Dharma is a gateway to becoming a lord of all dharmas. On the relative level, ripening beings is a gateway to upholding the sacred Dharma. On the relative level, method is a gateway to becoming learned regarding the correct and the incorrect. [F.256.a] On the relative level, the perfection of knowledge is a gateway to nirvāṇa.

“On the ultimate level, the unarisen is a gateway to all dharmas.” [B2]

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what is the gateway to the utterly unborn?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, on the ultimate level, the utterly unarisen is a gateway in every way.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what is the nature of the utterly unarisen?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, on the ultimate level, the utterly unreal is the nature of the utterly unarisen.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, does the utterly unarisen have any divisions?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, what do you think? Does the sky have any divisions?”

The divine son answered, “No, Mañjuśrī, it does not.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, in the same way, just as the sky does not have any divisions, so, divine son, does the utterly unborn also not have any divisions.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, do you comprehend the utterly unarisen on the ultimate level?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, the utterly unarisen does not comprehend the utterly unarisen. And why? Because, divine son, all phenomena are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal.”

The divine son asked, “Mañjuśrī, are you this eloquent because you know and understand any phenomenon whatsoever?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, what do you think? Does an echo make a sound because it knows phenomena?”

The divine son replied, “Mañjuśrī, of course an echo does not know any phenomena. Instead, on the relative level, the sound appears from circumstances.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, in the same way, based on the circumstance of observing all beings, on the relative level a bodhisattva [F.256.b] great being speaks without speaking.”

The divine son asked, “Mañjuśrī, on what basis do you teach?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, on what type of emanation does the Thus-Gone One base himself as he teaches?”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, the Thus-Gone One does not ultimately base himself on any emanation whatsoever.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, in the same way, on the ultimate level, without basing myself on any phenomena, I teach without teaching.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, if, on the ultimate level, without basing yourself on any phenomena, you teach without teaching, on what basis do you awaken to unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, I base myself on the acts with immediate consequence and, without awakening to completely perfect buddhahood, I awaken to unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood.”

The divine son said, “How do you base yourself on the acts with immediate consequence?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, ultimately the acts with immediate consequence do not truly exist and do not have any substance. It is on them that I base myself without basing myself.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, the Thus-Gone One has explained that beings are born in hell because of committing the acts with immediate consequence.”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, the Thus-Gone One has explained that beings are born in hell because of committing the acts with immediate consequence. In the same way, divine son, the Thus-Gone One teaches, without teaching, how to quickly awaken to unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood when basing oneself on the acts with immediate consequence, without basing oneself on the acts with immediate consequence.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what are the acts with immediate consequence?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, the acts with immediate consequence are those by which the bodhisattva great beings quickly, without awakening to unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood, perfectly awaken. Such are the acts with immediate consequence of the bodhisattva great beings.
[F.257.a]

“Divine son, you may wonder what the five acts with immediate consequence are. Well, divine son, the first act with immediate consequence of the bodhisattva great beings is as

follows. When a bodhisattva great being with pure motivation, without developing, has developed the mind set on unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood, he does not develop the mind-set that aims for the levels of the hearers, solitary buddhas, anyone with reference point, or the extremists.

“Moreover, divine son, the second act with immediate consequence of the bodhisattva great beings is as follows. Divine son, when a bodhisattva great being, without producing, has produced the mind set on giving up all possessions, he will not entertain any feelings of miserliness until he reaches the essence of enlightenment.

“Moreover, divine son, the third act with immediate consequence of the bodhisattva great beings is as follows. Divine son, when a bodhisattva great being, without producing, has produced the mind-set that thinks, ‘I will protect all beings in any possible way,’ he will not yield from that.

“Moreover, divine son, the fourth act with immediate consequence of the bodhisattva great beings is as follows. Divine son, when a bodhisattva great being, without attaining forbearance, has attained the forbearance that understands that ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal, he will not engender any clinging to substance, essence, or actuality.

“Moreover, divine son, the fifth act with immediate consequence of the bodhisattva great beings is as follows. Divine son, when a bodhisattva great being, without engendering, has engendered the mind-set that thinks, ‘I will fully understand all phenomena by means of momentary knowledge,’ he will not rest under any circumstances until he has obtained, without obtaining, the wisdom of omniscience that is endowed with all supreme features.

“By abiding in this way, without abiding, the bodhisattva great being quickly and perfectly awakens, without ultimately awakening, to unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood.”
[F.257.b]

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, those acts of immediate consequence that cause ordinary childish beings to be born in hell are the very acts that cause a bodhisattva great being to

awaken to unexcelled and completely perfect buddhahood without perfectly awakening. Is that correct?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Yes, divine son, it is. And why? Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utter emptiness. Divine son, understanding this utter emptiness is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utter signlessness. Divine son, understanding this utter signlessness is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utter wishlessness. Divine son, understanding this utter wishlessness is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena do not exist as something that can be apprehended whatsoever. Divine son, understanding this state of being beyond something to apprehend whatsoever is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utterly beyond formation. Divine son, understanding this state where phenomena are utterly beyond formation is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utterly unconditioned. Divine son, understanding this utterly unconditioned state is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utterly unseen. Divine son, understanding this state of being utterly unseen is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn. [F.258.a] Divine son, understanding this utterly unborn state is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utterly unarisen. Divine son, understanding this utterly unarisen state is

awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.

“Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are utterly unreal. Divine son, understanding this state of being utterly unreal is awakening. Yet, ultimately, awakening is not the way that it is expressed through words.”

The divine son then asked, “Mañjuśrī, who will have faith in this Dharma teaching?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine son, since ultimately even the Thus-Gone One does not have faith, forget about the hearers, solitary buddhas, and all the extremists who rely on reference points.”

The divine son asked him, “Who will gain conviction in it?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Those who ultimately are not attached to any phenomenon will gain conviction.”

The divine son asked him, “Who will apply it earnestly?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Those who ultimately do not earnestly apply themselves to any phenomenon.”

The divine son asked him, “Who will become realized?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Those who ultimately do not realize any phenomenon.”

The divine son asked him, “Mañjuśrī, who are those who ultimately do not realize any phenomenon?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Divine son, those who, on the relative level, realize the omniscient wisdom that is endowed with the supreme of all aspects.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what kind of nature do they have?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, ultimately they have the utterly unborn nature.”

The divine son asked him, “Mañjuśrī, in whose hands will a sūtra such as this end up?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Divine son, relatively, in the hands of those who offer the sacred Dharma to all beings.” [F.258.b]

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how will they abide?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, ultimately they will abide in the utterly unborn, the utterly unarisen, and the utterly unreal.”

The divine son asked, “Mañjuśrī, in what way will they proceed?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, ultimately they will proceed within the utterly unborn, the utterly unarisen, and the utterly unreal.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how will the irreversible bodhisattva great being attain awakening?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, whoever is an irreversible bodhisattva great being has no chance and no opportunity not to attain awakening.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what do the bodhisattva great beings turn back from?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, ultimately, bodhisattva great beings turn back from thoughts. They turn back from the levels of all the hearers, solitary buddhas, and the extremists who rely on reference points.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, what does a bodhisattva great being not turn back from?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, bodhisattva great beings do not turn back from all phenomena being the same in being utterly unarisen. If you wonder why, it is because ultimately all phenomena are the same in being utterly unarisen, and the bodhisattva great beings are the same. That is why they do not turn back.”

The divine son asked, “When one speaks of the sameness of all phenomena in being utterly unarisen, Mañjuśrī, what phenomenon is that a designation for?”

Mañjuśrī said, “The sameness of all phenomena in being utterly unarisen designates that ultimately there is no diversity.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, how does the sameness of all phenomena in being utterly unarisen manifest as diversity?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, [F.259.a] whoever conceptualizes the sameness of all phenomena in being utterly unarisen as ultimately having substance, materiality, and essence will ultimately experience diversity. As for ultimately experiencing diversity, it develops into many views involving reference points. Those who hold these many views that involve reference points wander helplessly in all the various forms of existence.

Divine son, whoever does not conceptualize the sameness of all phenomena in not occurring as ultimately having substance, materiality, and essence, does ultimately not experience diversity. Since he ultimately does not experience diversity, he ultimately understands the utterly unreal. In this way he comes to understand that all phenomena ultimately are the same in being characterized as utterly unborn.”

The divine son asked, “Mañjuśrī, is there a method that can awaken a bodhisattva great being *with* disturbing emotions, but not someone *without* disturbing emotions?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, there is. Divine son, relatively, all phenomena continuously emerge and disappear. In this way, the awakening of bodhisattva great beings also appears, relatively. And why? Divine son, ultimately, all phenomena are without disturbing emotions, unborn and unceasing. Any phenomenon that is ultimately unborn and unceasing is also ultimately beyond being realized. It will never be realized, nor was it ever realized. And why? Divine son, because ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn. Therefore, divine son, through such a method a bodhisattva great being with disturbing emotions can awaken, yet someone who is devoid of disturbing emotions cannot.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, is there a method by which a bodhisattva great being who is miserly can complete the perfection of generosity, yet those who are generous cannot?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Yes, divine son, there is a method by which a miserly bodhisattva great being [F.259.b] can complete the perfection of generosity, yet those who are generous cannot. And why? Because to never let go of, or cast away, any sentient being, or any of the buddha qualities, on the relative level, is the miserliness of the bodhisattva great beings.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, is there a method by which a bodhisattva great being who is ill behaved can complete the perfection of discipline, yet those who are disciplined cannot?”

Mañjuśrī said, “There is. Divine son, when a bodhisattva great being avoids superficial discipline in order to ripen beings, that

is the perfection of discipline of a bodhisattva great being on the relative level.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, is there a method of patience for a bodhisattva great being who has forsaken patience?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, there is. Any bodhisattva great being who ultimately has no patience with any phenomena having substance, actuality, or essence is in fact, in an ineffable manner, in possession of the supreme patience. Divine son, in a manner free from reference points, that is the supreme patience of a bodhisattva great being.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, is there a method by which a lazy bodhisattva great being can be diligent?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, there is. A lazy bodhisattva great being is unlike those diligent hearers, solitary buddhas, and extremists who employ an easy form of diligence that involves focus.”

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, is there a method by which a bodhisattva great being who is forgetful can rest in equipoise?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, there is. A bodhisattva great being, who, even in his sleep, does not give rise to thoughts of substance, essence, or actuality on the ultimate level, is resting in equipoise in a manner devoid of reference points.” [F.260.a]

The divine son said, “Mañjuśrī, is there a method by which a bodhisattva great being who has no knowledge can come to possess great knowledge?”

Mañjuśrī said, “Divine son, there is. And why? Divine son, ultimately all phenomena are discerned by knowledge. However, when one searches for phenomena, they disappear and cannot be observed. Knowledge is also like that; ultimately it also does not exist and cannot be observed. Therefore, relatively, one speaks of ‘possessing knowledge,’ even though that knowledge is ultimately utterly unborn. Divine son, according to that method, a bodhisattva great being who has no knowledge is called *one who possesses great knowledge*, or *one who possesses especially exalted knowledge*, or *one who possesses sacred knowledge*, or *one who lays hold of knowledge*, or *one who possesses knowledge devoid of a focus*. Ultimately, things are not as they are described.”

The Blessed One now addressed Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta. “Excellent!” he said. “Excellent, excellent! Mañjuśrī, you have spoken well and explained, without explaining, the acts and non-acts of bodhisattva great beings. Mañjuśrī, for a starving person, feeble and thin, it is better to suffer, and thus not to unknowingly eat poisonous food. In the same way, Mañjuśrī, it is better for bodhisattva great beings to engage in nonconceptual miserliness, bad behavior, ill will, laziness, forgetfulness, and lack of knowledge, and thus not engage in the conceptual applications of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and knowledge of the hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points. Why? Because the latter give rise to the faults of poisonous reference points, and this must therefore be understood to be a danger on the relative level.”

At this point the divine son Excellent Rule [F.260.b] asked the Blessed One: “Blessed One, are bodhisattva great beings not afraid of disturbing emotions?”

The Blessed One said, “Divine son, relatively, bodhisattva great beings do fear disturbing emotions. But far more, they fear the mind-set of the hearers and solitary buddhas, who rely on reference points; their fear of the disturbing emotions is not comparable.”

The divine son asked, “Blessed One, why is that?”

The Blessed One said, “Divine son, that is something you should ask yourself! Why not explain it yourself, as best you can? Divine son, what do you think? If a person wishes to survive, would that person’s greatest fear be having his limbs severed, or having his head cut off?”

The divine son replied, “Blessed One, someone who loses his limbs could still survive. Thus, if he wanted to acquire merit, he could still take up and follow a meritorious path, which in turn would become a cause for taking birth in the higher realms. However, Blessed One, someone who had his head cut off would be unable to survive. In this way, even if he strove for merit, he would be unable to genuinely follow a meritorious path.”

The Blessed One said, “Divine son, similarly, for bodhisattva great beings it is better to conduct themselves without reference points, even if it involves transgression, and thus not have the qualities and trainings of those who fall into the views of the hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points. It is better to be a miserly bodhisattva, and thus not abandon all sentient beings, or even cast away all the qualities of a buddha. It is better to be an ill-behaved bodhisattva great being rather than someone who fails to ripen others. It is better to be a bodhisattva great being who faithfully practices on the level of action with conviction in the absence of focus, yet has disturbing emotions, than to be a hearer or solitary buddha who relies on reference points, who attains certainty and is free from disturbing emotions.” [F.261.a]

The divine son said, “Blessed One, the acts of the bodhisattva great beings, which are non-acts, are at odds with the entire world. Blessed One, when the poisonous faults of reference points have formed, the discipline of the hearers and solitary buddhas, who rely on reference points, becomes an unwholesome state for bodhisattva great beings. No matter how diligent the hearers and solitary buddhas, who rely on reference points, are, the poisonous faults of reference point have been formed, and thus their diligence is inferior to the laziness of bodhisattva great beings.”

The Blessed One said, “Divine son, just as the food of a destitute man is poison for a universal monarch, likewise, divine son, are the discipline and diligence of the hearers and solitary buddhas, who rely on reference points, for ill-behaved and lazy bodhisattva great beings. And why? Because of involving the poisonous faults of reference points.

“Divine son, just as the wealth of a person who is only concerned with his personal achievements is not sufficient to ensure the wellbeing of a whole city, likewise, divine son, the diligence of those who have the impoverished, inferior, and conceptual attitude of the hearers and solitary buddhas is unable to liberate even the beings here in Jambudvīpa, let alone liberate all beings.

“Divine son, just as a leader who lovingly and compassionately grants great wealth and enjoyment to others may use his wealth to accomplish the happiness of limitless beings in order to give all beings unsurpassed happiness, so likewise, divine son, whoever develops the superior attitude of the bodhisattva great beings and inspires all beings with knowledge, means, great love, and compassion [F.261.b] will ripen limitless beings through his diligence beyond focus and the great wealth of the accumulations of merit and wisdom, gathered over limitless trillions of great eons. Without settling them, he will even settle all beings in omniscience.”

Venerable Mahākāśyapa now addressed the Blessed One. “Blessed One,” he said, “the hearers actualize all unconditioned phenomena while, Blessed One, bodhisattva great beings are classified under conditioned phenomena. How can that outshine all the hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points, who are included under the unconditioned?”

The Blessed One said, “Kāśyapa, I will give you an analogy that illustrates this. Some people need an analogy to understand the meaning expressed by a skilled being. It is like this: imagine that the four great oceans were filled with butter. Then, imagine that someone were to extract a drop of butter from the oceans using the very tip of a hair split into one hundredths. Do you think, Kāśyapa, that the drop of butter extracted with that very tip of a hair split into one hundredths would be able to outshine the four great oceans filled with butter?”

Kāśyapa said, “No, Blessed One, they would not. Blissful One, they would not.”

The Blessed One said, “Moreover, Kāśyapa, which one among the two would be largest, best, foremost, and most valuable?”

Kāśyapa said, “Blessed One, even one trillionth of a single ocean would be, Blessed One, much larger, better, exalted, and valuable than the single drop. Blessed One, the drop that was extracted using that very tip of a hair split into one hundredths could not compare to that, let alone all four great oceans.”

The Blessed One said, “In the same way as in this analogy, [F.262.a] the unconditioned wisdom of the hearers and solitary buddhas, who rely on reference points, is as insignificant as the drop of butter that was extracted from that very tip of a hair split into one hundredths, since it involves reference points.

“Kāśyapa, the bodhisattva great beings are similar to the four great oceans filled with butter in this analogy. They are free from reference points. They are endowed with all supreme features of engaging, without engaging, the level of faithful practice. They embody all the accumulations of merit and wisdom. Without viewing, they view conditioned wisdom. Moreover, through the blazing fire of the ultimate, they ripen beings and thereby transform them, without relying on reference points, into the omniscient wisdom that is endowed with all supreme aspects.

“Kāśyapa, this is how the bodhisattva great beings, without relying on reference point, outshine the hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points and who have attained the unconditioned.

“Kāśyapa, as another analogy, imagine a city that contains hundreds of thousands of semiprecious trinkets. At the same time, there is a boat on the ocean that easily and effortlessly brings to land precious and valuable gemstones of beryl. Now, what do you think: could the semiprecious stones found in the city outshine the precious gemstones of beryl?”

Kāśyapa said, “Blessed One, it could not. Blissful One, it could not.”

The Blessed One said, “Kāśyapa, just like the semiprecious trinkets found in the city, so should you view the hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points and their attainment of the unconditioned. Kāśyapa, just like the most valuable gemstones of beryl, which are first discovered in the ocean, then boarded on to the ship, and easily and effortlessly arrive at the trading house, so, Kāśyapa, should you view the bodhisattva great beings who arrive at the trading houses in the city of cyclic existence and, without establishing anyone, establish all beings in unsurpassed and [F.262.b] perfectly complete awakening.

“Kāśyapa, consider a further analogy. During the third month of spring, the entire land is filled with crops. If, at that time, a small insect should carry off a single grain to eat, which would be larger, that single grain or all the grains found on the entire land?”

Kāśyapa answered, “Blessed One, the entire world filled with crops would have an infinitely greater pile of grains, which would be able to nourish uncountable, limitless beings. At the same time, Blessed One, the single grain that the small insect carried off to eat could not even sustain a single being.”

The Blessed One said, “Kāśyapa, you should see the result that is the undefiled liberation of all hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points as being just like the single grain that the small insect carried off to eat. On the other hand, Kāśyapa, it is as being like the entire earth filled with crops that you should see, Kāśyapa, the crops of the bodhisattva great beings’ roots of virtue; they are the accumulations of merit and wisdom that in an unsurpassed manner embody the entire buddhadharma, such as the six perfections, by means of abiding, without abiding, within the relative and ultimate truths. When they have ripened, the bliss of the unsurpassed wisdom that is endowed with the supreme of all aspects becomes, in a manner that is beyond reference point, the sustenance of all beings.”

Venerable Mahākāśyapa exclaimed to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, that is amazing! Blissful One, that is amazing! It is exactly as the Blessed One has explained, without explaining. Blessed One, that is how the bodhisattva great beings, by means of the unsurpassed wisdom beyond focus, which is endowed with the supreme of all aspects, engage in, without engaging in, the level of faithful practice—and thereby outshine the hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points.” [F.263.a]

The bodhisattva great beings from the buddha realm of the blessed Thus-Gone Ratnaketu, who had arrived here in the Sāhā world together with noble Mañjuśrī, now addressed the Blessed One.

“Blessed One, it is like this. The instructions of the hearers and solitary buddhas who rely on reference points, such as the

way to abandon disturbing emotions and determine downfalls, are all conceptual and specific instructions that involve reference points.

“In the buddha realm of the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Ratnaketu, there are no such instructions that involve reference points. Such instructions that involve focus do not exist there. Instead, Blessed One, the beings there listen, without listening, to the pure instructions of the bodhisattva great beings. They listen, without listening, to the irreversible instructions. They listen, without listening, to the instructions beyond reference point. They listen, without listening, to the instructions on how all phenomena are ultimately utterly unborn. They listen, without listening, to the instructions on how all phenomena are ultimately utterly unarisen.

“The Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni underwent great hardship. Having patience with so much suffering, and understanding that ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn, he taught the higher, middling, and lower Dharma.

“It is like this: ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal. However, from this single identity that all phenomena share on the ultimate level, the Blessed One teaches the Dharma, without teaching, in many ways in order to accommodate the reference points of beings.”

The bodhisattva great beings then began to venerate the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni with exquisite offerings, such as divine flowers, fragrant herbs, incense, [F.263.b] flower garlands, unguents, powders, robes, parasols, standards, banners, and canopies with victory banners.

They addressed Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta. “Mañjuśrī,” they said, “we will now proceed to Jewel World.”

Mañjuśrī told them, “Children of noble family, if you know that the time has come to leave, then do so.”

The bodhisattva great beings asked him, “Mañjuśrī, are you not coming with us?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Children of noble family, all buddha realms are a single buddha realm. Likewise, all buddhas are a single buddha. Likewise, all dharmas are a single dharma.

Likewise, all beings are a single being. Since there are no differences between these, children of noble family, I will also go there.”

The bodhisattva great beings asked, “Mañjuśrī, in what way are all of the buddha realms a single buddha realm? Mañjuśrī, in what way are all buddhas a single buddha? Mañjuśrī, in what way are all dharmas are a single dharma? Mañjuśrī, in what way are all beings a single being?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Children of noble family, none of the buddha realms are realms. Why? Because ultimately they are utterly unborn. Children of noble family, none of the buddhas are buddhas. Why? Because ultimately they are utterly unarisen. Children of noble family, none of the dharmas are dharmas. Why? Because ultimately they are utterly unreal. Children of noble family, no beings are beings. Why? Because ultimately they are all utterly and entirely unarisen.”

With these words, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta [F.264.a] caused this trichiliocosm to appear precisely, without any difference, like the Jewel World of the Blessed One, Thus-Gone Ratnaketu. As he had thus fulfilled his intention, he rested evenly in absorption. Then the bodhisattva great beings also saw the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Ratnaketu and the Jewel World. In fact the bodhisattva great beings all thought that they had arrived in the Jewel World. Looking at the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni, they saw him in the precise colors and shape of the blessed one, the Thus-Gone Ratnaketu. Even the great hearers thought that they had become bodhisattva great beings.

The bodhisattva great beings, who thought that they were beholding Ratnaketu, asked the Blessed, Thus-Gone Śākyamuni, “Blessed One, who has brought us to this Jewel World?”

The Blessed Śākyamuni asked them, “Children of noble family, who has led you?”

The bodhisattva great beings replied, “Blessed One, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta led us.”

The Blessed Śākyamuni said, “Children of noble family, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta has brought you here without coming and going.”

Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta told the bodhisattva great beings. “Children of noble family, to find out where you are being led to, and from where you are being led, look with your equipoise!”

When the bodhisattva great beings each looked through their meditative absorption, [F.264.b] they saw that they had never moved from this Sahā world. Amazed, they were full of astonishment and exclaimed, “Although we never got up from our seats, we thought that we had traveled to the Jewel World. But it was Mañjuśrī who caused it all by means of his inconceivable blessing without blessing!” They then added, “Blessed One, may all beings also attain this blessing in a manner beyond reference point!”

Then the Blessed Śākyamuni spoke to the bodhisattva great beings. “Children of noble family, consider this analogy. Space contains the earth, and also wood, zinc, copper, silver, gold, as well gems, pearls, beryl, conch, crystal, coral,⁵ cat’s eye, conch shells that coil to the right, and red pearls, so that of these are contained within space. Yet at the same time, children of noble family, although relatively there are of course different items contained, space itself remains undifferentiated. And why? Because ultimately space is utterly unreal.

“Likewise, children of noble family, ultimately all phenomena are surely utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal. And yet, through the relative conventions of the world, they are imputed and designated in a conventional manner: ‘This is form, this is feeling, this is perception, this is formation, this is consciousness. These are the sense fields. These are the elements. This is the Jewel of the Buddha. This is the Jewel of the Dharma. This is the Jewel of the Saṅgha. This is the vehicle of the hearers. This is the vehicle of the solitary buddhas. This is the unexcelled vehicle. These are the paths of the ten virtuous actions. These are the paths of the ten nonvirtuous actions. These are hell beings. These are the animal existences. These are the abodes of the hungry spirits. [F.265.a] These are demigods. These are humans. These are gods. These are gods who experience desire. These are gods who experience form. These are gods who experience the formless. This is the desire

realm. This is the form realm. This is the formless realm. These are good physical actions. These are good verbal actions. These are good mental actions. This is the perfection of generosity. This is the perfection of discipline. This is the perfection of patience. This is the perfection of diligence. This is the perfection of concentration. This is the perfection of knowledge. This is the perfection of skillful means. This is the perfection of aspirations. This is the perfection of strength. This is the perfection of wisdom. These are the ten levels, the ten powers, the ten strengths of the bodhisattvas, the ten strengths of the thus-gone ones, the fourfold fearlessness, the four genuine discriminations, the five faculties, the five powers, the eighteen unique qualities of a buddha, the omniscient wisdom that is endowed with the supreme of all aspects, the awakening of a buddha, suchness, the limit of reality, emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, the unconditioned, all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, all speech and objects of speech, consciousness and objects of consciousness.’

“In this way, as conventions are designated and connected, the relative conventions of the world are applied. Ultimately, however, all experiences are nonexistent. And why? Children of noble family, ultimately all phenomena are utterly unborn, utterly unarisen, and utterly unreal.”

The bodhisattva great beings were amazed. They rose from their seats and performed a very elaborate and unique worship of the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect [F.265.b] Buddha Śākyamuni. They bowed down their heads to the feet of the Blessed One and said, “Blessed One, in a manner beyond reference point, please emit your sound to all beings: a lion’s roar, an especially exalted sound, the sound of the supreme leader, the sound of a great being, a sound of the genuine, the sound of thatness, a sound beyond reference point, the sound of the ultimate.”

Those bodhisattva great beings happily and joyfully circumambulated the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni several hundred thousand times before finally departing from the presence of the Blessed One. Proceeding into the ten directions, they donned, in the manner of having no

armor, the great armor of diligence beyond reference point. In this way they taught, without teaching, this Dharma teaching, which abides within both the ultimate and the relative truths. They taught this very Dharma-vinaya to tame all beings and, without establishing, they established these beings in the teaching.

Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta did not get up, but remained on his seat, resting evenly in absorption. By means of his absorption, a light known as *eradicating the reference points and ignorance of all beings* shone forth above his head from his crown protuberance. As the light appeared, it illuminated all the infinite buddha realms within all the worlds in the ten directions. The light rays caused the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma so that the teaching on relying on both the relative and ultimate truth was heard, without being heard.

In order to pay homage to all the buddhas and the bodhisattva great beings in all the infinite and limitless worlds in the ten directions, the light produced clouds that rained down divine flowers, clouds that rained down divine fragrant herbs, clouds that rained down divine incense, [F.266.a] clouds that rained down divine garlands, clouds that rained down divine unguents, clouds that rained down divine powders, clouds that rained down divine garments, clouds that rained down divine parasols, clouds that rained down divine standards, clouds that rained down divine banners, clouds that rained down divine victory banners, clouds that rained down divine canopies. There were clouds that rained down divine flowers, fragrant herbs, incense, garlands, unguents, powders, garments, parasols, standards, banners, victory banners, and canopies. Thus they sent forth clouds that rained down divine flowers, fragrant herbs, incense, garlands, unguents, powders, garments, parasols, standards, banners, victory banners, and canopies that were all of the finest quality and produced all forms of unexcelled exuberance.

Now Mañjuśrī Kumārabhuta emerged from his absorption. In a manner beyond reference point, he circumambulated the Blessed, Thus-Gone, Worthy, Perfect Buddha Śākyamuni

several hundred thousand times before he departed from this Sahā world.

The Blessed One now told Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, you should uphold and propagate this Dharma teaching, which is the source of all buddhas and bodhisattva great beings.”

Venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One, “Blessed One, I can indeed uphold this teaching, but I would be unable to propagate it. The reason, Blessed One, is that ultimately there are so many beings who cling to reference points; they also cling to physical matter, and they cling to substance, and it is extremely difficult to break them away from this mistaken grasping.” [F.266.b]

The Blessed One said to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, all the blessed buddhas in the past, present, and future have blessed, without blessing, this Dharma teaching. Ānanda, you only need to act as a mere circumstance.”

Venerable Ānanda asked him, “Blessed One, what happens if a son or daughter of noble family should hear just a little of this teaching?”

The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, it is based on this Dharma teaching that the Thus-Gone One genuinely teaches, shows reality, shows the absence of reference points, shows the ultimate, and teaches without teaching. This teaching is inconceivable and limitless. Ānanda, whoever hears, without hearing, a little of this Dharma teaching, even if it is just a single syllable, will encounter all the inconceivable and limitless teachings of the Buddha.”

Then Venerable Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma teaching? How should one apprehend it?”

The Blessed One said, “Ānanda, you should know this Dharma teaching as *Teaching the Relative and Ultimate Truths*.”

When the Blessed One had spoken, the bodhisattva great beings, the great hearers, Venerable Ānanda, and the entire retinue, as well as the world with all its gods, humans, demigods, and *gandharvas*, rejoiced and praised the Blessed One’s teachings.

This completes the Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra, Teaching the Relative and Ultimate Truths.

It was translated, proofed, and finalized by the Indian scholars Śākyaprabha and Jinamitra, together with the translator-editor Bhande Dharmatāśīla and others.

Notes

- 1 Interestingly, however, a brief Sanskrit passage from this text has survived in Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*. See Vose, *Resurrecting Candrakīrti*, 214 n8.
- 2 Tib. 'dron pa.
- 3 Tib. rnam par shigs.
- 4 The Tibetan does not include the word *no* in connection with the disturbing emotions. Given the context, however, this appears to be a scribal error.
- 5 The list also includes one type of stone (Tib. *a mra gar ba*) that we have been unable to identify.

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