

## THE BASKET'S DISPLAY



ཟ་མ་རྟག་བཀོད་པ།

## The Basket's Display

*Kāraṇḍavyūha*

འཕགས་པ་ཟ་མ་རྟག་བཀོད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

*'phags pa za ma tog bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Basket's Display”**

*Āryakāraṇḍavyūhanāmamahāyānasūtra*

Toh 116, Degé Kangyur, vol. 51 (mdo sde, ja), folios 200a–247b

**Translated by Peter Alan Roberts with Tulku Yeshi**



Published by 84000 (2013)  
www.84000.co



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## Summary

*The Basket's Display (Kāraṇḍavyūha)* is the source of the most prevalent mantra of Tibetan Buddhism: *oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ*. It marks a significant stage in the growing importance of Avalokiteśvara within Indian Buddhism in the early centuries of the first millennium. In a series of narratives within narratives, the sūtra describes Avalokiteśvara's activities in various realms and the realms contained within the pores of his skin. It culminates in a description of the extreme rarity of his mantra, which, on the Buddha's instructions, Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin obtains from someone in Vārāṇasī who has broken his monastic vows. This sūtra provided a basis and source of quotations for the teachings and practices of the eleventh-century *Maṇi Kabum*, which itself served as a foundation for the rich tradition of Tibetan Avalokiteśvara practice.

## Acknowledgments

The sūtra was translated from the Tibetan and Sanskrit by Peter Alan Roberts. Tulku Yeshe of the Sakya Monastery, Seattle, was the consulting lama who reviewed the translation. The project manager and editor was Emily Bower, and the proofreader was Ben Gleason. Thanks to William Tuladhar-Douglas and Charles Manson for their assistance in obtaining Sanskrit manuscripts, and to Richard Gombrich and Sanjukta Gupta for their elucidations.

## A Note on This PDF Version

This PDF, for technical reasons, does not at present include the glossary of terms and proper names prepared by the translators. Please access the online version in the 84000 Reading Room for a fully functional glossary:

<http://read.84000.co/#!ReadingRoom/UT22084-051-004/0>

## Introduction

The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* is an early Mantrayāna sūtra that is the source of the mantra *oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ*. The sūtra is thus of particular importance, as this mantra now holds a central role in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, especially throughout the lay population. This sūtra also records Avalokiteśvara's transformation into the principal figure of the Buddhist pantheon, greater than all other buddhas, let alone bodhisattvas. In this sūtra, Avalokiteśvara is a resident of Sukhavātī and acts as a messenger and gift bearer for Amitābha, even though he is also described as superior to all buddhas and therefore paradoxically has both a subservient and dominant status.

## The Sūtra in India and its translations

The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* probably dates to around the fifth century CE. In terms of where it was composed, the text indicates familiarity with the cesspits of Vārāṇasī, and assumes the reader's knowledge of Candradvīpa, the southern part of Bengal where the Ganges Delta is situated. In the Tibetan version, the merchants who wish to sail to Laṅka ask whether the winds are blowing toward the land of the Greeks. This appears to locate their port of departure on the northwest coast of India. In terms of time, the text is located within a culture where the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas had a dominant place in Indian culture, particularly the Skandha Pūraṇa, probably during the Gupta period of the third to fifth century.

The earliest surviving manuscript is comprised of fragmentary pages from two manuscripts discovered within a Gilgit stūpa in the 1940s. It was written in a hybrid of Middle Indic and Sanskrit, now called Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, which was frequently used in sūtras. Adhelheid Mette, who has published these fragments, suggests that it was composed in the fourth or fifth century;<sup>1</sup> the script in which it is written had fallen out of use by the early seventh century, and the fragments show variations between the two manuscripts that are the result of the texts having gone through generations of copying. Other existing Sanskrit manuscripts (see below) date from a century or more later than the ninth century Tibetan translation.

According to Lokesh Chandra,<sup>2</sup> in 270 CE Dharmarakṣa of Dunhuang translated the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* into Chinese. Then, between 435 and 443 CE, Gunabhadra translated it into Chinese again. However, this is a case of misidentification. The sūtra they translated was the *Ratnakaraṇḍavyūha*. The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* itself was not translated into Chinese until 983 CE, considerably later than the Tibetan translation; the translator was T'ien Hsi-tsai.

The sūtra also exists in a later, longer and more polished form, entirely in verse

and incorporating passages from such texts as Śāntideva's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, which has great importance within Nepalese Buddhism. Dating to the fifteenth century, it is one of the last Sanskrit Buddhist sūtras. It has not been translated into Tibetan.

### Avalokiteśvara

Avalokiteśvara is noticeable by his absence in early sūtras where Mañjuśrī figures prominently. In the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* or *The Display of the Pure Land of Sukhāvatī*, which describes the realm of Amitāyus, the buddha who later became known by the name Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara has yet to appear. He makes his first prominent appearance in the longer *Sukhāvatīvyūha* in which he stands beside Amitāyus as one of his two principal bodhisattva attendants. The other bodhisattva was Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and in a number of subsequent sūtras they are included as a pair in the introductory description of the assembly of those who are listening to the teaching. In one of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*'s internal contradictions, both Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Avalokiteśvara are listed as being in the audience awaiting Avalokiteśvara's appearance.

Each bodhisattva later had a chapter dedicated to him in the White Lotus Sūtra, but while Avalokiteśvara reached preeminence over all buddhas in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, Mahāsthāmaprāpta declined in importance. In the Tibetan tradition, even in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, he has become conflated with Vajrapāṇi. At the time of the composition of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, Vajrapāṇi, who in earlier Buddhism was a powerful yakṣa, appears as one of the gathered bodhisattvas, which is indicative of sūtras that contain mantras. However, this is a recent development, as one of Avalokiteśvara's qualities given in the sūtra is that he terrifies Vajrapāṇi! Vajrapāṇi would soon join Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara to form the principal trinity of bodhisattvas in the early tantra tradition.

The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* does not mention Avalokiteśvara's abode in this world on the Potalaka Mountain, which was a later feature that first appeared in South Indian Buddhism. The origin of the popular four-armed version of Avalokiteśvara appears within the sūtra as the goddess who is the embodiment of the six-syllable mantra, referred to throughout as a *vidyā* (which is a feminine noun) or often as *the queen of mahāvidyās*. Many forms of Avalokiteśvara appeared in India, such as the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara included in fasting practice, and in the eleventh century there appeared the higher tantra form named Jinasāgara, a red, four-armed Avalokiteśvara in union with a consort. This practice was introduced into Tibet in the beginning of the twelfth century.

Eventually Avalokiteśvara practices spread throughout the Buddhist world. There are still ancient Avalokiteśvara statues even in Śrī Laṅka, though the figure is identified as Śiva in Tamil areas and as Maitreya in Buddhist temples. Avalokiteśvara was prominent in China for centuries before the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* was translated into Chinese. In particular Avalokiteśvara became a dominant figure in Chinese Buddhism as Kuan Yin (or Guanyin in Pinyin), transforming into a female bodhisattva, a process described by Chün-Fang Yü in *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Ava-*

*lokiteśvara*, as the result of focusing on his incarnation as the Princess Miao-chan.<sup>3</sup>

## The Kāraṇḍavyūha in Tibetan Buddhism

*The Pillar Testament* (Tib. *bka' chems ka khol ma*) from the eleventh or twelfth century states that the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* was one of the texts that descended from the sky in a casket onto the palace roof of the fifth-century ruler of the Yarlung Valley, Lhathothori Nyentsen (Tib. *lha tho tho ri gnyan btsan*), and that during the reign of his descendant Songtsen Gampo (Tib. *strong btsan sgam po*), who became the king of most of the Tibetan plateau and introduced Buddhism to Tibet, it was translated by Thönmi Sambhota, the inventor of the Tibetan alphabet.<sup>4</sup> In the thirteenth century Nelpa Paṇḍita, rejecting this legend, stated that the casket was brought by a *paṇḍita* on his way to China.<sup>5</sup> However, he only records the *maṇi* mantra as being within the casket, which happens to be called a *za ma tog* or “a solid and precious casket” (*rin-chen za ma tog*) and not a reed basket. Nevertheless, this is probably why this sūtra became associated with the legend.

The earliest and only translation of the sūtra appears to be the one presently in the canon. All of the versions of the Kangyur except one have a colophon ascribing the translation of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* to Yeshé Dé and the Indian paṇḍitas Dānaśīla and Jinamitra, who collaborated with each other on the majority of their translations. The Narthang Kangyur (Tib. *snar thang bka' 'gyur*) is alone in attributing the translation to Śākyaprabha and Ratnarakṣita.

Nanam Yeshé Dé (Tib. *sna nam ye shes sde*) was a Tibetan who became the principal translator in the translation program set up under the royal auspices of King Trisong Detsen (Tib. *khri strong lde btsan*) (r. 742–798 CE). The translation work took place in a building dedicated to the translation program. It was situated within the circular compound of Samye (Tib. *bsam yas*) Monastery. Yeshé Dé's name is in the colophon of no less than 347 texts in the Kangyur and Tengyur, three of which are his own original works in Tibetan. Jinamitra was invited to Tibet during the reign of Trisong Detsen, and 234 texts name him as Yeshé Dé's co-translator. Dānaśīla, also known as Mālava, was invited to Tibet from Kashmir during the reign of Ralpachen (Tib. *ral pa can*) (r. 815–838 CE) and was involved with the translation of around 165 texts. He was also the author of seven texts, five of which he helped translate. He was still active in Tibet during the reign of King Langdarma (Tib. *glang dar ma*) (r. 838–841 CE).

Jinamitra and Dānaśīla were also two of the four or five Indian paṇḍitas who played principal roles in the completion of the *Mahāvvyuttpati*, the Sanskrit-Tibetan concordance that was intended to regulate the translation of Sanskrit texts into Tibetan. Work on this dictionary began during the reigns of Trisong Detsen and Senaleg (*sad na legs*) (r. 800–815 CE), but it was completed in the reign of Ralpachen (*ral pa can*). The catalog for the Tangtong Denkar Palace (*pho brang thang stong ldan dkar*) collection, which was compiled in 824 CE, lists the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*.

There is at least one instance in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* where the translation does not accord with the *Mahāvvyuttpati*. In describing the twenty peaks of the mountain that is the belief in the existence of an individual self in relation to the *skandhas* (“aggre-

gates”), the peaks are described as *samudgata*, which the *Mahāvvyuttpati* translates as “high” (Tib. *mtho ba*). In the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, however, it is translated as “arisen” (Tib. *byung ba*). Unless the translators changed their minds, this would appear to identify the translation as having taken place before the *Mahāvvyuttpati* was completed. Therefore we can say that the translation was certainly made during the decade between 815 and 824 CE, and presumably in the earlier part of that decade, around 820 CE or earlier. Neither Yeshé Dé nor Jinamitra are specified to have lived beyond the end of Ralpachen’s reign in 824 CE. Yeshé Dé’s remains are said to be interred within a stūpa on Hepori Hill next to Samye Monastery, where he worked on so many translations.

A later translation or revision of the Tibetan version was never made. However, the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* served as the basis for the eleventh-century *Maṇi Kabum* (*A Hundred Thousand Teachings on the Maṇi Mantra*; Tib. *ma ni bka’ ’bum*), which was attributed to Songtsen Gampo, although the extracts from the sūtra that it includes are clearly derived from the early ninth-century translation. The *Maṇi Kabum* was a highly influential work in propagating the practice of Avalokiteśvara, known in Tibetan as Chenrezi (*spyen ras gzigs*), the repetition of the maṇi mantra, and the identification of Songtsen Gampo as an emanation of Avalokiteśvara, and has had a much greater impact on Tibetan culture than the sūtra upon which it is based.

### Translation of the Title

The title of the sūtra is somewhat ambiguous. A *karaṇḍa* is usually a basket made of reeds. The *karaṇḍa* is frequently portrayed in the background of portraits of Indian *siddhas* as a large pot-bellied basket with a lid, containing collections of scriptures. These *siddhas* are also portrayed making the hand gesture representing the basket, the *karaṇḍamudrā* (“basket gesture”). There is even a layperson’s hairstyle named *karaṇḍamakuṭa* (“basket crest”), where the hair is arranged on top of the head in the shape of a tall, rounded basket with a lid.

Another word for basket is *piṭaka*, which forms the basis of the most common metaphor for the Buddha’s teachings, “the three baskets” or *tripiṭaka*, which contain the *Vinaya*, *Sūtra*, and the *Abhidharma* or its predecessor the *Mātrkā*. However, there are many instances in Tibetan literature where *za ma tog*, the translation of *karaṇḍa*, means something more solid and smaller than a pot-bellied reed basket, as in the precious casket (Tib. *rin chen za ma tog*) in the legend of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*’s appearance to King Lhathothori. The name of the earlier *Ratnakaraṇḍasūtra* could at first seem to mean “precious casket,” but the contents of the sūtra validate the Tibetan translation as *The Basket of the [Three] Jewels* (*dkon mchog gi za ma tog*).<sup>6</sup> There are also instances in the Sanskrit where the word *karaṇḍa* is apparently used for something more solid than a reed basket. There is a *dhāraṇī* in the tantra section of the Kangyur that has in its title the phrase *dhātukaraṇḍa* (Tib. *ring bsrel gyi za ma tog*), which means “the casket of relics,” or “reliquary.”<sup>7</sup>

The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* is spelled with a long initial *a* in all existing Sanskrit manuscripts, while every Tibetan edition has a short initial vowel. The long vowel is more likely to be lost than added, as errors generally replace the uncommon with the

common. The enhanced vowel is used in Sanskrit to denote affiliation, origin, and ancestry. In the case of *kāraṇḍa*, the word usually means “ducks”; they live among the river reeds that are used to make baskets. Here *kāraṇḍa* may be signifying that this sūtra has its origin in the basket that contains the description of Avalokiteśvara’s qualities. A basket or casket is normally spelled without the long vowel: *karaṇḍa*. There are also titles in the Tengyur that contain the word *ratnakaraṇḍa* (without the long vowel) where it means “a casket that is made of a precious material,” even though that meaning is not necessarily evident in Tibetan because of the syntax of the titles in question.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, after hesitating between “basket” and “casket” and wishing there was one word for both (or at least a word for a lidded, pot-bellied reed basket), we chose “basket” as the better translation, primarily because of the way *karaṇḍa* is used in the sūtra itself. This term occurs only within the description of the Avīci hell. The Vaidya edition has *visphurad ratnakaraṇḍavat*, which means “raging [flame] like a precious casket,” but this appears to be a corruption, with the Cambridge manuscript having *visphurantam karaṇḍavat*, and the Tibetan not having the equivalent of *ratna* (“precious”). If *karaṇḍa* is being used here to describe the shape of the flame, then it is referring to the distinctive shape of the reed basket, wider at its middle. This shape is still associated with *za ma tog* in contemporary Tibetan, and it is also compared with the shape of an egg.

*Vyūha* has a wide range of meanings, but is based on the idea of things being set out or displayed, and was therefore translated into Tibetan as *bkod pa*. The word can also mean “description” or “explanation” and even “chapter.” The sūtra is therefore a display from a basket, or the presentation of its contents.

The later Nepalese version of the sūtra has a longer title, *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*, which could be translated as *A Display from the Basket of Qualities*, the “qualities” being those of Avalokiteśvara. Both versions of the sūtra are dedicated primarily to a description of Avalokiteśvara’s qualities, which are stated to be greater than that of any buddha. The use of *vyūha* in the title is also evocative of the earlier *Gaṇḍavyūha*, which forms the last chapter of the *Avatamsaka*, where *gaṇḍa* means “supreme” or “best.” The influence of the contents of that chapter is also discernable in this sūtra.

## **Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ**

The *Kāraṇḍavyūha*’s principal content is the introduction of the *oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ* mantra and the descriptions of its inconceivable benefits. These are also the most quoted sections of the sūtra. However, it contains no instructions on the qualities and benefits of each syllable, of the kind that subsequently became widespread in Tibetan Buddhism. It also gives no explanation of the meaning of the mantra as a whole, a meaning that has been understood in various ways. Donald Lopez has given an account of various interpretations of the mantra in the West in his *Prisoners of Shangri-la*.<sup>9</sup>

Alexander Studholme, in his *The Origins of Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*, describes how the sūtra was composed within the context of familiarity with, and under the influence of, Purāṇic literature, in particular the *Skandapurāṇa*. In this sūtra, Ava-

lokiteśvara has taken on various attributes and characteristics of Śiva, to the extent that one passage could be misread as describing Avalokiteśvara to be the creator of the universe. Even so, he is still being described as the creator of its deities, including Śiva and Viṣṇu. In particular, Avalokiteśvara's mantra is evidence of the influence of Śiva's five-syllable mantra, *oṃ namaḥ śivāya* ("Om—Homage to Śiva!"), which is found in the *Skandapurāṇa* together with a description of the benefits of its recitation.

In classical Sanskrit grammar, *padme* would be the locative case, which has led to the interpretation of *oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ* as "jewel in the lotus." However, mantras are typically given in the vocative or dative case, usually with the name of a deity being invoked. *Padme* is in fact the vocative for *padma*, this being Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. In classical Sanskrit, the *e*-ending vocative form is only used for feminine nouns.<sup>10</sup> P.C. Verhagen has translated one of the few native Tibetan texts to be found in the Tengyur, a grammar text that uses this very mantra to explain the *e*-ending vocative form for masculine nouns.<sup>11</sup> This vocative form of masculine nouns is a characteristic of the Magadhi, or northeastern Middle Indic, dialect. However, this form appears to have been much more widespread, extending as far as Sanskrit loan words in the Tocharian language of Central Asia.<sup>12</sup> *Maṇipadma* is therefore a compound and is a name for Avalokiteśvara meaning "Jewel Lotus."

### Difficulties Inherent in the Sūtra

The sūtra itself is rarely read in Tibet, other than in the annual ritual chanting of the Kangyur, and as mentioned above it has been eclipsed by the eleventh-century *Maṇi Kabum*. There is no evidence of it having had any significant impact on religious life in Tibet in the preceding centuries. In spite of the eventual importance of the *oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ* mantra, the sūtra is still primarily known only through select quotations. One reason for this is that very little of the teaching and meditation practice of the *Maṇi Kabum* is to be found in the sūtra.

Another reason is the difficulty involved in reading the sūtra due to its structure of narratives within narratives. After a buddha is initially introduced, he is subsequently only referred to as "Bhagavat," and it is easy for readers to lose track of which level of the narrative they are reading. Although the speakers' names were not repeated in the original, we have added them in here for clarity. We have not marked these insertions with square brackets, again for the sake of readability.

Another problem with the sūtra is that although it is a compilation of narratives, the sūtra does not always use its source material in a skillful manner. The Sanskrit original itself does not compare well with the clarity and style of writing found in other sūtras. There are abrupt transitions, inconsistency in the use of pronouns, and the contents of one part of the narrative appear to be in contradiction with those of another. For example, the Buddha tells the tale of the merchants being rescued from the land of the *rākṣasīs* in the first person, but there are sporadic lapses into what must have been the original third person of the narrative. The asura king Bali's account of his downfall likewise transitions from a first- to a third-person account. In common with many other Mahāyāna sūtras but perhaps more frequently than most of



them, the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* refers to itself within its own narrative as a sūtra that is being taught, requested, or longed for, but appears to describe itself as being comprised of verses, almost as if the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* is a different sūtra that is simply being referred to in this sūtra.

The sūtra assumes that the reader is familiar with the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the two great epics of Indian literature, and the story of Viṣṇu's avatar as a dwarf deceiving Bali, the lord of the asuras. Tibetan readers, however, would be unfamiliar with personages referred to in passing in the text, such as Śukra, who is both the deity of the planet Venus and counselor for the king of the asuras. Viṣṇu is usually referred to as Nārāyaṇa in the sūtra, but in the passage where he rescues the Pāṇḍavas and other kṣatriyas of *Mahābhārata* fame, he is referred to as Daśarathaputra ("son of Daśaratha"), which is actually the name of Rāma, another of Viṣṇu's avatars. This may be because the story of the dwarf avatar also appears in the *Rāmāyaṇa* when it is told to Rāma, that is, Daśarathaputra.

The sūtra also includes a variation of a well-known *jātaka* tale in which the Buddha as a horse saves merchants from the island of the rākṣasīs,<sup>13</sup> which has been retold with variations many times in Buddhist literature. Here it is retold with Avalokiteśvara as the horse and the Buddha as the head merchant who is being rescued. However, this too implies an unexplained internal contradiction; the sūtra had earlier narrated how Avalokiteśvara, in the form of a handsome man, had converted all the rākṣasīs from their cannibalistic ways to become devotees of Buddhism.

### Problems Arising from the Tibetan Translation

The Tibetan translation occasionally transliterates the Sanskrit rather than attempting to find a Tibetan equivalent, particularly when it comes to fauna and flora—even the Sanskrit word for *wolf* is simply transliterated as *tarakṣa*. There are also instances of obscure translations of words that do not agree with the *Mahāvvyutpati*.

In some passages, we relied more on the Sanskrit than we had originally anticipated because there is evidence that the manuscript from which the Tibetan translation was made had suffered from scribal corruption, as revealed by the surviving Sanskrit and confirmed by the English translation of the Chinese. For example, when describing the *maṇḍala* as *adrṣṭa* ("not seen"), this was corrupted to *aṣṭa* ("eight"); a mountain made of *padmarāga* ("ruby") was corrupted to *padmarakta*, which was translated as "red lotuses" (*pad ma dmar po*); and in the middle of Buddha's describing Avalokiteśvara's qualities, *ayaṃ* ("this") was corrupted to *ahaṃ* ("me") so that the Buddha seems to be describing himself.

There are also omissions of sentences in the Tibetan (whether as the result of omission in the original Sanskrit manuscript or later copies of the Tibetan) that affect the narrative or meaning. The omissions are particularly evident when there are lists of qualities or meditations that are more easily left out in the process of copying manuscripts. On the other hand, there are also instances of members of lists that are preserved in the Tibetan but omitted in the available Sanskrit texts.

The most egregious flaw in both the Tibetan and Chinese translations, and one which has already attracted scholarly attention, occurred on rendering the obscure

term *ratikara*, which literally means “that which creates joy,” and is also the name of one of the apsaras that are in the audience for this sūtra. The later Nepalese version used instead *dvīpa*, the common word for *lamp*, but both the Chinese and Tibetan translators, even with the assistance of Sanskrit scholars, were understandably stumped by this odd word, particularly as the *ratikara* laughs and speaks. Both Yeshé Dé and T'ien Hsi-tsai chose to make it refer to the *rākṣasī* wife speaking in her sleep, as she is the only other person in the room and is the merchant's paramour. This entailed interpolating the word *sleeping* into the translation. However, the result makes little narrative sense, whereas the unlikely meaning of lamp does make narrative sense.

### The Translation into English

Our aim was to make the most readable, accurate, and coherent version of the sūtra as it is preserved in the Tibetan translation. The Degé edition and the version in the critical edition of the Kangyur were therefore our principal sources.

Sanskrit manuscripts do not necessarily reflect the original form of a text, even though they are in the original language, because they may have their own accretion of omissions and additions that have occurred in the centuries following the time a Tibetan or Chinese translation was made. There has not yet been a critical edition from all available Sanskrit manuscripts, but we consulted three Sanskrit editions, the most important being a palm-leaf manuscript from the Cambridge University Library, which was written in the beginning of the second millennium before the development of the Devanāgarī script. It is notable for being closer to the Tibetan. Of easier access but less representative of the original text are the Sāmaśrami edition of 1872 and the 1962 Vaidya edition that is based closely on Sāmaśrami. The Sāmaśrami is available on the Online Sanskrit Texts Project of the Theosophical Network, and the Vaidya is openly available on the internet. To complete the translation of some difficult passages, we also referred to the Gilgit manuscript fragments, though they were not readily accessible. Silfung Chen's online English translation from the Chinese proved interesting in its correspondences with these editions.

Nevertheless, as noted above, there were a number of points where we relied on the Sanskrit to fill in missing elements, words, members of a list, and sometimes whole sentences, although it is possible that some of the latter may have been later additions to improve the flow and clarity of the sūtra's sometimes clumsy narrative. Where the Tibetan translation was modified in favor of the Sanskrit, annotations indicate that this is the case.

An important objective was readability, so the syntax does not necessarily reflect that of the Tibetan or Sanskrit versions. For example, an active construction may be used instead of a passive construction found in the original. The inconsistencies of first and third person have been resolved, and, as noted above, names are repeated when otherwise the reader might lose track of who is speaking or to whom the text is referring. Hopefully this will make reading the sūtra in English far less challenging than attempting to do so in Tibetan or Sanskrit. Readers will find the variant readings in Tibetan and Sanskrit in the notes if they wish.

## Summary of the Text

Buddha Śākyamuni is at Jetavana Monastery with many disciples. Lights shine upon the monastery and miraculously transform it. The bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asks the Buddha where the lights came from. The Buddha explains that they came from Avalokiteśvara, who had just visited the Avīci hell and the city of the pretas, and then describes those visits.

Then Buddha Śākyamuni recounts being a merchant at the time of Buddha Vipāśyin and how he heard him describe how various deities, including Śiva and Viṣṇu, were created from Avalokiteśvara's body.

Buddha Śākyamuni then recounts being Bodhisattva Dānaśūra at the time of Buddha Śikhin and how light rays shone from Buddha Śikhin. In response to questioning by Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi, Śikhin says that the lights and other omens are a sign of the approach of Avalokiteśvara, who then arrives from Sukhāvatī with an offering of lotuses from Buddha Amitābha.

After Avalokiteśvara's departure, Śikhin describes to Ratnapāṇi how Avalokiteśvara's accumulation of merit is inconceivable by using a series of analogies. Then he describes how Avalokiteśvara teaches this very sūtra to the asuras in the form of an asura.

Buddha Śākyamuni then states that he was a rishi (*ṛṣi*) at the time of Buddha Viśvabhū. Before repeating what Viśvabhū taught, Śākyamuni relates how Avalokiteśvara taught upside-down beings in the realm of gold and four-legged beings in the land of silver. There then follows a long description of Avalokiteśvara's visit to the asuras in the land of iron. Avalokiteśvara teaches the asuras the inconceivable merit that comes from making offerings to a buddha. Bali, the king of the asuras, tells Avalokiteśvara that he had in the past made an offering to the wrong recipient. He had imprisoned all the kṣatriyas, but Viṣṇu secretly freed them and came to him in the form of a dwarf asking for two steps of land. Bali offered him three, but Viṣṇu took on his divine form and covered the whole world in two steps. He then banished Bali to the underworld where he now dwells for having failed to fulfill his promise.

Avalokiteśvara then describes to him the suffering in hells that awaits those who have not made offerings to the Buddha.

Avalokiteśvara then radiates light rays to where Viśvabhū and his pupils are residing in Jetavana Monastery. Bodhisattva Gaganagaṇja asks Viśvabhū where the lights came from. Viśvabhū states that the lights are a sign that Avalokiteśvara is coming. However, Avalokiteśvara first goes to a land of darkness to teach the yakṣas and rākṣasas about the merit that comes from this sūtra.

Avalokiteśvara then goes to the Śuddhāvāsa realms, where in the form of a Brahmin he begs from a poor deva. The deva goes into his empty palace to give him whatever he has, but finds it full of jewels and food that he then offers to the Brahmin. Avalokiteśvara in the form of the Brahmin tells the deva that he is a bodhisattva from Jetavana Monastery.

Avalokiteśvara then descends to Siṃhala, the land of the rākṣasīs, in the form of a handsome man. He agrees to be their husband if they follow his instructions, which

they do, giving up killing.

Avalokiteśvara then travels to Vārāṇasī, where in the form of a bee he buzzes the prayer of homage to the Three Jewels to the insects in a large cesspit, liberating them.

Avalokiteśvara then goes to Magadhā, where starving beings have been eating each other for twenty years, and he causes a rain of food to fall. One of the people, a man who is hundreds of thousands of years old, realizes that only Avalokiteśvara could have caused this miracle, and tells the others of the benefits of making offerings to him.

Avalokiteśvara then goes to Buddha Viśvabhū. Bodhisattva Gaganagañja meets him, Viśvabhū teaches the six perfections, and the audience disperses. This is the end of part one.

Part two begins with Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asking for teachings from Buddha Śākyamuni, who lists the samādhis that Avalokiteśvara has.

Then Buddha Śākyamuni recounts being a head merchant who became stranded on Siṃhala Island with other merchants. Each of them goes to live with a rākṣasī. One night, a talking lamp warns the head merchant that the women are all rākṣasīs. As proof, the lamp directs him to an iron fortress where other merchants are being kept prisoner and then eaten. Then the lamp tells him of Bālāha,<sup>14</sup> a miraculous horse on which the merchants can escape. As they flee upon the horse, all the other merchants look back, fall off the horse, and are eaten by the rākṣasīs, while the head merchant reaches home safely. Buddha Śākyamuni states that Avalokiteśvara was the horse.

Buddha Śākyamuni then begins a description of two pores on Avalokiteśvara's body and their inhabitants.

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, to the Buddha's approval, describes the benefits that come from this sūtra.

Buddha Śākyamuni describes another pore and explains to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin that the pores are immaterial and cannot be seen even by buddhas.

Buddha Śākyamuni describes two more pores, saying that those who remember Avalokiteśvara's name, meaning the six-syllable mahāvidyā, will be reborn in them, but that no one, not even the buddhas, know this mantra.

After Buddha Śākyamuni describes more benefits that come from the mantra, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin declares his intention to obtain it.

Buddha Śākyamuni recounts his own fruitless search for it until, after meeting trillions of buddhas, he finally met Buddha Ratnottama who directed him to Buddha Padmottama. Padmottama describes the incalculable benefits that come from saying the mantra once and then describes his own long fruitless search for the mantra until he came to Buddha Amitābha, who instructed Avalokiteśvara to give the mantra to Padmottama. Avalokiteśvara does so through a maṇḍala made of precious stones and gives the instructions on how to make the maṇḍala.

Buddha Śākyamuni follows this narrative with a description of how incalculable the benefits are from even one syllable of the mantra.

He then tells Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin that he can only obtain it from an unnamed dharmabhāṇaka who has lost his monastic vows and lives in Vārāṇasī. Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin goes to him in a huge procession of people and offerings.

The dharmabhāṇaka describes the benefits of the mantra and, at the urging of Avalokiteśvara, who appears in the sky, gives the mantra to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, who returns to Buddha Śākyamuni. Seventy million buddhas recite the mantra of the goddess known as both Cundi and Cundā.

Buddha Śākyamuni then describes five more of Avalokiteśvara's pores.

Buddha Śākyamuni then describes the oceans that come from Avalokiteśvara's big toe, and says there are no more pores but those ten. Then omens of Avalokiteśvara's arrival appear. He leaves Sukhāvatī and comes to Buddha Śākyamuni and offers him lotuses from Buddha Amitābha.

Buddha Śākyamuni then directs Maheśvara and Umādevī to receive the prophecies of their future buddhahood from Avalokiteśvara.

Buddha Śākyamuni then gives a teaching on the incalculability of Avalokiteśvara's merit and listing the samādhis he has.

Then Buddha Śākyamuni recounts when he was with Buddha Krakucchanda and saw Samantabhadra and Avalokiteśvara both practicing various samādhis. Krakucchanda declares that not even the buddhas have Avalokiteśvara's samādhis.

Buddha Śākyamuni then describes the benefits that come from this sūtra, and Avalokiteśvara departs.

Then Ānanda requests teachings on monastic conduct. Buddha Śākyamuni prophesizes how there will be monks who do not maintain their conduct in the future and who should be expelled. He describes the tortures in hell and other rebirths that await laypeople who misuse the property of the Saṅgha.

Ānanda departs and the sūtra concludes.

## Outline of the Sūtra

This outline is intended as a guide to the complicated narrative levels of the sūtra.

- I. Sūtra narrative: Buddha Śākyamuni is in the Jetavana Monastery when lights appear, transforming the monastery's appearance. Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin questions Buddha Śākyamuni about this, and the Buddha states that the cause of the lights is Avalokiteśvara visiting Avīci hell and then the city of the pretas.
  1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Avalokiteśvara appears in Avīci hell and liberates beings. As a result, Yama's creatures go to Yama and describe Avalokiteśvara's arrival. Yama goes to Avalokiteśvara and praises him.
- II. Sūtra narrative: Buddha Śākyamuni responds to a question from Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin about whether Avalokiteśvara has left hell.
  1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Avalokiteśvara leaves the hells, visits the city of the pretas, and liberates them from their suffering. This very sūtra sounds in their realm.

III. Sūtra narrative -Buddha Śākyamuni says that he remembers being a merchant listening to Buddha Vipāśyin.<sup>15</sup>

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Buddha Vipāśyin describes the activities of Avalokiteśvara in the past.

- A. Buddha Vipāśyin's narrative: Avalokiteśvara emanates such deities as Maheśvara (Śiva), and Avalokiteśvara gives a prophecy to Śiva about the future rise of Shaivism, and how this will not bring liberation.

IV. Sūtra narrative: Buddha Śākyamuni tells Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin about his memories of being a bodhisattva named Dānaśūra when Buddha Śikhin taught about Avalokiteśvara.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Lights radiate from Buddha Śikhin, prompting Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi to question Buddha Śikhin. Signs appear as omens of the coming of Avalokiteśvara from Sukhāvatī. Avalokiteśvara arrives and tells Buddha Śikhin he has been liberating hell beings and pretas, and then Avalokiteśvara departs. In response to a question from bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi, Buddha Śikhin describes Avalokiteśvara's qualities.

- A. Buddha Śikhin's narrative: Buddha Śikhin gives analogies for the inconceivability of Avalokiteśvara's accumulation of merit. He describes his various manifestations as a guide for beings and his visit to the asuras where he teaches them the benefit of this very sūtra (even though the sūtra is itself the description of these events).

V. Sūtra narrative: The story of Buddha Śikhin teaching Ratnapāṇi ends abruptly. Buddha Śākyamuni then describes his memory of being a rishi with Buddha Viśvabhū when he taught on Avalokiteśvara.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Buddha Viśvabhū begins a description of what Avalokiteśvara has been doing.

- A. Buddha Viśvabhū's narrative: There is a brief description of how Avalokiteśvara visits *adhomukha* ("head-down") beings in the realm of gold and four-legged beings in the realm of silver. There then follows a lengthy episode in the land of iron where he meets Bali, the king of asuras, who tells him how he came to be in the underworld.

- i. Bali's narrative -Bali explains how he imprisoned many kṣatriyas, including the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas of *Mahābhārata* fame, and how Nārāyaṇa rescued them. Then he describes how he followed the tradition of a king making a vast offering from his wealth and granting the requests of anyone who came. Viṣṇu comes as a Brahmin dwarf requesting the amount of land that he can cover in two footsteps. Bali offers him three footsteps' worth. Viṣṇu takes on a gigantic form, encompasses the world in two steps, and then banishes the asuras to the underworld.

- B. Buddha Viśvabhū's narrative: Avalokiteśvara teaches Bali and the asuras, primarily describing the tortures by Yama's guardians in hell. Then he takes his leave, saying he has to go to Jetavana Monastery. (Although this is the time of Viśvabhū, not Śākyamuni, here Viśvabhū's own reported narrative transforms with no clear dividing line into Śākyamuni's narrative about Viśvabhū.)

2. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Avalokiteśvara radiates light rays to Viśvabhū in Jetavana Monastery. The appearance of the light rays prompts the bodhisattva Gaganagaṇja to ask Viśvabhū a question as to their source.

- A. Buddha Viśvabhū's narrative resumed: Avalokiteśvara leaves the realm of the asuras. (Although he had previously said Avalokiteśvara was leaving for Jetavana, Viśvabhū now says that he is going to Tamondhakāra, a realm of darkness inhabited by yakṣas and rākṣasas, where he teaches them analogies concerning the merit of knowing this very sūtra.)

Avalokiteśvara leaves that realm for the Śuddhāvāsa realms, where he appears in the form of a Brahmin who begs from an impoverished deity. The poor deity goes into his

empty palace to look for something to give the Brahmin and discovers his pots miraculously filled with jewels.

Avalokiteśvara then goes to the island of Sīṃhala, which is inhabited by rākṣasīs, where he appears as a handsome man. They all become his wives, follow the Dharma, and attain liberation.

Avalokiteśvara goes to Vārāṇasī, where he takes on the form of a bee and flies over a huge cesspool in the city. His buzzing is actually the sound of the *Namo buddhāya* prayer, and it liberates all the insects living in the cesspool.

Avalokiteśvara then goes to Magadhā, where people in the wilderness are eating each other for lack of food. He causes a miraculous rain of food and drink to fall. An old man among them describes the source of this miracle.

i. Old man's narrative: The old man gives a description of Avalokiteśvara's qualities.

3. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: (Here Viśvabhū's own narrative transforms, with no clear dividing line, into Śākyamuni's narrative *about* Viśvabhū.) Avalokiteśvara goes into the sky and thinks that it has been a long time since he has been to see Buddha Viśvabhū, so he decides to go to Jetavana.

Avalokiteśvara arrives in Jetavana to see Buddha Viśvabhū. There is a brief mention of Viśvabhū teaching the six perfections and then everyone leaves, concluding part one of the sūtra.

VI. Sūtra narrative: Buddha Śākyamuni responds to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin's request for teachings on Avalokiteśvara by first giving a list of Avalokiteśvara's samādhis.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: An account of when Śākyamuni was the leader of five hundred merchants who became stranded on the island of the rākṣasīs, and how he alone escaped on Avalokiteśvara in the form of a horse.

VII. Sūtra narrative: Śākyamuni says he will describe Avalokiteśvara's ten pores and their inhabitants and landscapes.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Śākyamuni describes the first and second of Avalokiteśvara's pores:

- (1) The pore Suvarṇa, where gandharvas dedicated to the Dharma live.
- (2) The pore Kṛṣṇa, where rishis and gandharvas live who play music that teaches birds and animals, who then remember the name of this very sūtra.

VIII. Sūtra narrative: Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin describes the benefits of possessing and writing the sūtra to Buddha Śākyamuni's approval.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Buddha Śākyamuni describes the third of Avalokiteśvara's pores:

- (3) The pore Ratnakūṇḍala, where female gandharvas live who remember the name of Avalokiteśvara.

IX. Sūtra narrative: Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin wishes to go to the pores but Buddha Śākyamuni describes how Samantabhadra failed to find the pores in twelve years of searching. Buddha Śākyamuni describes how Avalokiteśvara has a subtle form that even he cannot perceive, and that Avalokiteśvara has eleven heads, a hundred thousand arms, and a trillion eyes.

Buddha Śākyamuni laughs and tells Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin that it is not yet time for Avalokiteśvara to come, and then returns to the description of the ten pores.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: He describes the fourth and fifth of Avalokiteśvara's pores:

- (4) The pore Amṛtabindu, where devas live on the bhūmis and gandharvas live on mountains of gold and silver.
- (5) The pore Vajramukha, where kīṃnaras live who contemplate the six perfections and human suffering and remember Avalokiteśvara's name.

X. Sūtra narrative: Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asks where he can find the six-syllable

mahāvidyā. Buddha Śākyamuni tells him that the buddhas have spent sixteen eons looking for the mahāvidyā but failed to find it. He gives a description of the benefits gained by those who do possess, repeat, and wear it. Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin says he will use his own skin, bone, and blood to write it down if he can obtain it.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Śākyamuni describes how in a previous life he searched through many realms and met trillions of buddhas but failed to find the mahāvidyā. Then Buddha Ratnottama sends him to see Buddha Padmottama, and Śākyamuni tells of his search.

- A. Buddha Padmottama's narrative: This is a description of the merit gained by repeating the mahāvidyā and a story of how, in the past, Padmottama searched for the mantra through many realms and met many buddhas but did not find it. Padmottama comes to Amitābha and tells him of his search. Amitābha tells Avalokiteśvara to give the mahāvidyā to Padmottama. Avalokiteśvara describes to Padmottama how to make the maṇḍala of the mahāvidyā so that he may in the future give the mahāvidyā to others. In response to Amitābha's questions, Avalokiteśvara describes how to give the mahāvidyā if one cannot make such a maṇḍala. Avalokiteśvara gives the mahāvidyā to Padmottama, who returns to his realm.

- XI. Sūtra narrative: The sūtra does not state specifically that Padmottama gives the mahāvidyā to the Buddha Śākyamuni, and Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin does not ask the Buddha for it but asks where he can go to find it. Buddha Śākyamuni describes the dharmabhāṇaka in Vārāṇasī who possesses the mahāvidyā.

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin goes to Vārāṇasī with a great procession of people and offerings, praises the dharmabhāṇaka, and asks for the mahāvidyā. The dharmabhāṇaka describes the qualities of the mahāvidyā, wrong paths, and the devotion of even Prajñāpāramitā to the mahāvidyā.

Avalokiteśvara appears in the sky and tells the dharmabhāṇaka several times to give the mahāvidyā to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin.

The dharmabhāṇaka does not create a maṇḍala, as was described by Avalokiteśvara, but simply recites the mahāvidyā to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin. Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin returns to the Jetavana grove and tells Buddha Śākyamuni that he has received the mahāvidyā. Trillions of buddhas recite the dhāraṇī of the goddess Cundi: *oṃ cale cule cunde svāhā*. No explanation for this dhāraṇī is given, so the reader is assumed to be familiar with it.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: Abruptly, without any transition, the description of the last five of Avalokiteśvara's pores continues from where it had previously been left off.
  - (6) The pore Sūryaprabha, where bodhisattvas dwell. They can see Avalokiteśvara and the seven buddhas when they remember the mahāvidyā.
  - (7) The pore Indrarāja, where irreversible bodhisattvas live.
  - (8) The pore Maḥoṣadī, where bodhisattvas who have just developed bodhicitta live, and gandharvas live on mountains.
  - (9) The pore Cittarāja, where pratyekabuddhas live.
  - (10) The pore Dhvajārāja, where buddhas live who teach the six perfections to the humans of Jambudvīpa.

- XII. Sūtra narrative: Buddha Śākyamuni, in response to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin's question, says there are no more pores than those ten, but that beyond the last pore, the four oceans come from Avalokiteśvara's big toe.

He states that Avalokiteśvara is coming to give prophecies to Śiva (Maheśvara) and Umādevī about their eventual buddhahood. Avalokiteśvara arrives with a gift of lotus flowers from Amitābha. Maheśvara asks the Buddha for a prophecy, and he is sent to Avalokiteśvara who prophesies his buddhahood and then does the same for Umādevī. Buddha Śākyamuni, in response to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin's question, describes the qualities of Avalokiteśvara.

1. Buddha Śākyamuni's narrative: He gives a description of the inconceivability of Avalokiteśvara's merit and a list of Avalokiteśvara's samādhis, which differs from that given earlier. Śākyamuni describes his memory of being Bodhisattva Dānaśūra at the time of Buddha Krakucchanda. He sees Samantabhadra with Avalokiteśvara. They each enter different



states of samādhis, and Buddha Krakucchanda emphasizes Avalokiteśvara's superiority.

XIII. Sūtra narrative: Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asks for this very sūtra to be taught (although it is near its conclusion), and the Buddha describes the benefits of the sūtra. Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin sits silently.

Avalokiteśvara and all the other various kinds of beings assembled leave.

In an abrupt change of content, Ānanda asks Śākyamuni Buddha about monastic training. Śākyamuni condemns bhikṣus with incorrect conduct, saying they should be banished from the community. He prophesies how in three hundred years, people will use the property and possessions of the Saṅgha or monastery, and describes the sufferings they will endure, such as in the hells.

Ānanda leaves, and again the various classes of beings are said to leave (though they had already done so earlier), and the entire world rejoices in the Buddha's words.



## THE TRANSLATION

### *The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra*

### *The Basket's Display*

#### *Part One*

[F.200.a] Thus have I heard: One time the Bhagavat was staying, with a great Saṅgha of 1,250 bhikṣus and a multitude of bodhisattvas, at Jetavana, the monastery of Anāthapiṇḍika,<sup>16</sup> in Śrāvastī.

Eight hundred million<sup>17</sup> bodhisattva mahāsattvas had gathered there, such as Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajramati, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Jñānadarśana, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajrasena, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Guhyagupta,<sup>18</sup> Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Ākaśagarbha, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Sūryagarbha, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Anikṣiptadhura, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Ratnapāṇi, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Sarvaśūra, [F.200.b] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Bhaiṣajyasena, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajrapāṇi, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Sāgaramati, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Dharmadhara, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Pṛthivīvaralocana, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Āśvāsahasta, and Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Maitreya.

The thirty-two classes of devas had also gathered there, the principal ones being Maheśvara and Nārāyaṇa. Śakra, who is the lord of the devas, Brahmā, who is the lord of the Sahā universe, Candra, Āditya, Vāyu, Varuṇa, and other deities were also assembled there.<sup>19</sup>

Many hundreds of thousands of nāga kings had also gathered there in that retinue. Nāga King Utpala, Nāga King Elapatra, Nāga King Timiṅgira, Nāga King Gavāṃpati, Nāga King Śataśīrṣa, Nāga King Hullura,<sup>20</sup> Nāga King Vahūdaka,<sup>21</sup> Nāga King Takṣaka, Nāga King Gośīrṣa, Nāga King Mṛgaśīrṣa, Nāga Kings Nanda and Upananda, Nāga King Vātsīputra, Nāga King Sāgara, Nāga King Anavatapta, and many hundreds of thousands of other nāga kings were gathered there.

Many hundreds of thousands of gandharva kings had also assembled there.

Gandharva King Dundubhisvara, Gandharva King Manojñasvara, [F.201.a] Gandharva King Sahasrabhuja, Gandharva King Sahāpati,<sup>22</sup> Gandharva King Śarīraprahlādana, Gandharva King Nirnāditabhūrya, Gandharva King Alamkārahūṣita, Gandharva King Kumāradarśana, Gandharva King Subāhuyukta, Gandharva King Dharmapriya, and many hundreds of thousands of gandharva kings were gathered there in that retinue.

Also gathered in that retinue were many hundreds of thousands of kiṃnara kings. Kiṃnara King Sumukha, Kiṃnara King Ratnakirītī, Kiṃnara King Svārimukha, Kiṃnara King Prahasita,<sup>23</sup> Kiṃnara King Cakravyūha, Kiṃnara King Puṣpāvakīrṇa, Kiṃnara King Maṇi, Kiṃnara King Pralambodara, Kiṃnara King Dṛdhavīrya, Kiṃnara King Suyodhana, Kiṃnara King Śatamukha, Kiṃnara King Druma,<sup>24</sup> and many hundreds of thousands of other kiṃnara kings were gathered there.

Many hundreds of thousands of apsaras had gathered there. The apsara named Tilottamā, the apsara named Suvyūhā, the apsara named Suvarṇamekhalā, the apsara named Vibhūṣutā, the apsara named Karṇadhārā, the apsara named Amṛtabindu, the apsara named Pariśobhitakāyā, the apsara named Maṇiprasthanā, the apsara named Cuḍakā, the apsara named Mṛdukā, the apsara named Pañcabhūryābhimukhā, the apsara named Ratikārā, the apsara named Kañcanamālā, the apsara named Nilotpalā, the apsara named Dharmābhimukhā, the apsara named Sakrīḍā, [F.201.b] the apsara named Kṛtsnākārā, the apsara named Suvyūhamatī, the apsara named Keyūradharā, the apsara named Dānaṃdadā, the apsara named Śāsī, and many hundreds of thousands<sup>25</sup> of other apsaras were gathered there.

Many hundreds of thousands<sup>26</sup> of female nāgas were gathered there. The female nāga named Vibhūṣaṇadharā, the female nāga named Acilillanā,<sup>27</sup> the female nāga named Trijaṭā, the female nāga named Svātimukhā,<sup>28</sup> the female nāga named Jayaśrī, the female nāga named Vijayaśrī, the female nāga named Mucilindā,<sup>29</sup> the female nāga named Vidyullocanā, the female nāga named Vidyutprabhā,<sup>30</sup> the female nāga named Svātigiri, the female nāga named Śataparivārā, the female nāga named Mahauśadhi, the female nāga named Jalabindu,<sup>31</sup> the female nāga named Ekaśīrṣā, the female nāga named Śatavāhāna,<sup>32</sup> the female nāga named Śatabāhu, the female nāga named Grasatī, the female nāga named Anākṛtsnagatā,<sup>33</sup> the female nāga named Subhūṣaṇā,<sup>34</sup> the female nāga named Pāṇḍarameghā,<sup>35</sup> the female nāga named Rathābhīruḍhā,<sup>36</sup> the female nāga named Tyāgānugatā,<sup>37</sup> the female nāga named Anāgatā,<sup>38</sup> the female nāga named Abhinna-parivārā, the female nāga named Pulindā,<sup>39</sup> the female nāga named Sāgarakukṣi, the female nāga named Chatramukhā, the female nāga named Dharmapīṭhā, the female nāga named Mukhakarā,<sup>40</sup> the female nāga named Vīryā, the female nāga named Sāgaragambhīrā, the female nāga named Meruśrī, and many hundreds of thousands of other female nāgas were gathered there.

Many hundreds of thousands of female gandharvas had also gathered there. The female gandharva named Priyamukhā, the female gandharva named Priyaṃdadā, [F.202.a] the female gandharva named Anādarśakā, the female gandharva named Vajraśrī, the female gandharva named Vajramālā, the female gandharva named Sumālinī, the female gandharva named Vanaspati, the female gandharva named Śatapūṣpā, the female gandharva named Mukulitā, the female gandharva named

Ratnamālā, the female gandharva named Muditapuṣpā,<sup>41</sup> the female gandharva named Sukukṣi, the female gandharva named Rājaśrī, the female gandharva named Dundubhi, the female gandharva named Śubhamālā, the female gandharva named Vibhūṣitāṃkārā, the female gandharva named Abhinamitā, the female gandharva named Dharmakāṅkṣiṇī, the female gandharva named Dharmāṃdadā,<sup>42</sup> the female gandharva named Audumbarā,<sup>43</sup> the female gandharva named Śatākārā, the female gandharva named Padmaśriyā,<sup>44</sup> the female gandharva named Padmāvatī,<sup>45</sup> the female gandharva named Padmāṃkārā,<sup>46</sup> the female gandharva named Paṛiśobhitakāyā, the female gandharva named Vilāsendragāminī,<sup>47</sup> the female gandharva named Prthivīṃdadā, the female gandharva named Phalaṃdadā,<sup>48</sup> the female gandharva named Siṃhagāminī, the female gandharva named Kumudapuṣpā, the female gandharva named Manoramā, the female gandharva named Dāṇāṃdadā, the female gandharva named Devavacanā,<sup>49</sup> the female gandharva named Kṣāntipriyā, the female gandharva named Nirvāṇapriyā, the female gandharva named Ratnāṅkurā, the female gandharva named Indraśrī, the female gandharva named Indramaghaśrī, the female gandharva named Prajāpatinivāsinī, the female gandharva named Mr̥garājini, the female gandharva named Sphurantaśrī, the female gandharva named Jvalantaśikharā, the female gandharva named Rāgaparimuktā, [F.202.b] the female gandharva named Dveṣaparimuktā, the female gandharva named Mohaparimuktā, the female gandharva named Sujanaparivārā, the female gandharva named Ratnapīṭhā, the female gandharva named Āgamanagamanā, the female gandharva named Agniprabhā, the female gandharva named Candrabimbaprabhā, the female gandharva named Sūryalocanā, the female gandharva named Suvarṇābhāsā,<sup>50</sup> and many hundreds of thousands<sup>51</sup> of other female gandharvas.

Many hundreds of thousands<sup>52</sup> of female kiṃnaras had gathered there. The female kiṃnara named Manasā, the female kiṃnara named Mānasī, the female kiṃnara named Vāyuvegā, the female kiṃnara named Varuṇavegā, the female kiṃnara named Ākāśaplavā,<sup>53</sup> the female kiṃnara named Vegajavā, the female kiṃnara named Lakṣmīṃdadā, the female kiṃnara named Sudāṃṣṭrā, the female kiṃnara named Acalaśriyā,<sup>54</sup> the female kiṃnara named Dhātupriyā, the female kiṃnara named Jvalantapriyā,<sup>55</sup> the female kiṃnara named Suśriyā,<sup>56</sup> the female kiṃnara named Ratnakāraṇḍakā, the female kiṃnara named Avalokitalakṣmī, the female kiṃnara named Kuṭilā, the female kiṃnara named Vajramuṣṭi, the female kiṃnara named Kapilā, the female kiṃnara named Subhūṣaṇabhūṣitā, the female kiṃnara named Vistīrṇalālāṭā, the female kiṃnara named Sujanaparisevitā, the female kiṃnara named Sahāpatī,<sup>57</sup> [F.203.a] the female kiṃnara named Ākāśarakṣitā, the female kiṃnara named Vyūharājendrā, the female kiṃnara named Maṇicūḍā, the female kiṃnara named Maṇidhāriṇī, the female kiṃnara named Maṇirocanī, the female kiṃnara named Vidvajjanaparisevitā, the female kiṃnara named Śatākārā,<sup>58</sup> the female kiṃnara named Āyurdadā, the female kiṃnara named Tathāgatakoṣaparipālītā, the female kiṃnara named Dharmadhātuparirakṣiṇī, the female kiṃnara named Satataparigrahadharmakāṅkṣiṇī, the female kiṃnara named Sadānukāladarśinī, the female kiṃnara named Nūpurottamā, the female kiṃnara named Lakṣaṇottamā,<sup>59</sup> the female kiṃnara named Āśvāsānī, the female kiṃnara named Vimokṣakarā, the female kiṃnara named Sadānuvṛtti, the female kiṃnara named Saṃvegadhāriṇī, the

female kiṃnara named Khaṅgajvalanā, the female kiṃnara named Prṭhivīyupasaṃkramaṇā, the female kiṃnara named Surendramālā, the female kiṃnara named Surendrā, the female kiṃnara named Asurendrā, the female kiṃnara named Munīndrā, the female kiṃnara named Gotrakṣāntī, the female kiṃnara named Tyāgānugatā,<sup>60</sup> the female kiṃnara named Bahvāśrayā, the female kiṃnara named Śatāyudhā, the female kiṃnara named Vibhūṣitālaṃkāṛā, the female kiṃnara named Manoharā, and many hundreds of thousands<sup>61</sup> of other female kiṃnaras were gathered there.

Many hundreds of thousands<sup>62</sup> of upāsakas and upāsikās had gathered there.

Many hundreds of thousands<sup>63</sup> of *tīrthika* mendicant renunciants<sup>64</sup> had also gathered there. [F.203.b]

At the time of this great gathering, light rays shone in the great Avīci hell. Having shone there, they came to the Jetavana Monastery, where they became adornments for the monastery: pillars adorned with divine, precious jewels; multistoried buildings that were covered with gold; buildings with doors made of gold and silver; buildings with steps made of gold and silver; and upper stories made of gold and silver, the silver upper stories having gold pillars adorned with divine jewels and the gold upper stories having silver pillars adorned with divine jewels.

In the gardens around Jetavana, there appeared various kinds of wish-fulfilling trees. They had trunks of gold and leaves of silver and were bedecked with a variety of adornments, with beautiful monastic robes,<sup>65</sup> with Kaśika cloth, with hundreds of thousands of pearl necklaces, and with hundreds of thousands of crowns, earrings, braided ribbons, armlets, and anklets.

Outside the monastery there appeared hundreds of trees, which, like the wish-fulfilling trees, were made from precious metals and were bedecked with precious bracelets.

Within the Jetavana Monastery, there appeared stairs made from diamonds and entrance chambers hung with pearls and silks.<sup>66</sup>

Many bathing pools also appeared. Some were completely filled with water that had the eight qualities.<sup>67</sup> Some were completely filled with a variety of flowers: they were completely filled with blue lotuses, red lotuses, night lotuses, white lotuses,<sup>68</sup> tiger claw flowers and great tiger claw flowers,<sup>69</sup> and udumbara flowers.

Moreover, there were a variety of tree blossoms: magnolia, [F.204.a] ashoka, oleander, trumpet flower, mountain ebony, jasmine, and other beautiful tree blossoms.

The Jetavana Monastery appeared completely beautified.

Then from within that assembly Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin arose from his seat, bared one shoulder, and kneeling on his right knee and facing the Bhagavat, placed his palms together and addressed these words to the Bhagavat: “Bhagavat, I have perceived a great wonderful marvel. Bhagavat, where did these great light rays come from? Who has this power?”

The Bhagavat replied, “Noble son, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva<sup>70</sup> Avalokiteśvara entered the great Avīci hell. When he had completely liberated the beings there, he went to the city of the pretas. It was he who emanated these light rays.”<sup>71</sup>

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, as the great Avīci

hell is without respite, how did Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara enter it? In the great Avīci hell a wall encloses a ground made of burning iron, which has become one raging flame in the shape of a reed basket. Within this Avīci hell there is a pot from which comes the sound of wailing. Many hundreds of thousands of tens of millions of hundreds of millions of beings have been thrown into that pot. Just as green or black mung beans are massed together in a water-filled vessel, rising and sinking as they are cooked, [F.204.b] that is how the beings in the great Avīci hell undergo physical suffering. Bhagavat, how did Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara enter the great Avīci hell?”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara entered the great Avīci hell just as a *cakravartin* king enters a grove made of divine jewels. Noble son, it had no affect upon his body. As he approached the Avīci hell, it cooled. The beings that were Yama’s guards were in a state of agitation and extremely terrified. They wondered,<sup>72</sup> ‘Why has an inauspicious sign appeared in this Avīci hell?’ When the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara entered the Avīci hell, lotus flowers the size of cartwheels appeared, the pot burst open, and the inferno of fire transformed into a pool. On seeing these inauspicious signs appear in Avīci hell, Yama’s guardians became dismayed.

“Then Yama’s guardians gathered their swords, clubs,<sup>73</sup> short spears, long spears, maces, discuses, tridents, and so on, and, taking all their Avīci utensils,<sup>74</sup> went to the Dharmarāja Yamarāja. When they arrived, they told him, ‘Divine One, know first that our place of work is completely destroyed.’

“Dharmarāja Yamarāja asked them, ‘Why is your place of work completely destroyed?’

“Yama’s guardians answered, ‘Divine One,<sup>75</sup> know first that an inauspicious omen appeared in this Avīci hell, all of which became peaceful<sup>76</sup> and cool. There entered a handsome being, with his hair in a topknot, his body beautified by divine adornments, with an extremely loving mind, and resembling a golden statue.<sup>77</sup> [F.205.a] That is the kind of being that arrived. The moment he arrived, lotus flowers the size of cartwheels appeared, the pot burst open, and the inferno of fire was transformed into a pool.’

“Yamarāja wondered, ‘What deity has manifested this power? Is this a special result that has occurred through the blessing of the deity Maheśvara, Nārāyaṇa, or some other deity? Have they descended to this level? Or has a powerful rākṣasa been born who rivals great Rāvaṇa?’<sup>78</sup>

“He looked with his divine sight into the heavens, wondering whose blessing this could be. Then he looked back into the Avīci hell and saw Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara there.

“Yamarāja went to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, bowed down his head to his feet, and made this special praise: ‘I pay homage to Avalokiteśvara, Maheśvara, lover of lotuses, giver of the supreme boon, who has power; who illuminates the world;<sup>79</sup> who brings relief; who has a hundred thousand arms; who has a hundred thousand times ten million eyes; who has eleven heads; who reaches Vaṣṭavāmukha; who delights in the Dharma; who completely frees all beings; who brings relief to turtles, crocodiles, and fish; who creates the greatest mass of wisdom; who brings

joy; who is a splendor of jewels; who is sublime; who extinguishes Avīci; who is adorned by the splendor of wisdom; who delights in wisdom; who is the one to whom all devas make offerings, pay homage, and show reverence; who brings freedom from fear; who teaches the six perfections; who illuminates like the sun;<sup>80</sup> [F.205.b] who creates the lamp of Dharma; whose perfectly supreme form is whatever form is pleasing; who has the form of a gandharva; who has a form like a mountain of gold; who is deep like the vast ocean; who has attained the ultimate yoga; who shows his own face; who has many hundreds of thousands of samādhis; who brings true pleasure; who has a beautified body; who manifests as the supreme rishi;<sup>81</sup> who brings freedom from the terrors of bondage in stocks and manacles; who is free from all existences; who has many retinuees; who creates abundance;<sup>82</sup> who is a precious wish-fulfilling jewel; who teaches the path to nirvāṇa; who brings the city of the pretas to an end; who is a parasol for beings; who liberates beings from illness; who has a sacred thread made of the nāga kings Nanda and Upananda;<sup>83</sup> who reveals the beneficial lasso; who has hundreds of mantras; who terrifies Vajrapāṇi; who terrifies the three worlds; who frightens yakṣas, rākṣasas, bhūtas, pretas, and piśācas,<sup>84</sup> vetālas, ḍākiṇīs, kūṣmāṇḍas, and apasmāras; who has eyes like blue lotuses; who has profound wisdom;<sup>85</sup> who is the lord of knowledge; who brings freedom from all afflictions; who accumulates various paths to enlightenment; who has entered sacred liberation; who has paths to enlightenment accumulated within his body; who completely liberates pretas; and who has hundreds of thousands of samādhis as numerous as atoms.'

"In that way, Yamarāja praised Avalokiteśvara with a particularly sacred praise. Then Yamarāja circumambulated him three times and departed." [F.206.a]

Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, "Bhagavat, did Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara leave?"

The Bhagavat replied, "Noble son, he left the Avīci hell and went to the city of the pretas. Many hundreds of thousands of pretas came running toward him. They were like burned tree trunks; they were like standing skeletons; they were covered with hair; they had stomachs the size of mountains and mouths the size of a needle's eye.

"As Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara arrived at the city of the pretas, it cooled and the *vajra* hail ceased. The staff-wielding guard at the gates, who had thick calves and red eyes, became kind and said, 'I should not be performing this duty.'

"Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara's mind was filled with compassion on seeing these beings, and he emitted ten rivers from his ten fingers; he emitted ten rivers from his ten toes; and he emitted great rivers from all his pores. When the pretas tasted the water, their throats widened, their bodies became whole, and they were completely satisfied by the supreme flavor of divine food.

"Then they contemplated the human existence.<sup>86</sup> They thought about saṃsāric existence in this way: 'Oh! The humans in Jambudvīpa are happy. They can perfectly enjoy cool shade. Happy are those humans in Jambudvīpa who are always supporting their parents and honoring them. [F.206.b] Happy are those good humans who always rely on a *kalyāṇamitra*. Those who continuously learn the Mahāyāna are good contemplative beings. Those who follow the eightfold path are good beings. Those



who beat the *dharmagaṇḍī* are good beings. Those who repair dilapidated and ruined monasteries are good beings. Those who repair dilapidated, ruined, ancient stūpas are good beings. Those who are dedicated to the sacred representations and the dharmabhāṇakas are good beings; those who have seen the activities of a tathāgata are good beings; those who have seen the activities of a pratyekabuddha are good beings; those who have seen the activities of a bodhisattva are good beings.'

"At that time there appeared the sound of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*; wisdom, like a thunderbolt, destroyed the view of the aggregates as a self,<sup>87</sup> which is like a mountain with twenty peaks; and the pretas were all reborn in the realm of Sukhāvātī as bodhisattvas named Ākāṅkṣitamukha.

"Avalokiteśvara, having completely liberated those beings, departed from the city of the pretas."<sup>88</sup>

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, "Bhagavat, did Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara leave?"

The Bhagavat replied, "Noble son, each day, he completely ripens a million trillion beings. Noble son, not even the tathāgatas have Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara's prowess."

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked, "Bhagavat, how is that so?" [F.207.a]

The Bhagavat replied, "Noble son, there appeared in this world the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyak sambuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct,<sup>89</sup> the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tamed beings, the teacher of gods and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Vipāśyin.

"At that time, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, I was a merchant named Sugandhamukha, and I heard Tathāgata Vipāśyin describe the qualities of Avalokiteśvara."

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, "What were the qualities of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara that you heard the tathāgata describe?"

The Bhagavat replied, "Āditya and Candra came from his eyes, Maheśvara came from his forehead, Brahmā came from his shoulders, Nārāyaṇa came from his heart, Devi Sarasvatī came from his canines, Vāyu came from his mouth, Dharaṇī came from his feet, and Varuṇa came from his stomach.

"When those deities had come from Avalokiteśvara's body, that bhagavat said these words to the deity Maheśvara: 'Maheśvara, in the *kaliyuga*, when beings have bad natures, you will be declared to be the primal deity who is the creator, the maker. All those beings will be excluded from the path to enlightenment. They will say these words to ordinary beings:

'It is said: the sky is his *liṅga*,

The earth is his seat.

He is the foundation of all beings.

The liṅga is so called because they dissolve into it.'<sup>90</sup>

“Noble son, those are the words I heard Tathāgata Vipāśyin say.” [F.207.b]

“In a later time, there appeared in this world the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksambuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct,<sup>91</sup> the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tamed beings, the teacher of gods and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Śikhin.

“At that time, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, I was Bodhisattva Dānaśūra, and I heard from him the description of the qualities of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara.”

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “What were the qualities of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara that you heard the tathāgata describe?”

The Bhagavat said, “When all the devas, nāgas, yakṣas, rākṣasas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, and humans had gathered together, the bhagavat Śikhin looked at the great gathering and began to speak of the Dharma within that assembly. At that time, light rays of various colors emanated from the mouth of Bhagavat Śikhin. They were blue, yellow, red, white, orange, and the color of crystal and of silver. They shone on all worlds in the ten directions, then returned and entered the mouth of the bhagavat.

“From within that assembly Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi arose from his seat, bared one shoulder, and kneeling on his right knee and facing Bhagavat Śikhin, placed his palms together and addressed these words to him: [F.208.a] ‘Bhagavat, why did this sign appear?’

“Bhagavat Śikhin replied, ‘Noble son, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara is coming from the realm of Sukhāvatī. I manifest this kind of sign when he is coming. When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara comes, a profusion of wish-granting trees appears, a profusion of mango trees appears, star jasmine flowers and magnolia trees appear, ponds covered with flowers appear, and precious trees appear. There is a rain of various flowers,<sup>92</sup> a rain of precious stones—jewels, pearls, diamonds, beryl, conch, crystal, and coral—and there is a rain of divine cloth. In the vicinity of the monastery the seven jewels of a cakravartin appear—the precious wheel, the precious horse, the precious elephant, the precious jewel,<sup>93</sup> the precious wife, the precious householder, and the precious counselor—and the ground appears to be made of gold. When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara comes from the realm of Sukhāvatī, the entire world shakes six times.’

“Then Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi asked Bhagavat Śikhin, ‘Bhagavat, what are these omens of?’

“Bhagavat Śikhin answered, ‘Noble son, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara is arriving, and that is why these omens appear.’

“As the earth shook and it rained beautiful lotuses, [F.208.b] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara came to Bhagavat Śikhin. He was holding lotus flowers, each with a thousand petals and a golden stem. He bowed down his head to the bhagavat’s feet and offered the lotuses to him. He said, ‘Tathāgata Amitābha sends these flowers to you. The Tathagāta asks if you are in health, if you are at ease, and if all is well.’<sup>94</sup>

“Bhagavat Śikhin took the lotuses and placed them on his left. He then spoke of

the qualities of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara. ‘How did you, Avalokiteśvara, accomplish your task among the pretas, the beings in the Avīci hell, the beings in Kālasūtra and Raurava, the beings in Hāhava, Tāpana, the great hell Pretāyana, the great hell Agnighaṭa, the great hell Śālmali,<sup>95</sup> the great hell Śītodaka, and others?’<sup>96</sup>

“Avalokiteśvara replied, ‘The beings in those great hells are my task. I will completely ripen those beings, and then I will bring them to the highest complete enlightenment.’

“Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, having given this answer, bowed his head to the bhagavat’s feet, departed alone,<sup>97</sup> and disappeared into the sky as a blazing mass of fire.

“Then Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi asked Bhagavat Śikhin, ‘Bhagavat, if I may ask for an answer to a question, how much merit has Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara accumulated?’ [F.209.a]

“Bhagavat Śikhin replied, ‘If someone were for a deva’s eon to serve tathāgatas, arhats, and samyakṣaṃbuddhas as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges with robes, food, bowls, bedding, seats,<sup>98</sup> necessary medicine, and utensils—the merit that would be produced through those tathāgatas would be the same as that of the tip of one hair on the body of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara.

“‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, if it were to rain day and night on the four great continents for a twelve-month year, I could count each drop, but, noble son, I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, the ocean is 84,000 yojanas deep and has an immeasurable expanse, but I can count each drop all the way down to Vaḍavāmuḥha. However, noble son, I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can count every hair on all the four-legged creatures in the four great continents, such as lions, tigers, bears, hyenas, deer, camels, jackals,<sup>99</sup> and so on, and oxen, donkeys, cattle, elephants, horses, buffalo, and cats, but, noble son, I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, if stūpas<sup>100</sup> for tathāgatas, arhats, and samyakṣaṃbuddhas as numerous as atoms were made in divine gold and precious stones, [F.209.b] and in one day the relics were placed in them all, I can calculate the accumulation of that merit, but I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can count the number of leaves in a forest of agarwood trees, but I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, if all the women, men, boys, and girls in the four great continents were to gain the result of becoming stream entrants, once-returners, non-returners, arhats, and pratyekabuddhas, their merit would only be, as said before, equal to the merit of the tip of one hair on the body of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara.’

“Then Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi asked Bhagavat Śikhin, ‘Bhagavat, I have never

seen nor heard of tathāgatas having the kind of accumulation of merit that Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has, let alone bodhisattvas.’

“Bhagavat Śikhin said, ‘Noble son, even if all who are tathāgatas, arhats, and samyaksambuddhas like me were gathered in one place and provided for an eon with robes, food, bowls, bedding, seats, necessary medicine, and utensils, those tathāgatas, arhats, and samyaksambuddhas [F.210.a] would still not be able to calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit. So, noble son, it is needless to say that I cannot do so all by myself in this world.

“‘Those who remember Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s name will have happiness in this world. They will be completely freed from the sufferings of aging, death, and illness. They will be freed from the unavoidable sufferings of saṃsāra. Like white and pale yellow birds, like kings of geese moving with the speed of the wind, they will go to the realm of Sukhāvatī. They will hear the Dharma by listening to Tathāgata Amitābha teach. The sufferings of saṃsāra will not afflict their bodies. They will not become old or die. They will have no desire, anger, or stupidity. Their bodies will feel no hunger or thirst. They will not know the suffering of being inside a womb. Completely inspired by the taste of the Dharma, they will be reborn within a lotus and will remain in that realm until Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s powerful commitment is fulfilled and all beings have been brought to liberation.’

“Then Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi asked Bhagavat Śikhin, ‘Bhagavat, when will that powerful commitment be fulfilled?’

“Bhagavat Śikhin replied, ‘He completely ripens the many beings who circle in saṃsāra, teaches them the path to enlightenment, and teaches the Dharma in whatever form a being can be taught through. He teaches the Dharma in the form of a tathāgata to beings who are to be taught by a tathāgata. [F.210.b] He teaches the Dharma in the form of a pratyekabuddha to beings who are to be taught by a pratyekabuddha. He teaches the Dharma in the form of an arhat to beings who are to be taught by an arhat. He teaches the Dharma in the form of a bodhisattva to beings who are to be taught by a bodhisattva. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Maheśvara to beings who are to be taught by Maheśvara. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Nārāyaṇa to beings who are to be taught by Nārāyaṇa. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Brahmā to beings who are to be taught by Brahmā. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Śakra to beings who are to be taught by Śakra. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Āditya to beings who are to be taught by Āditya. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Candra to beings who are to be taught by Candra. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Agni to beings who are to be taught by Agni. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Varuṇa to beings who are to be taught by Varuṇa. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Vāyu to beings who are to be taught by Vāyu. He teaches the Dharma in the form of a nāga to beings who are to be taught by a nāga. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Vighnapati to beings who are to be taught by Vighnapati. He teaches the Dharma in the form of a yakṣa to beings who are to be taught by a yakṣa. He teaches the Dharma in the form of Vaiśravaṇa to beings who are to be taught by Vaiśravaṇa.<sup>101</sup> He teaches the Dharma in the form of a king to beings who are to be taught by a king. He teaches the Dharma in the form of a paṇḍita to beings who are to be taught by a paṇḍita. He teaches the Dharma in the

form of a king's soldier to beings who are to be taught by a king's soldier. [F.211.a] He teaches the Dharma in the form of parents to beings who are to be taught by their parents. He teaches the Dharma in whatever particular form a being should be taught through. That, noble son, is how Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara completely ripens beings and teaches them the Dharma of nirvāṇa.'

"Then Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi said to Bhagavat Śikhin, 'Bhagavat, this is extraordinarily marvelous. I have never seen nor heard of such a thing before. Not even the tathāgatas have what Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has.'

"Bhagavat Śikhin said, 'Noble son, in this Jambudvīpa there is a cave named Vajrakukṣi in which a hundred thousand million times ten million asuras live. Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara teaches the asuras there in the form of an asura. He teaches them the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*. He says to the listening asuras,<sup>102</sup> "You must listen."

"Then all other asuras, with loving minds and peaceful minds, with palms placed together, come to listen to this Dharma teaching from Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara:

"Those who turn their minds to this king of the sūtras will have happiness in this world. Hearing it will purify them of the five actions with immediate results on death. At the time of death, twelve tathāgatas will come and reassure them, saying, 'Noble son, do not be afraid. You have heard the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*. You have prepared various paths for going to Sukhāvatī. [F.211.b] You have prepared various parasols, various crowns, various earrings, and various necklaces.' When that kind of omen appears, at death they will go without impediment to Sukhāvatī."

'Ratnapāṇi, in that way, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara teaches the Dharma of nirvāṇa to the asuras and shows them the entranceway to nirvāṇa.'

"Then Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi bowed his head to Bhagavat Śikhin's feet and departed."

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, "It is very difficult, Bhagavat, to hear the manifold description of Avalokiteśvara's qualities."

The Bhagavat said, "Noble son, there will be a description of Avalokiteśvara's qualities after he has left Vajrakukṣi and come to the land of iron. Listen to it at that time. Before that there is this teaching:<sup>103</sup>

"In a later time, there was the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksaṃbuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct, the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tamed beings, the teacher of devas and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Viśvabhū.

"At that time, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, I was a rishi who taught patience and lived in a cliff among the mountains where people did not go. At that time, I heard Tathāgata Viśvabhū describe the qualities of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara. "Avalokiteśvara had gone to the land of gold and taught the eightfold noble path, the Dharma that teaches nirvāṇa, to the upside-down beings<sup>104</sup> who lived there.

"Then he left the land of gold and went to the land of silver. Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara said to the four-legged beings who lived there, 'You

must listen with perfect, pure thought to this Dharma teaching on contemplating nirvāṇa, on turning the mind to nirvāṇa.' Then Avalokiteśvara taught them the Dharma.

"Those beings sat before Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara and said to him: [F.212.a] 'Show the path to blind beings! Be a protector and refuge to beings who have no protector! Be a father and mother to those who do not have a father and mother! Be a lamp for the darkness of the three lower existences! Be aware of us and show us, with great compassion, the path to liberation.'<sup>105</sup> The beings who have obtained and always remember your name are happy; they are free from this kind of suffering that we experience.'

"Then the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, issued forth into the ears of those beings. When they heard it, they reached an irreversible level and were established in the highest happiness.

[B.2] "Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara left for another land, which was made of iron, where he approached the asura king Bali.<sup>106</sup>

"When the asura king Bali saw Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara approaching from the distance, he went toward Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, accompanied by his queens, his retinue, and many asuras such as Kubja and Vāmanaka<sup>107</sup> with their retinues. Bali bowed down at his feet and said these words:

'On this day, my life has borne fruit.

On this day, my wishes have been fulfilled.

On this day, my wishes have been fulfilled, for I am completely happy on actually seeing you.'

"Bali offered a bejeweled throne to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara and said, 'Bhagavat, look with compassion upon those who like to perform bad actions, who lust after the wives of others, [F.212.b] who are dedicated to killing, who kill others, and who are old and dying. Be a refuge to those who are weary of saṃsāra. You, lord, be our father and mother and show the path to we who are bound in bondage.'

"Avalokiteśvara said, 'Noble son, it is like this: I will explain how much merit is acquired by those who give alms to a tathāgata, an arhat, a samyaksaṃbuddha.

'Noble son, it is like this: For example, were there to be as many bodhisattvas like myself as there are grains of sand in twelve Ganges Rivers, and were they to be in one place with every facility for a deva's eon, they would still be unable to calculate that aggregation of merit. So it is needless to say that I cannot do so all by myself in the realm of the asuras.

'Noble son, it is like this: I can, for example, count how many atoms there are, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit through that alms giving.

'Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can count each drop in the vast extent of the ocean, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit through that alms giving.

'Noble son, it is like this: For example, if all the men, women, boys, and girls in the four continents were to apply themselves to work, and those people in the four continents were to do no other work than growing mustard, and from time to time the king of the nāgas would send down rain, and the mustard would grow perfectly for

one harvest; and then if the men, women, boys, and girls were to load that mustard into carts, bags, and baskets, onto camels, donkeys, and cattle, and collect the great harvest together; and then if the donkeys and cattle threshed it to make a vast heap of mustard seeds, [F.213.a] noble son, I could count each one of those grains, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit through that alms giving.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, the lower half of the supreme mountain Sumeru extends downward for 84,000 yojanas and the upper half extends upward for 84,000 yojanas. Noble son, if Sumeru were to become a mass of birch bark; if the vast ocean was to become an inkwell; and if all the men, women, boys, and girls who live in the four continents were to become scribes; and if they were to write on the limitless, endless extent of Mount Sumeru as birch bark, I would be able to count each letter, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit through that alms giving.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, if all those scribes were to become bodhisattvas on the tenth bhūmi, then the accumulation of merit of all those bodhisattvas on the tenth bhūmi would then equal the accumulation of merit through that alms giving.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can count each grain of sand in the ocean, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit through that alms giving.’

“Then the asura king Bali, with tears, a darkened face,<sup>108</sup> choking, with stuttering words and sighs, said these words to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara:

‘What kind of gift did I, Bali, make, with my queens and retinue, that brought me bondage in this lifetime? I made an offering to a bad recipient, and I am now experiencing the result of that action. Even a handful of dust thrown toward an omniscient one transforms into amṛta, but I made my offerings not knowing that, [F.213.b] and made an offering to a petitioner who came to me in the form of a dwarf.

‘I had prepared offerings of elephant- and horse-drawn carts carrying diadems, earrings, and necklaces, hung with precious yak-tail whisks, and covered with strings of pearls, a net of pearls as a rear adornment, and jingling golden bells hanging from silver cords.

‘I had also prepared offerings of a thousand tawny cows with silver hooves, golden horns, and covered with nets of pearls.

‘I had also prepared an offering of a thousand young women with excellent complexions, who were full-bodied, very beautiful, similar to and rivaling divine maidens; adorned with divine jewelry; wearing diadems, earrings, and necklaces; adorned with armlets, bracelets, anklets, and girdles; and wearing rings, sash necklaces, and gold rings on the big toes of their left feet.<sup>109</sup> They jingled as they moved, and wore clothing of silks in a variety of colors.

‘I had also prepared a hundred thousand precious seats, numerous heaps of gold, heaps of silver, and heaps of jewels.

‘I had prepared numerous heaps of clothing and jewelry.

‘I had prepared many hundreds of thousands of herds of cows along with herders.

‘I had prepared numerous kinds of food and drink. I had prepared divine food with

supreme flavors.

‘I had continuously prepared bejeweled bells of gold and silver, many bejeweled lion thrones of silver and gold, many thousands of divine yak-tail whisks, parasols, shoes adorned with gold, and bejeweled gold diadems.

‘At that time, I had invited a thousand kings, a hundred thousand Brahmins, and many hundreds of thousands of kṣatriyas, and I became arrogant on seeing<sup>110</sup> that I was their sole ruler. [F.214.a]

‘I now confess my first bad action. I tore out the hearts of the kṣatriya wives, slaughtered the boys and girls, bound all the great kṣatriyas in stocks<sup>111</sup> and shackles, and took them to a copper cave. I imprisoned many hundreds of thousands of kṣatriyas in that copper cave. I fastened the legs and arms of those kṣatriyas, such as the Khasas and Pāṇḍavas, with iron chains and iron pegs to keep them in that cave.

‘I made doors for the cave: the first door was made of wood, the second door was made of acacia, the third door was made of bronze, the fourth door was made of copper, the fifth door was made of iron, the sixth door was made of silver, and the seventh door was made of gold. Then I heaped seven mountains, one on top of the other, in front of the golden door.<sup>112</sup>

‘Then I went in search of Daśarathaputra,<sup>113</sup> one day in the form of a beggar, one day in the form of a bee, one day in the form of a pig, and one day in the form of a man, transforming into a different form each day, but I did not see him.

‘Then, after contemplating, I began to make my offerings. Daśarathaputra, seizing the opportunity, quickly removed the seven mountains, throwing them to another place. He then shouted loudly to the kṣatriyas. Yudhiṣṭhira, Nakula, Sahadeva, Bhīmasena, Arjuna, the Kauravas, and the other kings heard him and were relieved and comforted.<sup>114</sup>

‘Daśarathaputra asked, “Are you alive or dead?”

‘They replied, “We are alive, Bhagavat.”

‘Then the great hero destroyed all the doors and looked inside the copper cave. All the bound kings saw Nārāyaṇa. They discussed among each other, saying, “Either the time has come for the asura king Bali to die, [F.214.b] or the time has come for us to be slain.” They said to each other, “It is good if we die in battle, but it’s not good to die in chains. If we die in chains, the way of the kṣatriyas will come to an end, but if we die on the battlefield, we will be reborn in the higher realms.”

‘Then all the great kings returned to their own cities and made preparations with many horse-drawn chariots.

‘While they prepared their very precious chariots and weapons, Daśarathaputra transformed himself into a dwarf who wore a deerskin as a sash, held a bamboo staff, and carried a stool. He came to where I was and arrived at my door.

‘The guard stationed there said, “Brahmin dwarf, you can’t enter.”

‘He said, “I have come a long way

‘Then the guard asked, “Brahmin, where do you come from?”

‘He answered, “I have come to the rishi king from Candradvīpa.”

‘Then the guard came to me<sup>115</sup> and said, “Your Majesty, a Brahmin dwarf has arrived here.”

‘I, the lord of the asuras, asked, “What is it that he requires?”



‘The guard said, “Your Majesty, I don’t know.”

‘Then I said, “Go and bring the Brahmin to me.”

‘The guard summoned him, saying, “Come in, great Brahmin.”

‘Then he came inside and was placed on a precious seat.

‘Śukra, who was renowned as my *upādhyāya*, was also present at this time and said to me, “This is a person who brings doom.<sup>116</sup> He will certainly cause you an obstacle.”

‘I asked him, “Bhagavat, how do you know that?”

‘Śukra answered, “I know by seeing his signs and omens.”

‘I asked, “What can we do?” [F.215.a]

‘Nārāyaṇa thought, “If he thinks about this, he will definitely decide against making a gift, so I will put divinely inspired speech into his mouth.”

‘So I said, “Come here, Brahmin. What is your wish?”

‘The Brahmin answered, “I ask for two steps of ground.”

‘I said, “Great Brahmin, if you are asking for two steps, I will give you three.”

‘The dwarf accepted this gift, saying, “This is auspicious.” He accepted it along with a gift of water, sesame, and gold, and then vanished.

‘Śukra said to me, “Rishi King, I said that this was a man of doom who had come, but you did not pay heed to what I said. So may you experience the result of your actions!”

‘Then Nārāyaṇa appeared in his own form. He was vast, with the sun and moon on his shoulders, and holding a sword, a bow, a wheel, a long spear, and a short spear<sup>117</sup> in his hands. I, lord of the asuras, became faint, grew dizzy, fell headlong, and said, “What have I done? I have taken poison with my own hand!”

‘Nārāyaṇa took two steps and said, “Give me my third step!”

‘I said, “There can be no third. You have taken all the ground that can be taken. What can I do?”

‘Nārāyaṇa said, “Wherever I place you, there shall you stay.”

‘Then I, lord of the asuras, said to him, “Whatever you command, that I will do.”

‘Nārāyaṇa asked, “Is this true? Is this true?”

‘I answered, “It’s the truth, it’s the truth.”

‘Thus Nārāyaṇa caught me in the noose of truth. The offering site was destroyed and the offering bowls discarded. The Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas took away the maidens. The Kauravas, Pāṇḍavas, and the others<sup>118</sup> took away the golden lion thrones, the divine parasols, the bejeweled shoes, the clothing, the jewelry, the bejeweled golden armlets, [F.215.b] and the tawny cows, destroying the offering site.

‘I, lord of the asuras, having been expelled from the offering site,<sup>119</sup> contemplated my situation and said, “I was about to make an excellent offering, but I made an unfortunate offering that has resulted in this bondage. Homage to you, lord. Do what is to be done. It will be as you do.”<sup>120</sup>

‘Then Nārāyaṇa took me, my queens, and my retinue and placed us in the underworld.

‘I<sup>121</sup> have this to say to the bhagavat: In the past I made that gift to a bad recipient, and now I am experiencing the result of that action.

‘Be my refuge, holder of beautiful lotuses.

‘I make this praise to the one who wears a matted topknot; to the one who has an omniscient buddha<sup>122</sup> upon his head; to the one who brings relief to many beings; to the one who has compassion for the inferior and desolate; to the one who has beautiful eyes like parasols; to the one who has illuminated the world;<sup>123</sup> to the one who is a supreme king of healing; to the one who is a perfectly pure being; to the one who has the supreme attainment of yoga; to the one who has perfect liberation; to the one who is a lover of liberation; to the one who is like a wish-fulfilling jewel; to the one who protects the treasure of the Dharma; to the one who is a teacher of the six perfections; and to the one whose thoughts are good.

‘The beings who remember your name, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, will have happiness. When those who have been born in Kālasūtra, Raurava, Avīci,<sup>124</sup> and in the city of the pretas remember your name, they will be freed from the great suffering of the lower existences. The beings who remember your name will have good thoughts. They will go to the realm of Sukhāvātī, and listen to the Dharma from Tathāgata Amitābha.’

“Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara made a prophecy to Bali, the lord of the asuras: [F.216.a] ‘You, lord of the asuras, will become the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksambuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct, the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tamed beings, the teacher of devas and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Śrī. You will guide all the asuras. In your buddha realm there will not be the word *desire*, there will not be the word *anger*, there will not be the word *ignorance*, and you will come into possession of the six-syllable mahāvidyā.’

“As a gift for requesting the Dharma, Bali presented Avalokiteśvara with strings of pearls worth a hundred thousand silver coins<sup>125</sup> and diadems adorned with various jewels.

“Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara began to teach the Dharma.

‘Listen, great king. Human beings are continually thinking about transitory things, about acquisitions,<sup>126</sup> about great pleasures, about male and female slaves, servants, and hired workers, about costly clothes, beds, and seats, about valuable treasures, riches, stores of grain, and storerooms, about sons and daughters, and about wives and parents. They are ignorant. Those things that they are attached to appear as dreams do.

‘At the time of death, there will be no one to protect them. When they are separated from their lives they will look back at Jambudvīpa. They will see the great river filled with pus and blood. They will see the great trees that blaze with fire, blaze strongly, and blaze fiercely. When they see them they will be terrified. Yama’s guards<sup>127</sup> will bind them with nooses and drag them away. When their feet are cut through on the great road of razors, as they lift that foot another foot will replace it. [F.216.b] Numerous ravens, vultures, eagles, and dogs will devour them. They will experience the sensation of great suffering in the hells. When they step off the great road of razors, five hundred thorns, each with sixteen spikes, will pierce each foot. They will cry out, “What have I, who delighted in bad actions, done?”<sup>128</sup>

‘Yama’s servants will reply, “Friend, you did not offer alms to the Tathāgata. You did not hear the *gaṇḍī* being beaten. You did not circumambulate a stūpa anywhere.”

‘Then they will reply, “We were without faith, delighted in bad actions, rejected the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, and are experiencing the result of those actions.”

‘Then Yama’s guardians will take them to King Yama, bring them before him, and present them to him.

‘King Yama will say to the guardians, “Show them today your place of work!”

‘Then Yama’s guardians will bring them to the great Kālasūtra hell and put them into it. Inside there, though a hundred spears strike them, they will not die. Though a hundred spears strike them a second time, they will not die. Though a hundred spears strike them a third time, they still will not die. Because they will not die, they are thrown into a furnace, but there they still will not die.

‘A red hot metal ball will be inserted into their mouths, incinerating their lips, destroying their teeth, splitting their palate, and loudly burning up their throat, gullet, heart, anus, and whole body.

‘It is like this, great king. There will be no one to protect them in that other world. Therefore, great king, you must diligently create merit in this life.’

“In that way Avalokiteśvara gave Bali the appropriate Dharma teaching. [F.217.a] Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara said to that great king, ‘I must leave, for today many are gathering in the Jetavana Monastery.’<sup>129</sup>

“Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara radiated many blue, yellow, red, white, crystal, and silver light rays that reached Tathāgata Viśvabhū, before whom devas, nāgas, yakṣas, mahoragas, and humans had gathered.

“From within that assembly of bodhisattvas the bodhisattva named Gaganagañja arose from his seat, bared one shoulder, and kneeling on his right knee and facing Bhagavat Viśvabhū, placed his palms together and addressed these words to him: ‘Bhagavat, where did these light rays come from?’

“Bhagavat Viśvabhū said, ‘Noble son, the light rays came from Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, who is in the palace of Bali, the lord of the asuras.’

“Bodhisattva Gaganagañja then asked Bhagavat Viśvabhū, ‘Is there a way for me to see Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara?’

“Bhagavat Viśvabhū answered, ‘Noble son, he is coming here.’

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara left the palace of Bali, lord of the asuras, divine flowers fell on Jetavana Monastery, and extremely beautiful wish-granting trees appeared there. They were hung with hundreds of thousands of adornments, with many hundreds of thousands of strings of pearls, with silk, with monastic robes,<sup>130</sup> and with clusters of garlands. Their trunks were red, and their leaves were made of gold and silver. There were also many trees made of coral, many blossom-covered trees, [F.217.b] and pools that were completely filled with flowers.

“Then Bodhisattva Gaganagañja asked Bhagavat Viśvabhū, ‘Bhagavat, is Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara not coming?’

“Bhagavat Viśvabhū answered, ‘Noble son, he has left the palace of Bali, lord of the asuras, and is going to an extremely dreadful land<sup>131</sup> named Tamondhakāra where there are no humans. There, noble son, the sun and moon do not shine. A wish-fulfilling jewel named Varada provides light in that place.

“Many hundreds of thousands of yakṣas and rākṣasas live in that continent. They

become happy as Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara arrives there, and with joy in their hearts they run to him. When they come to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, they pay homage at his feet and ask, ‘You are not tired? You are not exhausted? It has been a long time since you were here in Tamondhakāra.’

‘He answers, ‘I have been doing much. I have not been ripening my own mind for the sake of one being, but have been, with the motivation of great compassion, ripening many beings.’<sup>132</sup>

‘The yakṣas and rākṣasas lead him to a lion throne of divine gold and jewels, upon which he sits. Seated,<sup>133</sup> he teaches the Dharma to the yakṣas and rākṣasas: ‘Listen! Those who hear and then possess, study, promulgate,<sup>134</sup> and have their minds completely focused on even one four-line verse<sup>135</sup> of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, will be inspired to accumulate merit.

‘Noble sons, it is like this: For example, I know the number of atoms that exist, but, noble sons, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*.

‘Noble sons, it is like this: For example, I can count the drops in the vast ocean, but, noble sons, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from even one four-line verse<sup>136</sup> of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*. [F.218.a]

‘Noble sons, if tathāgatas, arhats, and samyaksaṃbuddhas as numerous as the grains of sand in twelve Ganges Rivers were gathered together in one place and for twelve eons were provided with robes, food, bowls, bedding, seats,<sup>137</sup> necessary medicine, and utensils, they would still not be able to calculate the merit that comes from even one four-line verse<sup>138</sup> of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*. So it is needless to say that I cannot do so all by myself in Tamondhakāra.

‘Noble sons, it is like this: For example, even if all the households in the four continents built monasteries of gold and jewels and built a thousand stūpas inside each of those monasteries, and in one day inserted relics in them all, the accumulation of merit from one four-line verse<sup>139</sup> of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, would be far greater than the merit from inserting the relics.

‘Noble sons, it is like this: For example, just as the five great rivers flow into the great ocean, noble son, in that same way merit accumulates from one four-line verse<sup>140</sup> of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*.’

‘Then the yakṣas and rākṣasas asked Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, ‘What kind of accumulation of merit is obtained by those beings who write out this precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*?’

‘Noble sons, their accumulation of merit is immeasurable. Those who engage in writing out the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, are engaged in writing the 84,000 compilations of the Dharma. They will become kings; they will become cakravartins who rule the four continents; they will give birth to thousands of brave heroic sons with perfect bodies and who defeat their adversaries.

‘Those who always possess and remember the name of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, [F.218.b] will be completely liberated from the suffering of saṃsāra and be completely liberated from birth, aging, sickness, death, misery, lamentation, suffering, unhappiness, and conflict. Wherever they are reborn, in every life they will remember their previous lives. Their bodies will have an aroma like *gośīrṣa* sandalwood. From their mouths will come the scent of the blue lotus. Their bodies will be completely perfect, and they will have immense, powerful strength.’

‘In that way Avalokiteśvara taught them an appropriate Dharma. Some of the yakṣas and rākṣasas attained the result of becoming a once-returner. The others attained the result of becoming a non-returner.<sup>141</sup> The yakṣas and rākṣasas then said, ‘Stay here.<sup>142</sup> Do not go anywhere else. We will build a stūpa of divine gold in Tamondhakāra. We will create a circumambulatory walkway of gold.’

‘Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara said to them, ‘I have to bring many beings onto the path to enlightenment.’

‘Then the yakṣas and rākṣasas, resting cheeks on hands, brooded and said to each other, ‘Our Avalokiteśvara is going to leave us, and we will not be able to talk about the Dharma with him.’

‘As Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was leaving, the yakṣas and rākṣasas followed him. Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara said to them, ‘It is too far for you to come, so you should go back.’

‘The yakṣas and rākṣasas bowed down at the feet of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara and returned.

‘Then Avalokiteśvara vanished into the sky as a mass of flames.’

‘Avalokiteśvara then manifested in the form of a Brahmin and went among the devas in the Śuddhāvāsa realms. [F.219.a]

‘Among those devas there was a deva named Sukuṇḍala who was poor and suffering. Avalokiteśvara came to that deva in the form of the Brahmin and said to him, ‘I’m hungry and thirsty.’

‘The deva said to the Brahmin, ‘Great Brahmin, I have nothing at all.’

‘The Brahmin said, ‘You should give me what little you have.’

‘So Sukuṇḍala entered his divine palace and looked inside his pots. He saw that some pots had become completely filled with priceless precious jewels, other pots had become completely filled with food that had the supreme flavors, and the left side of the divine palace had become completely filled with divine clothing. Sukuṇḍala thought, ‘Without a doubt the one at my door is an excellent recipient for offerings, and he has brought me this attainment of splendor.’

‘Sukuṇḍala invited the Brahmin into his divine palace. The Brahmin entered, and Sukuṇḍala offered him the divine jewels, served him the food with divine perfect flavors, and gave him the divine clothing.<sup>143</sup> The Brahmin ate and recited a benediction.

‘Deva Sukuṇḍala then asked him, ‘Great Brahmin, where do you come from?’

‘He replied, ‘I come from the monastery named Jetavana.’

‘Sukuṇḍala then asked him, ‘What is that place like?’

“The Brahmin answered, ‘It is a place that is delightful, filled with divine jewels, and completely beautified by divine wish-granting trees. There are beautiful flowers, many kinds of bathing pools, many who have the qualities of right conduct and are worthy recipients for offerings, and there are the miracles of Tathāgata Viśvabhū. Son of a deva, that is how pleasant that place is.’

“The deva then said, ‘Brahmin, you definitely speak the truth. Who are you? Are you a deva or a human? If you are a human you don’t seem to be one.’ [F.219.b]

“The Brahmin replied, ‘I am not a deva and I am not a human. I am one who has compassion for the poor and the wretched. I am one who shows them the path to enlightenment. I am a bodhisattva.’

“Deva Sukuṇḍala then offered his diadem and earrings to the Brahmin and recited:

‘Oh, the one who is comprised of qualities  
Is devoid of all evil.  
On this day the seed has been planted,  
And on this day the fruit has been produced.’

“After the deva had recited this verse, the Brahmin departed.”

“The great Brahmin descended from the deva realms to the island of Siṃhala. Arriving there, he transformed himself into a handsome form and approached the rākṣasīs. When they saw his handsome body they desired him. Desiring him, they came to him and said, ‘Sir, take us young women. We have no husband. For we who have no husband, be a husband. For we who have no protector, be a protector. For we who have no support, be a support. These are your homes with food; homes with drink; homes with clothes and a variety of multicolored beds,<sup>144</sup> beautiful gardens, and beautiful pools.’

“He said, ‘Only if you do as I command.’

“They answered, ‘We will!’

“He then taught them the noble eightfold path. He made them recite the fourfold scriptures. Some of them attained the result of becoming a once-returner, and some attained the result of becoming a non-returner.<sup>145</sup> The rākṣasīs were no longer afflicted by the suffering of desire; there was no anger in their minds; they did not wish to cause anyone’s death; they continually delighted in the Dharma; and they took vows. They promised, ‘We shall kill no more. We will nourish ourselves in the same way that humans do in Jambudvīpa: with food and drink. From now on we will not act like rākṣasīs, and we will keep the *upāsikā* vows.’<sup>146</sup> In this way the rākṣasīs took vows.”

“Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara then left the island of Siṃhala [F.220.a] and went to a place where many hundreds of thousands of different kinds of insects lived within a cesspit in the great city of Vārāṇasī. When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara arrived there, he transformed himself into the form of a bee that made a buzzing sound that was heard by the insects as the words, “*Namo buddhāya, namo dharmāya, namaḥ saṃghāya.*”<sup>147</sup> The insects remembered the words *namo*

*buddhāya, namo dharmāya, namaḥ saṃghāya*,<sup>148</sup> and the thunderbolt of wisdom destroyed the mountain, which has twenty peaks, that is the view of the aggregates as a self,<sup>149</sup> and they were then all reborn in the realm of Sukhāvatī as bodhisattvas named Sugandhamukha.”

“After Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara had ripened those beings, he left the great city of Vārāṇasī.

“Then he went to Magadha. When he arrived in the land of Magadha, he saw beings that had lived for twenty years in the wilderness eating each other’s flesh. Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara wondered, ‘By what method can I bring contentment to these beings?’

“Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara then caused divine rains to fall. First there was a rain of water, and the water brought them satisfaction. Then there came a rain of divine food with supreme flavors, and they were completely filled. When they were completely satisfied by eating the food, a rain of grain fell. Then there fell sesame, rice, jujubes, and wild rice. Whatever those beings wished for, their wishes were fulfilled each time.

“Those beings in the land of Magadha were amazed, and they all sat down<sup>150</sup> together. Seated,<sup>151</sup> they asked each other, ‘What deity manifested all of this?’

“Among them there was one being who was many hundreds of thousands of years old. He was aged, old, feeble, hunchbacked, and bent like a cow’s ear. He said to them, ‘Only Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has this kind of power [F.220.b], no other deity.’

“Then those gathered there asked him, ‘What are the qualities of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara?’

“Then the man began to describe Avalokiteśvara’s qualities to them: ‘He is a lamp for those in darkness. He is a parasol for those burned and pained by the sun. He is a river for those afflicted with thirst. He gives freedom from fear to those who are terrified and afraid. He is medicine for those afflicted with sickness. He is a father and mother for beings who suffer. He is a teacher of nirvāṇa to those reborn in Avīci. Those are his special qualities.

‘Those who remember his name will have happiness in this world and will completely leave behind every suffering in saṃsāra.

‘Those who continually gather and offer flowers and incense to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara will become cakravartin kings who possess the seven jewels. The seven jewels are: the precious wheel, the precious horse, the precious elephant, the precious jewel, the precious wife, the precious householder, and the precious counselor.

‘Those who offer flowers to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara will have aromatic bodies, and wherever they are reborn, their bodies will be perfect.’

“The old man taught Avalokiteśvara’s special qualities in that way. Then those gathered there returned to their homes, and the aged man, having taught them an appropriate Dharma, returned to his home, and Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara [F.221.a] vanished into the sky.”

“While Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the sky he thought, ‘It has been a long time since I’ve seen Tathāgata Viśvabhū,’ and so he next went to Jetavana Monastery. Bhagavat Viśvabhū saw him coming.

“As Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara approached the Jetavana monastery, he saw devas, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans, and a gathering of many hundreds of bodhisattvas.

“Bodhisattva Gaganagaṇja asked Bhagavat Viśvabhū, ‘Bhagavat, which bodhisattva is arriving?’

“Bhagavat Viśvabhū said, ‘This is Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara who is arriving.’

“Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara bowed his head to Bhagavat Viśvabhū’s feet, circumambulated him three times, and sat on his left.

“Bhagavat Viśvabhū asked him, ‘Are you tired? Are you weary? Noble son, what work have you been doing?’

“Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara told Viśvabhū what had occurred. Bodhisattva Gaganagaṇja was extremely amazed and said, ‘I have never seen such a field of activity as that of this bodhisattva. There is no such field of activity among the tathāgatas, let alone among the bodhisattvas.’

“Then Bodhisattva Gaganagaṇja came to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara and sat before him. Seated,<sup>152</sup> he asked Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, ‘Are you tired? Are you weary?’

“He replied, ‘I am not tired and I am not weary.’

“They talked with each other and then became silent. [F.221.b]

“Then Bhagavat Viśvabhū began to teach upon the six perfections: ‘Noble sons, listen. Having become a bodhisattva, you must complete the perfection of generosity. Similarly, you must complete the perfection of conduct, the perfection of patience, the perfection of diligence, the perfection of meditation, and the perfection of wisdom.’

“Having taught that Dharma he became silent.

“Then the assembled beings each returned to their own dwelling places, and the bodhisattvas returned to their own buddha realms.”

This completes part one of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*.



## *Part Two*

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin addressed these words to the Bhagavat: “Bhagavat, I request that you teach what samādhis Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has previously remained in.”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, they are like this: The samādhi named Creation, the samādhi named Illumination, the samādhi named Sublime Vajra, the samādhi named Sunlight, the samādhi named Dispersal, the samādhi named Armlet, the samādhi named Supreme Vajra Victory Banner, the samādhi named Ornament, the samādhi named King of Arrays, the samādhi named Seeing the Ten Directions, the samādhi named The Supreme Illumination of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel,<sup>153</sup> the samādhi named Dharma Holder,<sup>154</sup> the samādhi named Descending into the Ocean,<sup>155</sup> the samādhi named Totally Stable,<sup>156</sup> the samādhi named Giving Joy,<sup>157</sup> the samādhi named Vajra Victory Banner,<sup>158</sup> the samādhi named Viewing All Worlds,<sup>159</sup> the samādhi named Completely Present,<sup>160</sup> [F.222.a] the samādhi named Truly Bowing Down, the samādhi named Coiled at the Crown, the samādhi named Supreme Illumination by the Moon,<sup>161</sup> the samādhi named Many Attendants, the samādhi named Divine Bright Earrings,<sup>162</sup> the samādhi named Lamp of the Eon,<sup>163</sup> the samādhi named Manifesting Miracles, the samādhi named Supreme Lotus, the samādhi named King's Power,<sup>164</sup> the samādhi named Extinguishing Avīci, the samādhi named Blazing, the samādhi named Divine Circle,<sup>165</sup> the samādhi named Drop of Amṛta, the samādhi named Circle of Light, the samādhi named Immersion in the Ocean, the samādhi named Door of the Celestial Palace, the samādhi named Cuckoo's Song, the samādhi named Scent of the Blue Lotus, the samādhi named Mounted, the samādhi named Vajra Armor, the samādhi named Elephant's Delight, the samādhi named Lion's Play, the samādhi named Unsurpassable, the samādhi named Subduing, the samādhi named Moon on High, the samādhi named Shining, the samādhi named Hundred Light Rays, the samādhi named Sprinkling, the samādhi named Brightening, the samādhi named Beautiful Appearance, the samādhi named Summoning the Asuras, the samādhi named Meditation, the samādhi named Summoning Nirvāṇa, the samādhi named Great Lamp,<sup>166</sup> the samādhi named Liberation of Sensation,<sup>167</sup> the samādhi named King of Lamps,<sup>168</sup> the samādhi named Creating the Supreme State,<sup>169</sup> the samādhi named Creating Indestructibility,<sup>170</sup> the samādhi named Facing the Deities,<sup>171</sup> the samādhi named Creating Union, the samādhi named Teaching Ultimate Truth, the samādhi named Lightning, the samādhi named Array of Names,<sup>172</sup> the samādhi named Gaping Lion, the samādhi named Face of Arcturus,<sup>173</sup>

[F.222.b] the samādhi named Approaching, the samādhi named Flash of Intelligence,<sup>174</sup> the samādhi named Increasing Power of Mindfulness, the samādhi named Aspiration, the samādhi named Carriage of Victory, and the samādhi named Teaching the Path.

“Noble son, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has those samādhis. In each of his pores there are a hundred thousand samādhis. Noble son, in that way, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has an incalculable accumulation of merit. Even the tathāgatas do not have that kind of accumulation of merit, let alone a bodhisattva.

[B.3] “Noble son, in the past, when I was a bodhisattva named Siṃhalarāja,<sup>175</sup> I was going to the island of Siṃhala with five hundred merchants. We were going to Siṃhala Island bringing much merchandise in chariots, in bags, baskets, and pots, carried by camels, oxen, donkeys, and so on, so as to go to villages, towns, suburbs, cities, and markets.

“I found an excellent ship that had been to Siṃhala Island many times. I asked the pilot, ‘Toward what lands are the winds blowing? Are the winds blowing toward Ratnavāṭī,<sup>176</sup> or are the winds blowing toward Yavanadvīpa,<sup>177</sup> or are the winds blowing toward the island of the rākṣasīs?’<sup>178</sup>

“The pilot answered, ‘Know this, lord: the breeze is blowing toward Siṃhala Island.’<sup>179</sup>

“Then we set sail in the great ship in the direction of Siṃhala Island, but the rākṣasīs who lived on Siṃhala Island sent untimely winds that broke the great ship into pieces. We<sup>180</sup> fell into the water and swam to the shore.

“Then five hundred rākṣasīs took on the form of maidens, and with a great cry came down to the shore. They gave us cotton robes. We put them on, wrung our clothes dry, [F.223.a] and went to sit under a large magnolia tree. Seated, we talked among ourselves, asking each other what we should do, but we agreed that there was nothing we could do, and we became silent.

“Then the rākṣasīs came to us and said, ‘You who are not masters of a house, become masters. You who have no refuge, obtain a refuge. You who have no home, obtain a home. These will be your homes supplied with food. These will be your homes supplied with drink. These will be your gardens for you to enjoy. These will be your bathing pools for you to enjoy.’

“After the rākṣasīs said that, each one took a merchant home to be the master of her house. The senior rākṣasī<sup>181</sup> took me home to be the master of her house. She satisfied me with food that had perfect, divine flavors. Having satisfied me with food, she frolicked with me, and in this way I was perfectly satisfied with human pleasures. Two or three weeks<sup>182</sup> passed in that manner. Then one night as I was lying in bed, I was astonished to see that the lamp was laughing. I had never seen or heard before of a burning, laughing lamp.<sup>183</sup> I asked it, ‘Why are you laughing?’

“It answered, ‘This is one of the rākṣasīs who live on Siṃhala Island. She is going to kill you.’

“Then I asked it, ‘How do you know she is a rākṣasī?’

“It answered, ‘If you don’t believe me, take the road south<sup>184</sup> and follow it. You will come to a high fortress<sup>185</sup> without windows or doorways. Many hundreds of

merchants have been thrown in there. Some are alive. Some are dead. If you don't believe me, follow that road. Follow that road and observe. Then you will believe me.'

"Then I<sup>186</sup> made the *rākṣasī* enter the sleep named Ignorance's Net, and I went out at night, armed with a sword<sup>187</sup> that glowed like moonlight. [F.223.b] I took the road that led south, and followed it until I eventually came to an iron fortress. I walked around it, but couldn't find a door. However, there was a magnolia tree beside the iron fortress, and so I<sup>188</sup> climbed up it. I made the sound of spitting, and the merchants inside who heard me<sup>189</sup> said, 'Great head merchant, know this! We have been thrown into this iron fortress. Each day a hundred men are taken and eaten. When they've been eaten, their bones are scattered around the iron fortress.'

"That is how they described what had happened to them. I climbed down the magnolia tree and went quickly back up the southern road.

"When I returned to the house, the lamp asked me, 'Head merchant, did you see?'

"I answered, 'I saw,' and then asked it, 'What can I do?'

"The lamp said, 'Lord, I have a way by which you can comfortably and happily leave *Siṃhala* Island and see *Jambudvīpa* once more.'

"It said, 'There is a divine king of horses named *Bālāha* who has compassion for the desolate and destitute. *Bālāha*, the king of horses, eats the herb named *sarvaśetāna*,<sup>190</sup> rolls back and forth on the golden sand, shakes his body, and then asks, 'Who is going to cross over to the far shore?' You should then say, 'Lord, I am going to cross over to the far shore.'"

"After the lamp told me this, I went to lie down next to the *rākṣasī*. She awoke and asked me, 'Noble son, why is your body cold?'

"I answered, 'I went outside the town to defecate and urinate. [F.224.a] That's why my body has become cold.' And so she went back to sleep.

"At sunrise I got up and said to all the merchants, 'Come with me. We are going outside the town.'

"Then we all left the town. When we were outside the town and had sat down,<sup>191</sup> I asked them, 'How affectionate are your wives toward you?'

"Some said, 'She is very loving toward me.'

"Some said, 'She takes care of me with food that has perfect, divine flavors.'

"Some said, 'She provides me with all kinds of clothes.'

"Some said, 'She gives me diadems, earrings, and necklaces.'

"Some said, 'I don't have to do any physical work.'

"Some said, 'She cares for me with sandalwood, musk, and camphor.'

"After the merchants told me these things, I said to them, 'It's not right for us to be attached to *rākṣasīs* in this way.'

"When they heard me say this, they were disturbed and asked, 'Great head merchant, is it true that they are the *rākṣasīs* who live on *Siṃhala* Island?'

"I answered, 'It's true, it's true. By the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, they are not humans. They are *rākṣasīs*.'

"The merchants then asked me, 'What can we do? Do you have a plan for us?'

"I said to them, 'On *Siṃhala* Island there is *Bālāha*, the king of horses, who has compassion for the desolate and destitute. He eats the herb called *sarvaśetāna*, rolls

back and forth on the golden sand, shakes his body, and then asks three times, “Who is going to cross over to the far shore? Who is going to cross over to the far shore? Who is going to cross over to the far shore?”<sup>192</sup> We should go to him.

“The merchants then asked, ‘On what day should we go?’

“I answered, ‘We should definitely leave in three days’ time. Each person should prepare provisions for the journey.’ [F.224.b]

“They promised they would and returned to town, each to their own home.

“The *rākṣasī* asked me,<sup>193</sup> ‘Are you tired? Are you weary? Have you seen the delightful gardens and the delightful bathing pools?’<sup>194</sup>

“I answered, ‘I haven’t seen any.’

“The *rākṣasī* then said, ‘Noble son, in this *Siṃhala* Island there are pleasing gardens of all kinds that are completely filled with flowers, and there are many hundreds of bathing pools.’

“I said, ‘I will go to those gardens and the various flower-filled pools in three days’ time. I will gather beautiful flowers there and then return. Therefore you should prepare good traveling provisions for me.’

“She said, ‘Noble son, I will do so.’

“I contemplated my predicament, thinking, ‘These *rākṣasīs* will kill us if they find out.’ I remained silent, contemplating this predicament. The *rākṣasī* served me good food, and as I ate it, I sighed.

“The *rākṣasī* asked me, ‘Noble son, why did you sigh?’

“I said to her, ‘The people of *Jambudvīpa* and my homeland are so pleasant.’

“The *rākṣasī* said, ‘Noble son, what would you do in your homeland? In this *Siṃhala* Island you have a home with food, a home with drink, a home with clothes, a variety of delightful gardens, and a variety of delightful bathing pools.<sup>195</sup> Enjoy these divine pleasures. Why be sorrowful in *Jambudvīpa*?’ I said nothing in reply.

“That day passed, and on the second day, my provisions of good food were quickly prepared. Everyone had made his preparations, and at dawn on the third day we all left the city, coming out through its gate. When we were outside, we agreed that not one of us would turn to look back at *Siṃhala* Island. After we had made that agreement, we hurried as quickly as we could, and eventually reached the location of *Bālāha*, the king of horses. [F.225.a]

“*Bālāha*, the king of horses, was enjoying the *sarvaśetāna* herb. When he had finished enjoying it, he rolled back and forth on the golden sand and shook his body. When he shook his body, the island of *Siṃhala* shook.

“He asked three times, ‘Who is going to cross over to the far shore? Who is going to cross over to the far shore? Who is going to cross over to the far shore?’<sup>196</sup>

“The merchants said, ‘We are going to cross over to the far shore.’

“*Bālāha*, the king of horses, said to us, ‘None of you must look back at *Siṃhala* Island. None of you must turn your eyes toward *Siṃhala* Island.’

“We agreed to do as he said. Then first I alone mounted him, and then the five hundred merchants mounted him. When we were all mounted, the *rākṣasīs* who lived on *Siṃhala* Island came running after us, making a great clamor, weeping and wailing pitifully. Hearing the noise, the merchants turned round and looked back at them, and when they did so they fell headlong into the water. When they had fallen into the

water, the *rākṣasīs* pulled them out and ate them.

“I arrived in Jambudvīpa alone. When we reached the shore, I circumambulated Bālāha, the king of horses, three times, bowed to him, and departed. I journeyed toward my home and eventually arrived there. My father and mother embraced me and wept, and their tears dissolved their cataracts so they regained their sight.

“Then I sat with my parents and told them everything that had happened. My parents said, ‘Son, we have got you back alive. We do not need wealth. We only need a walking stick for when we are old; someone to guide us on the path when we are blind; someone to make food offerings to us when we have died; and someone to be our protector when we are dead. Son, you have brought us delight like a cooling breeze.’ That is what my parents said to me.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, those are the sufferings I experienced when I was a head merchant. [F.225.b] Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it was like this: Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was Bālāha, the king of horses, and he rescued me from the fear of death.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit, but I can say just a little about his pores.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: A trillion *gandharvas* dwell in a pore named *Suvarṇa*. They do not experience the sufferings of *samsāra* and are satisfied by perfect happiness. They perceive divine objects but are free from attachment. They have no aversion, they do not become angry, and they never have malice. They all dwell on the noble eightfold path and always aspire to the Dharma. Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: In this pore named *Suvarṇa* there is a wish-fulfilling jewel named *Avabhāsa*. Whenever the *gandharvas* wish for something, their wishes are fulfilled.”

“Beyond the pore named *Suvarṇa*, there is a pore named *Kṛṣṇa*, within which a trillion *rishis* dwell. Some have one clairvoyance; some have two clairvoyances; some have three clairvoyances; some have four clairvoyances; some have five clairvoyances; and some have the six clairvoyances.

“Within that pore the ground is silver and the mountains are gold with silver peaks adorned by rubies.<sup>197</sup> There are seventy-seven such mountains, and on each of those mountains live eighty thousand *rishis*. Those *rishis* have leaf huts<sup>198</sup> where there are wish-fulfilling trees with red trunks and gold and silver leaves that shine like jewels. [F.226.a] There are four pools near each wish-fulfilling tree. Some are filled with water that has the eight qualities, and some are completely filled with divine flowers. The area around them is completely adorned by wish-fulfilling trees that are divine coral trees hung with divine adornments; hung with diadems and earrings; hung with one hundred and eight-string necklaces and sixty-four-string necklaces; and hung with bracelets; and their leaves are made of jewels and gold.

“In each of those wish-fulfilling trees there live a hundred *gandharvas*. When they play music, deer, birds, and so on contemplate deeply. They see the suffering and happiness of beings in *samsāra*<sup>199</sup> and the way in which suffering is experienced in Jambudvīpa. They see birth, aging, and death. They see separation from the desired and beloved, and encounters with the disliked. They see human beings undergoing

many kinds of suffering. The deer and birds contemplate deeply<sup>200</sup> in that way. When they remember the name the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, food with supreme divine flavors appears; divine aromatic substances appear; and divine clothing appears. Whenever they wish for something, their wishes are fulfilled.”

Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, I am utterly astonished.”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, why are you astonished?”

Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, if those kinds of things appear just because someone thinks of the name of the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, [F.226.b] then those who listen to, cause to be written out,<sup>201</sup> possess, recite, study, and have their minds completely focused on the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, will have happiness.

“Those who write a single letter from the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket's Display*, will have happiness and will not see these sufferings of saṃsāra. They will not be reborn as an untouchable<sup>202</sup> or of mixed caste,<sup>203</sup> they will not be reborn as someone with defective senses; they will not be reborn as lame, hunchbacked, with a deformed nose, a goiter, or a cleft lip, nor with leprosy.<sup>204</sup> Their bodies will not be afflicted by illness. They will have health, great strength, and clear faculties.”

The Bhagavat gave his approval, saying, “That is excellent, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin. Your eloquence and your teaching of this kind of Dharma to a gathering of devas, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, humans, nonhumans, upāsakas, and upāsikās is excellent! Excellent!”

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, when you teach what I request, the devas gain unwavering faith.”

The Bhagavat gave his approval, saying, “Excellent, noble son. That you repeatedly make these requests is excellent, excellent.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: Beyond the Kṛṣṇa pore there is a pore named Ratnakūṇḍala. Many trillions of female gandharvas live within it. Those female gandharvas have excellent figures; are beautiful and attractive; have magnificent, fair complexions; their bodies are adorned with divine jewelry; and they rival the apsaras. [F.227.a] Even though they have this beauty, they are not afflicted by the suffering of desire, they are not afflicted by the suffering of anger, and they are not afflicted by the suffering of stupidity. Their bodies do not experience the sufferings that humans do.

Those gandharva maidens remember the name of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara. Whenever in the three periods they remember it, all valuable things appear for them.”

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, I will go to those pores because I want to see them.”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, those pores cannot be perceived, just as the ele-

ment of space cannot be perceived. Noble son, those pores cannot be perceived, and they cannot be touched.

“Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra spent twelve years wandering in search of those pores, but he never saw them. He did not even see the hundred buddhas who live in each of those pores, let alone any bodhisattvas.”<sup>205</sup>

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, if Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra did not see them in twelve years of wandering, if he did not see those pores and did not even see the hundred buddhas who are in each of those pores,<sup>206</sup> why should I go?”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, I also searched and looked for one of his pores but did not see one.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, noble son, this bodhisattva is taught to be illusory, unattainable, and subtle.<sup>207</sup> This bodhisattva is described as unstained,<sup>208</sup> with form,<sup>209</sup> a vast form, a hundred thousand arms, a trillion eyes, and eleven heads; as a great yogin, a sublime yogin; as residing on the level of nirvāṇa; as having an excellent mind;<sup>210</sup> as having great wisdom; as liberated from existence; as from the good family,<sup>211</sup> as imperceptible; and as wise; and therefore casts no shadow in the midst of all phenomena.<sup>212</sup>

“Thus, noble son, no one can see or hear<sup>213</sup> Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara. [F.227.b] No tathāgata can see the body of his true nature,<sup>214</sup> let alone Samantabhadra or other bodhisattvas.

“Noble son, this Bodhisattva Mahāsattva is inconceivable. He manifests inconceivable<sup>215</sup> miracles. He has completely ripened many trillions of beings. He has led those beings onto the path to enlightenment. Having entered that path, they have gone to the realm of Sukhāvātī where they hear the Dharma from Tathāgata Amitābha.”

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, how can I see Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara?”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, you will see him if he comes here, to the Sahā universe, to look at me, bow down to me, and honor me.”

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “I request it, Bhagavat, that Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara come.”

The Bhagavat answered, “Noble son, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara first comes when a being is ripened.”

Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin rested his cheek on his hand<sup>216</sup> and said, “What point is there in my having a long life that is devoted to bad actions, deprived of the sight of Avalokiteśvara, blind, and following a path of darkness?”<sup>217</sup>

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, when is Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara coming?”

The Bhagavat laughed and said, “Noble son, it is not yet time for Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara to come. [F.228.a]

“Noble son, it is like this: Beyond that pore, there is a pore named Amṛtabindu.<sup>218</sup> In that pore a million trillion devas live. Some are on the first bhūmi; some are on the

second bhūmi; some are on the third bhūmi; some are on the fourth bhūmi; some are on the fifth bhūmi; some are on the sixth bhūmi; some are on the seventh bhūmi; some are on the eighth bhūmi; some are on the ninth bhūmi; and some are on the tenth bodhisattva bhūmi.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: Within that pore named Amṛtabindu there are sixty mountains of gold and silver. Each one is sixty thousand yojanas high, and each one has ninety thousand peaks adorned by gold. Bodhisattvas that have developed one-pointed minds<sup>219</sup> dwell on their slopes. On those kings of mountains, there dwell many millions of trillions of gandharvas, who are continuously playing music.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: Within that pore named Amṛtabindu there are many millions of trillions of extremely beautiful celestial palaces completely adorned with divine jewels, having many kinds of visual delights, and adorned by a hundred thousand strings of pearls.

“Bodhisattvas relax in those celestial palaces and discuss the Dharma. Then they leave the celestial palaces and go each to their own walkways, each of which has seventy bathing pools. Some are filled with water that has the eight qualities, some are completely filled with flowers, and some are completely filled with blue lotuses, red lotuses, night lotuses, white lotuses, fragrant water lilies, tiger claw flowers, and great tiger claw flowers.<sup>220</sup> Along these walkways there are beautiful wish-fulfilling trees that have red trunks and leaves made of silver and gold, are adorned with divine adornments, [F.228.b] are hung with diadems, earrings, garlands, one hundred and eight-string and sixty-four-string necklaces, and are perfectly hung with armlets and a variety of other adornments.

“The bodhisattvas walk each evening along these walkways while thinking about various aspects of the Mahāyāna. They think of nirvāṇa, they contemplate all the sufferings of saṃsāra, and after contemplating suffering they meditate on love.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, there are bodhisattvas within that pore in this way.

“Beyond that pore there is a pore named Vajramukha.<sup>221</sup> Within it live many hundreds of thousands of kiṃnaras beautified by necklaces, earrings, garlands, various jewelry, and ointments.

“They have continuous faith in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. They are focused one-pointedly on the Dharma, remain in loving kindness, meditate on patience, contemplate nirvāṇa, and are saddened for humans. Noble son, those are the kind of kiṃnaras that live there.

“There are many hundreds of mountains within that pore. Some are made of diamonds, some of silver, some of gold, some of crystal, some of rubies,<sup>222</sup> some of sapphires, and some of the seven jewels. Noble son, those signs are seen within that pore.

“Noble son, within that pore there are many wish-fulfilling trees, coral trees, sandalwood trees, and aromatic trees. There are many hundreds of thousands of bathing pools. There are extremely beautiful and delightful divine celestial palaces of crystal and silver. These are the kinds of celestial palaces that appear there.

“The kiṃnaras relax in those celestial palaces and discuss the Dharma. Seated,<sup>223</sup> they talk about the Dharma. They talk about the perfection of generosity, [F.229.a]



they talk about the perfection of conduct, they talk about the perfection of patience, they talk about the perfection of diligence, they talk about the perfection of meditation, and they talk about the perfection of wisdom.

“When they have talked about the six perfections, they leave the celestial palaces and they each go to walk in their own walkways. Some of the walkways are made of gold. Some of the walkways are made of silver. All around the walkways there are wish-fulfilling trees that have red trunks and leaves made of silver and gold; and that are hung with divine ornaments, hung with diadems, earrings, and garlands, hung with armlets, hung with anklets, hung with one hundred and eight-string and sixty-four-string necklaces, and hung with strings of jewels. These wish-fulfilling trees around the walkways are like many-storied mansions.

“The *kiṃnaras* take walks along these walkways. While they are walking, they contemplate with sadness the sufferings of *saṃsāra*: ‘Oh, the suffering! Oh, the suffering! Death is suffering! Oh, the suffering! Poverty is also suffering! Oh, the suffering! Separation from the desired and beloved and encountering the undesired and the disliked is extremely unendurable suffering! There are those who are born in *Kālasūtra*, born in *Raurava*, born in the great hell of *Hāhava*, born in *Agnighaṭa*, born in *Vajraśaila*,<sup>224</sup> and born in the city of the pretas.<sup>225</sup> Those beings have the greatest suffering.’

“The *kiṃnaras* contemplate in that way, and following that contemplation they contemplate the essence of *nirvāṇa*.

“Noble son, the *kiṃnaras* who rejoice in the Dharma in that way continually remember the name of *Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara*. Remembering his name, they receive all kinds of things.

“Thus, noble son, it is difficult to find *Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara*, [F.229.b] who is the father and mother of all beings, who brings freedom from fear to all beings, who reveals the path to all beings, who is a *kalyāṇamitra* for all beings. Noble son, this is what *Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara* is like.

“Noble son, it is difficult to obtain his name. Those who remember the name that is the six-syllable *vidyāmantra* will be reborn in those pores. They will no longer continue to be in *saṃsāra*. They will go from one pore to another, living within those pores until they reach the level of *nirvāṇa*.”

Then *Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin* asked the *Bhagavat*, “*Bhagavat*, where can the six-syllable *mahāvidyā* be obtained?”

The *Bhagavat* said, “Noble son, even the *tathāgatas* do not know the six-syllable *mahāvidyā*, let alone the *bodhisattvas*.”

Then *Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin* asked the *Bhagavat*, “*Bhagavat*, do the *tathāgatas*, *arhats*, and *samyaksambuddhas* not know it?”

The *Bhagavat* said, “Noble son, the six-syllable *mahāvidyā* is the supreme essence of *Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara*. Those who know that supreme essence know liberation.”

Then *Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin* asked the *Bhagavat*, “*Bhagavat*, are there any beings who know the six-syllable *vidyāmantra*?”

The *Bhagavat* said, “Noble son, no one knows the six-syllable *mahāvidyā*. It is an

inconceivable yoga and therefore difficult to obtain. Even the tathāgatas do not know it, let alone the bodhisattvas. [F.230.a]

“Noble son, all the tathāgatas have spent sixteen eons wandering in search of this six-syllable mahāvidyā, so therefore how could bodhisattvas know it? It is the supreme essence of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara.

“If someone traveled throughout this realm of beings, there would be found a few<sup>226</sup> who know the six-syllable mahāvidyā. Those beings who continually possess the six-syllable mahāvidyā and are dedicated to repeating it are meritorious. When they repeat it, bhagavats and buddhas to the number of sand grains in ninety-nine Ganges Rivers gather around them, bodhisattvas to the number of atoms gather around them, and they reach the entranceway to the six perfections.

“The devas of the Trāyastriṃśa paradise also gather there. The four mahārājas guard the four directions. Many millions of trillions of nāgas such as Nāga King Sāgara, Nāga King Anavatapta, Nāga King Takṣaka, and Nāga King Vāsuki<sup>227</sup> guard the ground.<sup>228</sup> Also, the yakṣas from above the earth guard the open space above them.

“Ten million tathāgatas reside in each pore of that noble son. Residing there they give their approval, saying “Excellent, excellent, noble son! You have acquired such a wish-fulfilling jewel as this. Seven generations of your descendants will attain liberation.<sup>229</sup> Noble son, even all the beings who live in your stomach will become irreversible bodhisattvas.

“Noble son, those who wear this six-syllable mahāvidyā on their body or on their throat<sup>230</sup> will be known to have a body that is a vajra body, will be known to be a stūpa containing relics, and will be known to be the wisdom of ten million tathāgatas. [F.230.b]

“A noble son or noble daughter who repeats the six-syllable mahāvidyā will have indestructible mental brilliance. He or she will become a pure mass of wisdom. That person will have great love and great compassion. That person will complete the six perfections each day. That person will receive the consecration of a vidyādhara cakravartin.

“Those who inhale that person’s breath, whether in love or in anger, will become irreversible bodhisattvas. They will quickly attain the highest complete enlightenment and be samyaksaṃbuddhas.

“All those who just touch that person with their clothing<sup>231</sup> will become bodhisattvas in their last existence.

“Women, men, boys, and girls who just see that person, and even the deer, birds, oxen, donkeys, and so on, who see that person, will all become bodhisattvas in their last existence. They will not experience the suffering of birth, aging, sickness, death, and separation from the beloved. They will become inconceivable yogins.”

In that way the Bhagavat encouraged the repetition of the six-syllable mahāvidyā.

Then Sarvaṇīvaraṇaṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, I wish to hear the six-syllable mahāvidyā, which is the inconceivable yoga and the immeasurable and highest dhyāna; which shows the way to the nirvāṇa of supreme enlightenment; which is the entranceway into liberation; which pacifies desire and hatred;<sup>232</sup> which

fills the treasury of the Dharma;<sup>233</sup> which uproots saṃsāra and the five existences; which brings the hells and afflictions to an end; which takes those who have become animals to a higher existence; [F.231.a] which completes the taste of the Dharma; and which is the imperishable<sup>234</sup> teaching of omniscience.

“Bhagavat, how can I obtain it? I would offer the four continents filled with the seven precious materials to anyone who bestows upon me the six-syllable mahāvidyā.

“Bhagavat, if I can't find a birch bark page to write it on, nor ink, nor a reed pen, I will make ink from my blood, I will slice off my skin to make a page, and I will break one of my bones to make a pen. Bhagavat, I have no concern for my body. The one who bestows it upon me will be my parents, my guru of gurus.”

Then the Bhagavat said to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, “Noble son, I remember going to as many worlds as there are atoms in the world for the sake of obtaining this six-syllable mahāvidyā. I honored many millions of trillions of tathāgatas, but I did not obtain it, and I did not hear it from those tathāgatas.

“At that time I went, weeping, to the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣaṃbuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct, the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tames beings, the teacher of gods and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Ratnottama.

“The tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣaṃbuddha Ratnottama said, ‘Noble son, don't weep so pitifully. Noble son, go to the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣaṃbuddha Padmottama.<sup>235</sup> He knows this six-syllable mahāvidyā.’

“Noble son, I went to Tathāgata Padmottama. I approached the realm of Tathāgata Padmottama, arrived there [F.231.b], and bowed my head to the feet of Tathāgata Padmottama. I placed my palms together before him and said, ‘Bhagavat Padmottama, I must obtain this six-syllable mahāvidyā, which purifies all bad karma merely by the remembrance of its name. I seek to obtain that which is difficult for a bodhisattva to obtain. For that purpose I have been to many worlds, in distress. I have arrived here, exhausted and without any result.’

“Then Tathāgata Padmottama praised the qualities of this six-syllable mahāvidyā: ‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can know the number of atoms, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can count the grains of sand in the ocean, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, a person builds a building that is a hundred yojanas high and five hundred yojanas wide, and completely fills it with sesame seeds. There isn't even a needle-sized hole in this building. At its door there is an immortal man who never ages. If every hundred eons that man takes out one sesame seed, I can calculate<sup>236</sup> the time when such a building would be emptied down to the floor, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, if the people in the four continents were all

to work at various kinds of agriculture, such as barley, wheat, rice, green or black mung beans, and so on; and jujubes, horse gram, and so on; and the nāga kings sent rain at the appropriate times; and those grains grew, ripened, and were harvested; if Jambudvīpa were made into one threshing floor, and the grain was brought in carts, in animal loads, in bundles and baskets, and put on that threshing floor, trodden by oxen and donkeys, and made into one big heap; [F.232.a] then, noble son, I could count every single grain, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, in Jambudvīpa there are great rivers that flow day and night. They are the Sītā,<sup>237</sup> the Ganges,<sup>238</sup> the Yamuna, the Indus,<sup>239</sup> the Pakṣu,<sup>240</sup> the Sutlej,<sup>241</sup> the Chenab,<sup>242</sup> the Ravi,<sup>243</sup> the Sumāgandha,<sup>244</sup> the Himavati,<sup>245</sup> and the Godavari.<sup>246</sup> Each of these rivers has five hundred tributaries. Day and night they flow into the ocean. Noble son, this is how the accumulation of merit increases as the result of a single repetition of the six-syllable mahāvidyā: I can count each drop in those great rivers, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can count each hair on all four-legged beings such as herds of oxen, donkeys, buffaloes, horses, and elephants; dogs, jackals,<sup>247</sup> goats, and similarly lions, tigers, wolves, deer, monkeys, hares, pigs, and so on; and rats and cats, and so on; but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, the king of mountains, named Vajrāṅkuśa, is 99,000 yojanas high and extends downward into the sea for 84,000 yojanas. Vajrāṅkuśa, the king of mountains, is 84,000 yojanas wide on each side. On the side of that king of mountains there is an ageless, immortal man, who once every eon wipes the mountain one time with a Kaśika cloth. Even this alone will eventually cause the mountain to be worn down and vanish. I can count the number of years, months, days, hours,<sup>248</sup> and minutes of time that would take,<sup>249</sup> but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: [F.232.b] For example, the ocean is 84,000 yojanas deep, and it has an immeasurable expanse, extending as far as Vaṇḍavāmukha. I can count all its drops of water, which are the size of the tip of a hair, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, I can count the number of leaves in a forest of agarwood trees, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumulation of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, even if all the men, women, boys, and girls who live in the four continents were to be on the seventh bodhisattva bhūmi,<sup>250</sup> the accumulation of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once would be far greater than the accumulation of merit of those bodhisattvas.

‘Noble son, it is like this: For example, if for a year of twelve months, or with a leap-month to make a year of thirteen months,<sup>251</sup> it were to rain day and night, noble son, I could count each drop of rain, but, noble son, I cannot calculate the accumula-

tion of merit that comes from repeating the six-syllable mahāvidyā once.

‘Noble son, it is like this: There is no need to say much, but if, for example, a million tathāgatas like me were to be in one place for an eon, provided with all requirements, with robes, food, bowls,<sup>252</sup> bedding, seats,<sup>253</sup> necessary medicine, and utensils, still those tathāgatas would not be able to calculate the accumulation of merit from the six-syllable mahāvidyā, so it is needless to say that I cannot do so all by myself in this world.

‘Noble son, I have entered the yoga of meditation through an inconceivable dhyāna. This is a subtle Dharma, an imperceptible Dharma, an unknown Dharma; it is the attainment of the ultimate essence. It has been established through the qualities of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s skillfulness in methods. In that way, noble son, [F.233.a] I too obtained skillfulness in methods through the six-syllable mahāvidyā.

‘Noble son, I also wandered through many hundreds of thousands of millions of tens of millions of worlds, and then in front of Tathāgata Amitābha, with palms placed together, I wept because of my emotion for the Dharma.

‘At that time, Tathāgata Amitābha, who knew the present and the future, said, “Noble son who is united with the yoga of meditation, do you desire the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās?”

‘I replied, “I do desire it, Bhagavat,<sup>254</sup> I do desire it, Sugata. I have gone to many worlds in search of the six-syllable mahāvidyā, Bhagavat, just like a thirsty person seeks water. I have attended to many millions of trillions of tathāgatas, but I have not obtained the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās. Bhagavat, be my protector, refuge, and support. Be the eyes for those whose faculties are poor. Be the path for those who have lost the path. Be a parasol for those burned by the sun. Be like a great sal tree for a great crossroad. Be infinite teachings for those thirsty for the Dharma. Be armor for the complete stability of the mind.”

‘Then the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksambuddha Amitābha said to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara with a voice as beautiful as a cuckoo’s song, “Noble son, look! The tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksambuddha Padmottama has been to many millions of trillions of worlds for the six-syllable mahāvidyā. The Tathāgata has traveled like this, noble son, so therefore give him the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās.”

‘Then Bhagavat Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara said, [F.233.b] “It should not be given to one who has not seen the maṇḍala.<sup>255</sup> How would one apprehend the Bhagavat’s lotus-hook hand gesture?<sup>256</sup> How would one know the Maṇidhara hand gesture?<sup>257</sup> How would one know the lord-of-all-kings hand gesture?<sup>258</sup> How would one know the correct maṇḍala?<sup>259</sup>

“These are the features of the maṇḍala: It should be square with a circumference of five cubits.

“Draw Amitābha in the center of the maṇḍala. To create the body of Tathāgata Amitābha, sprinkle powder made from precious sapphire powder, emerald powder, ruby powder, crystal powder, and powdered silver and gold.

“On his right create Bodhisattva Mahāmaṇidhara. On his left draw Śaḍakṣarī Mahāvidyā, who has four arms and is white like the autumn moon. She is adorned

with various adornments and holds a lotus in her left hand. Draw a jewel upon that lotus. Draw a jewel rosary in her left hand. Portray the palms of two hands being placed together in the gesture named the lord-of-all-kings.

“Draw a vidyādhara beneath the legs of Śaḍakṣarī Mahāvidyā. Draw him holding a smoking stick of incense in his right hand and a basket filled with various adornments in his left hand.

“Draw the four mahārājas at the four doors<sup>260</sup> of the maṇḍala. Draw them holding their individual offerings.<sup>261</sup>

“Place vases filled with various precious jewels at the four corners of the maṇḍala.

“A noble son or noble daughter who wishes to enter that maṇḍala should write the names of the entire lineage of his or her family and first of all cast those names into the maṇḍala. They will then all be freed from every human suffering [F.234.a] and will become bodhisattvas in their last life. They will also quickly attain the highest complete enlightenment, which is complete buddhahood.

“The ācārya should not give it to those who are inappropriate. It should be bestowed upon those who aspire for it with faith, or bestowed upon those who aspire for it with faith in the Mahāyāna. It should not be given to tīrthikas.”

“Then the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣambuddha Amitābha said to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, “Noble son, what if the noble son or noble daughter is poor and cannot use precious sapphire jewel powder, emerald powder, or gold or silver powder?”

“Bhagavat, he should use powder dyed with various colors and use various flowers and various incenses.”

“Noble son, what if, because he has gone to another land and lacks the facilities, he cannot even obtain those?”

“Then the ācārya should imagine the maṇḍala in his mind, and the ācārya should teach the nature of the mantras<sup>262</sup> and gestures.”

“Then the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣambuddha Padmottama<sup>263</sup> said to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, ‘Noble son, give the six-syllable mahāvidyā queen to me. I will liberate many millions of trillions of beings from saṃsāra so that they will quickly attain complete buddhahood with the highest complete enlightenment.’

“Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara gave the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās<sup>264</sup> to the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣambuddha Padmottama: *Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ*.” [F.234.b]

[B.4] “When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara gave the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās to the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣambuddha Padmottama, everywhere from the four continents to the deva realms shook like plantain leaves. The four great oceans shook. All vighnas and vināyakas, yakṣas and rākṣasas, together with the companies of mahākālas, and mātr̥s, fled.<sup>265</sup>

“Tathāgata Padmottama extended his arm like an elephant extending his trunk and offered a hundred thousand precious strings of pearls to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, who accepted them and offered them to the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyakṣambuddha Amitābha, who then offered them back to the tathāgata, the arhat,

the samyaksaṃbuddha Padmottama.

“Then the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksaṃbuddha Padmottama, having received the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās, went to the realm named Padmottama.<sup>266</sup>

“Noble son, in the past, that is what I heard from the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksaṃbuddha Padmottama.”

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaṣṭkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, how can I obtain the six-syllable mahāvidyā of perfect yoga? Bhagavat, just like those who are not satisfied by just a taste of amṛta, Bhagavat, I am not satisfied by simply hearing about the six-syllable mahāvidyā. Meritorious are those beings who, with higher motivation, possess this six-syllable mahāvidyā and repeat, listen to, and contemplate it.”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, those who write out this six-syllable mahāvidyā are writing out the collection of eighty-four thousand Dharmas. [F.235.a] If stūpas<sup>267</sup> were made from precious divine gold for tathāgatas, arhats, and samyaksaṃbuddhas equal in number to atoms, and if in one day they were all filled with their relics, the result ripening from that would only equal the result that ripens from one syllable of the six-syllable mahāvidyā, which has inconceivable qualities and brings liberation.

“The noble son or noble daughter who repeats this six-syllable mahāvidyā will attain these samādhis: the samādhi named Jewel Holder, the samādhi named Purification of Hells and Animals, the samādhi named Vajra Armor, the samādhi named Stable Conduct, the samādhi named Skillfulness in All Methods, the samādhi named Scattering, the samādhi named Revealing All Buddha Realms,<sup>268</sup> the samādhi named Entering All Dharmas, the samādhi named Adornment of Dhyāna, the samādhi named Entering the Chariot of the Dharma, the samādhi named Complete Liberation from Desire and Anger, the samādhi named Eternal Calf, the samādhi named Teaching<sup>269</sup> the Six Perfections, the samādhi named Holding Great Meru, the samādhi named Rescuing from All Existences, the samādhi named Seeing All the Tathāgatas, and the samādhi named Complete Stability.

“Noble son, it is like this: those who possess the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās will attain one hundred and eight samādhis.”

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaṣṭkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, where can I go to obtain this mahāvidyā?” [F.235.b]

“Noble son, in the great city of Vārāṇasī there is a dharmabhāṇaka who possesses, recites, and is completely focused on the six-syllable mahāvidyā.”

“Bhagavat, I will go to the great city of Vārāṇasī in order to see that dharmabhāṇaka, to bow down to him, and to honor him.”

“Excellent! Excellent! Do so, noble son! A dharmabhāṇaka who possesses, recites, and is completely focused on<sup>270</sup> the six-syllable mahāvidyā is rare. He should be seen as being equal to the tathāgatas; seen as being the life of the world;<sup>271</sup> seen as a mass of merit;<sup>272</sup> seen as being like the Ganges and all sacred places;<sup>273</sup> seen as one who speaks that which is not false; seen as one who speaks the truth;<sup>274</sup> seen as a heap of jewels; seen as a wish-fulfilling jewel; seen as a Dharma king;<sup>275</sup> and seen as a savior of beings.

“Noble son, you should have no doubts when you see this dharmabhāṇaka. Noble

son, do not fall from a bodhisattva bhūmi to be reborn in the lower existences. This dharmabhāṇaka's conduct is poor, and his behavior is poor. He is surrounded by his wife, sons, and daughters. His orange robes are filled with feces and urine; he has not followed the noble path."<sup>276</sup>

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, "I will do as the Bhagavat has instructed."

Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin set forth accompanied by many hundreds of thousands of lay bodhisattvas, monastics, boys, and girls. In order to make offerings to the dharmabhāṇaka, they brought divine parasols, divine shoes, diadems, earrings, garlands, armlets, [F.236.a] one hundred and eight-string and sixty-four-string necklaces for covering the shoulders, ear adornments, and finger rings; and also various kinds of clothing: monastic robes,<sup>277</sup> clothing commanded by the vidyādhara, and Kāśika cloth; and also various flowers: blue lotuses, red lotuses, night lotuses, white lotuses, tiger claw flowers and great tiger claw flowers,<sup>278</sup> *mañjuśukas* and *mahāmañjuśukas*, udumbaras, various kinds of turmeric flowers, magnolias, oleanders, trumpet flowers, mountain ebony, gardenia,<sup>279</sup> star jasmine,<sup>280</sup> night-flowering jasmine,<sup>281</sup> and so on; beautiful peacocks, brahminy ducks, and delightful mynas,<sup>282</sup> the colors blue, yellow, red, white, and crystal; and also various fruits and flowers.

He went to the great city of Vārāṇasī and eventually arrived there. He went to where the dharmabhāṇaka was and bowed his head to his feet.

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin saw someone whose conduct was poor, whose behavior was poor, and whose path was imperfect.<sup>283</sup>

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin gave him a great offering of parasols, shoes, cloth, adornments, scents, and ointments, and placing his palms together in front of the dharmabhāṇaka, he said, "Oh you who are the treasurer of the Dharma, you are like an unfathomable ocean that is an accumulation of the treasure of amṛta. You are a repository within the human realm. The devas, nāgas, yakṣas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans gather to listen to the Dharma from you.

"You teach a Dharma that is like a great vajra. [F.236.b] You liberate many beings who are bound in the bondage of saṃsāra. Meritorious are those beings who live in Vārāṇasī, can see you, and always gather around you. The instant they see you, you burn up all their bad karma. You burn up all bad karma like a fire burns a forest, just through being seen. The tathāgatas, arhats, and samyaksaṃbuddhas know of you. Many millions of trillions of bodhisattvas come to make offerings to you, as do Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Āditya, Candra, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Agni, Dharmarāja Yama, and the four mahārājas."

The dharmabhāṇaka then said to him, "Noble son, do not create a cause for remorse. Those who indulge in the afflictions create the realms of beings and have the characteristics of saṃsāra.

"Those who know the six-syllable mahāvidyā will not be polluted by desire, anger, or stupidity. Noble son, just as the gold in the Jambu River does not become stained, someone who wears the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās on his body will have a body that is not polluted by desire, anger, or stupidity."



Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin grasped the dharmabhāṇaka's feet tightly and said, "My senses are impaired, so be my eyes! I have lost the path, so show me the path! I am thirsty for the Dharma, so quench my thirst with the taste of the Dharma! I lack the highest complete enlightenment,<sup>284</sup> so give me the seed for enlightenment! Give me the opportunity of the Dharma! Give me the pure body of perfectly established forms!<sup>285</sup> [F.237.a] Give me a good reputation so that all beings say, 'He has gained unwavering goodness!' Thus, guru, give me the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās, through which I will quickly achieve the highest complete enlightenment and be a samyakṣambuddha! Turn the twelve wheels of the Dharma! Free all beings from the suffering of saṃsāra! Give me the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās that I have not obtained! Give me the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās! Be my protector, refuge, and support. Be a home for the homeless."

Then the dharmabhāṇaka said, "The six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās is a recitation that is hard to find. It is an unequalled<sup>286</sup> vajra recitation. It is an unbreakable vajra recitation. It is a recitation of the highest wisdom. It is a recitation of unceasing wisdom. It is an unsurpassable recitation. It is a recitation that brings liberation. It is a recitation of the pure wisdom of the tathāgatas. It is a recitation that eliminates desire, anger, stupidity, and the sufferings of saṃsāra. It is a recitation of skill in all methods. It is a recitation of dhyāna, liberation, samādhi, and samāpatti. It is a recitation of entry into all Dharmas. It is a recitation continuously yearned for by the devas.

"Noble son, people are ordained in various orders and are ordained in the various garments of those seeking liberation, which are rainbow-colored garments,<sup>287</sup> white garments, and pure white garments.<sup>288</sup> They are ordained into those who stare at the sun,<sup>289</sup> the followers of Maheśvara, the followers of Viṣṇu and Garuḍa, and naked ascetics.<sup>290</sup> They take ordination in those orders, but those deities do not bring liberation; [F.237.b] they are not protectors, nor is theirs the conduct that is to be followed. All the hosts of deities—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Śakra, who is the lord of devas, Āditya, Candra, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Agni, Dharmarāja Yama, and the four mahārājas—constantly request the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās."

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked him, "Bhagavat, how can we obtain the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās, so that we can dedicate ourselves to liberation?"

The dharmabhāṇaka said, "Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: Prajñāpāramitā is known to be the one who gave birth to all the tathāgatas. Even she places her palms together and pays homage to the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās, let alone the tathāgatas, arhats, samyakṣambuddhas, and the hosts of bodhisattvas.

"Noble son, this is an essence, like rice. Noble son, through this you can obtain anything from within the Mahāyāna: many Mahāyāna sūtras, the geyas, the vyākaraṇas, the gāthās, the udānas, the nidānas, the avadānas, the itivṛttakas, the jātakas, the vaipulyas, the adbhūta-dharmas, and the upadeśas.<sup>291</sup> Simply repeating it will bring peace and liberation. Why say more about its other virtues?

"What does it mean that it is conceived of as a central essence? It can be conceived of as being like the essence of rice. We take it home and fill our pots with rice and keep it in there. And then, in accord with the sun, we dry it in the sun's heat. When it is dried, we pound it with a pestle to remove the chaff. What is the essence?<sup>292</sup> The

essence is the rice. In that way, [F.238.a] all other yogas are like husks, and from among all yogas, the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās is like the rice.

“Noble son, the bodhisattvas produce merit in order to possess the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās, so as to have the perfection of generosity, the perfection of conduct, the perfection of patience, the perfection of diligence, the perfection of meditation, and the perfection of wisdom. Noble son, one repetition of the mahāvidyā completes the six perfections. Those who just touch it with their clothes<sup>293</sup> will attain the level of irreversibility. Noble son, that is what the six-syllable mahāvidyā queen is like. Those who recite that name are rare. Possessing its name just once will make them equal to someone who has provided all the tathāgatas with all requisites: with robes, food, bowls, bedding, seats,<sup>294</sup> necessary medicine, and utensils.”

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin then said to the dharmabhāṇaka, “Give me the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās.”

The dharmabhāṇaka<sup>295</sup> thought and thought about this. Then a voice came from the sky saying, “Give him the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās!”

The dharmabhāṇaka wondered where this voice had come from. Again there came the voice from the sky, saying, “This bodhisattva has undergone many hardships. Give him the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās!”

The dharmabhāṇaka looked up into the sky and saw someone who had a body white as the autumn moon, a crown of coiled hair, an omniscient buddha<sup>296</sup> upon his head, and a beautiful lotus in his hand, and was adorned with the splendor of lotuses.

Then the dharmabhāṇaka said to Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, [F.238.b] “Noble son, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has given permission for the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās to be given to you.”

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin reverently placed his palms together to receive it.

*Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.*

As soon as this was given, the earth shook in six ways.

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin obtained these samādhis: the samādhi named Unceasing True Nature, the samādhi named Love, Compassion, and Rejoicing, the samādhi named Practicing Yoga, the samādhi named Established in the Entry to Liberation, the samādhi named Illuminating Everywhere, the samādhi named The King of Arrays, and the samādhi named Holding the Dharma. Those are the samādhis he attained.

As soon as Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin had obtained the six-syllable queen of mahāvidyās, he offered the four continents, completely filled with the seven jewels, as payment to that upādhyāya.

The dharmabhāṇaka said, “There is no payment required for even one of the syllables, let alone the six syllables of the mahāvidyā, nor will I take anything from you, noble son. You are a bodhisattva, a noble being, with no one higher, and you are my pupil, noble son.” The dharmabhāṇaka presented him with a string of pearls to the value of a hundred thousand silver coins and said, “Noble son, in accord with my instruction, present this to the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksambuddha Śākyamuni.”

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin bowed his head to the feet of the dharmabhāṇaka and departed, having obtained what he sought and with his wishes fulfilled. He went to the Jetavana Monastery, arrived there, bowed down to the feet of Bhagavat Śākyamuni, and sat to one side. [F.239.a]

Then the bhagavat, the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksaṃbuddha Śākyamuni asked, “Noble son, did you find what you sought?”

“Bhagavat, it happened, as the Bhagavat knows.”

Seventy-seven times ten million<sup>297</sup> samyaksaṃbuddhas gathered there, and those tathāgatas recited this dhāraṇī:

*Namaḥ saptanām samyaksaṃbuddhakoṭinām tadyathā  
oṃ cale cule cunde*<sup>298</sup> *svāhā*<sup>299</sup>

(The homage by seven times ten million samyaksaṃbuddhas is like this: *Oṃ cale cule cunde svāhā*.)

That was the dhāraṇī recited by seventy-seven times ten million samyaksaṃbuddhas.

“Beyond that pore<sup>300</sup> there is the pore named Sūryaprabha, in which many millions of trillions of bodhisattvas dwell. Within that pore named Sūryaprabha there are ten thousand mountains of gold. Each mountain has 22,000 peaks. Rubies adorn the sides of each mountain. On the sides there are extremely beautiful gardens with divine precious jewels and adorned with many very beautiful and delightful walkways and bathing pools. There are many hundreds of thousands of many-storied palaces made of divine gold and jewels. They are decorated with braided lengths of strings of pearls and silk, and they are hung with hundreds of strings of pearls.

“Within each of the many-storied palaces there is a precious wish-granting jewel named Śārada,<sup>301</sup> that provides each bodhisattva with everything he needs.

“When those bodhisattvas have entered their many-storied palaces, they remember the six-syllable mahāvidyā. When they remember it, they realize nirvāṇa. They see the seven tathāgatas that are at the level of nirvāṇa. They also see Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara. [F.239.b] When they see him, faith arises in their minds. After that has occurred, the bodhisattvas leave the many-storied palaces. Then some go to their walkways; some go to the gardens of precious wish-granting jewels; some go to the bathing pools; and some go to the sides of the mountains, which are made of precious ruby jewels.

“When they arrive there, they sit cross-legged, sitting up straight, and establish themselves in focused mindfulness. Noble son, that is the kind of bodhisattva who lives in that pore.

“Beyond that there is the pore named Indrarāja, in which many millions of trillions<sup>302</sup> of irreversible bodhisattvas dwell. Within that pore named Indrarāja there are eighty thousand mountains made of divine gold and jewels.<sup>303</sup> In the middle of those mountains there is a precious jewel named Padmāabhāsa. It fulfills whatever wishes the bodhisattvas make.

“In that way those bodhisattvas live on these kings of mountains without thinking

about food or drink. They have none of the sufferings of *saṃsāra*. They are not stained by the afflictions of *saṃsāra*. They remain at all times in contemplation of *nirvāṇa*. They have no other thought concerning their bodies.

“Noble son, beyond that there is the pore named *Mahoṣadhī* in which many<sup>304</sup> millions of trillions of bodhisattvas live who have first developed *bodhicitta*.

“Noble son, there are 99,000<sup>305</sup> mountains in that pore. Some are made of diamonds, some are made of silver, some are made of gold, some are made of precious sapphire jewels, some are made of rubies, some are made of emeralds, and some are made of crystal. Those kings of mountains are like that. Each one has eighty thousand peaks, is adorned with various jewels, [F.240.a] and is extremely beautified by various delightful features.

“On the peaks there live *gandharvas* who continually play music, which emanates from that pore.

“Those bodhisattvas who have first developed *bodhicitta* contemplate emptiness and featurelessness. They contemplate sadness concerning the body, thinking, ‘Alas, there is suffering: the suffering of birth, aging, sickness, and death; the suffering of being separated from the beloved and pleasant; the suffering of encountering the disliked and unpleasant; the suffering of being born in *Avīci*; the suffering of being born in *Kālasūtra*; and the suffering of being born in the city of the pretas.’ At that time they are sitting cross-legged, their bodies straight, establishing themselves in focused mindfulness, dwelling in the mountains.

“Noble son, beyond that there is the pore named *Cittarāja*,<sup>306</sup> in which live many millions of trillions of *pratyekabuddhas*. They perform miracles of fire, heat, rain, and lightning.

“Noble son, there are a hundred thousand mountains in that pore. All those kings of mountains are made from the seven jewels.<sup>307</sup> There are a variety of wish-granting trees on those kings of mountains. Their trunks are gold, and their leaves are silver.<sup>308</sup> They are studded<sup>309</sup> with a variety of jewels and hung with a variety of adornments. They are hung with diadems, earrings, garlands, armlets, one hundred and eight-string and sixty-four-string pearl necklaces. They are hung with *Kaśika* cloth. They have the jingling sounds of silver and gold bells.

“*Pratyekabuddhas* live on these kings of mountains. [F.240.b] They talk with each other about the *sūtras*, the *geyas*, the *vyākaraṇas*, the *gāthās*, the *udānas*, the *nidānas*, the *avadānas*, the *itivṛttakas*, the *jātakas*, the *vaipulyas*, the *adbhūta*dharmas, and the *upadeśas*.

“Then, *Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin*, beyond that pore, last of all, there is the pore named *Dhvajārāja*.<sup>310</sup> That pore is 84,000 *yojanas* wide. Within that pore there are 84,000 mountains, beautifully adorned with a variety of jewels.

“On those kings of mountains, there are many hundreds of thousands of wish-fulfilling trees. There are many hundreds of thousands of sandalwood trees. There are hundreds of thousands of agarwood trees.

“Within that pore the ground is made of diamonds. Within that pore there are many hundreds of thousands of ninety-nine-story<sup>311</sup> palaces made of divine<sup>312</sup> gold and jewels,<sup>313</sup> decorated with pearls, cloth, and garlands, hung with strings of bells, and shining with moonstone gems.

“In those many-storied palaces, there are golden stairs beautified by delightful jewels of various kinds.

“In those many-storied palaces, there are seated tathāgatas who teach the Dharma to the humans in Jambudvīpa.<sup>314</sup> They teach the six perfections: they teach the perfection of generosity, they teach the perfection of conduct, they teach the perfection of patience, they teach the perfection of diligence, they teach the perfection of meditation, and they teach the perfection of wisdom. [F.241.a] They teach various kinds of Dharma, continually teaching the humans who live in Jambudvīpa.

“Thus, noble son, they see the pores of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara. They also see deities such as devas, nāgas, yakṣas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas,<sup>315</sup> humans, nonhumans, Maheśvara, and Nārāyaṇa assembled in Jetavana Monastery, and many millions of trillions of bodhisattvas assembled there.”

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, are there no other pores?”

The Bhagavat replied, “Noble son, beyond that pore are the four great oceans that come from the big toe of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s right foot. Their depth is immeasurable. When water comes from the right big toe, it falls on Vaḍavāmukha, transforming it into a heap of ash. Noble son, that is the kind of blessing that Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has.”

Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin then asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, is there yet another pore?”

The Bhagavat said, “There are no more, noble son.”

Then Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, is Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara coming?”

The Bhagavat said, “Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara [F.241.b] will come to this great monastery of Jetavana in order to see me, to bow down to me, to honor me, and to give a prophecy concerning the deity Maheśvara in a realm within this universe.”<sup>316</sup>

The noble Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara radiated blue, yellow, red, white, crystal, and silver light rays, and those light rays went to Jetavana. When they came there, they circled the Bhagavat three times. Then they left Jetavana Monastery and went to the great Avīci hell. When they arrived there, they cooled the great Avīci hell.

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin asked the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, from where did those light rays come, and where did they go?”

The Bhagavat answered, “Noble son, Avalokiteśvara radiated those various light rays. They came to this Jetavana Monastery. When they arrived they circled me three times and then went to the great Avīci hell.”<sup>317</sup>

At that time, good omens manifested in Jetavana Monastery. Divine magnolia trees appeared and divine lotus pools appeared.<sup>318</sup> At that time, Jetavana Monastery appeared to shine like divine gold. That is what Jetavana Monastery looked like.

Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara left the realm of Sukhāvatī and went to Jetavana Monastery, and eventually arrived there. He went inside Jetavana Monastery, bowed his head to the Bhagavat’s feet, and sat to one side.<sup>319</sup>

Then the Bhagavat, with the voice of the cuckoo, asked, "Noble son, are you tired? Are you weary? Have you completely ripened beings?"

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara said to the Bhagavat, "I have done as the Bhagavat instructed. I have accomplished the task."

The Bhagavat gave his approval, saying, "Noble son, it is excellent that you have accomplished the task. Excellent."

Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara offered lotus flowers to the Bhagavat [F.242.a] and said, "Bhagavat, the tathāgata Amitābha presents you with these lotus flowers and hopes you are not unwell, not fatigued, that you are in good health, and that life is pleasant."

The Bhagavat accepted the lotuses and placed them on his left.

Then the deva Maheśvara came to the Bhagavat, bowed his head to the Bhagavat's feet, and said, "Bhagavat, I pray that you give me a prophecy."

The Bhagavat said, "Go, noble son, to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, who will give you the prophecy."

Then the deva Maheśvara went and bowed down to the feet of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara and said, "I pay homage to Avalokiteśvara, great lord, who holds a lotus,<sup>320</sup> who has a lotus face, who loves the lotus, who has a beautiful lotus in his hand, who has the splendor of lotuses, who travels around, who brings relief to beings, who completely illuminates the world, and who brings comfort."

The deva Maheśvara praised Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara in that way and then sat silently.

Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara asked the deva Maheśvara, "Noble son, why are you silent?"

The deva Maheśvara answered, "I request the prophecy of my unsurpassable true enlightenment."

Avalokiteśvara said, "Noble son, in the world named Vivṛta, [F.242.b] you will be the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyak sambuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct, the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tames beings, the teacher of gods and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Bhasmeśvara."<sup>321</sup>

Then Umādevī came and bowed her head to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara's feet and praised him: "I pay homage to Avalokiteśvara, great lord, who gives life, who completely illuminates the world,<sup>322</sup> who has a beautiful lotus in his hand,<sup>323</sup> who has the splendor of beautiful lotuses, who travels around, who brings beings to nirvāṇa, who creates excellent minds, and who holds the Dharma."

Umādevī praised Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara in that way and then said, "I pray that you free me from this inferior female body of a woman. I pray that you free me from the suffering of the dark impurities in the womb, and from always being owned."

Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara said to her, "Sister, your realm will be on the southern<sup>324</sup> slope of Himavat, the king of mountains."<sup>325</sup> You will be the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyak sambuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct, the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tames beings, the teacher of gods and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Umeśvara."

That was the prophecy that Umādevī received.

The Bhagavat said, “Look, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, [F.243.a] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has given them prophecies of the highest complete enlightenment. This, noble son, is entitled ‘the Maheśvara episode.’”<sup>326</sup>

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, Avalokiteśvara has come. I who was blind can now see. Today my life has borne fruit. Today my wishes have come true. Today my wishes have been fulfilled. Today my path to enlightenment has been cleansed.<sup>327</sup> I have been taught correct thought, the dharmakāya, and nirvāṇa.”

Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin then said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, I pray that you teach today the special qualities of Avalokiteśvara.”

The Bhagavat said, “Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: there are the kings of mountains Mount Cakravāla and Mount Mahācakravāla,<sup>328</sup> the kings of mountains Mount Mucilinda and Mount Mahāmucilinda,<sup>329</sup> the kings of mountains Mount Kāla and Mount Mahākāla, the kings of mountains Mount Saṃsrṣṭa and Mount Mahāsaṃsrṣṭa,<sup>330</sup> the king of mountains Mount Pralambodara,<sup>331</sup> the king of mountains Mount Anādarśaka, the king of mountains Mount Kṛtsrāgata, the king of mountains Mount Jālinīmukha, the king of mountains Mount Śataśṛṅga, the king of mountains Mount Bhavana, the king of mountains Mount Mahāmaṇiratna, the king of mountains Mount Sudarśana, and the king of mountains Mount Akāladarśana.

“I can calculate, noble son, the number, parts, and groups of how many *palas*<sup>332</sup> are in those mountains, how many hundreds of palas, or thousands of palas, or millions of trillions of palas, but, noble son, I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“Noble son, it is like this: I can count each drop in the vast ocean, but, noble son, I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit. [F.243.b]

“Noble son, it is like this: I can count each leaf in a forest of agarwood trees, but, noble son, I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: If the king of mountains Sumeru were to become birch bark, and if the vast ocean were to become an inkwell,<sup>333</sup> and if all the men, women, boys, and girls who live in the four continents were to become scribes, and if they were to write on the limitless, endless extent<sup>334</sup> of Mount Sumeru as birch bark, I would be able to count every single letter, but, noble son, I cannot calculate Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s accumulation of merit.

“Noble son, it is like this: If someone were to provide tathāgatas, arhats, and samyakṣaṃbuddhas as numerous as the grains of sand in twelve Ganges Rivers with robes, food, bowls, bedding, seats, necessary medicine, and utensils for an eon, the accumulation of merit that would come from serving those tathāgatas would only equal the merit of the tip of one hair on the body of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara [F.244.a] has many hundreds of thousands of samādhis: the samādhi named Completely Defeating, the samādhi named Adorning, the samādhi named Unadorning, the

samādhi named Lightning's Illumination,<sup>335</sup> the samādhi named Being Patient, the samādhi named Great Brilliance, the samādhi named Manifesting, the samādhi named Vajra Garland, the samādhi named Sublime Gift, the samādhi named Hundred Strengths, the samādhi named Endless Array,<sup>336</sup> the samādhi named Summit of Mental Brilliance,<sup>337</sup> the samādhi named King's Powers, the samādhi named Vajra Wall,<sup>338</sup> the samādhi named Vajra Doorway, the samādhi named Continuous Sublime Gift, the samādhi named Liberation from the Senses,<sup>339</sup> the samādhi named Liberation from Anger, the samādhi named the Senses' Sublime Illumination,<sup>340</sup> the samādhi named Day-Maker's<sup>341</sup> Sublime Illumination,<sup>342</sup> the samādhi named Facing the Dharma, the samādhi named Vajra Womb, the samādhi named Well Taught, the samādhi named Creating Nirvāṇa, the samādhi named Creating Infinite Light Rays, the samādhi named Creating Yoga, the samādhi named Scattering, the samādhi named Complete Illumination of the World,<sup>343</sup> the samādhi named Illumination of the Buddha Realms,<sup>344</sup> the samādhi named Facing Love,<sup>345</sup> the samādhi named Wisdom's Light,<sup>346</sup> the samādhi named Well Tamed,<sup>347</sup> the samādhi named Abode of Beings,<sup>348</sup> the samādhi named Creating Inexhaustibility, the samādhi named Extinguishing Avīci, the samādhi named Ocean Deep, the samādhi named Hundred Retinues, [F.244.b] and the samādhi named Teaching the Path.<sup>349</sup> Noble son, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara has those samādhis.

“Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, it is like this: When the tathāgata, the arhat, the samyaksambuddha, the one with wisdom and conduct, the sugata, the knower of the world, the unsurpassable guide who tames beings, the teacher of gods and humans, the buddha, the bhagavat Krakucchanda, appeared in this world, at that time I was a bodhisattva named Dānaśūra.

“When I was in the presence of that tathāgata, I heard that description of the qualities of Avalokiteśvara,<sup>350</sup> and I saw these different samādhis of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra and others.

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Ascending Vajra, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Scattering.<sup>351</sup> When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Moon's Sublime Illumination,<sup>352</sup> Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Sun's Sublime Illumination.<sup>353</sup> When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Sprinkling, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Treasury of Space.

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Plenitude, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Indra's Intelligence.<sup>354</sup>

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Creating Indra, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Indra's Intelligence.<sup>355</sup>

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Indra's Way,<sup>356</sup> [F.245.a] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Ocean Deep.

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Intimidating Lion, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Play



of the Lion.

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra was in the samādhi named Sublime Gift, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara was in the samādhi named Drying Up Avīci.

“When Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra opened up his pores, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara opened all his pores.<sup>357</sup>

“At that time, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra said to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, ‘Avalokiteśvara, it is excellent that you have this capability. Excellent.’

“Then Tathāgata Krakucchanda said to Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra, ‘Noble son, you have seen only a little of Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s prowess. Even the tathāgatas don’t have Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara’s prowess.’

“That is what I heard Krakucchanda say.”

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, I pray that you teach the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*, so that we will enjoy and be satisfied by the taste of the Dharma.” [F.245.b]

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, those who hear the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*, will not have the obscuration of previous karma. Those who, enamored of another’s wife, have sexual intercourse with her; those who have killed their parents; those who have killed an arhat; those who have destroyed stūpas; those who have maliciously caused a tathāgata to bleed; and those who delight in such bad actions will be freed from bad karma by the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*.”

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, how can I know the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*, which brings freedom from all bad karma?”

The Bhagavat said, “Noble son, on the southern<sup>358</sup> side of Sumeru, the king of mountains, the seven<sup>359</sup> samyaksaṃbuddhas examine the extent of stains and stainlessness. I also am presently examining them.

“A white cloth becomes black,<sup>360</sup> and a black cloth becomes white. When the white cloth becomes black, that is like an accumulation of bad karma. When a black cloth becomes white, that is like the accumulation of the Dharma.

“Noble son, in that way, the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*, burns up all bad karma. It makes it white. It eliminates all obscurations. It is like this: For example, during the summer, plants and forests become very green. Then the nāga king Śatamukha comes from his residence and burns the grass, the bushes, the herbs, and the forests.

“Noble son, in that same way, this precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*, burns up all bad karma. Those who hear the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*, will have happiness. Noble son, they should not be known as ordinary beings. [F.246.a] They should be seen as irreversible bodhisattvas. When they die, twelve tathāgatas will come and reassure them, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, noble son, do not be afraid. You have heard the precious king of the Mahāyāna sūtras, *The Sūtra of the Basket’s Display*. You

will no longer continue in saṃsāra. You will never again see birth, aging, sickness, and death. You will not be separated from that which is beloved and pleasant, and will not encounter that which is disliked. You will go, noble son, to the realm of Sukhāvatī. You will hear the Dharma from Tathāgata Amitābha.' In that way, noble son, those beings will have happiness."

Then Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara bowed his head to the Bhagavat's feet and departed.

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin became silent.

The devas, nāgas, yakṣas, asuras, gandharvas,<sup>361</sup> garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans all departed.

After they had departed, Brother Ānanda said to the Bhagavat, "Bhagavat, I pray that you teach us the vows of training."

The Bhagavat said, "Those bhikṣus who wish to give complete ordination should first go and examine the various locations. When they have examined them, they should tell the other bhikṣus, 'Noble ones,<sup>362</sup> the various locations are completely pure. There are no bones in those various locations. There are no feces and urine. Those various places are completely pure and are worthy for bhikṣus to give ordination.'

The Bhagavat said, "Those who have incorrect conduct should not give ordination. They cannot even make the announcement of the request for ordination, the intermediate motions, and the fourth.<sup>363</sup> [F.246.b] What need is there to say more? Bhikṣus, a bhikṣu with incorrect conduct cannot establish the various locations for ordination, let alone make the fourth motion.<sup>364</sup> They destroy the teaching. Those who have incorrect conduct should not dwell among those who receive offerings. They should dwell outside the monastery. The Saṅgha's alms should not be given to them. They are not worthy to be in the Saṅgha. They have no part of being a bhikṣu."

Brother Ānanda asked the Bhagavat, "Bhagavat, in what time will they become recipients of offerings?"

The Bhagavat said, "There will be those kinds of recipients of offerings three hundred years after my passing into nirvāṇa. They will see the monastery as their home. Sons and daughters will encircle them. They will use the Saṅgha's seats, stools, clothing bags, cushions, and beds, which are prohibited to them. They will urinate and defecate in the places the Saṅgha uses, and they will be reborn as insects in a cesspool of feces and urine in the great city of Vārāṇasī.<sup>365</sup>

"They will also spit in the places the Saṅgha uses, not knowing the karma that ripens from it. Those who spit in places the Saṅgha uses will be reborn in a sal tree forest as insects the size of the eye of a needle for twelve years.

"Those who use the toothpicks of the Saṅgha, which are prohibited to them, will be reborn as turtles, crocodiles, and fish.

"Those who use the Saṅgha's sesame, rice, millet,<sup>366</sup> horse gram, and other grains, which are not for them to eat, will be reborn in the city of the pretas. They will be like burned tree trunks, like standing skeletons covered with hair, with stomachs the size of mountains and mouths the size of a needle's eye. They will experience that kind of physical suffering.

“Those who use the food of the Saṅgha to feed dogs will be reborn in a low caste, with defective faculties, crippled and hunchbacked, [F.247.a] and unable to look others in the face while begging. When they die, they will be reborn with diseased bodies. They will have blood and pus dripping from their bodies; the tendons in their bodies will shrink. When they stand up, red lumps of their flesh will fall onto the ground, and their bones will be exposed. They will experience that kind of suffering for many years, for many hundreds of thousands of years.

“Those who use land exclusive to the Saṅgha will be reborn in the Raurava great hell for twelve eons. Lumps of red hot iron will be squeezed into their mouths, burning them, destroying their lips and teeth, splitting their palates, burning their throats, and burning their hearts and all their entrails until there is nothing left but bones. Bhikṣus, at that time the winds of karma will blow, and although they have died they will come back to life. Then Yama's guards will again seize them. Their karma will come; they will be under the power of their karma. Their tongues will become vast, and a hundred thousand plows will plow them. They will experience that kind of suffering in that hell for hundreds of thousands of years.

“When they die and leave that hell, they will be reborn in the Agnighaṭa great hell. Yama's guards will seize them and insert a hundred thousand needles into their tongues. Then, through the power of karma, they will come back to life and will be hurled into a mass of flames. When they are cast out from that mass of flames, they will be hurled into the Vaitarāṇi River.<sup>367</sup> When they die, they will be reborn in other hells. They will wander in that way for three eons. When they die and leave the hells, they will be reborn in Jambudvīpa as poor people, blind from birth. Therefore, Ānanda, protect the property of the Saṅgha.

“Bhikṣus, those who have the vows of training should have the three Dharma robes. One Dharma robe is worn by the Saṅgha so that there will be confidence in the Saṅgha. The second robe is for when one goes to the king's palace. [F.247.b] The third robe is for when one goes to the villages, towns, marketplaces, and hamlets. So the bhikṣus must have the three robes.”

“Those bhikṣus who have good conduct, who have good qualities, and who have wisdom<sup>368</sup> should remember my words of instruction.

“Bhikṣus, the exclusive property of the Saṅgha, such as the embers of the Saṅgha's fire, the smoke of the Saṅgha, the vajras of the Saṅgha, or the baggage of the Saṅgha, should not be used. There are remedies for poison, but there are no remedies for using the property of the Saṅgha.”<sup>369</sup>

Then Brother Ānanda said to the Bhagavat, “Bhagavat, every bhikṣu will remember these words of instruction given by the Bhagavat and will keep the pratimokṣa vows, will follow the Vinaya, and will preserve the Bhagavat's words of instruction.”

Then Brother Ānanda bowed his head to the Bhagavat's feet and departed.

Then the mahāśrāvakas departed to their own buddha realms.

The devas, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans also departed.

The joyful Bhagavat spoke those words, and the entire community and the world with its devas, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced in the Bhagavat's words.

*The noble Mahāyāna sūtra, The Basket's Display, is concluded.*

*Translated and revised by the Indian paṇḍitas Jinamitra and Dānaśīla, and by Yeshe Dé, the translator and chief editor.*

## Notes

- 1 Mette (2005).
- 2 Chandra (1999).
- 3 Yü (2000, 293–350).
- 4 *Pillar Testament* (1989, 95–6, 108).
- 5 Uebach (1987, 7a).
- 6 See *The Basket of the Jewels Sūtra*.
- 7 Toh. 507, see bibliography under *The Dhāraṇī Named The Relic Casket*.
- 8 See Dīpaṃkarajñāna and Śūra.
- 9 Lopez (1998, 114–34).
- 10 Martin (1987, 1).
- 11 Verhagen (1990, 133–138).
- 12 Cohen (2002, 67–68).
- 13 See 'dul ba gzhi, 'dul ba rnam par 'byed pa, and Rouse (1895, 127).
- 14 This is a Sanskritization of the name Valāhassa, which means “cloud horse.” The version of the story in the Vinaya-vāstu was translated into Tibetan as *rtā'i rgyal po sprin gyi shugs can*, “the king of horses who has the power of the clouds.”
- 15 In the tradition that enumerates Śākyamuni as the seventh buddha, Vipasyin is the first. The sūtra will introduce successively each buddha in order up to the fifth.
- 16 In Sanskrit texts his name is Sanskritized to Anāthapiṇḍada, but the Pali version of his name is well established in English.
- 17 According to the Sanskrit, *aṣṭi-koṭyo*, literally, “eighty ten millions.” Tibetan: *bye ba* (“ten million”), “eighty” being omitted.
- 18 According to the Sanskrit; Tibetan has *sbas* corrupted to *shan*.
- 19 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan appears to be corrupt at this point, adding another sentence mentioning both thirty-two and thirty-three classes of deities: “Also, Īśvara, Nārāyaṇa, and the other deities of the thirty-two classes of devas were assembled there. Also the deities of the thirty-three classes of devas were assembled there. Assembled with such deities as the deity Maheśvara, Āditya, Candra, Vāyu, and Varuṇa, were Śakra, the lord of the devas, and Brahma, the lord of Sahā.”
- 20 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Huluta.”
- 21 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “Nāga King Vahūdaka.”
- 22 According to Cambridge. Tibetan has *blo gros chen po* (a translation of *Mahāmati*, a scribal error for *Sahāpati*). Sāmaśrami and Vaidya have *Sahāmpati*.
- 23 Following Tibetan and Vaidya. Cambridge: *Maharṣita*.
- 24 Following Tibetan and Vaidya. Cambridge omits “Kṛṣṇa King Druma.”
- 25 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “hundreds.”
- 26 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “hundreds.”
- 27 According to Cambridge. Tibetan has Pulinda, which is repeated a few lines later. Absent in Sāmaśrami and Vaidya.
- 28 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has *sa ri'i bzhin*, with *sa ri* a corruption of *Svāti*.
- 29 Vijayaśrī and Mucilindā are absent in Tibetan and Cambridge.
- 30 According to Tibetan, Sāmaśrami, and Vaidya; absent in Cambridge.
- 31 According to Vaidya, “drop of water.” Cambridge has only *bindu*. Tibetan has *thigs pa*, meaning “drop.”

- 32 According to Tibetan and Cambridge (“hundred mounts”). Vaidya has *śatabāhu* (“hundred arms”).
- 33 According to Tibetan. The first element comes from the Cambridge manuscript compound (*Anākṛtsna-karā*), and the second from Vaidya (*Anākṛcchragatā*).
- 34 According to Sanskrit. After Subhūṣaṇā, Tibetan has “a female nāga named *thig le*” (possible from Tilakā). We have omitted it.
- 35 According to Tibetan and Cambridge. Vaidya has *Pāṇḍalameghā*.
- 36 According to Sanskrit. The Tibetan *de bzhin du chags pa* appears to have been translating from Tathāvirūdhā. According to Cambridge, the female nāga Nīlotpalā is listed after Rathābhiruḍhā here, though an apsara has already been given that name. We have omitted it.
- 37 According to Cambridge and Tibetan. Vaidya has *tyāgagatā*.
- 38 According to Cambridge. Absent in Tibetan and Vaidya.
- 39 According to Tibetan and Vaidya. Cambridge has *Nillau*.
- 40 According to Cambridge. Vaidya has *Mukharā*; Tibetan translates from *Sukhakarā*.
- 41 According to Sāmaśrami and Vaidya (“joyful flower”). Cambridge and Tibetan have *rudita puṣpa* (“weeping flower”), which seems anomalous here.
- 42 According to Tibetan, Sāmaśrami, and Vaidya; absent in Cambridge.
- 43 According to Tibetan, Sāmaśrami, and Vaidya. Cambridge has *audumvararudita* and Tibetan has *me tog u dum ba ra'i lto ba*, both implying a second part to the compound, although the Cambridge appears corrupt and the Tibetan “stomach” also has a dubious origin.
- 44 According to Tibetan and Cambridge; absent in Sāmaśrami and Vaidya.
- 45 According to Sāmaśrami and Vaidya; absent in Cambridge and Tibetan.
- 46 According to Sāmaśrami and Vaidya; Cambridge has *Padmālaṃbā*. Either that or Padmālaṃbāna translated into Tibetan as *pad ma'i dmigs*.
- 47 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has the obscure *cha bas dbang po*.
- 48 According to Tibetan and Cambridge; occurs earlier in Sāmaśrami and Vaidya.
- 49 According to Sāmaśrami, Vaidya, and Tibetan. Cambridge has *devavaralocana*.
- 50 According to Tibetan and Cambridge, Sāmaśrami and Vaidya have *Suvaca*. Tibetan has three additional names: *'khor gyis yongs su bskor ba*, *mchog dga'*, and *dam pa'i dpal*.
- 51 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “hundreds.”
- 52 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “hundreds.”
- 53 According to Tibetan, Sāmaśrami, and Vaidya; Cambridge has *Ākāśayūvanā*.
- 54 According to Cambridge; Sāmaśrami and Vaidya have *Acalaśrī*.
- 55 According to Tibetan and Cambridge (last two letters illegible). Absent in Sāmaśrami and Vaidya.
- 56 According to Tibetan and Cambridge; absent in Sāmaśrami/Vaidya.
- 57 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has *blo gros chen mo*, a translation of *Mahāmatī*, itself a scribal error of *Sahāpati*. Sāmaśrami and Vaidya have *Sahāmpati*.
- 58 Cambridge has *śatā*. Tibetan has *bdog ma*, translated from a corruption.
- 59 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan translates from a corruption, beginning with *akṣa* instead of *lakṣa*.
- 60 According to Tibetan and Cambridge. Sāmaśrami and Vaidya have *yogānugatā*.
- 61 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “hundreds.”
- 62 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “hundreds.”
- 63 According to Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “hundreds.”
- 64 *Nirgrantha* in its general meaning as “one with no possessions.” The Tibetan has *gcer bu pa*, “naked ones,” which would refer specifically to Jains, but that does not appear to be the meaning here.
- 65 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has *rgya'i gos* (“Chinese cloth”), perhaps from *cīnakavastra* or *cīnavastra*, a corruption of *cīvaravastra* (“monastic robes”). *Rgya'i gos* does not occur anywhere

else in the *bka' gyur*, whereas “monastic robes, sometimes made of divine material” occurs elsewhere along with “parasols, victory banners, etc.” “Chinese cloth” would be silk, which is next in the list of hangings.

- 66 According to the Tibetan. Sanskrit has “strings of pearls.”
- 67 Water of the eight good qualities is: cool; delicious; light; soft; clear; unstained; not harmful to the stomach; and not harmful to the throat.
- 68 Strictly speaking only the *padma* (red lotus) and *puṇḍarika* (white lotus) are lotuses. The *utpala* (blue lotus) is a water lily, as is the *kuduma* (night-flowering water lily)
- 69 *Māṇḍārava*, and *mahāmāṇḍārava*. The author, in copying lists of flowers from earlier sutras, has placed tree flowers on the pond. Tiger claw or Indian coral trees (*Erythrina stricta*) are trees prized for their beauty and are believed to grow in Indra's paradise. The greater tiger claw tree is presumably *Erythrina variegata*, which grows much taller.
- 70 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “Mahāsattva.”
- 71 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “It was he who emanated these light rays.”
- 72 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has this passage as a description of the events instead of the thoughts of Yama's guards: “At that time Yama's creatures were dismayed as they saw bad omens appear in the Avīci hell, for when the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara arrived there, lotus flowers the size of cartwheels...”
- 73 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has *btun*, “pestle,” which is an alternative meaning of *musala*.
- 74 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “taking all their Avīci utensils.”
- 75 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Divine One, you don't know? First an inauspicious...”
- 76 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “peaceful,” and makes this omen occur on Avalokiteśvara's entry into hell: “...a being, handsome, with a topknot and his body having all adornments, came and it became cool.”
- 77 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “...with an extremely loving mind, and resembling a golden statue.”
- 78 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan interpreted *mahārāvaṇa* incorrectly as “the elephant of the gods,” a name for Indra's elephant.
- 79 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates *prthivīvaralocanakarāya* as “the eyes of the world.”
- 80 According to Cambridge and Tibetan. Vaidya omits “who teaches the six perfections; who illuminates like the sun...” Tibetan translates this as “who creates perfect eyes like the sun.”
- 81 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “who manifests as the supreme rishi.”
- 82 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “who creates abundance.”
- 83 In other words, two cobras tied together and worn diagonally over the torso across one shoulder, as a Brahmin's thread. Śiva is also depicted wearing this.
- 84 According to the Tibetan (*phra men pha dang phra men ma*). Not present in Sanskrit.
- 85 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “who has profound wisdom.”
- 86 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “Then they contemplated the human existence.”
- 87 The Tibetan *'jig tshogs* means “an aggregation that is destroyed.” The Sanskrit *satkāya* means “existent accumulation,” a secondary meaning of *kāya*, which is usually translated as *sku*, meaning “body.” The mountain is singular in the Sanskrit and has twenty peaks, which are the views of the relationship of the self to each of the five *skandhas* or aggregates—i.e., the self is form, form possesses self, self possesses form, and self is located within form—and the same for the other four aggregates (sensations, identifications, mental activities, and consciousnesses), which comes to twenty views.
- 88 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “from the city of the pretas.”
- 89 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates *caraṇa* as “feet.”
- 90 *Liṅga* was translated into Tibetan as *rtaḡs*, which can mean “sign,” “emblem,” or “gender.” The etymology of *liṅga* is here given a fanciful etymology from the verb *līyana* (“dissolve”), which is lost in translation.

- 91 See note 93.
- 92 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “flowers.”
- 93 The seven jewels are listed here in the order given in Cambridge, and in agreement with the second time they are listed.
- 94 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan translation of these phrases is obscure.
- 95 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Shambala.”
- 96 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and others.”
- 97 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “departed in one direction.”
- 98 *Śayanāsana*, literally, “sleeping-sitting,” can mean “bed and seat” as translated into Tibetan (*mal stan*). However, it is also a Buddhist term for a monk’s cell or dwelling.
- 99 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan transliterates and does not translate the Sanskrit for “hyenas” (*tarakṣu*, though *tarakṣa* would mean “wolf”) and omits “camels, jackals.”
- 100 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “statues.”
- 101 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has *ngal bso po*, the translation of *viśrama* (“tranquility”).
- 102 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “He says to the listening asuras.”
- 103 The dialogue between the Buddha and Sarvaṇīvaraṇaviṣkhambin is absent in both the Tibetan and Cambridge. It has been added here from *Sāmaśrami* as the narrative is more confusing without it.
- 104 In Indian literature such as the *Pūraṇas*, those beings that do not produce descendants are reborn in a realm where the inhabitants continually hang upside down. The seven underworlds, called *patala*, include realms made of gold. The implication here is that Avalokiteśvara is traveling through the underworlds, one of which is ruled by Bali, which this sūtra describes as being made of iron. The hells and the preta realm are also located below the ground.
- 105 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has the peculiar “Show us the path of liberation that creates sensation.”
- 106 The Sanskrit editions added an extra sentence here: “As he approached, King Bali saw him in the distance, resembling a disc of gold emitting light rays of various colors.” This would easily have been omitted when copying a manuscript, since the next sentence begins in a similar way.
- 107 One example of these names being used separately for two attendants, as opposed to the compound name *Kubjavāmanaka* for one asura, is found in verses 31–32 and 35–36 in chapter 69 of the *Bṛhatsaṃhita* by Varāhamihira (505–587 CE), where Kubja and Vāmanaka are listed as separate attendants of kings. See Varāhamihira (1869, 287).
- 108 This is a poetic metaphor for a face covered or darkened by tears as clouds darken the land.
- 109 List of jewelry is given according to the Tibetan.
- 110 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “I became astonished on having become...”
- 111 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan translation is obscure.
- 112 The English translation of the Chinese translation adds here that there were five hundred locks on each door.
- 113 “Son of Daśaratha” is another name for “Rāma,” who came to be regarded as one of Nārāyaṇa’s, i.e., Viṣṇu’s, incarnations. The English translation of the Chinese translation has Nārāyaṇa transforming into these different beings.
- 114 According to the Sanskrit the five named kṣatriyas are the five Pāṇḍava brothers, and the Kaurava brothers were their enemies. This is the principal theme of the *Mahābhārata* epic.
- 115 This passage is awkward in the original text, as from this point on, descriptions of Bali shift from first-person voice to third-person voice. In this translation we have maintained the first-person voice throughout, as noted in the introduction.
- 116 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has the literal but obscure translation “being of time.”
- 117 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “weapons” instead of “long spear and short spear.”
- 118 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and the others.”
- 119 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “having been expelled from the offering site.”



- 120 According to the Gilgit manuscript. This passage is corrupted in later manuscripts and translated into Tibetan as “like a creator.”
- 121 At this point in the original, the narrative switches back to the first person, though the next sentence has one incident of Bali in the third person in his own narrative.
- 122 “Omniscient buddha” here is referring to Amitābha.
- 123 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “eyes of the world.”
- 124 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “Avīci.”
- 125 The text has only “hundred thousand,” assuming that the reader will know this refers to the silver coin, the *raupya*, the origin of the present day rupee, which was tied to the value of silver until the end of the nineteenth century.
- 126 According to Cambridge and Tibetan.
- 127 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has only “others.”
- 128 According to Cambridge: *kiṃ mayā pāparatena sattvena karma kṛtam*.
- 129 This is the Jetavana Monastery of Buddha Viśvabhū, and not the Jetavana Monastery in which Buddha Śākyamuni is relating the sūtra.
- 130 See note 65.
- 131 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “an extremely dreadful.”
- 132 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has simply “I have been ripening many beings.”
- 133 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “rested.”
- 134 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “promulgate.”
- 135 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “one four-line verse that is the root of this king...”
- 136 See note 135.
- 137 See note 98.
- 138 See note 135.
- 139 See note 135.
- 140 See note 135.
- 141 According to the Tibetan. Cambridge only lists “once-returner.” The other later Sanskrit editions have a complete list of attainments: “Some attained the result of a stream entrant, some attained the result of becoming a once-returner, some attained the result of becoming a non-returner, some attained the state of an arhat, and some attained enlightenment.”
- 142 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Stay in this *vihāra*!”
- 143 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and gave him the divine clothing.”
- 144 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “homes with drink” and “a variety of multicolored beds.”
- 145 According to Tibetan and Cambridge. See note 141 for the fuller list given in other Sanskrit editions.
- 146 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and we will keep the *upāsikā* vows.”
- 147 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “*namo dharmāya, namaḥ saṃghāya*” (“Homage to the Buddha, homage to the Dharma, homage to the Saṃgha”).
- 148 See note 147.
- 149 See note 87.
- 150 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “they all rested.”
- 151 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “rested.”
- 152 See note 151.
- 153 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “Supreme Eyes of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel.”
- 154 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Dharma King.”
- 155 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “the samādhi named Descending into the Ocean.”

- 156 According to Tibetan (*shin tu gnas pa*), Cambridge, and Sāmaśrami (*supraṭiṣṭha*).
- 157 According to Tibetan (*dga' ba sbyin par byed pa*) and Cambridge (*priyamdada*).
- 158 According to Tibetan (*rdo rje rgyal mtshan*), Cambridge, and Sāmaśrami (*vajradhvaja*).
- 159 According to Tibetan (*'jig rten thams cad la rnam par lta ba*), Cambridge, and Sāmaśrami (*sarvvalokadhātuvyavalokana*).
- 160 According to Tibetan (*ma lus 'ongs ba*) and Sāmaśrami (*kṛtsangata*).
- 161 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “Supreme Eyes of the Moon.”
- 162 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Divine Eyes” (from a corruption of *rocana* to *locana*).
- 163 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “The Continent of the Eon,” from the alternative meaning of *dvīpa* that here means “lamp.”
- 164 According to the Tibetan. Omitted in the Sanskrit.
- 165 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Divine Earrings.”
- 166 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “The Great Continent,” from the alternative meaning of *dvīpa* that here means “lamp.”
- 167 According to Tibetan. Omitted in the Sanskrit.
- 168 According to the Sanskrit. Omitted in Tibetan.
- 169 According to the Sanskrit. Omitted in Tibetan.
- 170 According to the Sanskrit. Omitted in Tibetan.
- 171 According to the Sanskrit. Omitted in Tibetan.
- 172 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Array of Nāgas” (*klu bkod pa*), from a corruption of *nāmayuha* to *nāgavyuha*.
- 173 Arcturus is the brightest star in the northern sky.
- 174 According to the Sanskrit. Omitted in the Tibetan.
- 175 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “named Siṃhalarāja.”
- 176 Ratnadvīpa, Siṃhala, and Rākṣasidvīpa (“island of rākṣasīs”) are normally synonyms, but here “Ratnadvīpa” appears to be differentiated. The Gilgit manuscript also has “Ratnadvīpa,” but the Cambridge manuscript has “Jambudvīpa.”
- 177 “Yavanadvīpa” (*nas kyi gling*) appears only in the Tibetan.
- 178 According to Tibetan and Cambridge. Vaidya has “Land of the Rākṣasas.” See also note 176.
- 179 The original text is inconsistent in making the island singular or plural.
- 180 The original text is inconsistent in switching to the third person “the merchants.”
- 181 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “extremely aged,” which is not the intended meaning here.
- 182 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “from two or three to seven days.”
- 183 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan translation, not comprehending the unusual word used for *lamp* in the Sanskrit, assumes it is the sleeping woman who is laughing.
- 184 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates it as “to the right,” an alternative meaning for *dakṣiṇa*. The Vinaya version of the story (*'dul ba gzhi*) translates this correctly as *lho* at first but later in the story use *g.yas*, “right,” even though they are describing the same road.
- 185 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “city.”
- 186 At this point the narrative in the original changes briefly from first to third person.
- 187 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan has “sword that glowed like moonlight named ‘provision for me.’”
- 188 At this point the narrative changes back to first person.
- 189 “Inside who heard me” is absent in the manuscript; it has been added to make the narrative clearer in English.
- 190 The herb is unidentified and may be fictional. The Vinaya version (*'dul ba gzhi*) has “the wild rice that does not need to be farmed” (*ma smos ma btap pa'i 'bras sa lu'i 'bru*), which is considered

superior to farmed rice. “Wild rice” there translates *taṇḍulaphalaśa*. Other names for rice include *śetaśala*, *sarvasaṃgata*, and *śvetataṇḍula*. Therefore this may be the origin of the name for this mythical herb.

- 191 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “they all rested.”
- 192 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has only two repetitions.
- 193 In the original this passage began with the plural for both “rākṣasī” and “merchant,” but then changed to singular.
- 194 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and the delightful bathing pools.”
- 195 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and a variety of delightful bathing pools.”
- 196 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has only two repetitions.
- 197 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “adorned by red lotuses,” presumably translating from a corruption of *padmarāga* to *padmarakta*.
- 198 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “leaf huts.”
- 199 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “the suffering and happiness of beings in saṃsāra.”
- 200 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “deeply contemplate emptiness in that way.”
- 201 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “cause to be written out.”
- 202 According to the Sanskrit, *caṇḍāla*, a term that is used for all those outside the caste system or those with the lowest status among them, or more specifically, those who deal with dead bodies. Tibetan translates as *phyag dar pa* (“sweeper”).
- 203 According to the Sanskrit, *kukkura*. Tibetan translates as *rme sha can* (“one with spotted flesh”), which has various definitions including “butcher.”
- 204 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “lame, hunchbacked, bent, knock-kneed, large-bodied, and having leprosy.”
- 205 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has, “he did not even see those who live in each of those pores, let alone any other bodhisattvas [being able to see them].”
- 206 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “and did not even see [them], why should I go?”
- 207 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Noble son, I am unwavering, without illusion, and appear as subtle.” The reading of “I” is from a corruption of *ayam* (“this [bodhisattva]”) to *aham* (“I”).
- 208 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “imperceptible.”
- 209 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “without form.”
- 210 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “without mind.”
- 211 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Lord of the family.” The family is that of the bodhisattvas or Mahāyāna.
- 212 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “and becomes a shadow on/in all phenomena.”
- 213 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “or hear.”
- 214 According to Cambridge (*svabhāvakāyaṃ*) and Tibetan (*rang bzhin gyi lus*). Vaidya has *svabhāvakā* (“nature”).
- 215 According to Tibetan. Sanskrit omits “inconceivable.”
- 216 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “rested his cheek on his hand.” This is a gesture of despondency.
- 217 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “following the three paths.”
- 218 Tibetan has only *bdud rtsi* (*amṛta*).
- 219 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “first mind.”
- 220 See note 69.
- 221 Translated into Tibetan as “Vajra Door.”
- 222 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “adorned by red lotuses,” presumably translating from a corruption of *padmarāga* to *padmarakta*.
- 223 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “rested.”

- 224 This is presumably the name of a hell. Translated into Tibetan literally as “Vajra Mountain.”
- 225 The list of hells is according to the Tibetan.
- 226 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “there would be none who know.”
- 227 Naga King Vāsuki omitted in Tibetan.
- 228 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “the ground.”
- 229 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “seven, eight generations will obtain [it].”
- 230 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “or on their throat.”
- 231 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “with their hand.”
- 232 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “which pacifies desire and hatred.”
- 233 According to Cambridge (*dharmagaṃjasya*) and Tibetan (*chos kyi mdzod*). Vaidya has *dharmarājasya* (“Dharma king”).
- 234 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “imperishable.”
- 235 According to Tibetan and Cambridge. Vaidya adds the dubious “the realm named Padmottama.”
- 236 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “I can calculate.”
- 237 Unidentified. Tibetan texts refer to the source of the Indus by this name. There is also a river of that name in South India, though it is not likely to be referred to here. This does not refer to the Tarim River of Sinkiang, which is also known as the Sītā.
- 238 Tibetan transliterates as “Gaṅga.”
- 239 Tibetan transliterates as “Sindhu.”
- 240 Unidentified, though Tibetan texts use this name for the source of the Brahmaputra.
- 241 Tibetan transliterates as “Śatadru.”
- 242 Tibetan transliterates as “Candrabhaga.”
- 243 Tibetan transliterates as “Airavati.” Sanskrit has “Erāvati,” though it is primarily known as Irāvati.
- 244 Unidentified. Possibly the Son River.
- 245 Unidentified. “Himarati” in Vaidya. “Himakala” in Tibetan. Possibly the Kali Gandaki.
- 246 Written as “Kodapari” in Tibetan; “Kalaśodari” in Sanskrit; and “Kalasodarī” in Cambridge.
- 247 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates *jambuka* as “fox.”
- 248 “Hour” here translates *muhurta*, but as there are thirty *muhurta* in a day, this “hour” is forty-eight minutes long.
- 249 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “I can count the number of years, months, days, hours, and minutes of time that would take.”
- 250 According to Tibetan, *sa bdun pa*, and Cambridge manuscript *saptamibhūmi*. Vaidya has *daśabhūmi* (“tenth bhūmi”).
- 251 This is according to the lunisolar calendar. When the year of twelve lunar months falls thirty days behind the solar year, an extra month, a leap-month, is added.
- 252 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “bowls.”
- 253 See note 102.
- 254 According to Tibetan.
- 255 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “through eight maṇḍalas” through a corruption in Sanskrit that has loss of the negative and *adr̥ṣṭa* (“not-seen”) becoming *aṣṭa* (“eight”).
- 256 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan has only “lotus” and omits “hook.” Amitābha’s hand gesture (*mudrā*) is portrayed in the maṇḍala.
- 257 This hand gesture is portrayed in the maṇḍala as being performed by Mahāmaṇidhara.
- 258 This hand gesture is portrayed in the maṇḍala as being performed by Śaḍakṣarī.
- 259 According to the Sanskrit.
- 260 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “four corners.”

- 261 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “individual implements.”
- 262 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “mantras.”
- 263 In the original text the narrative suddenly changes here from Padmottama’s first-person narration to Śākyamuni’s narration.
- 264 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “queen of.”
- 265 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has the vighnas and vināyakas being frightened and the others fleeing.
- 266 According to Cambridge and Sāmaśrami. Tibetan has only *Padma*. Vaidya, though it had *Padmottama* earlier, has *Patrottama* at this point.
- 267 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “statues.”
- 268 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan and Cambridge have this further on in the list, before “the samādhi of Seeing All the Tathāgatas.”
- 269 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Possessing the Six Perfections.”
- 270 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “recites, and is completely focused on.”
- 271 According to Cambridge (*jaṃgamayuṣyatitha*, corruption of *jagadāyuṣyatitha*). Omitted in Vaidya. Tibetan has “should be seen as the shore of the merit of beings.”
- 272 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “merit,” which was conjoined with the preceding phrase.
- 273 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “should be seen as being like the Ganges and all sacred places.”
- 274 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits.
- 275 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Dharma treasury.”
- 276 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “his conduct is not controlled.”
- 277 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “cloth from China.” Sāmaśrami and Vaidya follow this with *dhyuṣītāni*, which is not included in Cambridge or Tibetan.
- 278 See note 69.
- 279 According to Sanskrit *vārṣika*. Tibetan has *vāraṣikā*. The name means “a monsoon flower.” It is described as white and fragrant. Though the Sanskrit dictionary gives Arabian jasmine (*Jasminum sambac*), the description matches gardenia (*Gardenia gummifera*).
- 280 According to the Tibetan compound *kunda* (*Jasminum multiflorum*) and *dhyuṣita* (white). Sanskrit has *śakunakādhyuṣita*. Cambridge has *śakuntādhyuṣita*.
- 281 According to the Sanskrit, *vimalika*; Tibetan has *vimānaka*.
- 282 Transliterated into Tibetan as *vyaśārika*. Vaidya has *śālika*, but Cambridge has *śārikā*. The myna is a vocalizer that has always been a popular house pet in India, the *Gracula religiosa* or the *Turdus salica*.
- 283 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “his conduct was not controlled.”
- 284 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “I lack the highest complete enlightenment, so...”
- 285 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Give me the completely pure state of great stability.”
- 286 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “unequalled.”
- 287 Literally “Indra garments.” This obscure term is found only in this sūtra. It appears in the Sanskrit to be a kind of compound called *madhyamapadalopī*, “omission of the middle word.” As this appears to be in a list referring to colors of cloth, the first part of the compound is presumably short for *indradhanu*, *indrayudha*, or *indrakārmuka*, all meaning “rainbow.”
- 288 According to the Sanskrit. The obscure word *dhyuṣita* is found only in this sūtra. It is also used to describe star jasmine earlier in the sūtra, which has been interpreted as “bright white.” It has also been interpreted as a variant of a word meaning “dwell,” and therefore the Tibetan translates it as “dwelling” (literally “based”) garments. Edgerton sees it as related to *duṣya*, which he interprets as meaning “very fine” when applied to cloth.
- 289 According to the Tibetan. Sanskrit has just *divasa* (“day”), which is presumably short for *divasakara* (“daymaker”), a common term for the sun.

- 290 Sāmaśrami has *nagnaśravaṇeṣu* and Vaidya has *nagnaśramaneṣu*, which are here synonymous. This could refer to Jains—monks of the Digambara sect are always naked—but nakedness was also a common feature among Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite ascetics. Cambridge has *nagnaśāvareṣu* (“naked savages”), referring to the tribal people living in the mountains of present day Orissa. The Tibetan is based on a similar version, but with the compound divided into two, “naked ones and mountain men” (*gcer bu pa dang ri mi*).
- 291 This is the traditional division of the twelve kinds of teachings given by the Buddha. The *sūtras*, literally “threads,” does not mean entire texts as in the general meaning of *sūtra* but the prose passages within texts; the *geyas* are the verse versions of preceding prose passages; the *vyākaraṇas* are prophecies; the *gāthās* are stand-alone verses; the *udānas* are teachings not given in response to a request; the *nidānas* are the introductory sections; the *avadānas* are accounts of the previous lives of individuals who were alive at the time of the Buddha; the *itivṛttakas* are biographies of buddhas and bodhisattvas in the past; the *jātakas* are the Buddha’s accounts of his own previous lifetimes; the *vaipulyas* are teachings that expand upon a certain subject; the *adbhūta dharmas* are descriptions of miracles; and the *upadeśas* are explanations of terms and categories.
- 292 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “What is the essence?”
- 293 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “with their hands.”
- 294 See note 98.
- 295 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan has *mkhan po* for *dharma upādhyāya*, or “preceptor.”
- 296 This is referring to Amitābha.
- 297 The mantra itself has seven times ten million buddhas. The compiler must have been aware of the apparent contradiction and is presumably stating that in this *sūtra* a greater number of buddhas are reciting this mantra than did so in the Cundī *sūtra*. See also note 305.
- 298 According to Tibetan and Cambridge. Vaidya and Sāmaśrami have *cunye*.
- 299 This is the mantra of the Goddess Cundi in the form written in *The Dhāraṇī Named Goddess Cunde* (folio 46b7). However, it is *oṃ cale cule cundi svāhā*, the form that is popular in Chinese Buddhism, in the same text as repeated in the Dhāraṇī section of the Kangyur (*The Dhāraṇī Named Goddess Cunde*, folio 143a5). *Cale cule cunde* are the vocative forms of Calā, Culā, and Cundā, three variations of her name. Cundi is the vocative for Cundī. The words *seventy million buddhas* are a reference to her being the mother of seventy million buddhas as described in her *sūtra*, which was not translated into Tibetan, but was translated into Chinese (*The Dhāraṇī of Cundī*). This *sūtra* was evidently popular in India at the time of the creation of the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*, at least in its present form.
- 300 Here the narrative abruptly changes to continue on directly from the description of the previous pore (Vajramukha). No attempt has been made to smooth this fracture of the original.
- 301 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan did not translate but transliterated it as *śaridaka*.
- 302 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “many hundreds of thousands.”
- 303 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and jewels.”
- 304 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “many.”
- 305 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “ninety thousand.”
- 306 According to the Sanskrit, *cittarāja*. The Tibetan had *sna tshogs kyi rgyal po* (“King of Variety”), translating *citrarāja*. The Chinese has “Painting King,” which was also translating *citrarāja*.
- 307 Not the same as the identically named “seven jewels of the cakravartin.” The seven jewels were associated with the seven heavenly bodies: ruby, moonstone or pearl, coral, emerald, yellow sapphire, diamond, and blue sapphire.
- 308 According to the Sanskrit and the Chinese. Cambridge has “the trunks are red, and the leaves are red-gold.” Tibetan has “the trunks are red pearl, and the leaves are gold and silver.” For consistency in the description of the trees, the Vaidya and Sāmaśrami versions have been followed.
- 309 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has the verb “hung” used for both the jewels and the

adornments.

- 310 According to Cambridge (*Dvḥajārāja*) and Tibetan (*rgyal mtshan gyi rgyal po*). Vaidya and Sāmaśrami have *Dhvajāgra*.
- 311 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “ninety-nine thousand multistoried palaces.”
- 312 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “divine.”
- 313 According to the Tibetan. The Sanskrit omits “and jewels.”
- 314 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “they face Jambudvīpa and teach the Dharma.”
- 315 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits mahoragas.
- 316 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “in a realm within this universe.”
- 317 The preceding two paragraphs were absent in the Tibetan, and could easily have been omitted in the copying of Sanskrit manuscripts.
- 318 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “divine magnolia trees appeared and divine lotus pools appeared.”
- 319 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits.
- 320 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “who holds a lotus.”
- 321 “Lord of Ashes,” according to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has only *Īśvara* (“Lord”).
- 322 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “who creates the eyes of the world.”
- 323 According to Cambridge (*śubha-padma-hastāya*) and Tibetan (*pad ma bzang po phyag na mnga’ ba*). Omitted in Vaidya and Sāmaśrami.
- 324 According to the Sanskrit.
- 325 *Himavat* (“having snow”) is also an alternative name for the Himalayas.
- 326 “Noble son” is from the Sanskrit, which makes it clear that this sentence is a continuation of Śākyamuni’s speech. Otherwise it could seem to be the description of a conclusion of a section of the book. The uncommon word *nirvyūha*, used for the two parts this sūtra is divided into, was translated in the Tibetan version as *le’u*, which is more commonly used to translate *parivarta* and normally means a chapter. Neither the Cambridge manuscript nor the Tibetan has a chapter division at this point in the text—unlike later Sanskrit manuscripts, which have here and elsewhere a number of additional divisions into chapters, which they call *prakaraṇa*. The text from which the Chinese translation was made included neither this Maheśvara episode, nor the preceding description of the oceans coming from Avalokiteśvara’s toe. This strange final sentence of the Maheśvara episode, therefore, in which the Buddha is giving a title and text division to what has occurred, is probably indicative of yet another case of unskilful compilation in this sūtra.
- 327 The Tibetan has translated this freely as “my path is without obstacles.”
- 328 These are probably synonymous with Cakravāḍa and Mahācakravāḍa in other sūtras, which can refer either to the submarine mountain that contains the hells or the circle of mountains around the edge of the world.
- 329 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “Mahāmucilinda.”
- 330 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “Mahāsaṃsrṣṭa.”
- 331 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “Pralambodhara.”
- 332 A *pala* is approximately .15 or 3/20 of an ounce, or 4.5 grams, and is said to be the equivalent to the weight of 640 grains of rice. The weight of four rice grains is called one *guṇjā*; five guṇjās are one *paṇa*; eight paṇas are one *karṣa*; and four karṣas are one pala. In practice the actual weight of the pala varied in different regions. The Tibetan has *srang*, which, though often translated into English as “ounce,” is much less, and is roughly equivalent to the pala.
- 333 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan has just “ink.”
- 334 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “write on the endless.”
- 335 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “Eyes of Lightning.”
- 336 According to Cambridge (*anantavyūha*) and Tibetan (*bkod pa mtha’ yas pa*). Vaidya and Sāmaśrami have *andhavyūha*.

- 337 According to the Sanskrit, *Pratibhānakūṭa*. Cambridge has *Pratibhāsakūṭa*, “Mountain of Brilliant Light”; Sāmaśrami has the corrupt *Pratihāsakūṭa*, “Mountain of Laughter.” The Tibetan has *spobs pa'i phung po*, agreeing with Vaidya; *spobs pa* is the standard Tibetan translation of *pratibhāna*.
- 338 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “the samādhi named Vajra Wall.”
- 339 According to the Tibetan and Sāmaśrami. Cambridge has “purification of the senses” (*-śodhano* instead of *-mocano*).
- 340 Tibetan translates *locana* (“illumination”) as “eyes.” Cambridge has *śodhana* (“purification”). Vaidya and Sāmaśrami have *candra-* (instead of *indriya*) *vara-locana* (“The Moon’s Sublime Illumination”).
- 341 “Day-maker” (*Sanskrit: divakara*, Tibetan: *nyin byed*) is an epithet for the sun.
- 342 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “The Sun’s Sublime Eyes.”
- 343 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “The Complete Eyes of the World.”
- 344 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “The Sacred Eyes of the Buddha Realms.”
- 345 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan has “Facing the Deeds to Be Done.”
- 346 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits.
- 347 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits.
- 348 According to the Tibetan. Sanskrit omits.
- 349 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits.
- 350 According to the Tibetan.
- 351 According to Cambridge (*vikirṇa*) and Tibetan (*'thor ba*). Vaidya has the corrupt *vividhamādhi*, and Sāmaśrami has *viviṇamādhi*.
- 352 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “Sacred Eyes of the Moon.”
- 353 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “Sacred Eyes of the Sun.”
- 354 This paragraph omitted in Tibetan.
- 355 This paragraph only in Tibetan.
- 356 According to the Tibetan. Vaidya has *bhadrarāja* (“excellent king”), Sāmaśrami has *rāja* (“king”), and Cambridge has *Indrarāja* (“Indra king”).
- 357 The Tibetan uses the same word for “open” while the Sanskrit has two different synonyms.
- 358 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan translates as “the right hand side,” another meaning of the word *dakṣiṇa*.
- 359 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan has “six buddhas.”
- 360 Literally “blue,” but in Sanskrit this is a euphemism for “black.”
- 361 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “gandharvas.”
- 362 *Bhadanta*, a relic from the Middle Indic language of the original monastic communities, which in its Sanskritized form would be *bhadrānta*, “one who has the utter limit of goodness.” It is translated into Tibetan as *btsun po*, “noble one.”
- 363 According to the Sanskrit. The Tibetan here is particularly obscure: “They should not do the supplication and the fourth.” See also note 364.
- 364 The announcement that someone wishes to take ordination, followed by three inquiries as to whether any bhikṣu present has an objection, are together called “the four motions.”
- 365 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and they will be reborn as insects in a cesspool of feces and urine in the great city of Vārāṇasī.”
- 366 “Kodrava” is specifically *Paspalum scrobiculatum*, which is kodo millet. Tibetan has *rgya shug*, or “jubes.”
- 367 Generally in Indian mythology the Vaitarāṇi River is analogous to the River Styx, as it separates the living from the dead. However, in the context of the hells it is simply another place of suffering.



368 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “and who have wisdom.”

369 According to the Sanskrit. Tibetan omits “using the property of.”

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