

*Kṣítigarbha Ten Wheels
Mahāyāna Sūtra
from the Great Collection*

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Translated by Gavín Kilty

FPMT
Education Services



Kṣitigarbha

“Then, the Bhagavān addressed the bodhisattva mahāsattva Ākāśagarbha: “Son of the family, this great instruction, this Dharma gateway known as The Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels, I entrust to you. Retain and propagata these points of Dharma. Those beings who read it, recite it, contemplate it, teach it widely to others, or practice it purely, you must protect in ten ways, work for their happiness, and guide them for a long time.

“What are these ten? It is like this. Protect their wealth and their ways of obtaining it and do not let it diminish. Guard them from all harm and make them free from harm. Guard them from wrong views and wrong ways, and see that they eradicate the path of the ten nonvirtues. Guard their bodies and speech from all harm, and make such harm nonexistent. Protect them from, and eradicate all criticism and slander. Protect them from weakening their ethics and practice. Eradicate completely all harm from spirits, all disturbance of the elements, all untimely illness, and old age. Guard them from untimely events, improper behavior, wrong views, and epidemics. Even if they should die, protect them so that they behold the buddhas, that they are reborn in the higher realms, and that they find happiness and well-being.”

— *Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels Mahāyāna Sūtra,*
Chapter 8

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Image of Kṣitigarbha on page 2, courtesy of Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

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Technical Note

Words enclosed in square brackets are those added by the translator or editor for the purpose of clarification. For example:

May I see whatever actions are done as the stainless [actions of a buddha].

A Guide to Pronouncing Sanskrit

For help in pronouncing Sanskrit terms and mantras, please consult the FPMT Translation Services' *A Guide to Sanskrit Transliteration and Pronunciation*, available online: https://fpmt.org/wp-content/uploads/education/translation/guide_to_sanskrit_transliteration_and_pronunciation.pdf.

Translator's Introduction

The Content of the Sūtra

The *Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels Sūtra* is a discourse in eight chapters delivered by the Buddha, primarily dealing with ethics, conduct, and practices of those ordained within his teachings as well as the conduct of society in general toward his disciples.

The eponymous Kṣitigarbha is featured heavily in the first chapter, which concentrates on his extraordinary arrival within the assembly and his equally extraordinary qualities. He also begins the second chapter by asking questions of the Buddha but from then on does not play a noticeable role in the discourse.

The “ten wheels” in the title applies mainly to the second chapter, although the term occurs in subsequent chapters. In the second chapter, in ten sections, the Buddha draws parallels between the just rule of a virtuous ruler and his own teachings. The term “wheel”¹ refers to the conduct or insight of the ruler and the Buddha. In other chapters, it generally means conduct or practice. Therefore, it appears that the title *Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels Sūtra* refers to the first two chapters.

The third and fourth chapters teach what practices and conduct the saṅgha community should avoid and follow. They also dwell heavily on the conduct of the rest of society toward the saṅgha. In particular, these two chapters stress the importance of not punishing or disparaging even those monks who have committed grave wrongs. The three vehicles—those of the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas—feature in these chapters, and the Buddha emphasizes the importance of respecting all three equally.

The fifth chapter is the reaction of the assembly to the discourse and primarily consists of confessions and pledges for the future.

The sixth chapter explains the ten virtues followed by the bodhisattva and their ripening results. These ten are also referred to as “ten wheels.”

The seventh chapter teaches a form of the ten perfections, also referred to as “ten wheels,” as practiced by the bodhisattva. Each perfection has a worldly and nonworldly aspect.

The final chapter lists the spontaneous developments of insight within the assembly in response to the discourse. The Buddha assigns Ākāśagarbha as guardian of the sūtra and of those who practice it.

The Source Text and the Translation

The Tibetan edition of the *Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels Sūtra* was translated from the Chinese edition by the Chinese master Hashang Zabmo and Lotsawa Nampar Mitog. The Chinese text was translated from the Sanskrit either in the fifth century during the Northern Liang Dynasty, or in the seventh century by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang. There is no extant Sanskrit edition. In the Tibetan canon, it is found in the Dege, Lhasa, Narthang, and Chone editions of the Kangyur.

That the sūtra arrived in the Tibetan canon via a Chinese translation from the Sanskrit has inevitably resulted in a text that is sometimes difficult to follow. For example, the sūtra announces a list of ten, but it is not always easy to clearly delineate that list into ten sections. It is not always evident where one section begins and another ends. Sometimes it seems as if the term “ten” just means “a few,” in the same way that “five hundred,” which occurs in several sūtras, means “many.”

Numbering the chapters is also problematic. The first four chapters are clearly marked, as is the sixth through the eighth, but

no chapter five is apparent. To solve this, I followed the delineation of the Chinese edition.²

The Tibetan text used for translation was the Dege edition (Tōh 239). The Lhasa and Narthang editions were often consulted, although for the most part the differences were slight. All three are of the same translation from Chinese.

The table of contents is for the benefit of the reader. Apart from the chapter headings, the sections listed in the table are not found in the Tibetan. As such, their titles may not always match the content precisely.

Because of the difficulties of translating a translation, there may well be errors in my own work. For this I ask allowance.

Mantra to Increase the Power of Recitation

TADYATHĀ / OM DHARE DHARE BHANDHARE SVĀHĀ (7x)

Kṣīṭigarbha Ten Wheels Mahāyāna Sūtra from the Great Collection

In the language of India: *Daśacakra-kṣīṭigarbha-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra*

In Chinese: *Dà chéng dà jí dì zàng shí lún jīng*³

In Tibetan: *Dü pa chhen po lä säi nying pöi khor lo chu pa zhe ja wa theg pa chhen pöi do*

In English: *Kṣīṭigarbha Ten Wheels Mahāyāna Sūtra from the Great Collection*

I. The Qualities of Kṣīṭigarbha

Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus I once heard. On the hill of Khaladeya, a place of practice for many ṛṣi sages, the Bhagavān Buddha resided with an immeasurable and countless saṅgha of *bhikṣus* of the śrāvaka community and with countless bodhisattva *mahāsattvas* of the bodhisattva community.

The Miraculous Displays of Kṣīṭigarbha

As soon as Candragarbha had spoken, from the south came a great aromatic cloud from which great aromatic rains fell. From a great cloud of flowers, great rains of flowers fell. From a great cloud of ornaments made from celestial jewels, a great rain of

ornaments fell. From a great cloud of celestial silk, a great rain of celestial silks fell. These clouds and rains covered this hill—a place of practice for many ṛṣi sages.

From the aromas, the flowers, the precious ornaments, and the silks, various sounds of the mighty Dharma resonated in the hundreds and thousands. There were the sounds of going for refuge to the Three Jewels; the sounds of abiding in the training; the sounds of being possessed of a calm mind and patience; the sounds of the practice of endeavor; the sounds of taming the four *māras*; the sounds of engaging in and being absorbed in wisdom; the sounds of great proclamation throughout the three worlds; the sounds of endeavoring in mindfulness, samādhi, and the varieties of *dhāraṇī* retention; the sounds of emptiness, of no cause and no result; the sounds of being thoroughly discontent with desire; the sounds of “forms are like foam on the water;” the sounds of “feelings are like bubbles on the water;” the sounds of “recognition is like a mirage;” the sounds of “compounding activities are like the plantain tree;” the sounds of “consciousness is like an illusion;” the sounds of impermanence; the sounds of suffering; the sounds of no-self; the sounds of being empty; the sounds of restraint and modesty; the sounds of abandonment; the sounds of close contemplation; the sounds of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity; the sounds of the mastery of all phenomena; the sounds of taking birth in the higher realms and of being beyond sorrow; the sounds of approaching the three vehicles; the sounds of the turning of the wheel of the great Dharma; the sounds causing the rains of the great Dharma to fall; the sounds of sentient beings being thoroughly ripened; the sounds of liberation from the three lower realms; the sounds of striving to complete the six perfections; the sounds of skillful means; the sounds of arriving at the ten grounds; the sounds of various displays by way of clairvoyance; the sounds of various displays within the pure and peerless Mahāyāna; the sounds of never falling back from the grounds; the sounds of forbearance of the unborn; the sounds of initiation from the crown

of the head; and the great roars of entering the great ocean of all the buddhas.

At that time, everyone in the great assembly witnessed these various clouds and rains, and heard the great sounds of the Dharma. In accordance with their dispositions, they saw their bodies completely adorned with various aromas, flowers, precious ornaments, and celestial silks. In their hands they saw that they held wish-fulfilling jewels, and from each of these wish-fulfilling jewels, various jewels fell like rain. Furthermore, various lights were emitted from these jewels, and by the power of these lights, they all saw buddha lands in the ten directions, as many as the number of grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed.

By the power of these lights, they saw in each of those buddha lands, a limitless entourage paying homage to and surrounding the tathāgatas. By the power of these lights, the sentient beings in those buddha lands who were afflicted by sickness were freed from their suffering as soon as the lights touched them. Those who were about to be killed, and those cast into prison and bound were completely liberated as soon as the lights touched them. By the power of the lights, those weighed down by the evil habits of indulging in unhappy actions of body, speech, and mind were relieved from their burden and were purified. Those hungry and thirsty were filled and satisfied. Those who had been almost killed and persecuted with various punishments were freed from their suffering as soon as the lights touched them. Those deprived of clothing, ornaments, jewelry, and wealth were possessed of whatever they desired. As soon as the lights touched them, those sentient beings who took joy and delight in killing and so on, up to those who took joy and delight in bad views, took joy and delight in abandoning killing and so on, up to taking joy and delight in abandoning wrong views. As soon as the lights touched them, those who were experiencing various sufferings because of not finding what they wanted were able to find whatever they wished for. The assembly saw that, by the power of these lights,

all sentient beings in those buddha lands who were tormented by suffering found peace and were blessed with happiness.

By the light that shone within those buddha lands, all clouds, dust, fog, wind, storms, inauspicious sounds, bad smells, unpleasant tastes, such as bitterness and heat, all that was unpleasant to the touch, fearful sounds, and many other kinds of harmful phenomena disappeared. All bad action, wrong speech, wrong thought, and wrong inclination completely vanished. The land was not too cold, not too hot; it was peaceful and happy, as smooth as the palm of a hand, and became filled with the best necessities of happiness.

The Qualities of Kṣīṭigarbha

At that time, the earth element of the bodies of the entourage became heavy and were weighed down. Seeing this, they became afraid and wondered by what cause this had arisen. At that time, Indra Vimalajāta, the king of the gods, was close to the Bhagavān. He rose and bowed his head to the feet of the Bhagavān. Placing his palms together in the direction of the Bhagavān, he spoke these verses:

You who speak the truth, who see the truth,
Great sage, you who reside in truth,
Please, to this assembly gathered here,
Speak the Dharma of the complete truth.

Many ordinary beings have been removed
From suffering and the causes of suffering.
Why in this assembly gathered here
Have these clouds and rains appeared?

The members of this entourage, filled with delight and joy,
Have developed minds of great faith,
Have immersed themselves in the Mahāyāna,
Will grow the perfect view, and go beyond doubts.

Here in this entourage the earth element
Of the bodies of the gods and humans has become heavy,
And they cannot raise themselves up.
By what cause has this happened?

From gems in our hands, jewels have appeared and lights have
radiated from them,
Lighting up the ten directions, dispelling wrongs,
Dispelling suffering, and bringing happiness.
Tell us great guide, how has this happened?

The bodies of everyone in this entourage
Have become adorned with perfumes and garlands.
The gods and humans here are in wonder.
What is the reason? What is the cause?

Who did this? From where did it come?
Who displayed these miraculous feats?

Was it the Buddha, the bodhisattvas?
Was it Brahmā, was it Māra?
Was it Śakra, who was it?
Great guide, explain it to us.

The Bhagavān spoke these words to Indra Vimalajāta:⁴ “This you should know. For countless, immeasurable great eons, during the times of the five troubles, in world systems where no buddha has appeared, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha has been ripening sentient beings completely. Now he has come with an entourage of ten million times a hundred million times eighty thousand⁵ bodhisattvas to this world system to pay homage to me, to venerate me, and to make offerings to me. Furthermore, in order to generate respect and joy within this entourage, he will arrive with his retinue in the form of a monk, revealing these sights through the power of his supernatural knowledge.

“The bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣīṭigarbha is adorned with countless, immeasurable, and unimaginable qualities, so much so that the śrāvakas, the pratyekabuddhas, and all those of the world are unable to conceive of them. This bodhisattva is a treasure of supreme qualities. He is a mine of the jewels of liberation. He purifies the eyes of the bodhisattvas. He is the navigator who leads sentient beings to nirvāṇa. Just as a wish-fulfilling jewel brings down all jewels like rain, he fulfills all hopes and desires. He is like a treasure island for many traders.

“Because he grows and nourishes the shoots of virtue, he is like a fertile field. Because he holds sentient beings in the bliss of liberation, he is like a container. Because he is the source of the supreme qualities, he is like an excellent vase of jewels. Because he is a light for those striving in virtue, he is like the illuminating sun. Because he is a light for those who have lost the path, he is like a beacon. Because he soothes the torment of the afflictions, he refreshes like the moon. He is like a vehicle for those who cannot walk, like a resting place for those on long journeys, like a guide for those lost in desolate places. He is like medicine for those disturbed and crazed, and like a wise doctor for those beset by illness. He is like a crutch and stick for the aged and infirm, like a seat for those tired and worn out, like a bridge for those who cross the four rivers, and like a boat and a ferry for those who travel to the far shore.

“He ripens the special fruits of the three kinds of roots of virtue. He is the constant irrigation of the fields of the three kinds of virtue. Engaging in constant giving, he is like a turning wheel. His ethical conduct is as firm as Mount Meru. His joyful effort, hard to break, is like a precious diamond. His patience, unmoving, is like the great earth. His profound meditative stabilization is like a secret treasure. His beautifying meditative equipoise is like a supreme garland of flowers. His vast and profound wisdom is like an ocean. Not attached to anything, he is like the sky. Close to the cause of the supreme fruit, he is like a fully bloomed flower.

“In taming the *tīrthikas*, he is like the king of lions. Completely destroying the deva māras, he is like a mighty nāga or mighty elephant. In tearing apart the enemy of affliction, he is like the sword of the gods. His dislike of the busy life is like the vehicle of the pratyekabuddha. In cleansing the pollution of affliction, he is like the water and the waves. In removing the detritus of impurity, he is like a strong wind. In severing any opportunity for affliction to enter, he is like a sharp blade. In guarding against all fear and anxiety, he is like a close relative and friend. In guarding against adversaries in debate, he is like a moat or a fortress. In delivering from all danger, he is like a mother and father. In hiding the weak and the powerless, he is like a dense forest. For those traveling on long hot roads, he is like the cooling shade of a great tree. For those tormented by heat and thirst, he is like cool water. For the hungry, he is like delicious fruit. He is clothing to dress the naked, a thick cloud for those oppressed by the heat, a precious wish-fulfilling jewel for the poor, a refuge and a place for those beset with fear, rain for the harvests, and a water-cleansing jewel for those whose water is sullied.

“By encouraging the growth of the shoots of virtue in many sentient beings, he shows the supreme field of activity, satisfying and delighting his entourage. He urges and places sentient beings into conscientiousness and modesty. He is an adornment for the accumulation of wisdom and merit. In the thorough cleansing of affliction, he is like a purgative and a medicine. In controlling a disturbed mind, he is like a domain for meditative equipoise. His unhindered confidence is like an irrigation water wheel. In bringing his mind toward its object, it is as if he is thinking of some beautiful form. The resilience of his patience is like Mount Meru. His vast and profound form is like the great ocean. His unhindered powers of supernatural display are like the sky. His dispelling of all imprints of obscurations is like the hot sun melting ice away. Always sporting in the form and formless absorptions, and the perfect path, he is like the precious island of the exalted wisdom

of omniscience. Therefore, even without deliberate intention, he turns the great wheel of Dharma.

“Son of the family, bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha is possessed of countless, immeasurable, and unimaginable qualities such as these, and because he is close to arriving at this place with his entourage, you have seen these sights and miraculous displays produced by the lights.”

Kṣitigarbha’s Arrival and Homage

As soon as the Bhagavān had spoken of the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha’s many qualities, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha with his entourage of ten million times a hundred million times a hundred times eighty thousand⁶ bodhisattvas arrived from the south, appearing by way of a miraculous display in the form of a monk, to be in the presence of the Bhagavān. He bowed his head three times to the feet of the Bhagavān and to the entourage, and made three circumambulations. Standing before the Bhagavān, he folded his hands and uttered these verses of praise:

Guide, supreme among humans,
With a mind of love, you protect all beings.
Having eliminated all thoughts of anger,
Like the mighty earth you are the epitome of patience.

With your supreme marks and signs of enlightenment,
You adorn all buddha lands.
With true love and compassion,
You fill all buddha lands.

Having cut all webs of attachment,
You abide in the bliss of the truth as it is.
Having left behind the realm of purity,
You liberate all sullied sentient beings.
Having pledged to come to this troubled world,
You ripen sentient beings destined for the lower realms.

With pure and firm endeavor,
You endured hardships for a long time.
Those who practice prolonged hardships,
When hearing this are filled with awe.

You developed the practices of generosity, ethics,
Patience, joyous effort, meditative stabilization, and wisdom.
You paid homage beyond measure to the buddhas,
The bodhisattvas, and the śrāvakas.

You freed many ordinary beings from all manner
Of hunger, thirst, sickness, and death.
For the sake of other sentient beings, you often gave away,
Without attachment, your body and your life.

In order to seek out the sacred Dharma,
You gave away your flesh and bones many times.
Having sacrificed all of your own happiness,
You had thoughts of compassion for living beings.

For the sake of many ordinary beings,
You endeavored to cut the web of doubts.
With your six senses well bound,
You left all desire far behind.

You understood that phenomena are transient,
In the nature of suffering, without self, and empty.
The cause of all suffering and karma is attachment and craving.
Therefore, by way of the six senses, attachment is first to be
severed.

In all realms where sentient beings dwell,
There you dwelled constantly with compassion.
Although enlightened into supreme buddhahood,
You never give up on your prayers of the past.

Seeing any sentient being
 Beset by suffering,
 You endeavored to rescue them from that state
 With the greatest of perseverance.

You meditated on all forms of generosity, ethics,
 Patience, joyous effort, meditative stabilization, and wisdom,
 And just like a mother who cares with love her only child,
 Even in the past you constantly developed a mind of love for all
 sentient beings.

Therefore, having quickly become a buddha,
 You liberate immeasurable disciples in your entourage.

Inasmuch as you meditated upon the deeds of enlightenment,
 There is no sentient being you do not dedicate them to,
 So you do not give up on the six perfections
 Performed for the sake of all sentient beings.

You constantly practiced to attain peerless enlightenment
 In the degenerate times of the last era.
 And now that those degenerate times are here,
 You have become a buddha of peerless enlightenment.

Gods, nāgas, humans, and *yakṣas*,⁷
 Possessed of wrong views—you have tamed them all;
 Severed their doubts, brought them to joy;
 And placed them on the vajra-like path.

Countless beings you have prophesied
 For the attainment of supreme enlightenment.
 You have become the greatest master, truly worthy of veneration,
 And a field of the greatest merit.

Incomparable, peerless Bhagavān,
 You protect all sentient beings with your love.

Your immeasurable great renown
Has completely spread in the ten directions of the world.

Therefore, the bodhisattvas, for their own sake,
Have all gathered here in the presence of the great sage.
Having heard the sacred Dharma,
Their minds are filled with joy.

In particular, by generating pure perseverance,
They will engage in the activities of enlightenment,
And by the power of the Dharma of the guide,
All will attain perfect enlightenment.

Therefore, such an entourage as this,
Gathered here today by you, the guide,
Has not been seen before.

As many as 130,000 powerful yakṣa spirits,
Who constantly devour flesh and drink blood,
Have given up their evil ways
And devoted themselves to the great enlightenment.

Some have gained pleasing forms
And developed patience and samādhi.
Some have removed all impurities
And become arhats in the highest realms.

Some are absorbed in the four immeasurables.
Others abide in the four ways of gathering disciples.
Some have achieved perfect perception.
Others dwell in appropriate patience.

Some have attained the Hero Samādhi.
Others have grown the eye of wisdom.
Some abide in the unborn forbearance.
All have been blessed by the guide.

By the power of the splendor of the Bhagavān,
 Retinues of māras have been destroyed.
 Of the traditions of the tīrthikas,
 Ninety-five have been conquered.

The lineage of hell beings, animals,
 Hungry ghosts, and demi-gods have all been destroyed.
 Happily, these righteous sentient beings
 Have all come into the presence of the Victorious One.

Those frightened by sickness and by weapons,
 And those made afraid by famine have had their fear expelled
 today.
 Those who are blind and confused,
 Who have lost the true path, you will free.

Those disturbed and driven mad by afflictions,
 You will all bring onto the path of peace.
 I have left behind all activity and come here
 To touch my head to the feet of the Bhagavān.

All bhagavāns who now are residing
 In limitless worlds
 Praise you completely.
 Hearing this, this entourage has come here.

Omniscient ocean of perfect qualities
 Whose measure is not to be found,
 Who has fulfilled the hopes of many sentient beings,
 With a mind of great faith, I bow to you.

Having perfected immeasurable merit,
 I prostrate to the feet of the Bhagavān.
 And for the duration of eons immeasurable,
 With many offerings, may I please him.

As the Bhagavān has done,
 I too make a pledge.
 And in this degenerate world,
 May I gain peerless enlightenment.

Having praised the Bhagavān with these sacred verses, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, together with his entourage, cast celestial perfumes and countless jewel flowers toward the Bhagavān, where they formed a jeweled parasol in the space above him. So that he could hear the sacred Dharma, he sat in silence before the Bhagavān.

At that time, those assembled in the circle of the entourage gazed upon the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha with wonder. They offered him celestial incense, jeweled flowers, clothing, victory banners, flags, parasols, and so on. Having made these offerings to the great bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, they said: “We have gained a great gift. By the blessings of the Bhagavān, we have come before a great being such as you, and with reverence, we make these offerings to you.”

The Inconceivable Qualities of Kṣitigarbha

Within that circle of entourage was a bodhisattva mahāsattva known as He Who Properly Puts Forward Doubts. He rose from his seat, arranged his robes, and exposed his right arm. He bowed his head to the feet of the Bhagavān and knelt on his right knee. Placing his palms together in the direction of the Bhagavān, he spoke these words: “Bhagavān, from where does this son of the family come? How long will he remain in this buddha land? The Bhagavān has praised the qualities and roots of virtue that he possesses. In return, he praised the inconceivable ocean of qualities possessed by the Bhagavān. We have not seen anything so wondrous as this before. Bhagavān, explain this to us.”

The Bhagavān replied: “Son of the family, listen. The entire mass of humans and gods in this world would not be able to

comprehend the extent of this great being's qualities and roots of virtue. If the Tathāgata were to explain in detail the extent of the qualities and roots of virtue of this great being, it would confuse the entire mass of humans and gods in this world and they would not accept it."

Again, the bodhisattva spoke these words: "Bhagavān, out of your compassion for us, I request you to explain." The Bhagavān replied: "Listen well. Keep this in your mind. I will explain just a little to you. How are the qualities of this great being inconceivable and beyond measure? It is like this. He dwells with ease in the qualities of the Hero Samādhi. He also engages with full comprehension within the domain of the Tathāgata. He has gained the qualities of the forbearance of dharmas⁸ being unborn. He has mastery over all the dharmas of the buddhas. He has gained the forbearance of the ground of the wisdom of omniscience. He has crossed the great ocean of the wisdom of omniscience. He abides thoroughly within the samādhi of the Victory Banner of the Majestic Lion. He has successfully climbed the great mountain of the wisdom of omniscience. He has thoroughly destroyed all tīrthikas and opponents and, in order to completely ripen all sentient beings, he dwells in as many buddha lands as there are."

Ripening sentient beings by the power of his samadhi

"In the manner that this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. This is because the samādhis that he dwells in create limitless beneficial effects and these will completely ripen those countless sentient beings who are to be tamed.

"As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Samādhi of Actual Generation of Exalted Wisdom, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will correspondingly perceive the whole sphere of activity of that samādhi.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Endowed with Immeasurable Exalted Wisdom, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will, with great devotion and in keeping with their abilities, make offerings to the Bhagavān Buddha with limitless and supreme offering substances.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Perfect Exalted Wisdom of Purity, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will correspondingly perceive the limitless faults within the sphere of desire and their minds will become pure.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Exalted Wisdom Endowed with Conscience and Consideration, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will develop a sense of conscience and restraint. They will be completely separated from nonvirtuous activity and their resolve will not weaken.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Clarity Possessed of All Vehicles, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will develop the clairvoyance of the miraculous eye, the clairvoyance of remembering past lives, the clairvoyance of knowing death and future births, and the insight into the causes and results concerning this and future lives.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Clairvoyance That Knows without Suffering, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will be freed from suffering, sadness, and lethargy.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi

known as Possession of the Features of Clairvoyance, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will become endowed with the clairvoyance of skillful means.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Illumination of All Worlds, by the power of that samādhi, all worlds within the ten directions will be freed from darkness and all those who live in those buddha lands will directly see all buddha lands in the ten directions.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Beacon of the Buddha, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will completely renounce wrong views and go for refuge to the Three Jewels.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Vajra Light, by the power of that samādhi, the surrounding hills, the great environment, Mount Meru and other mountains, major and minor valleys, steep cliffs, stones, gravel, thorns, grass, and wretched trees will disappear. In those buddha lands, all that is considered bad—such as poisons, curses, fierce animals, obstacle-creating spirits, sudden calamities, epidemics, bad regions, gloomy skies, dust, bad smells, and unclean waste—will all be eradicated. The land of those buddha lands will become as smooth as the palm of a hand and all manner of auspicious phenomena will appear. All will become pure, exquisite, of the best quality, and adorned with many beautiful features.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Power of Exalted Wisdom Hard to Conquer, by the power of that samādhi, the king of the māras and his entourage who dwell in those buddha lands will all become afraid and go for refuge to the Three Jewels.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Flash of Lightning, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will be freed from the fear of the next world and will be made joyful by the Dharma.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Possessed of Supreme Taste, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will be satisfied by food and drink that appear exactly as they wish.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Possessed of Supreme Radiance, by the power of that samādhi, there will be no sentient being dwelling in those buddha lands who will not be endowed with great power and strength, and all the suffering that comes from sickness will be gone.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Supreme Possessions, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will not be deprived of or lacking in seats, mats, clothing, jewelry, and all necessary possessions for as long as they live, in complete accordance with their wishes.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Exalted Wisdom Free of Argument, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will have minds that are clear and bright. They will not respond in anger toward opponents and there will be no incarceration. There will be harmony and joy. They will take thorough pleasure in giving, practicing morality and patience, applying joyous effort, being of peaceful minds, and developing wisdom.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Supreme Delight, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will experience a special joy that knows no bounds.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Light of the Worldly Paths, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will gain unobstructed wisdom and will train themselves in various pure activities.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Vajra of the Victorious One, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will be blessed with all powers and those powers will not decline. They will constantly delight in the perfect path and their minds will be at peace.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Excellent Victory Banner, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will be disgusted by and will have no liking at all for nonvirtuous activity. They will protect their virtuous actions and by the karmic paths of the ten virtues, will be reborn in the higher realms.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Possessed of Love and Compassion, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will develop minds of love, compassion, and minds that intend no harm or ill will to anyone. They will have equanimity for all and develop minds of giving help and joy to each other.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi

known as Gathering of All Merit, by the power of that samādhi, all sentient beings who dwell in those buddha lands will know no fighting, argument, disease, or famine. All unseasonable winds, rains, snow, storms, heat, suffering, and all other phenomena unpleasant to experience will cease to be.

“As this great being dwells in those buddha lands, so those buddha lands become. If he dwells in absorption on the samādhi known as Light of Ocean Lightning, by the power of that samādhi, all the great lands of those buddha lands will be made of precious gems; will be devoid of fault and flaw; and will be adorned by trees blossoming with jewels and trees of clothing, vessels, ornaments, flowers, fruit, music, and of all the necessities of life in copious quantities and supreme quality.

“In brief, in order to completely ripen many sentient beings, every day early in the morning, this son of the family enters into samādhis as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed. Rising from those samādhis, he tames by various means all sentient beings ready to be tamed in all buddha lands of the ten directions and likewise, completely ripens them in various beneficial ways.

“For immeasurable, countless great eons in the past, in places where the tathāgatas do not dwell, this son of the family has completely ripened sentient beings in the time of the five degenerations. In the future too, if in some worlds great fear brought on by weapons should arise and the beings there are persecuted, this son of the family will see it, and by the power of the samādhi that he enters into early in the morning, all fear brought on by those weapons will dissipate, and sentient beings, with minds of love, will show kindness toward one another.

“If in some worlds great fear brought on by disease should arise and many should die, this son of the family will see it, and by the power of the samādhi he enters into early in the morning, all fear brought on by this disease will dissipate, and sentient beings will enjoy the happiness of good health.

“If in some worlds great fear brought on by famine should arise and many die, this son of the family will see it, and by the power of the samādhi he enters into early in the morning, all fear brought on by this famine will dissipate and sentient beings will be fully satisfied by food and drink.

“In this way, this son of the family, by the power of his many samādhis, will bring comfort to sentient beings by way of countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable forms of happiness. This son of the family is possessed of countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable features of perseverance, and will engage in the effort to bring help and happiness to all sentient beings.”

Ripening and benefiting sentient beings through great pledges

“In the past, in order to thoroughly ripen and bring benefit and happiness to many living beings, this son of the family, in the presence of countless, immeasurable bhagavān buddhas as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed, made great pledges that know no end and developed great compassion and unshakable perseverance. Such great compassion, unshakable perseverance, and great pledges grow more and more, and in a single day or even in just one moment, he tames a thousand million living beings, releases them from their various sufferings, and completely fulfills their hopes with whatever they desire.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, suffering and tormented because of their various desires, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will gain whatever they desire and be released from their suffering. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, bereft of food and drink, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will gain whatever they desire and be

blessed with food and drink. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, bereft of clothing, ornaments, medicines when sick, blankets, seats, and the necessities of life, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will find all they want, and be blessed with clothing, ornaments, medicines when sick, and blankets, seats, and the necessities of life. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, bereft of love and beset by enemies, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will find love and be free of enemies. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, their bodies and minds suffering and sick, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, their bodies and minds will be blessed with well-being and be free of all illness. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, lost in argument and fighting, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, their minds will be free of hostility. They will regard each other with joy; they will find tolerance; and with minds of love toward each other, they will regret their bad deeds and develop affection for each other. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, suffering by being held as prisoners—whether cast into prison, manacled with iron, pinioned or shackled in chains, or bound by the limbs—if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, all will be freed from their prisons, their iron manacles, their chains, and their shackles, and they will find joy in their freedom. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, cast into prison where they are kicked, beaten, interrogated, and are on the point of being killed, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will be freed from prison, from being kicked, beaten, and interrogated. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, their bodies and minds exhausted, wretched, and weak, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, their body and minds will become light and healthy. They will gain strength and, in keeping with how they are tamed, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, their senses incomplete and impaired, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, their senses will no longer be incomplete and impaired. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, crazed and disturbed, their minds taken over by spirits, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will

find release from their madness and troubled minds and live in peace. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, their bodies and minds unceasingly tormented by attachment, hatred, ignorance, anger, envy, pride, bad views, sleep, unawareness, doubt, and so on, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, their minds will be freed from attachment and so forth. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, engulfed by fire, swept away by rivers and by storms, or having fallen down steep embankments and from trees or buildings, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will be released from such dreadful circumstances and from falling from such places. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, bitten by poisonous snakes, seized by wild animals, or struck down by poisons, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will be freed from all such harms. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, affected by demonic spirits—plagued by uninterrupted fever for a day, two days, three days, or four days; driven mad, with bodies and minds trembling and disturbed, rendered senseless and delirious—if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will be freed of all these fears, and their bodies and

minds will be wholesome. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, endangered by yakṣas, rakṣas, bhūtas, piśācas, pūtanas, kaṭapūtanas, kumbhāṇḍas,⁹ and spirit robbers of complexion, and by wild animals such as lions, tigers, and wolves; ensnared by mantras and curses, warfare, and many other fears; terrified in body and mind; and frightened of dying and wanting to live, searching for happiness and not wanting suffering, if with single-pointed minds they all say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, they will be freed of all these fears, and their bodies and lives will no longer be oppressed. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, seeking learning; longing for pure devotion; seeking pure morality and the practice of concentration; seeking clairvoyance, wisdom, freedom, and a good body; longing to hear pleasant sounds, to enjoy pleasant aromas, pleasant tastes, and that which is pleasant to the touch; searching for gain and profit, for renown, for merit, for a livelihood, for flowers and fruit, for pleasant groves, for seats and cushions, for travel; searching for wealth and grain, for medicine to cure sickness, for homes, for servants, for dyes, for rain, for water, for a good harvest, for shelter, for cool breezes, for fire, for a means of transport, for sons and daughters; wishing to become wise, to seek alms; wishing for warmth, for coolness, for intelligence; and persecuted and tormented by the desire for all other things of this world and beyond, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, by the quality, power, and radiance of the supreme samādhi of that son of the family, all of them will be freed from such persecution and suffering, and their wishes will all be fulfilled. In keeping with their merit,

they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“If living beings, wherever they may be, sow their seeds in fertile or infertile ground, and whether they do it diligently or not, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, by the quality, power, and radiance of the supreme samādhi of that son of the family, all their harvests will be good with bountiful crops.

“Why is this? This son of the family, for immeasurable and countless great eons in the past, in the presence of immeasurable and countless bhagavān buddhas, engaged in great endeavors and made prayers with unbreakable pledges. By their power, and in order to thoroughly ripen living beings, he preserves constantly and completely the great earth in its entirety. He preserves constantly and completely the collections of seeds, and all sentient beings make use of them according to their wishes. By the power of the supernatural powers of this son of the family, all the grass that grows on this land, the tree roots, branches, shoots, leaves, trunks, buds, flowers, fruit, and so on will grow in abundance. The flowers and fruits of the plants, crops, and so on will be ripe and of excellent quality, sweet to the taste, rich in oil, and with beautiful aroma.

“Wherever sentient beings may be, possessed of fierce attachment, hatred, ignorance, and so on, active on the path of the ten nonvirtues of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, harsh speech, divisive speech, gossiping, covetousness, malice, and wrong views, if with single-pointed minds they say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him with great devotion, all their afflictions will cease; they will be freed of the ten nonvirtues; they will be on the path of the ten virtues; toward all beings they will have minds of love, compassion, and the intention to be of help; and they will be of a happy disposition.

“In this way, by the force of his supreme qualities, samādhis, power, radiance, and by his great effort in the samādhis, in one moment, in one instant, this son of the family travels to immeasurable and countless buddha lands, and in each of those buddha lands, in one moment, in one instant, immeasurable and countless sentient beings become receptive vessels. He frees them from sufferings as many as there are grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed and places them in happiness. In keeping with their merit, they will be reborn as gods of the higher realms until they reach nirvāṇa.

“In this way, this son of the family is endowed with these excellent qualities, prayers of firm resolution, and great endeavor beyond conception.”

Manifestations of Kṣitigarbha

“In order to thoroughly ripen sentient beings, in some worlds of the ten directions he appears in the form of the great ruler Mahābrahmā and teaches the Dharma to tame sentient beings there. In some worlds he appears as Maheśvara. In some he appears in the form of the gods of the desire realm known as Paranirmitavaśavartin. In some he appears in the form of the gods of the desire realm known as Nirmāṇarati. In some he appears in the form of the gods of the desire realm of Tuṣita. In some he appears in the form of the gods of the desire realm known as Suyāma. In some he appears in the form of the gods of the desire realm known as Trāyastriṃśa. In some he appears in the form of the gods of the desire realm known as the Chaturmahārājika. In some he appears in the form of a buddha. In some he appears in the form of a bodhisattva. In some he appears in the form of a pratyekabuddha. In some he appears in the form of a śrāvaka. In some he appears in the form of a *cakravartin* ruler. In some he appears in the form of a human of the royal caste. In some he appears in the form of a human of the Brahmin caste. In some he appears in the form of a human of the laborer caste. In some he appears in the form of a human of the merchant caste. In some

he appears in the form of a man. In some he appears in the form of a woman. In some he appears in the form of a youth. In some he appears in the form of a young girl. In some he appears in the form of a *gandharva*.¹⁰ In some he appears in the form of a demigod. In some he appears in the form of a *kiṁnara*.¹¹ In some he appears in the form of a *mahoraga*.¹² In some he appears in the form of a nāga. In some he appears in the form of a yakṣa. In some he appears in the form of a rakṣa. In some he appears in the form of the kumbhāṇḍa. In some he appears in the form of a piśāca. In some he appears in the form of a hungry ghost. In some he appears in the form of a pūtana. In some he appears in the form of a kaṭapūtana. In some he appears in the form of an *ostāraka*.¹³ In some he appears in the form of a lion. In some he appears in the form of a musk ox. In some he appears in the form of a horse. In some he appears in the form of the bull who leads the herd. In some he appears in the form of various wild animals. In some he appears in the form of the Lord of Death. In some he appears in the form of a guardian of hell. In some he appears in the form of a hell being.

“In these and in other immeasurable and countless forms, he appears and teaches the Dharma to many beings in keeping with their merit, thereby placing them on the irreversible stages of the three vehicles.”

Swift efficacy of prayers made to Kṣītigarbha

This great being, this son of the family, is in this way possessed of unimaginable qualities and is a treasure of the highest and supreme qualities. He is a source of every precious jewel of liberation. He is the completely pure eyes of many bodhisattvas. He is the guide that leads sentient beings to the great city of nirvāṇa. In this way, because of these great qualities extensively explained previously, he turns the great wheels of Dharma without deliberation.

“It is like this. Son of the family, if some beings for a hundred eons were to go for refuge with single-pointed minds to Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Samantabhadra, and bodhisattva mahāsattvas as many in number as grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed, and say the names of these great bodhisattvas, and visualizing them, make offerings to them and prostrate to them with great devotion, and make prayers to fulfill their wishes, and if others for just an instant with single-pointed minds say the name of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, and visualizing him, make offerings to him and prostrate to him with great devotion, all their prayers will be swiftly answered and fulfilled.

“Why is that? In order to bring benefit and happiness to every sentient being, this bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha longs to fulfill their prayers, like a treasury of wish-fulfilling jewels. In this way, this great being, in order to thoroughly ripen sentient beings, for a long time made prayers of firm resolve and meditated on great compassion and on extraordinary perseverance. Therefore, he is greater than all other bodhisattvas and you should make offerings to him with great devotion.”

Rejoicing and making offerings

Then, the entire assembly of the bodhisattvas that had assembled from the ten directions and the śrāvakas, gods, humans, yakṣas, gandharvas, and so on all rose from their seats, and as much as they could, cast into the air flowers of gold, silver, precious jewels, and incense as offerings to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha. They offered clothing made of celestial material, gems, precious jewels, garlands of pearls, necklaces of pearls, gold, silver, garlands of jewels, victory banners, flags, parasols, and so forth to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha. They offered endless delightful music made with celestial instruments and various verses of praise to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha with great devotion.

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha offered these celestial offerings in turn to the Bhagavān Buddha and spoke this verse:

These offerings of the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, humans,
And bodhisattvas of the ten directions,
I offer to the one of great qualities, the guide of the world.
Please accept these wonderful offerings.

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, having spoken this verse, prostrated to the Bhagavān Buddha.

In response, the Bhagavān Buddha spoke these verses:

Having generated a firm resolve and a pure mind,
You wipe away the suffering of countless sentient beings.
Like jewels, you are the source of happiness.
Like a vajra, you cut away the net of doubts.

With a mind of great compassion and perseverance,
You have made these supreme offerings to the Bhagavān.
With ocean-like wisdom, you free sentient beings from suffering.
Without fear, you have traveled across saṃsāra.

The Dhāraṇī of Kṣitigarbha

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha rose from his seat and spoke these words to the Bhagavān Buddha: “Bhagavān, for the bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, male lay practitioners, and female lay practitioners¹⁴ of the entourage of the Bhagavān Buddha, who liberates sentient beings from the four rivers, I will bring about an increase of mindfulness; an increase of the mindfulness of protection; an increase of their life; an increase of their bodily well-being; an increase of their health; an increase of their strength and vitality; an increase of their renown; an increase of the necessities of life; an increase of their companions; an increase of their

disciples; an increase of their ethics; an increase of their learning; an increase of their giving; an increase of their samādhi; an increase of their patience; an increase of their skillful means; an increase of their pure branches of enlightenment; an increase of the truths of the *ārya* beings; an increase of absorption into the very pure path of the branches of enlightenment; an increase of the lamp of Dharma; an increase of their thorough ripening of all sentient beings; an increase of great love; an increase of great compassion; an increase of virtuous Dharmas; an increase of renown within the three realms; an increase of the rain of Dharma within the three realms; an increase of pleasant tastes on all great lands; an increase of the radiance and virtue of all sentient beings; an increase in the joy of the Dharma and of virtuous actions; an increase of the light of wisdom; an increase of the six perfections; an increase of the five celestial eyes; an increase of receiving initiation; an increase of being reborn as a god; and an increase of gaining nirvāṇa.

“It is like this. Having made devotions to as many bhagavān buddhas in the past as there are grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed, I received the words of this dhāraṇī mantra, endowed with fire and water, possessed of the light of all that is auspicious, a great knowledge mantra that holds all knowledge.

“Through this dhāraṇī, all virtuous Dharmas are produced and increased. The store of seeds, the roots, the shoots, the branches, the trunks, the leaves, the flowers, the fruit, the plants, and the taste and aroma of the harvests will all be produced and increased. The rains and the beneficial aspects of earth, water, fire, and air will all be created and increased. Joy and happiness will be created and increased. Jewels and wealth will be created and increased. Strength and power will be generated and increased. All the necessities of life will be produced and increased. Moreover, through this dhāraṇī, wisdom will increase and the enemy of afflictions will be vanquished.

“It is like this:

CHIMBHO CHIMBHO / CIMCHIMBHO / ĀKĀṢA CHIMBHO /
 VAKARA CHIMBHO / AMAVARA CHIMBHO / VARA CHIMBHO /
 VACIRA CHIMBHO / AROGA CHIMBHO / DHARMA CHIMBHO /
 SATEVA CHIMBHO / SATENIHALA CHIMBHO / VIVAROKAŚAVA
 CHIMBHO / UPAŚAMA CHIMBHO / NAYANA CHIMBHO /
 PRAJÑĀ SAMAMONE RATNA CHIMBHO / KṢAṆA CHIMBHO /
 VIṢEMAVARIYĀ CHIMBHO / ŚĀSĪTALAMAVA CHIMBHO /
 VIADRASOTAMA HELE / DAMAVE YAMAVE / CAKRĀSE /
 CAKRĀ VASILE / KṢILE PHILE KARABHA / VĀRA VARĪTE /
 HASERE PRARĀVE / PARECARĀ BHANDĀNE / ARADĀNE /
 PHĀNARA / CACACACA / HILEMILE / AKHA TATHĀGEKHE /
 THAGAKHĪLO / THHĀRE THHĀRE / MILEMADHE / NANTE
 KULEMILE / AṆKUCITAVHE / ĀRAI GYIRE / VARA GYIRE /
 KUTAŚAMA MALE / TONGYE TONGYE / TON GŪLE /
 HURŪ HŪRŪ HURŪ / KULOSTO MILE / MERITO / MERITE /
 BHANDHATA / HAKHAMA REMA / HURU HURU.

Benefits of the Kṣitigarbha dhāraṇī

“It was well spoken to cleanse the stains of existence. It was well spoken to pacify the era of troubles. It was well spoken to cleanse nonvirtuous thoughts. It was well spoken to tame the great elements. It was well spoken to purify lower rebirths. It was well spoken to remove the imprints of bad deeds. It was well spoken to fulfill all hopes. It was well spoken to ripen the harvests. This, which was well spoken by all the buddhas, has been blessed by all the tathāgatas. This, which was well spoken, will be blessed by the bodhisattvas. Rejoice!

“Bhagavān, in this way, having made devotion to as many bhagavān buddhas in the past as there are grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed, I received the words of this dhāraṇī mantra endowed with fire and water, possessed of the light of all that is auspicious, a great knowledge mantra that holds all knowledge.

Through this dhāraṇī, all virtuous Dharmas are produced and increased. The store of seeds, the roots, the shoots, the branches, the trunks, the leaves, the flowers, the fruit, the plants, and the taste and aroma of the harvests will all be produced and increased. The rains and the beneficial aspects of earth, water, fire, and air will all be created and increased. Joy and happiness will be created and increased. Jewels and wealth will be created and increased. Strength and power will be generated and increased. All the necessities of life will be produced and increased.

“Venerable Bhagavān, through this dhāraṇī, beings are saved from the four rivers. It brings about an increase in the aims of the bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, male lay practitioners, and female lay practitioners of the entourage of the Bhagavān and so on, up to the production and increase of the necessities of life. Through this mantra, the noble nectar-like teachings of the Bhagavān will grow to completion, will remain for a long time to come, and will bring benefit and happiness to the sentient beings of the three realms.”

When the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha had spoken the words of this dhāraṇī, this mantra that holds all knowledge, the hill of Khaladeya shook and many millions of celestial instruments began to play by themselves. Celestial incense, flowers, and jewels fell in limitless amounts from the skies like rain, and the entire assembly gathered there was held in amazement.

Expressing Wonder and Praise

From among the assembly gathered there, the great goddess of auspiciousness, the great goddess possessed with splendor, the great goddess of the melody of offering, the great goddess of the earth, the great goddess of water, the great goddess of light, and other goddesses who ruled the four great elements, numbering eighteen thousand in total, rose from their seats, bowed their heads to the feet of the Bhagavān, placed their hands together, and with great devotion, spoke these words to the Bhagavān:

“What wonder! Bhagavān, what wonder! Sugata, we rule over the four great elements, but we do not know of the creation or the cessation of, nor that which is conducive and that which is not conducive to the four great elements in terms of their beginning, duration, and ending. This great being, because he has gained the profound and subtle perfection of wisdom, he is wise in the characteristics of the beginning, duration, and ending of the four great elements as well as in their creation, cessation, that which is conducive to them, and that which is not conducive to them.”

The Bhagavān replied: “It is like that. It is so. This son of the family, because he has gained the profound and subtle perfection of wisdom, is wise in the characteristics of the beginning, duration, and ending of the four great elements as well as in their creation, cessation, that which is conducive to them, and that which is not conducive to them. Goddesses, this you should know.

“A precious wish-fulfilling jewel has many qualities and causes various jewels to fall like rain, which provides for many sentient beings. This son of the family likewise causes the various jewels of the features of enlightenment to fall like rain, thereby providing for living beings.

“It is like this. A jewel island is completely filled with various jewels. Likewise, this son of the family is possessed of the various features of enlightenment. It is like this. The celestial *paricitra* tree is beautified with flowers and perfume. Likewise, this son of the family is beautified with the precious dharmas of a buddha. It is like this. The mighty lion is not cowed or eclipsed by any other animal. Likewise, this son of the family is not outshone or intimidated by any other living being.

“It is like this. Just as the illuminating sun clears away the darkness of the world, so does this son of the family clear away the dark ignorance of the bad views of all sentient beings. It is like this. The moon in a clear night sky shows the safe path to sentient beings who have lost their way, and they will be able to travel in

ease to their destination. Similarly, this son of the family, by way of the three vehicles, shows the perfect way to those sentient beings who have wandered off into the black night of ignorance and into the desolation of saṃsāra. In keeping with their merit, he places them with skillful means upon the right path.

“It is like this. Within the great element of earth lies the foundation for every store of seeds, for all plants and harvests, and for all sentient beings included in the realm of the earth element. Likewise, within this son of the family is found the teachings of all the Dharmas of the extraordinary branches of enlightenment. It is like this. The king of mountains, the very precious Meru, is very firm. It does not decline or degenerate. Likewise, this son of the family abides well within the exclusive dharmas of an enlightened being, which will not degenerate so as not to abandon any sentient being, and will not decline so as to plant the roots of virtue in all sentient beings.

“It is like this. Just as all sentient beings engage with space, so this son of the family likewise engages with all living beings. In this way this son of the family is endowed with immeasurable, limitless qualities.”

At that time, the large assembly was filled with wonder having heard the praise of the immeasurable qualities of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha. Paying respect and devotion, they gazed single-pointedly with joy at the great bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

This pure being, Kṣitigarbha,
 Blessed with many a perfect quality,
 Dons the attire of a monastic practitioner and teaches,
 And comes to pay homage to the great teacher.

He who brings happiness to all sentient beings
And freedom to all who suffer in the three realms
Brought down the rains of limitless phenomena,
And made offerings to the great teacher.

The one known as Indra Vimalajāta
Investigated and searched in the four directions,
Placed his palms together and, with devotion,
Made praises to the great teacher.

Like the light emanating from precious jewels,
He illuminated thoroughly many buddha lands,
All of which was seen by the Bhagavān's entourage.
There was nothing that was not illuminated.

By way of the six kinds of clairvoyance,
He illuminated the various worlds.
Coming here now, the courageous Kṣīṭigarbha
Revealed himself in the form of a monk.

He is a treasure of the seven jewels of an ārya,
The melodious roar of the fearless buddhas,
The victory banner of the bodhisattvas,
And the supreme guide of sentient beings.

He is the source of the jewels of liberation,
A merit-ocean of stable perseverance.
He has a mind of love given to compassion and loving kindness,
Liberating many suffering sentient beings.

He is a castle and moat guarding against all fears,
Showing the path like the moon in a clear sky.
Like the earth, he nourishes the roots of virtues.
Like a vajra, he cuts away all doubts.

He distributes the jewels of liberation to all.
 Like water, he washes away all obstructions.
 He is a parasol for shelter from the heat of the afflictions.
 Like a doctor, he cures all disease.

The renowned merit
 Of saying for a single day the name of Kṣitigarbha
 Is greater than saying the names of other wise beings
 For millions and millions of eons.

In liberating ordinary beings,
 He imprisons all afflictions.
 He has mastered the Hero Samādhi
 And also has completely achieved the other samādhis.

In thirteen completely pure ways,
 His exalted wisdom is like space to all,
 Destroying the darkness of beings
 In buddha lands immeasurable in number.

In as many buddha lands as he engages in samādhi,
 He constantly engages in the four concentrations.
 Having entered the samādhis, he dispels the torment
 Of the afflictions of sentient beings.

Ordinary beings who have amassed bad deeds,
 Who are made fearful by weapons, illness, and famine,
 And who are harmed and killed in various ways—
 He liberates them all.

Sentient beings possessed of the five aggregates,
 Persecuted and tormented by sufferings—
 If they seek refuge in Kṣitigarbha,
 All their sufferings of existence will cease.

If sentient beings, who turn the wheels of suffering
And cause harm and pain to one another,
Seek refuge in Kṣitigarbha,
They will be brought to minds of tolerance and love.

Those made terrified by thirteen circumstances,
Who are tormented by seeking and not finding—
If they seek refuge in Kṣitigarbha,
Their fears will disappear, and they will live in joy.

Those who long to amass merit,
Who seek patience, ethics, learning, and wisdom—
If they seek refuge in Kṣitigarbha,
All their hopes will be perfectly fulfilled.

Those who seek the skill of reciting every quality,
Who search for medicine and a store of seeds—
If they seek refuge in Kṣitigarbha,
All their hopes will be fulfilled.

Those who wish for good harvests and crops,
For sons, daughters, clothes, and servants—
If they seek refuge in Kṣitigarbha,
Their wishes will be perfectly realized.

Being endowed with many great qualities,
He holds and preserves this great earth.
Because of this, all medicines and harvests
Will be rich in oil, refined, and sweet to the taste.

Those obscured by many afflictions,
With a liking for the paths of the ten nonvirtues—
If they were to seek refuge in Kṣitigarbha,
All such nonvirtuous actions would cease.

In many forms does he reveal himself,
And to many beings he teaches the Dharma.
Having perfected all the excellent qualities of giving,
He is endowed with compassion and love for all sentient
beings.

If his qualities were praised,
Even for many hundreds of eons,
It would still be difficult to complete listing them all.
Therefore, everyone makes offerings to him with great
devotion.

2. The Ten Wheels

Kṣitigarbha's Questions

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha rose from his seat, placed his upper robe to one side, and bowed to the Bhagavān Buddha. He went down on his right knee, placed his hands together, and said to the Bhagavān:

To him possessed of limitless qualities,
The Bhagavān Buddha, I make this request:
Whatever doubts and questions I may have,
I ask that he resolves them in great detail.

The Bhagavān Buddha replied: “Pure being, with your exalted wisdom, you are unobstructed in seeing all Dharmas. However, as you desire to bring benefit and happiness to living sentient beings, ask the Tathāgata what you wish. The Bhagavān, by answering these questions, will bring joy to your mind.”

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha offered these verses:

Thirteen eons ago, I undertook practices
Great in number and of great difficulty.
To liberate each and every ordinary being
From the three fears and the five troubles,
I made limitless offerings
To millions of buddhas.

Therefore, this entourage who is pure in mind
And this great assembly, I have seen before.
Those of wise minds and great endeavor
Have assembled and gathered here.

To see these faultless entourages
Is a true wonder.

Why do the inhabitants of this buddha land
Weaken their virtue with bad deeds?
Together they dwell in all manner of unwholesome ways,
All of which are rejected by the wise.

They commit the bad actions of immediate repercussion,
Slander the pure and perfect Dharma,
Show contempt for the noble ones,
And with wrong views, they preach the scriptures of nihilism
and eternalism.

They follow the ways of the ten nonvirtues
And show no fear of the world to come.
They have cast far away the three vehicles
And unscrupulously follow those of wicked ways.

Their eyes veiled by ignorance,
They live lives of attachment, envy, and deceit.
The Buddha turned the wheels of Dharma
To liberate these sentient beings.

How will the vajra-like afflictions,
Which cast them into future lives, be destroyed?
How will they gain the pure dhāraṇī mantra?
And how will they perfect forbearance?

The great assembly I have brought here—
To witness them is truly a wonder.
Such qualities all assembled here,
Elsewhere I have not seen.

They are endowed with all qualities
And are persevering on the path of enlightenment—

So how will they turn the wheels of the Buddha
To a gathering of children?

The Bhagavān replied: “Excellent! Excellent! Son of the family, in a previous time too, in buddha pure lands as many in number as the grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed, at the time of the five troubles, you made these requests to as many buddhas as there are grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed. In the past too, you made great effort in answering these questions, thereby gaining great wisdom. By perfecting all practices, you will thoroughly ripen all sentient beings. You will bring benefit and happiness. With the skillful means of all the bodhisattva mahasattvas, you will thoroughly ripen all sentient beings by way of the six perfections—such as by giving—the treasure of the deeds of the āryas. These are the qualities of your deeds. You will perfect completely the ocean of good qualities of the exalted wisdom of omniscience. You will prevent those of the royal caste crowned as kings and who dwell within nonvirtuous ways from falling into the three lower realms. In order to spread and preserve the lineage of the Three Jewels in this land for a long time, you have asked these questions. This is excellent. Listen and keep this in your mind. I will explain.”

Kṣitigarbha replied: “Please do this, Bhagavān.” They again listened to the Bhagavān, who then spoke to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha.

The Ten Wheels of a Buddha

“Son of the family, the tathāgatas, through the force of prayers made in the past, are in possession of the ten wheels of a buddha. All the sentient beings of the buddha lands plagued by the five troubles have turned away from all virtuous dharmas.¹⁵ They lack the seven jewels of the ārya beings. Far from the wise, they are caught in the nets of nihilism and eternalism. Happily, they ride the chariots that travel to the lower realms of suffering. They have no thought for the sufferings of the next life. They reserve

their faith for the dense darkness of ignorance while completing the paths of the ten nonvirtues. They engage in the five actions of immediate repercussion. They slander the sacred Dharma and despise the ārya beings. They have cast far away all virtuous dharmas and perfected nonvirtuous dharmas.

“In such a world, the tathāgatas reside. Although they dwell in realms beset by a variety of sufferings, they dwell in great peace. They are without anxiety, without fear, and have gone to the place of the great ṛṣis. They have turned the wheel of the Buddha and tamed all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons. Like a vajra, they have cut through the hard and fast afflictions of ordinary beings and brought sentient beings into dharmas conducive for them.”

First Wheel: the Dharma

“Son of the family, it is like this. In some lands where there is no rule of law, the beings living there are tormented by their own wars and by the wars of others. They endure trouble and suffering. Many fight and argue, indulging in endless contempt for each other. They lie, deceive, speak harshly, and engage in slander. They become disturbed, blind, beset by cataracts and other eye diseases, and suffer all manner of illness. There is unpleasant illness due to cold and heat, epidemics, madness, emaciation, the inability to digest, unbalanced minds, and insanity. Sensory organs are incomplete; limbs and other minor parts of the body are deformed. They are bereft of clothing, food, and the necessities of life, and their possessions are unattractive. All the inhabitants go for refuge to the tīrthikas and worldly gods. Bad views, bad thoughts, and bad aspirations abound. The perfect path will be abandoned and they will fall to the lower realms of suffering.

“At that time, the elders in that land who are intelligent and wise, of great learning, and of honest disposition will come together to discuss the situation. They will assemble the people

of that land, and together, they will invite a prince who in the past engaged in the practice of giving; who guarded well his ethics; who persevered with assiduity; who engaged in difficult practices; who is endowed with the signs of supreme merit; whose sensory powers are complete; whose limbs are undamaged and of perfect proportions; who is endowed with the excellent signs and marks; who is blessed with a perfect complexion; who is one to whom everyone makes devotion; who is attractive to everyone in the land and upon whom everyone longs to gaze; who is of an honest nature and reliable; who is blessed with love and compassion; who is of great learning and of many skills; whose mind is adorned with firm patience; and who is the son of a supreme queen.

“He will be bathed with pure water and various aromatic substances, and clothed in the best robes adorned with jewels and infused with aromas. Precious gems will be tied to the crown of his head, a golden crown adorned with jewel garlands placed upon his head, and he will be wrapped in gentle and light silks. He will wear earrings, pendants, arm and shoulder ornaments made from precious gems, pearls, gold, silver, and so on, and boots studded with jewels. He will be sheltered by a parasol inlaid with jewels.

“A throne previously guarded by the gods and ṛṣis will be arranged. Within a great inestimable mansion guarded by Indra and the other gods and fashioned by skilled craftsmen, on that throne, where previous kings have sat, he will be crowned king. As he becomes king, a bell and great drum, guarded and cared for by the lord of the gods, the lord of the nāgas, the lord of the yakṣas, the lord of the demi-gods, and the lord of the kumbhāṇḍas, will be struck and sounds will ring out over all lands. Countless people of the royal caste and the other three castes will bathe and put on their best clothes. In their hands they will carry parasols inlaid with jewels, victory banners, flags, precious gems, pearls, gold, silver, conch shells, crystals, coral, aquamarine, and so forth, and offer them to the king.

“Furthermore, those of high birth, chaste monks, and Brahmins of great learning and wisdom will praise him in verses of melodious song. They will make prayers saying, ‘May all that is good come to pass,’ and will cast various auspicious substances over his head.

“He will appoint, from the families of the previous king, ministers who are learned, wise, honest, and intelligent. By carrying out the orders of the king, they will put an end to the persecution from their own and others’ wars that are waging in that land. They will banish all opponents and false friends, thereby eliminating those that bring hostility and harm. All evil forces will be tamed, and all that is virtuous will be born and grow.

“Son of the family, if those of the royal caste crowned as kings are endowed with such a wheel, by the force of such a wheel, their kingdoms will be great, all enemies and opponents will be conquered, and life will be long.

“Son of the family, similarly, in this world realm of the five troubles, in this *sahā*¹⁶ buddha land, at a time when no buddha is present, the minds of those beings who dwelled there were wholly bound by the latent force of afflictions and they were persecuted by inner and outer enemies. Disturbed by afflictions, they were made blind by ignorance. They became unhappy and developed unending attachment to and desire for views of nihilism and eternalism. They fought among themselves, lied and deceived, and were contemptuous of each other. They pursued attachment, hatred, and ignorance; were deceitful in their speech; and followed the paths of the ten nonvirtues.

“The lustful and attached beings in this afflicted world were oppressed by the various diseases of affliction and were blind to the perfect Dharma. Although they were tormented and disturbed by anger and hatred, they paid not the slightest attention to the true Dharma. Disliking the taste of the perfect Dharma, they showed nothing but contempt for the practice of virtue. In this way, they were bereft of joy and happiness and were constantly ensnared by the net of affliction. They went for refuge to the

six tīrthika teachers, turned their backs on the ārya path, and indulged themselves in the path of the three lower realms.

“At that time, all those bodhisattva mahāsattvas in that world who had made offerings and devotion to countless buddhas in the past, who engaged in the ocean-like qualities of the buddhas, and who dwelled in the range of activities of the buddhas of the past, assembled in my presence and said: ‘In the past, you endeavored in limitless acts of giving, guarded your ethics well, underwent difficult ascetic practices with great effort, and meditated thoroughly on them all. Adorned with such an accumulation of merit and exalted wisdom, with wisdom and skillful means, great compassion, and so on, you became a treasury of great qualities. From all the samādhis and the dhāraṇīs, you developed great forbearance. You became an ocean of the perfected qualities of all the grounds. You were devoid of deceit. Your body was tall and you were endowed with the major and minor features of a great being. You were of great patience and of great beauty.

““Not depending on others, you had meditated on the path to enlightenment and become an ocean of wisdom. You are endowed with the supreme complexion. You are the teacher of all the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha disciples, a friend and support for all sentient beings frightened by saṃsāra. You are adorned by the great qualities of love and compassion, and so on. You are the perfect heir to the past bhagavāns—Kṛakucchanda, Kankamuni, Kaśyapa, and so on—and in this excellent eon, you have become enlightened.

““Among all bodhisattvas you are supreme. You exude the beautiful aroma of various excellent qualities. You have been bathed in the pure waters of śamatha and vipaśyanā. You are dressed in the clothing of modesty and conscientiousness. You wear the crown jewel of the pure *dharmadhātu* and the flower-garland crown of the vast scope of activity of all the buddhas. You are bound by the thread of freedom and adorned by the jewels of the exalted wisdom of knowing all things, the forbearance of the

unborn, and other excellent qualities. You wear the boots of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

“By your three types of activity that permeate the three realms, you are permeated with the aromatic incense of the complete causes for becoming an ārya being. You have spread the seat of the vajra-like samādhi held by buddhas of the past, the gods, and the ṛṣis. Revered and honored by all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, you dwelled within the four close placements of mindfulness. Sitting on the seat laid out by all the buddhas of the past, you attained the complete enlightenment.

“With the exalted wisdom of omniscience, you turned the wheel of Dharma in order to preserve the unbroken lineage of the Three Jewels. Beating the great drum of Dharma, you proclaimed the Dharma in the three realms, and by the four truths of the ārya beings, you liberated gods, nāgas, yakṣas, rakṣas, demi-gods, *garuḍas*, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, kumbhāṇḍas, bhūtas, piśācas, pūtanas, kaṭapūtanas, and humans and nonhumans of all kinds. In order to bring supreme happiness and benefit to limitless gods and humans of this world, you turned in three ways the wheel of Dharma that is emblazoned with the twelve sections of dependent arising and was not turned by the śramaṇas, Brahmins, gods, demons, Brahmā, humans and nonhumans, and so on of this world.’

“Son of the family, by the power of being endowed with such a wheel of the buddhas, I directly perceive, exactly as they are, this world and all future worlds and all that is valid and all that is nonvalid. I dwell in happiness. I turn the wheel of Brahmā and tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons. With the conduct of Mahābrahmā, I preach with the roar of a lion in the assembled entourage here, in this wicked world of the five troubles. I remove the five actions of immediate repercussion from sentient beings. Likewise, I eradicate everything that is the root of nonvirtue and remove the stubborn vajra-like afflictions of all beings. Placing them in the fruit of liberation

that is the complete cessation of all contaminated actions, I bring them to the happiness of their gaining whatever they wish for, and ensure that powerful sentient beings do not turn away from the three vehicles.”

Second Wheel: Activity

“Son of the family, it is like this. He of the royal caste and crowned as king, as soon as he ascends the throne and begins the rule of his kingdom, examines well the laws and the dharma of the past and present kings. He understands well the wheel of activity of all the previous kings, and thereby knows causes and their ripening effects. Whatever that wheel contains, he provides the means to put it into action, thereby implementing the wheel of activity with its three aspects for the wise and wicked in that land. By the force of this wheel, all sentient beings living in that land are able to enjoy the desirable necessities for a long life. Their happiness grows and all enemies are vanquished.

“What are the three aspects of the wheel of activity? It is like this. By implementing the wheel of activity of his royal authority, he gives wise counsel and provides skills to ensure that all enemies are subdued and the people are protected. By implementing the wheel of activity of farming and dwelling, he sees that the establishment of homes and farming land is accomplished. In this way, he ensures that there is no shortage of food and drink. By implementing the wheel of activity of the search for wealth, he encourages the study of the means to gain profit in business and of various crafts, thereby ensuring that the people enjoy the necessities of life as they wish and that their contentment and happiness increase.

“Son of the family, if those of the royal caste and crowned as kings possess these three royal wheels of a king, then by the power of these wheels their land is joyful, all enemies and false friends are vanquished, and because they are wise in endeavoring to care for their health, their lives will be long.

“Son of the family, likewise, in the beginning, the tathāgatas attained enlightenment and gained the peerless exalted wisdom. Having examined the Dharma eye of the buddhas of the past, present, and future, they came to know of the causes and effects of actions and phenomena, and established the three aspects of the wheel of activity for those sentient beings to be tamed. By the power of that wheel of activity, the lineage of the Three Jewels and the Dharma eye will remain long, the peerless true Dharma will spread everywhere, and all beings will enjoy the happiness of continually taking birth as gods of the higher realms until they attain nirvāṇa. The tīrthikas, those preachers with wrong views, will not last, and by way of the perfect Dharma eye, all opponents will be tamed in keeping with the Dharma.

“Son of the family, what are these three aspects of the wheel of activity? It is like this. There is the activity wheel of samādhi, the activity wheel of the practice of recitation and the activity wheel of meritorious activity.”

Activity wheel of samādhi

“Son of the family, what is the activity wheel of samādhi of the tathāgatas? The samādhi is of ten kinds. What are these ten? When contemplating this body, accompanied by the understanding that knows the truth as it is, there are uncontrollable influencing factors such as the six objects, the causes of attachment to ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ the field of karma, the obstructions of ignorance, and the waters of craving. There are many conditions.

“It is in order to cut the streams of karma, affliction, and suffering that such contemplation is carried out. What is the stream of karma? It is the activity of compositional factors found in sentient beings. From the causes of ignorance and craving, existence is formed. Therefore, that is the stream of affliction. Through the force of affliction comes consciousness, and from the accumulation of the many causes and conditions that are consciousness comes name and form. From the accumulation of

the causes and conditions that are name and form come the six sources. From the accumulation of the many causes and conditions that are the six sources come contact, feeling, birth in future existences, old age, and death, successively. This is the stream of suffering.

“In this way, these three streams are produced in the field of karma from the cause of ignorance and the waters of craving. In this way, in order to dry up these three streams produced in the field of karma by the cause of ignorance and the waters of craving, the five appropriated aggregates are seen to be impermanent, suffering, inanimate, nonmoving, like an illusion, like mirages, like the moon in the water, like dreams, empty, without cause, without effect, unproduced, nonarising, uncreated, without form, at peace, isolated, and without a place of arising and creation. Examining well the five appropriated aggregates in this way, you will approach the forbearance resembling emptiness, the forbearance resembling no cause, and the forbearance resembling no result.

“Furthermore, in order to examine the five aggregates, with great skill you should examine the breath coming in and going out and develop the mindfulness on the breath coming in and breath going out. How should you properly examine the breath coming in and the breath going out through the force of mindfulness? By perfect count, by following, by *śamatha*, by *vipaśyanā*, by engagement, and by purity.

“By counting, two activities are accomplished. Because counting forms the basis, thought and analysis are controlled, and you will be able to apprehend the characteristics of the breath flowing in and out. By following the breath, two activities are accomplished. Because the arising of the breath becomes the basis, thought and analysis will be absent, and you will become wise in the characteristics of the breath flowing in and out. Through *śamatha*, two activities are accomplished. The breath flowing in and out will decrease, and you will be able to dwell in the supreme *samādhi*.

With the insight of vipaśyanā, two activities are accomplished. The breath flowing in and out will actually cease, and you will dwell in the discerning insight of knowing minds and their mental factors. By engaging, two activities are accomplished. You will become wise in the practices of abandoning the five appropriated aggregates, and you will apply yourself to engaging with the grounds of the āryas. By complete purity, two activities are accomplished: afflictions are completely eradicated, and your view becomes pure.

“In this way, meditating on the breath flowing in and out by way of these six practices is comparable to developing insight on the five appropriated aggregates. How is this so? The entity of the breath flowing in and flowing out is the aggregate of form. Taking and experiencing the breath flowing in and flowing out is the aggregate of feeling. Taking the characteristics of the breath flowing in and flowing out is the aggregate of discrimination. The actualizing of the breath flowing in and flowing out is the aggregate of compositional factors. Dividing the breath flowing in and flowing out into specifics is the aggregate of consciousness. In this way, the five appropriated aggregates are explained as being individual, separate, distinct, not new, not old, without location, not without aggregation, and beyond expression.

“By knowing well the five appropriated aggregates, the three kinds of compositional factors will be eliminated. With the perfection of the contemplation resulting in the three kinds of compositional factors coming to an end, the contemplation of the body together with the consciousness and the six objects will be perfected. The causes of attachment to ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ karma, ignorance, the causes of future existences, the field of karma, and its irrigation by the waters of craving will all come to an end.

“Likewise, by perfecting the meditations of the four close placements of mindfulness, the meditations up to the eight branches of the paths of the āryas will be perfected. Similarly, the

meditations up to the eighteen unique qualities of the Buddha will be perfected. Also, the meditations up to the exalted wisdom of omniscience, the forbearance of uncreated existence, the Hero Samādhi, and so on will all be perfected. Likewise, by the recollection of coming and going, you will enter the pure concentrations known as Possessed of the Mind Dwelling in the Ultimate and Perfect Dharma, Meditation on the Perfect and Very Pure Concentration, Perfect Offering to the Bhagavān Buddhas of the Three Times, and Born from the Speech of All the Sons Arisen from the Mind of All the Buddhas Established by the Dharma and Tamed by the Dharma.

“Some bodhisattvas meditating in this way, even if they delay, will become arhats for whom all fault is removed, and they will gain the six kinds of clairvoyance. Some bodhisattvas meditating in this way will develop higher and higher, and will eventually perfect all excellent qualities. Having become bodhisattva mahāsattvas, they will perfect their practices up to the eighteen unique qualities of the Buddha and the exalted wisdom of omniscience, and before long, will attain perfect and peerless enlightenment.

“Son of the family, if sentient beings contemplate the dharmas of the buddhas of the three times, I will lead them into the meditation on the ten aspects of the activity wheel of samādhi meditation with wisdom knowing their karma, dharmas, feelings, cause, effect, and ripening. Son of the family, this has been the tathāgata activity wheel of samādhi meditation.”

Activity wheel of the practice of recitation

“Son of the family, what is the tathāgata activity wheel of the practice of recitation? Those bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, male lay practitioners, female lay practitioners, and sons and daughters of the lineage whose roots of virtue are weak and slender, who dwell in the conventional truth, whose senses are not fully ripened, I lead into the practice of recitation, and in the evening and at dawn they make great effort.

“Those sentient beings who seek the peerless omniscience, I lead into the virtuous Mahāyāna. They read and encourage others to read. They recite and encourage others to recite. They memorize and encourage others to memorize. They practice the Mahāyāna and encourage others to practice it. They eradicate the afflictions of themselves and others. They attain the peerless exalted wisdom of omniscience and will relieve all sentient beings of their suffering and bring them to the great city of no fear.

“Those sentient beings who long for the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, I lead into the Dharma of dependent arising and encourage them in the practice of recitation. Those sentient beings who desire the vehicle of the śrāvaka, I encourage in the practice of reciting the sūtra of a hundred thousand verses, the vinaya scripture of a hundred thousand verses, the hundred thousand verses of abhidharma, and so forth. Son of the family, that is the activity wheel of the practice of recitation.”

Activity wheel of meritorious activity

“Son of the family, what is the tathāgata activity wheel of meritorious activity? Those beings who have not planted the roots of virtue, whose intelligence is weak, who are lazy, whose recollection is poor, who are attracted to material possessions, who have completely abandoned the virtuous teacher, I lead into the practice of meritorious activity. It is like this: working for the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha; working for the abbots and the ācaryas—that is the tathāgata activity wheel of meritorious activity.”

“Son of the family, in that way, by the power of being endowed with this second wheel of the Buddha, with the peerless and exalted wisdom of the actions of the past, present, and future, I know precisely the activities, dharmas, feelings, causes, and ripened results for all sentient beings; and by implementing the three aspects of the wheel of activity in accordance with those to

be tamed, those sentient beings who have become suitable vessels will be joyfully brought to happiness, well-being, and a state free from fear. Being freed from fear, they will tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons. They will turn the wheel of Mahābrahmā, and having established the conduct of Mahābrahmā, they will know precisely the causes and effects with respect to sentient beings.”

Third Wheel: Knowledge of Faculties

“Son of the family, those of the royal caste and crowned as kings will give with a mind of great skill, and as is appropriate, jewels, precious gems, farms, homes, servants, and workers to those śramaṇas—members of the Brahmin caste, the royal caste, the merchant caste, and the laborer caste—who are endowed with excellent qualities, are of great learning, are brave, are craftsmen, and are of great skills, and to those who are rich in excellent qualities, have skillful minds, are courageous, steadfast, irreversible, and adorned with various virtues.

“To those in that land whose qualities and intellect are weak and who do little work, those of the royal caste crowned as kings give what is appropriate.

“In various ways and in accordance with what is suitable and fitting, the king punishes those in that land who are without virtue, who make little effort, very lazy, unconscientious, thoughtless, lacking in compassion, of no gratitude, who have no fear of the sufferings of the next world, who are sunk in the mire of the householder’s life, and who engage in many bad actions. Some he admonishes and reprimands with words. Some he punishes by taking away their wealth and possessions. Some he punishes by taking away their provisions. Some he whips and casts into prison. Some he punishes by cutting off their hands and feet. Some he punishes by cutting off their heads. In these ways he punishes them.

“Son of the family, in this way those of the royal caste and crowned as kings possess the third wheel of the kings. By the force of this wheel, their lands become happy and all enemies and bad friends are vanquished and because they are wise in caring for health, the lives of the people are long.

“Son of the family, similarly, the Tathāgata possesses the exalted wisdom that knows the faculties of living beings. Therefore, those of his circle who are far from the accumulations of merit and wisdom, far from method and wisdom; who have completely abandoned giving, discipline, and tranquility; who are thoughtless; and whose minds are agitated come to where I am and come for refuge to me. Knowing their capacities, their faith, their latencies, and their dispositions, I teach them the Dharma of the disciplinary measures of the vinaya and so on, in accordance with what will tame them.

“Toward those who have fallen prey to pride and who do not keep many precepts, I take actions so that the teachings I have given will remain for a long time. Some I punish with pledges that they must remember. Some I scold with words, criticism, and reprimand. Some I punish by immediately taking them out of the assembly and shaming them. Some I punish by making them do prostrations, by being silent, and by isolating them from their possessions. For some, the fault is rectified ‘like spread-out grass.’¹⁷ Some are punished with expulsion, and so on.

“In this way, by knowing their capacities, their faith, their latencies, and their dispositions, they are punished accordingly. In order to destroy the black accumulation of meaningless activities, to dry up the waters of affliction, to ensure birth as a god of the higher realms, and to eventually reach the happiness of nirvāṇa, the dharma of appropriate punishments is taught in order to tame those beings who indulge in nonvirtuous actions. In many other discourses too, the dharma of appropriate punishment for non-virtuous actions is taught extensively.

“With supreme exalted wisdom I perceive those sentient beings who possess great resolve, faith, and pure disposition. I teach them various types of virtuous practices in accordance with what will tame them. Having engaged them in the training and the meditation, they will perfect all roots of virtue and I will bring them to the great city of no fear.

“Son of the family, in this way, endowed with the third wheel of the Buddha and by the power of this wheel, I know the various capacities, faith, latencies, dispositions, thoughts, karma, and experiences of all beings, and in accordance with what will tame them, I bring them joyfully to the place of no fear with benefit and happiness. Having no fear, I make pronouncements in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning well the wheel of the Buddha, I have tamed all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the assembled entourage.”

Fourth Wheel: Knowledge of Dispositions

“Son of the family, it is like this. He of the royal caste and crowned as king sees that in his land there are those beings who have gone for refuge to worldly gods and various tīrthikas; have wrong faith, wrong views, and wrong practice; are attached to wrong conduct; by their wrong views, are attached to good and bad; and are persecuted by all manner of unnecessary sufferings. Knowing this, he gathers the people repeatedly and teaches them through the sacred ways of the previous kings. He commands that in order to abandon the wrong views and the wrong faith, they should apply themselves assiduously to the noble ways of the kings of the past. All the sentient beings in that land who are of like-attitudes, like-opinions, like-desires, and like-thinking dwell harmoniously in the noble ways of the kings of the past. Listening to and acting in accordance with the king’s words, those who live in that land do what is right to do. He of the royal caste crowned as king spends

time with his ministers, putting on festivities for them. He sports with them happily and accompanies them, and with pleasant discussion, the king's activities are carried out.

“Son of the family, he of the royal caste crowned as king is endowed with this fourth wheel of the kings, and by the power of this wheel, all will be happy in his land. All enemies and bad friends will be vanquished, and because he is wise in caring for health, life will be long.

“Son of the family, the Tathāgata too possesses the exalted wisdom that is skillful in knowing dispositions. Therefore, the Tathāgata knows and sees in the world various adherences to wrong beliefs, wrong views, and wrong thinking; and disposition toward wrong practices and wrong actions—all of which act as the causes and the conditions for the experience of immeasurable suffering. He calls together his assembly again and again, and extensively teaches and explains the causes and effects regarding the dharmas of maintaining the lineage of the Three Jewels of the buddhas of the past, the six perfections, the yogas, the three vows, and so on, thereby liberating many within the assembly. Those possessed of wrong views he brings to the perfect view and establishes them on the perfect karmic path of the ten virtues. He always brings sentient beings to practices conducive to them. Led by methods of acting within the Dharma and engaging in meditation, cause and effect is maintained in an unbroken continuum.

“Sentient beings, in tune with the four types of monastic assembly, are led into the varieties of virtuous practice, and happily they enter the four close placements of mindfulness, samādhi, the teachings on the exalted wisdom of liberation, and the limbs of the paths.

“In order to preserve the teachings of the ārya beings and the lineage of the Three Jewels, they joyfully enter the four perfect abandonments, the four limbs of miraculous powers, the five forces, the five powers, the seven limbs of enlightenment, the eight branches of the paths of the āryas, other samādhis, teachings

on the exalted wisdom of liberation, and various features aligned with enlightenment.

“Son of the family, like this, I am endowed with this fourth wheel of the Buddha, and by the power of this wheel, I know the various dispositions, attractions, and likes of ordinary beings, and by taming them accordingly and with benefit and happiness, I bring them joyfully to the place of no fear. With no fear, I dwell in the place of the great ṛṣi sages, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the assembly.”

Fifth Wheel: Knowledge of the Ways of the World

“Son of the family, it is like this. He of the royal caste and crowned as king sees that countless sentient beings in his land and in the lands of others have attachment for, and no satisfaction with their wealth and possessions, and moreover, they seek the wealth and possessions of others. To guard against this, he sees that villages, towns, neighborhoods, and even the king’s palace are enclosed and surrounded by fences so that even birds, such as parrots, are safe.

“Son of the family, he of the royal caste crowned as king is endowed with this fifth wheel of the kings, and by the power of this wheel, all will be happy in his land. All enemies and false friends will be vanquished, and because he is wise in caring for health, life will be long.

“Son of the family, the Tathāgata, too, being immensely skillful in the nature of all things, possesses the exalted wisdom and knows all the deceptions perpetrated by malicious demonic forces, the ninety-five tīrthika schools, other demonic types, and countless other tīrthikas, as they desire and seek the wealth and possessions of the sentient beings of this land and of other lands. They become envious of me and my assembly, and in order to

kill me, they put poison in the alms, spread seats over fire pits, throw things down from above, conceal mad elephants, brandish swords, throw earth and filth, slander me by saying that I indulge in impure acts, label me a neuter, call me a nonhuman—an illusion—thereby slandering and disparaging me with an assortment of abusive words. They also become envious toward my śrāvaka disciples, and by the force of such envy, they engage in much slander and contempt. Knowing this, the Tathāgata is wise in protecting the six sense powers; he abides in the four Brahmā states; is endowed with the four types of perfect knowledge; and to the śrāvaka disciples, he teaches the sūtras and presents the three pure gateways to liberation. Son of the family, in this way, I know precisely and without error all phenomena of the world and beyond the world. Therefore, knowing the various natures of sentient beings, I work for their benefit and happiness in accordance with ways that will tame them.

“Son of the family, in this way, I am endowed with this fifth wheel of the Buddha. By the power of such a wheel, I am possessed of the wisdom that knows all phenomena of the world and beyond the world. Therefore, I know the individual natures of the countless sentient beings, and by working for their benefit and happiness in accordance with ways that will tame them, I bring them joyfully to the state of no fear. With no fear, I dwell in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the assembly.”

Sixth Wheel: Dwelling within Protection

“Son of the family, it is like this. He of the royal caste crowned as king, having surrounded the villages, towns, neighborhoods, and the king’s palace with protective ditches, institutes protection for all, even down to birds such as parrots. Inside the palace, he is

surrounded by his retinue, his queens, and his maidens, enjoying the five objects of desire and joyfully engaging his six sense faculties with carefree abandon in his wealth and possessions. Son of the family, in this way, he of the royal caste crowned as king is endowed with the sixth wheel of the kings. By the power of this wheel, all will be happy and joyful in his land. All enemies and false friends will be vanquished, and because he is wise in caring for health, life will be long.

“Son of the family, like that, the Tathāgata too leads the great bodhisattvas and the great śrāvakas to strong cities revealed by the āryas. After that, he dwells meditatively in the supreme concentration up to the four concentrations of the form realm. He dwells in the samādhi of Limitless Space up to the samādhi of No Discernment and No Nondiscernment. Similarly, he dwells in samādhis up to the samādhi of the Range of Activities of All Buddhas. By dwelling in such samādhis, the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, demi-gods, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, garuḍas, bhūtas, piśācas, pūtanas, kaṭapūtanas, and the millions of other beings who cause harm, who are devoid of love and compassion, and who have no fear of the sufferings of the next world see that I dwell in the samādhi of the Range of Activities of All the Buddhas, and develop minds of great joy toward me. Their minds will become pure and they will develop the greatest of joy and faith toward the Three Jewels. With reverence and devotion, they will be filled with wonder. They will confess each and every fault, and pledge to eliminate them.

“By these causes, within a short time, they will purify themselves of immeasurable and limitless afflictive obstructions, karmic obstructions, and Dharma obstructions, and will complete the accumulations of limitless merit and wisdom. They will turn their backs on saṃsāra and turn toward nirvāṇa, and come to guard and preserve the peerless and perfect Dharma of the Tathāgata.

“Son of the family, I too possess this sixth wheel of the Buddha. By the power of this wheel, the Tathāgata with his pure

exalted wisdom enters thousands of concentrations, samādhis, liberations, and meditative absorptions, and by working for the welfare and happiness of beings in accordance with the ways that will tame them, I bring them joyfully to the state of no fear. Having no fear, I make pronouncements in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the assembly.”

Seventh Wheel: Providing for the Community

“Son of the family, it is like this. He of the royal caste and crowned as king, together with his ministers and the four kinds of military personnel, think about and thoroughly examine the towns, villages, neighborhoods, mountains, districts, regions, minor kingdoms, parks, farmland, nomadic land, rivers, lakes, ponds, springs, isolated places, forests, and all other places under his rule. At those places where there is fear and suspicion, and terror that cannot be contained, and where enemies are embedded and cause harm, he of the royal caste crowned as king considers the situation from his own experience, and cleanses them thoroughly to bring them to a state of happiness. He protects these places well and makes them safe. In this way, there will be harmony and cooperation in these places, and no room for enemies and false friends to seize an opportunity to become embedded in the community. In order to remove all fear and anxiety, he takes away the suffering of unhappiness of all those sentient beings in that land, and happily and joyfully protects them.

“Son of the family, in this way, he of the royal caste crowned as king is endowed with the seventh wheel of the kings, and by the power of that wheel, all will be happy in his land. All enemies and false friends will be vanquished, and because he is wise in caring for health, life will be long.

“Son of the family, likewise, the Tathāgata with the eye of the buddhas sees precisely the thoughts of attachment, hatred, and ignorance in all sentient beings. He knows precisely the various harmful diseases of affliction. Knowing these, the Tathāgata, with unimaginable effort and the power of skillful means, provides the supreme medicine of various samādhis and encourages those sentient beings to make effort at removing those diseases of affliction.

“Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by focusing on the unclean, he encourages in the meditation of focusing on the unclean. Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by concentrating on the four Brahmā states, he urges to meditate on the four Brahmā states. Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by meditating on dependent origination, he urges to meditate on dependent origination. Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by counting breaths, he urges to focus on counting breaths. Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by meditating on the three gateways to liberation, he urges to meditate on the three gateways to liberation. Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by meditating on the concentration, he urges to meditate on the absorptions. Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by meditating on the formless concentration, he urges to meditate on the formless absorptions. Those sentient beings whose disease of affliction would be eradicated by meditating on the Hero Samādhi, he urges to meditate on the Hero Samādhi.

“Therefore, the Tathāgata gives such medicine of Dharma to sentient beings. He ensures that sentient beings who are suitable vessels will not be controlled by the four māras. He ensures that sentient beings who are suitable vessels will turn their backs on the vehicles of gods and men, and not be seized by the suffering realms. He ensures that the Dharma medicine of the peerless

Tathāgata and the lineage of the Three Jewels will not cease any time soon. In this way, the Tathāgata gives the medicine of Dharma to sentient beings.

“Son of the family, the Tathāgata is endowed with this seventh wheel of the Buddha. By the power of such a wheel, he gives the medicine of the Dharma to sentient beings and leads them to meditation upon it with the deeds of the peerless and all-pervading exalted wisdom. By this, the disease of affliction is eradicated, and they come to dwell joyfully in a state of no fear. With no fear, I dwell in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the assembly.”

Eighth Wheel: Recalling the Past

“Son of the family, it is like this. He of the royal caste crowned as king contemplates his own and other castes. He recalls when he was born, his time of playing when he was young, and so forth. He thinks about the place where he was born, being washed, being placed on the lap, being suckled, and his body and limbs being massaged. He thinks about playing happily; playing with sand and stones; being with his friends and playing games with carefree abandon; training in the arts; taking part in various other activities; traveling to and visiting the lands of other kings; accomplishing the duties of a king; carrying out the activities of a king; becoming the regent; assuming the reign after being enthroned; and experiencing a great wealth of happiness and his fame spreading to all quarters. Thinking about and remembering these and other events, he institutes the noble systems of the kings of the past and looks after the people living in his land. He rules his land and causes no harm to others.

“Son of the family, he of the royal caste and crowned as king is possessed of this eighth wheel of the kings. By the power of

that wheel, all will be happy in his land. Enemies and false friends will be vanquished, and being wise in caring for health, life will be long.

“Son of the family, likewise, as he sits in the midst of his assembly, the Tathāgata thinks of the events that occurred in the countless past lives of himself and others. It is like this. He thinks of the events of one life, two lives, three lives, and so on up to thousands of lives. Similarly, he contemplates the creation of an eon and the destruction of an eon up to the creation of countless eons and the destruction of countless eons. He thinks that in these past times there was such and such a person of this or that caste. They had such and such name and was of such and such lineage. They ate this and that food, and experienced such and such happiness and suffering. They lived up to such and such age. At the end of their life, such a person left their life and was reborn as such and such a person. Thinking of these and other countless other events, he teaches the Dharma precisely according to the sense powers and abilities of sentient beings, thereby bringing them benefit and happiness.

“Son of the family, in this way, I possess the eighth wheel of the Buddha. By the power of this wheel, I joyfully bring countless sentient beings to a place of no fear through methods that accomplish their happiness and welfare. With no fear, I dwell in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the assembly.”

Ninth Wheel: Knowledge of the Present

“Son of the family, he of the royal caste crowned as king thinks about the sentient beings in his kingdom and contemplates their castes, families, the skills they possess, the deeds they do, where they will be reborn when they leave this life, and the differences

between the good and bad causes and results that they accumulate. He knows those born into families who have become brave and valiant; those who have become weak and cowardly; those who have trained in crafts and become skilled and those who have not become skilled; the work they do; the virtue they do; the bad actions they do; those who are rich and powerful; those who are poor and oppressed; those who are good-looking and those who are not; and so on.

“He knows these things until they leave this life. He knows those who die having not completed their work; those who die having completed their work; those who have been killed because they have contravened the laws of the king; those who have been killed by their enemies; those who have died having been beaten with whips; those who have died having been cast into prison; those who have died training to become skilled in crafts; those who have died in battles with enemies; those who have died in fights and quarrels; those who have died protecting their wealth; those who have died in the grip of desire; those who have died under the control of anger and resentment; those who have died from weariness; those who have died from hunger; those who have died possessed of great faults; those who have died possessed of no faults; those who have died in old age; those who have died young; those who have died as children; those who have died having amassed a great deal of virtuous karma; and those who have died having amassed a great deal of nonvirtuous karma. He knows those sentient beings who have practiced virtue and who, when they die, will be reborn in higher realms; and he knows those sentient beings who have engaged in nonvirtue and will be reborn in suffering realms when they die.

“Knowing all these things, he thinks to himself, ‘I too will make great effort in the practice of virtue by way of physical deeds, virtue by way of speech, and virtue by way of mind. I will train myself in the practice of giving by various means, and pacify and

tame my mind. In this way, when I leave this life, I will be reborn in a happy place and not fall to the realms of suffering.’

“Therefore, having thought on these matters, he of the royal caste crowned as king engages with great effort in practices of virtue by way of body, speech, and mind. Constantly, he practices giving. He gives food, drink, clothes, elephants, horses, and various mounts. He gives blankets, medicines, houses, lamps, beacons, and all other provisions. He gives servants, workers, jewels, gems, and his head, eyes, arms, and legs without a thought for his own life. He gives up completely killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, harsh speech, idle gossip, divisive speech, covetousness, malice, and wrong views. By such causes, he of the royal caste crowned as king is endowed with ten qualities. What are these ten? He becomes of great renown and is endowed with great wealth, a wonderful reputation, a large retinue, freedom from suffering and ill health, and an entourage and circle of friends of great intelligence and learning. He relies upon and makes offerings to that which is pure and to those possessed of pure conduct. His praise spreads throughout the ten directions and his fame is spread far and wide. He is constantly protected by those mighty and powerful gods; and when he leaves this life, he will be reborn as a god in the higher realms; and in that excellent place, he will constantly enjoy the wealth of happiness.

“Son of the family, he of the royal caste crowned as king is possessed of this ninth wheel of the kings. By the power of that wheel, all will be happy in his land. All enemies and false friends will be vanquished, and being wise in caring for health, life will be long.

“Son of the family, the Tathāgata, likewise, knows precisely the births and deaths of all sentient beings. He knows precisely those of nonvirtuous physical activities; those of nonvirtuous speech; those of nonvirtuous minds, who show contempt for the ārya beings, who possess wrong views; and who, by the power of these wrong views, when they leave this life, fall to the lower realms. He

knows those who are reborn as hell beings, those born as animals, and those born as ghosts. He knows those possessed of virtuous physical activities, those of virtuous speech, those of virtuous mind; those who are not contemptuous of the ārya beings; who are of perfect view; and who, by the power of that perfect view, when they leave this life, will be reborn as gods, as humans, and as those whose contaminations have ended.

“In this way, as the Tathāgata precisely knows these things, he shows love and compassion to those sentient beings. By great effort, he reveals three miraculous powers and brings those sentient beings close to the Dharma, to the monastic discipline taught by the buddhas, and to worldly and nonworldly faith. What are these three? The miraculous power of clairvoyance, the miraculous power of teaching the Dharma, and the miraculous power of knowing the minds of others. With these three miraculous powers, he encourages sentient beings and brings them to the teachings, causes them to gain worldly and nonworldly faith, and liberates all sentient beings wandering in existence.

“Son of the family, in this way, I possess the ninth wheel of the Buddha. By the power of this wheel, I joyfully bring countless sentient beings to a place of no fear through methods that accomplish their happiness and welfare. With no fear, I dwell in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the assembly.”

Tenth Wheel: Dominion over All

“Son of the family, in order to eradicate the bodily diseases of the countless sentient beings of the four continents, he of the royal caste and crowned as king leaves his royal duties, washes his body with perfumed water, and dresses in new clothes. He sits upright and focuses on love and compassion for all sentient beings. To free

sentient beings from disease, he offers flowers, incense, music, and many other materials to all powerful and glorious gods.

“At that time, all the leaders of the gods, the leaders of the nāgas, down to the leaders of the mahoragas become aware of him and to each other they say, ‘He of the royal caste crowned as king is resplendent and possessed of excellent qualities. He is worthy to be a cakravartin king ruling over the four continents. We should go to him and crown him a cakravartin king. Let us go to him so that he can free sentient beings from disease and bring them to happiness.’

“With this, the leaders of the gods, down to the leaders of the mahoraga spirits, come to the great king crowned from the caste of kings and crown him a cakravartin king. He becomes possessed of the seven precious emblems and rules over the four continents. He has a thousand sons, all of whom are brave and fearless, handsome and attractive, and who conquer all enemies. The great land over which he rules, from the shores of the sea to the royal palace, no longer follows the ways of weapons, and all who live there follow the ways of the sacred Dharma and are brought to happiness.

“Son of the family, in this way he of the royal caste and crowned as king is possessed of the tenth wheel of the kings. By the power of this wheel, all those sentient beings who live on the four great continents and in their eight directions, and all those who dwell in the 84,000 minor kingdoms abide on the path of the ten virtues, and by being wise in caring for health, life is long. After they leave this life, they are born as gods in the higher realms blessed with wealth and possessions.

“Son of the family, likewise, the Tathāgata, when he was a bodhisattva, saw that the bodies of himself and others were stricken by the disease of countless afflictions. He washed his body in the perfumed waters of samādhi, in the waters of truth, in the waters of great love and great compassion, and dressed himself in the clothes of modesty and conscientiousness.

“All the bhagavān buddhas of the ten directions took care of him with their concentrations, meditative absorptions, endeavors, skillful means, wisdom, love, and compassion. Together they said: ‘This great being is a suitable vessel completely adorned with the accumulations of merit and great exalted wisdom. Therefore, he is a suitable vessel for the three gateways to liberation, the four states of no fear, the ten powers of the Tathāgata, and the eighteen unmixed qualities of a buddha. He will perfect great love and great compassion, the very causes of attaining the exalted wisdom of peerless omniscience. He takes delight in working for the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings. He has become the merchant in search of the jewels of enlightenment. He will completely liberate sentient beings from the sufferings caused by saṃsāra and will bring to them the great happiness of nirvāṇa. We bhagavān buddhas, with our words of truth, should grant him whatever he needs, and when he attains the peerless state of the complete enlightenment of a buddha, he will become the great dharmarāja.’

“At that time, with the support of the accumulation of merit and wisdom, and with firm resolve, I comprehended perfectly the four truths of the ārya beings, and became a buddha fully awakened into peerless and perfect enlightenment.

“Son of the family, just as a cakravartin king has power over and rules the four continents, the Tathāgata too has dominion over the four concentrations, the four formless realm samādhis, the four pure Brahmā states, the four individual knowledges, the four truths of the āryas, the four states of no fear, the ten powers of the tathāgata, the eighteen unmixed qualities of a buddha, and the exalted wisdom of omniscience.

“Just as the cakravartin king possesses the seven precious emblems, so the Tathāgata possesses the seven limbs of enlightenment. Just as the cakravartin king has a thousand sons who are brave and fearless, handsome and attractive, and who conquer all enemies, so the Tathāgata too has his great retinue of śrāvaka

disciples, from the wise Kaudinya down to the youths Suśubha, Surat, and others. They have been born from the minds of the buddhas, from the speech of the bhagavāns, from the teachings of the Dharma, and have found the dharmas of the Buddha. Because they have put an end to all contaminations, they are said to have great skill and courage. Because they possess the four pure states of Brahmā, they are said to be handsome and attractive. Because they vanquish the demonic gods and the tīrthikas, they are said to be those who conquer all enemies.

“Just as a cakravartin king tames and teaches the 84,000 minor kingdoms, so the Tathāgata also, through his speech, controls and has dominion over the billion Jambudvīpa continents, the billion Godānīya continents in the west, the billion Videha continents in the east, the billion Uttarakuru continents in the north, the billion oceans, the billion Meru mountains, the billion abodes of the four direction protectors, the billion formless realms of No Discernment and No Nondiscernment, and the billion great environments, all of which constitute the vast range of buddha lands unified as one.

“Son of the family, in this way, I possess this tenth wheel of the Buddha. By the power of this wheel, I understand precisely the way to the complete cessation of all contaminations within the bodies of all beings, self and others; and I joyfully bring countless sentient beings to a place of no fear through methods that accomplish their benefit and happiness. With no fear, I dwell in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons, and with the roar of a lion, I teach in the midst of the great assembly.”

“Son of the family, I am endowed with these ten wheels of the Buddha, and by the power of past prayers, I dwell in the buddha land endowed with the five troubles, whose sentient beings have degenerated the virtuous Dharma, lack the seven jewels

of the ārya beings, have cast the wise far away, are trapped and oppressed by the nets of nihilism and eternalism, delight in the chariots that travel to the lower realms, show no fear for the sufferings of the next life, have faith in dwelling in the darkness of all-enveloping ignorance, perfect the path of the ten nonvirtues, commit the five actions of immediate repercussion, slander the holy Dharma, show contempt for the ārya beings, cast far away all virtuous Dharmas, and perfect nonvirtuous Dharmas.

“Possessed of these ten wheels of a buddha, I dwell happily in the realm of no fear. With no fear, I dwell in the place of the great ṛṣis, and by turning the wheel of the Buddha, I tame all preachers who have the wrong views of the tīrthika gods and demons. Having destroyed all afflictions as hard as a vajra that exist in all sentient beings, and taming them by appropriate means to make them into suitable vessels, I place them on the irreversible stages of the three vehicles.”

Expressing Amazement and Gaining Insights

Then, within that assembly, all the bodhisattva mahāsattvas; all the śrāvaka saṅgha; the complete circle of gods; nāgas, down to the kaṭapūtanas; humans and nonhumans were filled with joy, exclaiming, “Excellent! Excellent!” Great showers of incense fell. Showers of flowers, jewels, and celestial silks fell from the skies, and the great thousand world realm violently shook.

As these ten wheels of the buddha were explained, the ten million times a hundred million times eighty-four bodhisattva mahāsattvas within the assembly gained forbearance upon the noncreation of Dharmas.¹⁸ Furthermore, countless bodhisattva mahāsattvas attained the states of dhāraṇī retention and samādhi; immeasurable, countless sentient beings irreversibly developed the mind that aims for peerless, complete enlightenment; and immeasurable, countless sentient beings gained the fruits of their practice.

3. Deeds Not to Abide in or Practice

How to Purify the Mind, Meditate, and Recite

Then, from among the assembly, Mahābrahmā Devagarbha, one who had amassed a large accumulation of roots of virtue, who had traversed the ten grounds and was blessed with the qualities of a bodhisattva mahāsattva, rose from his seat, placed his palms together, bowed his head to the feet of the Bhagavān, and spoke these verses:

Ocean of wisdom, great treasure of qualities,
I put to you my doubts.
Ocean of wisdom, with your great compassion,
Make the time and remove my doubts.

Like those tormented by thirst,
We in the assembly long to know
The taste of the supreme Dharma,
The essence of your qualities,
The taste of the excellent and ultimate Dharma.

The Bhagavān spoke to Mahābrahmā Devagarbha: “Ask what you will of the Tathāgata. I will respond to those questions and bring joy to your mind.” Mahābrahmā Devagarbha replied: “Bhagavān, I will,” and he spoke these verses:

There are those of wisdom
Who meditate upon samādhi,
Dwelling excellently in no-self,
And yet they either reside in the highest state
Or in the wanderings of saṃsāra.

Those who make great efforts day and night
 To recite and become familiar with the supreme Dharma,
 Either cross the great ocean of afflictions
 Or they fall to the depths of the lower realms.

Those who work hard in gathering virtue
 Will without doubt, enter nirvāṇa.
 Or, they will remain wandering in saṃsāra
 Or fall to the depths of the lower realms.

Those of wisdom crowned from the caste of kings
 Are endowed with the ten wheels,
 Yet they either sink into the mire of saṃsāra
 Or reap the great fruit of enlightenment.

Those whose minds are seized by afflictions,
 Who are troubled by many afflictions—
 How will they purify their minds?
 How do they meditate? How will they recite?

The Bhagavān replied to Mahābrahmā Devagarbha: “Excellent! These points are well and eloquently put. You have striven well in these matters. You have perfected all manner of conduct. You have thoroughly trained your body, speech, and mind in the presence of buddhas of the past, as many in number as grains of sands in Ganges riverbed. You have spread the noble Dharma, propagated the lineage of the Three Jewels, and for the benefit and happiness of limitless sentient beings, you ask of these profound matters to the Tathāgata. This is excellent.

“Son of the family, it is like this. There are the declarations of insight on deeds not to abide in or practice. All the buddhas of the past, in order to completely ripen all living beings, to disillusion them of saṃsāra, to eradicate their karma and afflictions, and to bring them quickly to the completion of the three vehicles, taught these declarations of insight on deeds not to abide in or practice.

All the buddhas of the present, in order to completely ripen all living beings, to disillusion them of saṃsāra, to eradicate their karma and afflictions, and to bring them quickly to the completion of the three vehicles, teach these declarations of insight on deeds not to abide in or practice. All the buddhas of the future, in order to completely ripen all living beings, to disillusion them of saṃsāra, to eradicate their karma and afflictions, and to bring them quickly to the completion of the three vehicles, will teach these declarations of insight on deeds not to abide in or practice.

“You have heard from the past tathāgatas declarations of insight on deeds not to abide in or practice. I, too, in order to completely ripen all living beings, to disillusion them of saṃsāra, to eradicate their karma and afflictions, and to bring them quickly to the completion of the three vehicles, have taught declarations of insight on deeds not to abide in or practice. Therefore, listen well, great being. Keep this in your mind and I will explain.”

Mahābrahmā Devagarbha replied, “Bhagavān, I will do this.”

Ten Dharmas Not to Abide in or Practice

The Bhagavān then spoke to Mahābrahmā Devagarbha: “There are ten dharmas not to abide in or practice. If yogis act out even a part of these practices, they will not attain any roots of virtue in the desire realm. Even those attained previously will immediately weaken and be lost. If that is so, what need to mention those states from the samādhis of the form and formless realms up to the three vehicles and the one vehicle?

“What are these ten? It is like this. In this world, there are those who wish to meditate on samādhi, but made anxious by the necessities of life, they become afflicted by the search for them. There are those who wish to meditate on samādhi, but their ethics are degenerate, and they commit many misdeeds. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but they entertain wrong views, are attached to the auspicious and inauspicious signs of this world,

and their physical actions and minds are not subdued. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but they have minds that are flighty and wild, they do not immerse themselves in the paths of the ārya beings, and their senses are agitated. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but they love divisive talk and cause dissension. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but with their harsh speech, they denigrate the ārya beings with pretensions of their own. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but they indulge in idle gossip and lies. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but out of desire and envy, they cannot bear the gains, respect, and wealth others have. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but they are angry and have malice towards others. Some wish to meditate on samādhi, but they have wrong views and deny the existence of cause and effect.

“Mahābrahmā, know it to be like this. These are the ten dharmas not to abide in or practice. If those who meditate on samādhi engage in even a part of those deeds, they will not gain any virtue in the desire realm. Even those attained previously will immediately weaken and be lost. If that is so, what need to mention those states of the samādhis of the form and formless realms, the three vehicles, and the one vehicle?”

Ten Further Dharmas Not to Abide in or Practice

“Mahābrahmā, furthermore, there are another ten dharmas not to abide in or practice. If those who meditate on samādhi engage in even a part of them, they will not gain samādhi, and any samādhis previously attained will weaken and be lost.

“What are these ten? It is like this: liking and being attached to things that perform functions; liking and being attached to worthless talk; liking and being attached to sleep; liking and being attached to seeking out the material life; liking and being attached to pleasant forms; liking and being attached to pleasant sounds; liking and being attached to beautiful aromas; liking and being attached to delicious tastes; liking and being attached to a soft touch; and liking and being attached to thinking and analyzing.

“Mahābrahmā, know it to be like this. These are the ten dharmas not to abide in or practice. If those who meditate on samādhi engage in even a part of those practices, they will not attain samādhi. Even samādhis attained previously will immediately weaken and be lost. If they do not attain samādhi, then any other virtues they have attained will come to nothing. In order to gain wealth, possessions, and offerings given by the faithful, they act with bad minds and do bad deeds. Because of that, they transgress the laws of the kings and ministers. Some are scolded and criticized. Others are whipped. Some are physically mutilated. Because of these circumstances, they become tormented by serious illness and suffer a long time. Their lives are short and when they die, they are reborn into one of the three lower realms, down to the great Hell of No Respite. Like Kudrāka, Aradaka, Deśukupalika, Devadatta, and others, they fall from their meditation and plunge as far as the great Hell of No Respite, where they suffer unbearable pain.”

Then, the Bhagavān spoke to the wise Kaudinya: “You and those bhikṣus who live in solitude and meditate on samādhi have permission to live in fine places, with fine bedding, and eat fine food, and do those things that other saṅgha are not allowed to do. Why is this? If those who meditate on samādhi are concerned by the necessities of life, they will act with bad minds and do bad deeds. They will not gain any samādhi, but plunge as far as the great Hell of No Respite, and there experience endless and limitless suffering. If those who meditate on samādhi possess the necessities of life, they will gain new samādhis and those previously gained will not degenerate.

“Because of this, they will develop none of the nonvirtues up to, as the texts have described in detail, all nonvirtuous thinking and analyzing. They will be born as high-rebirth gods until the attainment of nirvāṇa.

“If those who meditate on samādhi do not develop many samādhis, they should not sleep in the first part of the night nor

in the latter part. They must practice and meditate with enthusiasm. They must leave behind the busy life, and live with few desires and with contentment. They should have no attachment to anything and abandon completely desire, resentment, anger, hiding of faults, disturbance, causing harm, pride, arrogance, envy, miserliness, causing dissent, harsh talk, lying, worldly argument, and thoughtlessness.

“Those who strive in this way will receive praise, acclaim, homage, veneration, service and honor, and millions of gifts from Śakra, Brahmā, the four guardians of the world, the cakravartin rulers, and others. If that is so, what need to mention receiving veneration and offerings from those of the royal caste, the brahmins, those of the merchant caste, and others?”

“If those who have not attained samādhi are deserving of such praise, acclaim, homage, veneration, service, honor, gifts and offerings, what need to mention those who have attained samādhi?”

Then, the Bhagavān spoke this verse:

Meditation on samādhi removes all doubt.

Nothing else has such power.

Therefore, meditation on samādhi is supreme,

And the wise pay homage to that.

Instructions Not to Punish Transgressing Bhikṣus

Then, Mahābrahmā Devagarbha spoke: “Venerable Bhagavān, if those of the royal caste, ministers, or the powerful should punish those who have become ordained into the doctrine of the Buddha by whipping and beating them, casting them into prison, belittling them, despising them, cutting off their limbs, or depriving them of their lives, would that be proper?”

The Bhagavān replied to Mahābrahmā Devagarbha: “Son of the family, if someone is ordained into my teachings, shaves their head and their face, and wears the saffron robes, whether they

guard their ethics, weaken them, or have none at all, the gods, humans, demi-gods, and others are not allowed to convert them to the householder life. If that is so, what need to mention not beating them with whips and sticks, casting them into prison, scolding them, belittling them, cutting off their limbs, or depriving them of life?

“Why is that? Putting aside those who guard their ethics and are learned, even those who are ordained into my doctrine and who degenerate their ethics, indulge in nonvirtuous deeds, and are therefore, rotten and impure inside like maggots, who vow to practice virtue but do not, who vow to maintain celibacy but do not, who are defeated, destroyed, and turned upside down by a host of afflictions will become teachers and guides to the nāgas, yakṣa demons, gandharva spirits, demi-gods, garuḍas, the half-man half-horse kiṃnaras, the serpent-like mahoragas, humans, and ghosts and are therefore, treasuries of immeasurable precious qualities.”

Bhikṣus as treasuries of immeasurable precious qualities

“Moreover, son of the family, beings who see the outer forms of those ordained into my teachings, even if their ethics have degenerated, will develop ten noble states of mind and gain ten immeasurable precious qualities.

“What are these ten? It is like this. There are those ordained into my teachings whose ethics have degenerated, but when sentient beings see them, those beings recall the Buddha and develop an exceptional faith and veneration, accompanied by devoted service. By this cause, they will never turn to tīrthika teachers, their scriptures, and their entourage. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa.

“Some, on seeing these bhikṣus, will develop an exceptional state of mind that recalls the ethical conduct of the ārya beings. By this cause, they will give up killing, stealing, lustful sexual misconduct, lying, and drinking alcohol, which is the liquor of madness

and the bringer of thoughtlessness. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa. Some, on seeing these bhikṣus, will develop an exceptional state of mind that recalls the deed of giving. By this cause, they will make offerings to and perform service for the powerful who are pure and those who are pure in conduct. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa. Some, on seeing these bhikṣus, will develop an exceptional state of mind that recalls the serenity of patience. By this cause, they will give up slander, harsh speech, idle gossip, and anger. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa. Some, on seeing these bhikṣus, will develop an exceptional state of mind that recalls renouncing worldly life and striving with joyful effort. By this cause, they will leave their homes and take on the life of the homeless. With great effort, they will persevere in the supreme conduct. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa. Some, on seeing these bhikṣus, will develop an exceptional state of mind that recalls the abandoning of a disturbed mind and sitting in concentration. By this cause, they will develop a liking for forests and places of solitude, where they will spend day and night earnestly engaged in developing samādhi. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa. Some, on seeing these bhikṣus, will develop an exceptional state of mind that recalls wisdom. By this cause, they will take joy in hearing, reading, and reciting the sacred Dharma. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa.

“Some, on seeing these bhikṣus, will develop an exceptional state of mind that recalls roots of virtue perfectly arisen and previously developed. They will talk with a smiling face, speak with joy, and so on, up to bowing the head to feet. By this cause, they will be born into a noble and high-class family, and the immeasurable sentient beings who see them will be filled with joy. Eventually, free of fear, they will enter the great city of complete nirvāṇa.

“Son of the family, there are those who have entered my

teachings and whose ethics have degenerated, but nevertheless, there will be sentient beings who, by merely seeing them and their robes, will develop these ten exceptional states of minds¹⁹ and gain an immeasurable store of excellent qualities. Therefore, it is not right that those of the royal caste, ministers, or the powerful should punish them with whips and sticks, beat them, cast them into prison, scold them, belittle them, cut off their limbs, or deprive them of life.

“Moreover, Mahābrahmā, even those who are ordained into my doctrine and who degenerate their ethics, indulge in non-virtuous deeds, and are therefore, rotten and impure inside like maggots, who vow to practice virtue but do not, who vow to maintain celibacy but do not, who are defeated, destroyed, and turned upside down by a host of afflictions will become teachers and mentors that guide the nāgas, yakṣa demons, gandharva spirits, demi-gods, garuḍas, the half-man half-horse kiṃnaras, the serpent-like mahoragas, humans, and ghosts and are therefore, treasuries of immeasurable precious qualities. Because of their deeds, they are not fit vessels for the Dharma, but having shaved their heads and faces, and put on the saffron robes, they are, in aspect, like ārya beings. By merely seeing them, sentient beings will generate and develop many virtuous qualities. Furthermore, countless sentient beings will enter the perfect path that leads to rebirth as a god of the higher realms and to nirvāṇa.

“Therefore, those who come for refuge to me and take ordination, whether they guard their ethics, degenerate their ethics, or have no ethics at all, the mighty cakravartin emperors, lesser kings, ministers, and so forth are not allowed to convert them to the householder life. If that is so, what need to mention not beating them with whips and sticks, casting them into prison, scolding them, belittling them, cutting off their limbs, or depriving them of life?

“Mahābrahmā, therefore, those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated and who are of bad behavior are like corpses within

the monastic discipline that I have taught, but nevertheless, have the power to create ordination, ethics, and good qualities. For example, the bull and the musk deer, when they die and become deprived of consciousness, become corpses in the animal world. However, the bull contains medicinal bile and the deer contains musk, which are of immense benefit to immeasurable sentient beings. Likewise, those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated have become like corpses within the monastic discipline I have taught, but have the power to create ordination, ethics, and good qualities and thus, are of immense benefit to immeasurable sentient beings.

“Mahābrahmā, it is like this. Traders travel far over the wide ocean. They kill many beings of the same race, pluck out their eyes, and mix the eyeballs with a fruit called *dr̥dha* in order to create a precious eye medicine. If this medicine is applied to the sightless eyes of those who have emerged blind from the womb, their blindness will be removed and their sight will be sharp and clear. Similarly, those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated have become like corpses within the monastic discipline I have taught, but because they possess the appearance of the ordained, the many sentient beings who see them will instantly develop the eyes of pure wisdom. If that is so, what need to mention that they too will be able to teach the sacred Dharma to others?

“Mahābrahmā, it is like this. If incense is used, it is burned away, but the scent brings joy to others. Similarly, those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated are no longer fertile fields for the accumulation of merit. But, if the faithful make offerings to them day and night, even though they will fall to the lower realms when they are cremated, they will have created happiness for many living beings who will be reborn as gods in the higher realms and eventually reach nirvāṇa.

“Therefore, Mahābrahmā, bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated and are of bad behavior, and yet are venerated with offerings and service from householders, I do not permit to be punished

with whips and sticks, cast into prison, scolded, belittled, or to have their limbs cut off, or to be deprived of life. Such bhikṣus are not allowed to partake in the purification ceremony held for the pure saṅgha; are barred from entering and leaving the summer retreat; cannot partake in the wealth, donations, food, drink, and provisions made available to all the saṅgha of the four quarters; and cannot engage in any of the disciplines followed by monastic practitioners. However, I do not allow them to be beaten, bound, or deprived of life.”

Then, the Bhagavān spoke this verse:

Though the magnolia flower fades,
It is still superior to other flowers.
Though a bhikṣu’s ethics may have weakened,
And he follows bad ways,
He is superior to all tīrthikas.

The Five Bad Deeds of Immediate Repercussion and Other Bad Deeds

“Furthermore, Mahābrahmā, there are five unspeakable misdeeds of immediate repercussion. What are they? Intentionally killing one’s father, intentionally killing one’s mother, intentionally killing an arhat, creating schism within the śrāvaka saṅgha through wrong views, and drawing blood from the body of a buddha with evil intent. These are the five unspeakable misdeeds of immediate repercussion. Should a person commit just one of these, that person cannot be ordained or take full monastic ordination. If, however, that person is ordained and given full monastic ordination, that person’s preceptor has committed a fault and is expelled from the order. Such a person, nevertheless, has the appearance and conduct of the ordained, and therefore, I do not permit them to be beaten, cast into prison, scolded, belittled, to have their limbs cut off, or to be deprived of their life.

“Furthermore, there are four deeds that approach the five unspeakable misdeeds of immediate repercussion. What are these four? The first is to kill a pratyekabuddha with evil intent. Among the types of killing, such a deed is an unspeakable misdeed and is the root of faults. Second is to engage in impure conduct with an arhat nun. Among the acts of sexual misconduct, such a deed is an unspeakable misdeed and is the root of faults. The third is to misappropriate the offerings made to the Three Jewels by the faithful. Among the acts of stealing, such a deed is an unspeakable misdeed and is the root of faults. The fourth is, motivated by wrong views, to create division within a harmonious saṅgha. Among the acts of lying, such a deed is an unspeakable misdeed and is the root of faults.

“Should a person commit just one of these four deeds that approach the five unspeakable misdeeds of immediate repercussion, I do not permit that person to be ordained or take full monastic ordination. If such a person is ordained and given full monastic ordination, that person’s preceptor has committed a fault and is expelled from my order. If such a person, however, is ordained or takes full monastic ordination, that person has the appearance and conduct of the ordained, and therefore, I do not permit to be beaten, cast into prison, scolded, belittled, to have their limbs cut off, or to be deprived of their life.

“In this way, there are some deeds that are root bad deeds and are also misdeeds of immediate repercussion. There are some deeds that are root bad deeds but not misdeeds of immediate repercussion. There are some deeds that are misdeeds of immediate repercussion but not root bad deeds. There are some deeds that are not root bad deeds and not misdeeds of immediate repercussion.

“How is it that there are deeds that are root bad deeds and also misdeeds of immediate repercussion? It is like this. Should someone become ordained into my teachings with the intent to receive full monastic ordination and kills a person who has gone

beyond the world in terms of seeing the truth, such an act is a root bad deed and also a bad deed of immediate repercussion. Such a person must be quickly expelled from the order of monastic discipline that I have taught.

“How is it that there are deeds that are root bad deeds but not misdeeds of immediate repercussion? It is like this. Should someone become ordained into my teachings with the intent to receive full monastic ordination and kills another person or kills an unborn child by administering poison, such an act is a root bad deed but not a bad deed of immediate repercussion. Such a person is not permitted to spend their days with the saṅgha or partake of the general wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters.

“How is it that there are deeds that are misdeeds of immediate repercussion but not root bad deeds? It is like this. Should someone who has gone for refuge to the Three Jewels and holds the five or ten precepts commit just one of the five unspeakable misdeeds of immediate repercussion, such a deed is a misdeed of immediate repercussion but not a root bad deed. Such a person is not fit to become ordained or take full monastic ordination. If such a person is ordained or given full monastic ordination, that person’s preceptor has committed a fault and is expelled from the order.

“How is it that there are deeds that are not root bad deeds and also not misdeeds of immediate repercussion? It is like this. A person who has gone for refuge to the Three Jewels and holds the five precepts develops a mind of doubt toward the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. That person then goes for refuge to the tīrthikas and holds their teachers as their mentors or pays heed to various omens and reveres the gods. Such a person will slander, denigrate, hinder, and obstruct the sacred Dharma spoken by the tathāgatas, the sacred Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the sacred Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the sacred Dharma of the Great Vehicle. They will have no faith or trust in me and will therefore turn others from the Dharma and cause them

obstruction. They will hinder and obstruct those who read or recite—including down to those who write—just a single verse of scripture. Such acts are not root bad deeds and also not misdeeds of immediate repercussion, but are deeds that come close to the unspeakable misdeeds of immediate repercussion.

“Until such a person declares and confesses these unspeakable misdeeds, he is not suitable to be ordained and to take full monastic ordination. If such a person is ordained or given full monastic ordination, that person’s preceptor has committed a fault and is expelled from the order. If such a person is ordained or given full monastic ordination and does not declare and confess these unspeakable misdeeds, that person is to be quickly expelled from the monastic discipline that I have taught. Why is that? These two types of beings will cause the eyes of the sacred Dharma to be lost; will extinguish the lamp of the sacred Dharma; will sever the lineage of the Three Jewels; and will cause humans, gods, and others to act to engage in acts of meaningless and harmful suffering, and thus they will fall to the lower realms. These two types of beings, by their nature, will slander the sacred Dharma and belittle the ārya beings, and will cause others to slander the sacred Dharma and belittle the ārya beings. When they pass from this life, they will fall to great Hell of No Respite, enduring suffering of which there will be no remedy for an eon.”

The root bad deeds: proscribed and natural

“Mahābrahmā, furthermore, there are proscribed bad deeds that one should not abide in or practice. There are natural bad deeds that one should not abide in or practice. There are natural bad deeds that are also root bad deeds that one should not abide in or practice.

“How is this? What are the root bad deeds that one should not abide in or practice? It is like this. A bhikṣu might commit the root bad deed of sexual misconduct, the root bad deed of intentionally killing another human being, the root bad deed of stealing

offerings dedicated to the Three Jewels, or the root bad deed of telling a great lie. Should a bhikṣu commit any of these root bad deeds, he is forbidden from partaking in monastic tasks and has no right to use any of the provisions or the wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters. However, I do not allow such a bhikṣu to be beaten, cast into prison, scolded, belittled, to have his limbs cut off, or to be deprived of his life.

“Among the natural bad deeds, these are heavy bad deeds and they should not be committed. Why are they called ‘root bad deeds’? Should someone commit one of these four, on leaving this life, they will go to the realms of suffering. It is because they are the root causes of going to the lower realms that they are known as ‘root bad deeds.’ Why do I refer to these unspeakable misdeeds that one should not abide in or practice as ‘misdeeds of immediate repercussion,’ ‘those that come close to misdeeds of immediate repercussion,’ and ‘root bad deeds’?

“Son of the family, it is like this. If a lump of iron or lead is thrown into the air, it immediately returns to the earth. There are the five misdeeds of immediate repercussion, the four root bad deeds that come close to being misdeeds of immediate repercussion, and, additionally, slandering the sacred Dharma and harboring doubt toward the Three Jewels as committed by the two types of living beings of bad deeds. Should a person commit any of these eleven bad deeds, as soon as they die, they will, without doubt, pass from this life and be immediately born into the great Hell of No Respite, where they will experience great suffering. Therefore, they are known as ‘unspeakable misdeeds that one should not abide in or practice.’ A person who commits these unspeakable misdeeds that one should not abide in or practice will definitely not be able to cleanse themselves of afflictions in this body, and if they cannot gain samādhi, what need to mention that they will not enter the unchanging purity? Instead, having passed from this life, they will be born, without doubt, in the hell realms, where they will experience great suffering.”

Guarding against the four root bad deeds

“Mahābrahmā, furthermore, a son or daughter of the family should enter the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, or the Great Vehicle with a pure mind and great faith in my teachings. They should go forth from home into homelessness, show great devotion and veneration to the precepts of full ordination, and with great joyous effort, guard themselves against the four root bad deeds. The gods, humans, and non-humans will constantly follow and protect such a person. Moreover, the offerings such a person makes to the gods and humans will not go to waste. Taking great joy and happiness in the three vehicles, they dwell immediately in purity.

“Therefore, for those who wish for the perfect nirvāṇa, losing one’s life is nothing. But, they should always guard against the weakening of these four vows. Why is this? An ordinary being will attain the happiness of nirvāṇa by way of three causes. What are these three? They are the cause of relying upon the Tathāgata, the cause of relying upon the teachings of the ārya beings, and the cause of relying upon my close disciples. If ordinary beings rely upon these three causes and persevere with great effort, they will attain the happiness of nirvāṇa.

“For a person who falls from these four dharmas, I am no longer their teacher. They are not a śrāvaka of mine. A person who falls from these four dharmas goes against the doctrine I have taught, which contains the profound and vast teachings on impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and no-self, and is a doctrine of liberation bringing happiness and benefit to all living beings. If such a person goes against the liberation that I have taught, they become blind and confused with regard to all samādhis, and they will not be able to engage and dwell within them. With much affliction, they are ensnared and harmed. They are not fit vessels for the three vehicles and will fall to the lower realms to experience great suffering.

“If a son or a daughter of the family does not fall from these

four root dharmas, and from the liberation that I have taught and remains pure, then I am their teacher and they are a śrāvaka of mine, and thus a follower of my words. They will dwell in the happiness of my dharma. Such a person will complete all tasks and, therefore, will abide well in the aggregate of ethics, and by so doing, will dwell in all virtuous dharmas. They will abide in the perfect Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will abide in the perfect Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will abide in the perfect Great Vehicle. Why is this? Those who guard against these four natural bad deeds will plant the supreme causes for all contaminated and uncontaminated virtues. Therefore, guarding against these four is said to be the root of all virtuous dharmas.

“It is like this. It is upon the earth that all plants, tree, harvests, and forests grow. Similarly, it is upon these four root ethical precepts that all virtues are born and increase. It is like this. It is in dependence upon the earth that the mountains, the mountain environment, the great mountain environment, the king of mountains Mt. Meru, and so on exist with stability. Similarly, it is in dependence upon these four root ethical precepts that the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the peerless vehicle exist with stability.

“It is like this. It is upon the earth that one searches for and finds supreme flavors. Similarly, it is upon these four root ethical precepts that one will gain mindfulness, the samādhis, the retentions, the serenity of patience, every path of the āryas and so on, up to peerless and perfect enlightenment.

“It is like this. This great earth holds that which is clean and that which is unclean. Similarly, sons of the family and daughters of the family who guard these four root ethical precepts hold their minds in equanimity toward those who are suitable vessels for the Dharma and toward those who are not suitable vessels for the Dharma. They do not criticize them or look down upon them. They do not ridicule them while praising themselves and boasting. In this way, they become a vessel for the development of all virtues.

“It is like this. It is this great earth that all sentient beings make use of and live happily upon. Likewise, sons of the family and daughters of the family who guard these four root ethical precepts take great joy in the perfect Dharma taught by the Tathāgata; and with the purest of minds, they gather without discrimination all sentient beings by way of the four means of amassing disciples, and ensure that all beings make use of and live happily upon the joy of Dharma.”

Treatment of Bhikṣus Whose Ethics Have Degenerated

Then, the youth Upāli,²⁰ having heard these words of the Bhagavān, rose from his seat, arranged his robes, and touched his head to the feet of the Bhagavān. He folded his upper robe, went down on one knee, placed his palms together, and made this request: “The Bhagavān has said that those sons of the family and daughters of the family who guard these four fundamental ethical precepts should hold their minds in equanimity toward those who are suitable vessels for the Dharma and toward those who are not suitable vessels for the Dharma. They should not criticize them or look down upon them. They should not speak of their faults while praising themselves and boasting. During the times when that is not possible, when bhikṣus have weakened their ethics and follow nonvirtuous conduct, when they claim to be practitioners but are not, and when they claim to live chaste lives but do not, how does the saṅgha of bhikṣus speak of them and isolate them?”

The Bhagavān spoke to the youth Upāli: “I do not allow tīrthikas and householders to speak of the faults of bhikṣus. The saṅgha of bhikṣus also are forbidden to speak of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated in a manner contrary to the Dharma, or without understanding. If that is so, what need to mention isolating them or expelling them? If they speak of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated, or expel them, in a manner contrary to the Dharma or without understanding, they will commit great unspeakable misdeeds.”

Ten circumstances that create unspeakable misdeeds

“Upāli, you should know this. It is in ten circumstances that do not accord with the Dharma and are devoid of understanding that those speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated will commit great unspeakable misdeeds. The wise should avoid these. What are these ten? They are, without understanding, and in the presence of kings who have no faith in the saṅgha, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of wandering mendicants who have no faith in the saṅgha, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of officials who have no faith in the saṅgha, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of traders and householders who have no faith in the saṅgha, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of many women, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of many men, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of many wrongdoers, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of many bhikṣus and nuns, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; in the presence of those who are resentful, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated; and in the presence of enemies, speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated. These are the ten circumstances that do not accord with the Dharma and are devoid of understanding, in which they will commit unspeakable misdeeds. If speaking of faults that have a basis of truth is wrong, what need to mention speaking of faults that do not have a basis of truth? They will indeed commit unspeakable misdeeds.

“Furthermore, there are ten circumstances that do not accord with the Dharma in which speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated will create unspeakable misdeeds. The wise should avoid these. What are these ten? They are tīrthikas

speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; immoral householders speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; those who have committed the five misdeeds of immediate repercussion speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; those who slander the Dharma speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; those who are contemptuous of the ārya beings speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; those who are foolish and whose minds are disturbed speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; those tormented by illness speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; those who bring harm to the saṅgha of the four quarters speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; those who guard orchard groves speaking of the faults of bhikṣus; and those who have forsaken their monastic vows speaking of the faults of bhikṣus. Those speaking of the faults of bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated in these ten circumstances that do not accord with the Dharma will commit unspeakable misdeeds. If speaking of faults that have a basis of truth is wrong, what need to mention speaking of faults that do not have a basis of truth? They will indeed commit unspeakable misdeeds.”

Bhikṣus who confess their degeneration of ethics

“Furthermore, Upāli, if those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated remain within the saṅgha of bhikṣus, a bhikṣu from that saṅgha who is proper, of good conduct, and possessed of the five sets of good qualities should rise from his seat, adjust his robes, and make prostrations to the saṅgha of bhikṣus. Then, he should go to a bhikṣu whose ethics have degenerated and say, ‘I will speak of your faults. Young bhikṣu, pay heed. Today I will speak of your faults. The time has come for truth and not for lies. The time is right. I speak with a smile, with words that are not harsh, with a mind of love, without anger, and without hostility. I speak in order to preserve for times to come, the Dharma eye of the tathāgatas and the beacon of Dharma. Youth, I will speak of your faults in accord with the Dharma.’

“If that person has permission to speak of those faults, he should speak of them in accord with the Dharma. If he does not

have permission, again he must prostrate to the feet of the elders and the saṅgha, and with great reverence, he should say, ‘Such and such a bhikṣu has committed such and such fault. In the above ways, I speak of those faults.’

“Then, the elders in that saṅgha will know. They will know what the speaker has said, the faults that were committed, the truth of them, and the seriousness of them. In accord with the vinaya and the sūtras, and with both threatening and gentle means, they will speak to the bhikṣu and ask questions. By ways that will remedy the fault, it should be remedied accordingly. If the fault is great, the punishment should be great. If the fault is lesser, the punishment should be lesser. If the fault is minor, the punishment should be minor. The bhikṣu should be encouraged to declare his faults with shame.”

Punishment for unrepentant bhikṣus

Then, Upāli spoke these words to the Bhagavān: “If a bhikṣu who has committed faults has become intoxicated by the household life and by wealth, or, because of his learning, oratory skills, or disciples, has become insolent and does not listen to the saṅgha and the elders—who in accordance with the Dharma have taught and corrected him by way of the sūtras, the vinaya, and powerful māṭṛkā diagrams—how should such a bhikṣu be punished?”

The Bhagavān replied: “An elder bhikṣu endowed with the three baskets of learning should respectfully ask the saṅgha to send competent messengers to the king and his ministers in order to request that the bhikṣu be punished according to tradition.”

Upāli again addressed the Bhagavān: “Bhagavān, what should the saṅgha do if, at that time, that bhikṣu who has committed a bad deed and acts in contravention to the Dharma should please the king and his ministers with his wealth, learning, oratory skills, and various other means, and they should befriend this bhikṣu whose ethics have degenerated, tell him to rejoice in his misdeeds, and do not punish him according to the Dharma?”

The Bhagavān spoke to Upāli: “If that bhikṣu who has committed and abides in bad deeds remains in the saṅgha, but there is no actual appearance of his bad deeds, the saṅgha should take no action at that time. If that bhikṣu clearly commits a bad deed that is forbidden and improper while remaining in the saṅgha, at that time, respectful requests should be made to the saṅgha, and in accordance with the Dharma, they should expel him from the Dharma of the Buddha.

“Upāli, it is like this. In a field of barley there are those plants that will damage the crop. Their sprouts, stalks, and nodes may resemble those of barley, but they will infect the good barley. For as long as those plants have not developed heads of grain, the farmer can leave them untouched. As soon as they have developed heads of grain, the farmer understands that they will infect the good plants. He therefore uproots them and casts them out of the field. Similarly, this bhikṣu whose ethics have degenerated, who has committed and abides in bad deeds, who has become intoxicated by the householder life, and who remains in the saṅgha may resemble a bhikṣu in his conduct and dress, but he will infect the saṅgha. If the protector deity does not speak out and if no bad deed is clearly seen to have been committed by that bhikṣu, the saṅgha can leave the issue in abeyance. However, if urged by the protector deity, and a bad deed is clearly seen to have been committed by that bhikṣu within the saṅgha, at that time, respectful requests should be made to the saṅgha and they must expel him from the saṅgha.

“Upāli, it is like this. A corpse should not be placed in the ocean only after one day. Likewise, my śrāvaka saṅgha should not remain with a bhikṣu whose ethics have degenerated, who commits bad deeds, and who is like a corpse.”

Upāli again spoke: “Bhagavān, what should the saṅgha do if, at that time, those bhikṣus who commit bad deeds and whose ethics have degenerated have been ejected from the community after requests have been respectfully made, and yet, because of their

wealth, learning, oratory skills, and various other means, find favor with kings and ministers who befriend these bhikṣus of weakened ethics, and then, through forceful means, place them back into the community where they abide together with the other bhikṣus?”

The Bhagavān replied: “At such a time, so that those bhikṣus in the saṅgha who are conscientious, modest, and ethical may guard their ethics, they should refrain from resenting those bhikṣus of degenerate ethics. They should petition the king and the ministers for no harm to come to them, and they should leave that place and move elsewhere.”

Prediction of Degeneration of the Teachings

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha addressed the Bhagavān: “Venerable Bhagavān, in those buddha lands where the five troubles reign; where the Tathāgata has not dwelled and the sentient beings who dwell there are beset by affliction, engage in nonvirtuous behavior, are of a foolish nature, and are difficult to tame; where the royal caste is barbaric, the ministerial caste is barbaric, the householders are barbaric, the merchants are barbaric, and the Brahmins are barbaric; where all of them, and others besides, dwell in little virtue with no faith, live lives of deceit, cunning, stupidity, and arrogance, unfearful of the fruits of suffering that await in the next life; where there are those who have abandoned the virtuous teacher and will fall to the great Hell of No Respite; where there are those who for the sake of profit and gain rely upon and become the companion of those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated and of those who engage in activities contrary to Dharma, all of whom will, without doubt, fall to the great Hell of No Respite—it is in those places that I will dwell. With the Dharma of the Bhagavān Buddha, I will bring help, happiness, and relief to those sentient beings by teaching the supreme nectar of the sacred Dharma. I will cause them to abide in its practice and turn those of royal caste who have become barbaric, up

to the Brahmins who have become barbaric, away from falling into the great Hell of No Respite.”

The Bhagavān spoke to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣīṭigarbha: “Son of the family, in a future time you will dwell in this buddha land where sentient beings will be tormented by mental affliction and commit wrong deeds like ignorant children difficult to tame. The barbaric royal caste, the barbaric ministerial caste, the barbaric householder caste, the barbaric merchant caste, barbaric mendicants, and the barbaric Brahmin caste will predominate with few roots of virtue and no faith. They will dwell in deception and cunning; be confused and arrogant; have abandoned the virtuous teacher; lie; never engage in the teachings given by the virtuous teacher but hold them in contempt and cast blame; have doubts about the sacred Dharma and hold wrong views; be unfearful of the fruits of suffering that await in the next life; constantly rely with pleasure on those of a bad nature; find pleasure in those who commit the nonvirtue of killing up to those who possess the nonvirtue of wrong views; deceive the world with deceit and cunning; and bring harm to self and others. These beings from those of the barbaric royal caste down to those of the barbaric Brahmin caste will destroy my teachings.

“There will even be those who are ordained into my teachings who degenerate their ethics and take pleasure in the busy life of the world, and it is to these bhikṣus that the royal caste and the Brahmins will make offerings with devotion. Attached to gain, these bhikṣus mouth words in order to gain wealth. Devoid of proper conduct, they take pleasure in sending messages and letters back and forth. They seek out profit and study the works of the worldly Lokāyata.²¹ They take pleasure in ploughing fields. They accumulate and hoard wealth. They nourish homes, wives, and children. With worldly mantras and mudrās, they make use of spirits. They see good signs as bad. They make a living by preparing medicine and treating illnesses. They are attached to food, drink, clothes, and ornaments, and take pleasure in doing the work

of householders. Their ethics are destroyed and they engage in wrongful actions. They are like dogs reacting to the sound of the conch. While claiming to be practitioners of virtue, they are not, and while claiming to live chaste lives, they do not. Those of the barbaric royal caste up to those of the barbaric Brahmin caste will make offerings to them with devotion and listen to their words. Similarly, those whose ethics have degenerated will likewise rely upon and take pleasure in those of the barbaric royal caste up to those of the barbaric Brahmin caste, serve them, and listen to their words. If there are those ordained into my teachings who are possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and who strive in the paths of training and no training up to the fulfillment of the results, those of the barbaric royal caste up to those of the barbaric Brahmin caste will be envious of these bhikṣus and will not honor, serve, or show devotion to them.

“Son of the family, it is like this. There are those who travel to the islands of jewels only to discard precious gems, such as *indranīla*, *mahānīla*, gold, silver, *padmarāga*, *vaidūrya*, and other priceless jewels, and return instead with a trinket. Likewise, in the future, in this buddha land there will be those of the barbaric royal caste up to those of the barbaric Brahmin caste who are similar. Having traveled to the islands of my precious teachings, they will cast aside those beings of good ethics and excellent qualities who take joy in the highest truths, who are restrained and modest, and who are trained and need no further training. They will cast aside the circle of āryas and those ordinary beings of excellent qualities of virtue who strive in the practice of the six perfections. Instead, they will revere, make offerings to, listen to, and hold as their fields of merit those bhikṣus of bad deeds whose ethics are degenerate, who commit many bad deeds, and who are without shame, without restraint, of harsh words, conceited in mind and body, devoid of a virtuous dharma, without love, and without compassion. These doers of bad deeds—teachers and students—will, without doubt, fall to the great Hell of No Respite.”

The Ten Wheels of Bad Deeds

“Son of the family, there are ten wheels of bad deeds; and in the future, in this buddha land, if those of the barbaric royal caste, those of the barbaric ministerial caste, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, and barbaric Brahmins possess some, or all of these ten, all roots of virtue planted in the past will be burned and become ash. Before long, the limbs of their bodies will be cut to pieces. For days and nights, their tongues will be tied; they will be unable to speak and will endure unending suffering. When they die, without doubt, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite. What are these ten? It is like this.

1) “There will be those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated, who commit bad deeds, and whose wrong views are tolerated by the royal caste and their ministers. Moreover, when they see pure bhikṣus who dwell in solitude, they say, ‘People, it is like this. These bhikṣus are stupid, covered by ignorance, of low morals, and out to deceive the world. In their search for food, drink, clothing, profit, wealth, and fame, they praise themselves and deride others, and make mischief through their envy. Taking joy in profit and reputation, never being content, they should be expelled and their words should not be heard. These bhikṣus speak nothing but lies. They are devoid of a true dharma and therefore, there will be no results for them. They are not free of desire and have not ended their afflictions. They dwell in solitude only in search of offerings. Do not honor, venerate, or serve them as teachers of great qualities. They live a life of deceit and cunning, and are neither true fields of merit nor those who strive on the path.’

“Thus, they are slandered. Then those of the barbaric royal caste down to those of the barbaric Brahmin caste will not generate faith in those pure bhikṣus who dwell in solitude. They will not hold them as rare and precious, or revere, serve, or make offerings to them. Whatever they teach, their words will not be listened to and they will be held in contempt.

“Showing contempt for those pure bhikṣus who dwell in solitude is to show contempt for the eye of the Dharma and the lineage of the Three Jewels. The gods, nāgas, yakṣas, and so on, who dwell there and who have pure minds and unshakeable faith toward the Three Jewels, will rise up in anger and resentment at those of barbaric royal caste down to those of barbaric Brahmin caste, and say to each other, ‘Alas! Everybody, look! Those of the barbaric royal caste, those of the barbaric merchant caste, householders, traders, mendicants, and Brahmins show contempt for and disparage the eye of the Dharma. They are destroying all roots of virtue, falling under the spell of nonvirtuous teachers, and by their misdeeds, they will fall to the lower realms. From this day on, we will afford them no protection. We will no longer guard their homes, their countries, their cities, and their administrations.’ Thus, the gods, nāgas, and yakṣas, and so on will not protect them and will abandon them.

“Therefore, all those who are vessels of the pure Dharma and who have become perfect fields of merit, who dwell in the lands and cities of those of the barbaric royal caste, and so on will rise and leave those lands. Even if some were to stay, the gods and so on will develop thoughts of abandoning them, and have no desire to offer them protection. Therefore, the gods, nāgas, and yakṣas, and all those who are vessels of the pure Dharma and who have become perfect fields of merit will have no thought of guarding those of the barbaric royal caste, their administrations, their countries, and their cities. Because they will have no thought for their protection, inner and outer enemies of the kingdom will arise. In order to seize control of the kingdom, there will be killing and fighting among the people. Because of this, illness, famine, and so on will arise. All those of barbaric nature in that land, from those of the barbaric royal caste to the barbaric mendicants and the Brahmins, will have no joyous thoughts. All that was beautiful and attractive in the past will disappear. Even friends and relatives will take no joy in one another and have no desire to meet. There

will be no love or compassion, but only jealousy and miserliness, and many an evil deed will be committed.

2) “It is like this. Conduct will be that of killing down to that of wrong views. Without restraint and without shame, they will make use of and consume the wealth belonging to shrines and to the saṅgha, and show no remorse. Those of the barbaric royal caste will rise up against the wise and upright, while taking joy in flatterers and deceivers. The people will hurt one another, and with spite and thoughts of vengeance, they will fight and argue. Even if they win wars against external enemies, because of their lack of harmony, later the wars will bring only suffering.

“Soon, the limbs of all those of the barbaric royal caste, the barbaric ministerial caste, the barbaric householder caste, the barbaric merchant caste, barbaric mendicants, and barbaric Brahmins will weaken, and for many days and nights they will be struck dumb. For days and nights, they will be struck dumb, endure unending illness, and experience great sufferings of fevers. When they die, without doubt, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

3) “Son of the family, furthermore, those of the barbaric royal caste, those of the barbaric ministerial caste, barbaric householders, those of the barbaric merchant caste, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on who follow bad spiritual guides will possess few roots of virtue, and live lives of deceit and pretense. They are foolish and confused, conceited in their knowledge, without pure thoughts toward the Three Jewels, and they pay no heed to the results of suffering that await them in their next lives.

“Among them there will be those who possess a little faith in the Śrāvaka Vehicle, but because of their own stupidity, think, ‘There is no one who knows, or who is wiser than me.’ They hold in contempt, criticize, and slander the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Great Vehicle taught by me, and do not give even a single verse of those to other beings to keep, memorize, read, or recite.

“Also, there will be those who possess a little faith in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, but because of their own stupidity, think, ‘There is no one who knows, or who is wiser than me.’ They hold in contempt, criticize, and slander the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Great Vehicle taught by me, and do not give even a single verse of those to other beings to keep, memorize, read, or recite.

“Also, there will be those who possess a little faith in the Great Vehicle, but because of their own stupidity, think, ‘There is no one who knows, or who is wiser than me.’ They hold in contempt, criticize, and slander the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle taught by me, and do not give even a single verse of those to other beings to keep, memorize, read, or recite.

“Such people slander and criticize the sacred Dharma of the Buddha. They look down on the bhagavān buddhas of the past, present, and future. They destroy the baskets of Dharma taught by the buddhas of the past, present, and future, as if reducing them to ashes. They will sever the eight branches of the ārya path and cause the eyes of limitless sentient beings to droop. Those of the barbaric royal caste, down to barbaric Brahmins, will conceal and obstruct the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the Great Vehicle taught by the buddhas until not even a verse remains.

“Such beings have no respect for the lineage of the Three Jewels and the eye of Dharma. Because of this, the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, and so forth who possess pure thoughts and unshakeable faith toward the Three Jewels will become angry with all those of the barbaric royal caste, those of the barbaric ministerial caste, barbaric householders, those of the barbaric merchant caste, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on. Before long, the limbs of their bodies will shrivel. For days and nights, they will be struck dumb, endure unending illness, and experience great sufferings of fevers. When they die, without doubt, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

4) “Son of the family, furthermore, those of the barbaric royal caste, those of the barbaric ministerial caste, barbaric householders, those of the barbaric merchant caste, barbaric mendicants, and barbaric Brahmins will follow bhikṣus whose ethics are degenerate and who commit bad deeds. In their lands, countries, and cities, all those who are vessels of the pure Dharma and who have become fields of merit will have thoughts of abandoning those of the barbaric royal caste and so on, and will not protect them. Even if they should stay in those lands, they will take no pleasure in, or stay with those householders who depend on the Dharma. They will not frequent the homes of benefactors. Even if for a short time they frequent the homes of benefactors, they will guard their words and not speak. Even if they should speak, they will not engage in lies. In the presence of the householders, they will not criticize or disparage those whose ethics have degenerated, or speak of or discuss the faults of those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated and who commit bad deeds. Constantly, they rely upon the field of merit and avoid the weakening of their ethics.

“Those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated and who commit bad deeds will become angry and resentful, and criticize those who guard their ethics and possess virtuous qualities. Those of the barbaric royal caste, and barbaric mendicants down to barbaric Brahmins will speak lies with deceit and pretension to the sons and daughters of householders. They will slander, criticize, and label with bad names those who guard their ethics. All those of the barbaric royal caste down to barbaric Brahmins will resent those disciples of mine who have few desires, have contentment, guard their ethics, are learned, and endowed with confidence in practice. With vile words, they encourage others to slander and criticize them, thus causing those disciples’ bodies and minds much suffering.

“Furthermore, they will cause those disciples’ robes, begging bowls, and necessities of life to be seized, and force them to engage in the business of earning a livelihood. They will take the

wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters and prevent the saṅgha from using it. Some they will cast into prison and subject to whips, iron chains, and sticks. Some will have their limbs cut off and some will be decapitated.

“Son of the family, look at this! In this way, those of the barbaric royal caste, and barbaric mendicants down to barbaric Brahmins have devoted themselves to those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated and who commit bad deeds. They will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

5) “The bad deeds of those beings who commit the five deeds of immediate repercussion, who destroy the roots of their ethics, who commit those bad deeds that approach deeds of immediate repercussion, or who commit natural bad deeds or proscribed bad deeds are lighter than the bad deeds of those of the barbaric royal caste, and barbaric mendicants down to barbaric Brahmins who will devote themselves to those whose ethics are degenerate and who contravene the Dharma.

“Son of the family, in this way, those bhikṣus whose ethics are degenerate and who carry out bad deeds do, indeed, commit bad actions that contravene the Dharma. However, while they remain within my doctrine, shave their heads and facial hair, and wear the saffron robes, their outer conduct and appearance is likened to that of the āryas. In that respect, kings, ministers, and householders are not only forbidden to place them into the householder life, but are forbidden to commit acts that contravene the Dharma, such as striking them, beating them, interrogating them, casting them into prison, criticizing them, cutting off their limbs, and depriving them of a means of living. If kings, ministers, and householders should do such things, they accrue very serious misdeeds and will undoubtedly be reborn into the great Hell of No Respite. If it is forbidden to punish those bhikṣus whose ethics are degenerate and who commit bad deeds, what need to mention that it is forbidden to do the same to those of pure ethics?

“Son of the family, any bhikṣu who has committed just one of the four root bad deeds is one whose ethics have degenerated, and is known as ‘a bhikṣu of bad conduct.’ However, he exists with an unbroken stream of vows created by the trusted saṅgha,²² as is prescribed, and although his precepts and ethics have been abandoned, he still has the aroma of virtuous Dharma, and therefore the kings, ministers, householders, and those who are without vows are not allowed to criticize him or punish him. Such a bhikṣu is not a vessel for the Dharma. The Dharma of the āryas has been weakened and he has blemished the pure saṅgha. He is not fit to perform any of the tasks of a monastic practitioner, and has no right to partake of the wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters. However, because he has taken full ordination from a harmonious saṅgha and has not given up the vows, he is still superior to all householders. If that is true for those who have committed root bad deeds, then it is of course true for those who have committed a small proscribed bad deed. Therefore, the kings, ministers, and householders have no authority to criticize them, hold them in contempt, or punish them. Why is this?”

Outcaste men disguised as monastic practitioners

“Son of the family, in a time in the past, in the region known as Kaśī, there was a king called Brahmādatta. One day, he addressed five outcaste men: ‘In the snow mountains there is an elephant with six tusks known as the Eyes of Upāli. Take out these tusks and bring them to me. If you fail, have no hope for your lives.’

“To protect themselves, these outcaste men armed themselves with bows and arrows, wore dyed clothes, and disguised themselves as monastic practitioners. They arrived at the snow mountain where the king of the elephants lived. A she-elephant spied them as they arrived. Frightened by the bows and arrows, she ran to the elephant king, and said: ‘Great one, please listen. Some men armed with bows and arrows are lying in wait. How can we prevent them from harming us?’

“The elephant raised his head and looked. He saw the men with head and facial hair shaven, wearing colored robes, and he spoke to the she-elephant:

These men in religious robes, the banner of buddhas,
As many as there are grains of sand in the Ganges,
Have freed themselves of all bad deeds,
And so, without doubt, they do not harm living beings.

“The she-elephant replied:
They may be wearing religious robes,
But in their hands they carry bows and arrows.
These men are without mercy and are vicious,
Outcastes who delight in doing wrong.

“The elephant king replied:
They appear in religious robes—
And this is the very root of love and compassion.
In order to have love for all beings,
They have without doubt gone for refuge to the Buddha.
Do not have such doubts.
It will be good for your mind
To be quickly cared for by them.
These who wear the colored religious robes
Will free us from the ocean of saṃsāra.

“At that time, the outcaste men let fly poisoned arrows at the elephant king, which struck him in the heart. The she-elephant wailed and began to cry. In a strangulated voice, she said:

I thought these men in religious robes
Had gone for refuge to the Buddha.
In appearance, they seemed at peace,
But within, they held malicious thoughts.

To put an end to these enemies
Who have shot arrows in the body of our king,

I will now trample over their bodies
And take away their lives.

“Then, the elephant king spoke:

It is easy to lose your life,
But not good to have a bad mind.
These men have deceitful minds,
But in appearance are like disciples of the Buddha.

A wise mind is one of purity;
It is not for the things of this life.
In order to liberate many beings,
Always engage in the deeds of enlightenment.

“The elephant king generated a mind of compassion and said to the men, ‘What is it you want?’ ‘We want your tusks,’ they replied. The elephant king joyfully pulled out his tusks and gave them to the men, saying:

Without anger and without thoughts of loss,
These white tusks of mine I give to you.
By this merit may I become a buddha
And cure the sickness of affliction in living beings.

“Son of the family, in that time in the past, the elephant king, though born as an animal, wished to attain the unsurpassed enlightenment. Therefore, without attachment to his life, he gave away his body and performed service to and honored those attired in religious robes. Even though they were his enemy, he asked for nothing in return. Look at this!

6) “In the future, those of the barbaric royal caste, those of the barbaric ministerial caste, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, and barbaric Brahmins who are stupid, but arrogant, who live by cunning and pretense, who deceive the world, and who do not think about the resultant sufferings of the next world will harm, criticize and disparage, beat

and strike, cast into prison, and deprive of life all those who have gone for refuge to and become ordained in my doctrine as well as those who are vessels for the Dharma and those who are not vessels for the Dharma. They commit heavy misdeeds that contradict the commitments of the buddhas of the past, present, and future, and without doubt will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

“Their roots of virtue are burned and severed. Because of this, they are abandoned by the wise. These people, although they have committed such great misdeeds, live yet by cunning and pretense. Being under the sway of pride, they deceive the world, saying, ‘We too wish for the unsurpassable enlightenment. We will become buddhas by way of the Great Vehicle.’

“It is like this. For example, for a man to pluck out his eyes and become blind, and then to climb a high mountain in order to show the way to another, makes no sense. Likewise, in a future time, those of the barbaric royal caste, those of the barbaric ministerial caste, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, and barbaric Brahmins will harm, criticize and disparage, beat and strike, cast into prison, and deprive of life all those who have gone for refuge to and become ordained in my doctrine as well as those who are vessels for the Dharma and those who are not vessels for the Dharma. They commit heavy misdeeds that contradict the pledges of the buddhas of the past, present, and future. Their roots of virtue are burned and severed. Without doubt, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite. Therefore, they are to be abandoned by the wise.

“These people have committed great misdeeds and yet living by cunning and pretense and being under the sway of pride, they deceive the world, saying, ‘We too wish for the unsurpassable enlightenment. We will become buddhas by way of the Great Vehicle.’ Because of those despicable acts of harming the ordained, they will not even gain the lowest of bodily forms. What need is there to mention that they will not attain the enlightenment of the two vehicles or of the peerless vehicle?”

The cannibals and a condemned man disguised as a monastic

“Son of the family, furthermore, at a time in the past, in a land called Panca, there was a king called Jitāri who administered and ruled the country. In that land, there was a terrifying cremation ground called Khalampa. Many yakṣas and cannibals lived there. Going to this place brought on great fear and raised the hairs of the body. In that land, if one had committed a capital crime, by the law of the king, one was to be killed. Bound in five ways, one was taken to Khalampa cremation ground and fed to the cannibals and spirits.

“One such condemned person, in order to save his life, shaved his head and face, and had strips of religious robes, which he had found, tied around his neck. In keeping with the law of the king, the prison guards bound him in five ways and took him to the great cremation ground, and returned home. That evening, a great female cannibal called Eyes of Weapons arrived at the cremation ground with her retinue of five-thousand cannibals. The condemned man saw them from afar and was afraid. When the great cannibal saw him bound in five ways, his head and face shaven, and had strips of religious robes tied around his neck, she circumambulated him clockwise, paid homage to him, and prostrated to him. Then, in verse she said:

Man, do not be afraid. Rest easy.
 I will do no harm to you.
 Seeing you with shaven head and robes
 Reminds us of the Buddha.

“The children of the cannibal said to their mother:

We are very hungry;
 Our body and minds in torment.
 To relieve this torment of body and mind,
 Mother, give us this man to eat.

The cannibal said to her children:

These robes are the banner of freedom
Of buddhas numbering as many
As there are grains of sand in the Ganges.
To think of committing such a deed to such a one
Will result without doubt in birth in hell.

“The children and retinue circled the man, prostrated to him with reverence, and said:

To you who wear the colored robes, we confess.
For us to commit nonvirtue by body, speech, and mind
Toward mothers and fathers is easy—
But we will never cause harm to you.

“At that time, a great female cannibal called Teeth of a Donkey arrived at the cremation ground with her retinue of five-thousand. This cannibal too, when she saw this man bound in five ways, his head and face shaven, and of strips of religious robes tied around his neck, circumambulated him, prostrated to him with reverence, and with her palms pressed together, she said:

Man, do not be afraid. Rest in peace.
These robes tied about your neck
Are the garment banners of the Great Sage.
To these, we offer and prostrate.

“Then, the children of that cannibal said to their mother:

There is no tastier food than
The flesh and blood of a human.
It nourishes the body and mind,
Creates bravery, courage, and fearlessness.
Mother, give us this man to eat.

“The cannibal replied to her children:

All wealth and possessions of gods and men
Are gained in dependence upon the ordained.

Therefore, I make offerings to this wearer of robes.
May we gain unlimited happiness, too.

“The children and retinue of that cannibal circled the man, prostrated to him with reverence, and with palms pressed together, spoke this verse:

To this man with head shaven, attired in robes,
We prostrate with the greatest of reverence.
At all times in the future
May we meet the Buddha and generate faith.

“At that time, a great female cannibal called Scowling One with Loosened Hair arrived at the cremation ground with her retinue of five-thousand. When she saw this man bound in five ways, his head and face shaven, and strips of religious robes around his neck, she too circumambulated him, prostrated to him with reverence, and with her palms pressed together, she said:

These banner-like garments of the Great Sage
Have been praised and exalted by the wise.
Whosoever makes offering to them
Will definitely be freed from saṃsāra’s chains.

“The children of that cannibal said to their mother:

All the flesh and blood of this human
Has been dedicated to us by the great king.
Give it to us to eat and to drink.
Then, with strength, we will serve our mother.

“Then, the cannibal said to her children:

Those who bear such religious robes,
Are not right for you to eat.
If you develop a bad mind toward such a person,
You will indeed become a vessel for great suffering.

“The children and retinue of that cannibal circled the man, prostrated to him with reverence, and with palms pressed together, spoke this verse:

You wear the robes of the Great Sage
And are a great field of merit.
Therefore, we make offerings to you.
May we be free from the chains of saṃsāra.

“At that time, the great cannibal called Face of Weapons arrived at the cremation ground with her retinue of five-thousand. When she saw this man bound in five ways, his head and face shaven, and religious robes tied around his neck, she also circumambulated him, prostrated to him with reverence, and with her palms pressed together, said:

You with robes worn upon your body
Will definitely attain the bliss of nirvāṇa.
As such, were we to bring harm to you,
I fear we would incur the contempt of all the buddhas.

“Then, the children of that cannibal spoke to their mother:

Always we steal the radiance of humans,
And likewise, we eat and drink of their flesh and blood.
So as to grow and increase our strength,
Give us this man to eat as we please.

“The cannibal replied to her children:

If we were to bring harm to this man
With shaven head, attired in religious robes,
Without doubt, we would fall to the Hell of No Respite,
And for a long time, become receptacles of suffering.

“The children and retinue of that cannibal circled the man, prostrated to him with reverence, and with palms pressed together, spoke this verse:

We are surely afraid of the realms of hell,
 And so we will bring no harm to your life.
 We will free you from your chains and release you.
 By this, may we be free from the suffering of hell.

“The cannibal, her children, and her entourage took pity on the man. They released him from his chains, apologized to him, rejoiced, and sent him home.

“Early the next day, he went before the king and related to him in great detail what had taken place. When the king and his entourage heard the man’s story, they were astonished. The king issued a decree to the people of his land stating that, from that day onward, if anyone mocked or hurt the followers of the Buddha who had shaved their heads and were wearing the saffron robes—whether those followers protected their ethics, had degenerated them, or had no ethics at all—they would be killed. Because of this, and because many in the land were disposed to virtue, all the people gradually turned to the teachings, and in the world at large, kings and powerful people went for refuge to the Three Jewels with tamed minds.

“Son of the family, in this way, those cannibals, although they are born into the realm of ghosts, delight in stealing the radiance of humans and eat and drink their flesh and blood, are attached to bad deeds, and are devoid of compassion, when they saw that man devoid of ethics, with shaven head and face, and religious robes tied around his neck, they circumambulated him, paid him homage, prostrated to him, made offerings, chanted verses of praise, and had no thoughts of harming him. If that is so, then in the future those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, and barbaric Brahmins who hold vicious minds and have no compassion will commit bad deeds far greater than those committed by yakṣas and cannibals. They are stupid and confused. Their roots of virtue are completely severed. They have no faith, and

pay no homage to those disciples who have become ordained in my doctrine, whose heads are shaven, and who wear the saffron robes, whether those disciples be vessels for the Dharma or not. They harm them, criticize them, beat them, interrogate them, cast them into prison, and deprive them of their lives. They commit great misdeeds that contradict the teachings of all the buddhas of the past, present, and future. With their roots of virtue burned away and severed, without doubt they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite, having been abandoned by the wise.”

The elephant and a condemned man mistaken for a monastic

“Son of the family, in the past there was a king called Mahāpuṇya. He was a king of great compassion, so much so that when a condemned man was about to die, he could not bear to kill him. A wise minister addressed the king, ‘Great king, do not be sad. A king does not accumulate the bad act of killing. A butcher does not seek to kill. I have found a way to kill this man.’ With that, he put the man in front of a wild elephant, which picked the man up with its trunk and was about to dash him on the ground, when it saw that the man was wearing red clothes. Thinking that they were Buddhist robes, a mind of faith arose within it and it gently placed the man on the ground. It bowed its head to the ground with remorse, wiped the man’s feet with its trunk, and gazed at him with reverence. When the minister witnessed this, he ran and told the king. The king was astonished and issued a decree saying that from that day onward all his people must show reverence to the Three Jewels. Because of this, he abandoned killing and became ruler of the world.

“Look at this, son of the family. In this way, although that elephant had been born into the realm of animals, it had reverence for the robes and did not commit a bad act. If that is so, then in the future, those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants,

and barbaric Brahmins, with their vicious minds and lack of compassion, commit bad deeds far worse than the elephant. These stupid ones have no faith, and pay no homage to those disciples who have become ordained in my doctrine, whose heads are shaven, and who wear the saffron robes, whether those disciples be vessels for the Dharma or not. They harm them, criticize them, beat them, interrogate them, cast them into prison, and deprive them of their lives. They commit misdeeds that contradict the teachings of all the buddhas of the past, present, and future. With their roots of virtue burned away and severed, without doubt, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite, having been abandoned by the wise.

“Because those of the barbaric royal caste down to barbaric mendicants and barbaric Brahmins possess these three wheels of bad deeds, the gods, nāgas, yakṣa spirits, and so on who guard the land and who have pure minds and unshakeable faith toward the Three Jewels will rise up in anger and resentment against those of the barbaric royal caste, and so on, and before long, the limbs of their bodies will be cut to pieces. For many days, their tongues will be tied, and they will be unable to speak. They will endure unending illness and a great suffering of fever. When they die, without doubt they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

7) “Furthermore, son of the family, in a time in the future, in this buddha land there will be those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on who devote themselves to bad teachers, whose roots of virtue are few and weak, and who do not see the results of suffering that await them in their next lives. They will seize the wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters, wealth of the temples, wealth dedicated for the temples, wealth dedicated for the tree enclosures, farmer and nomads, wealth dedicated for the farmers and nomads, men and women suitable for work in the temples, cattle, clothes, alms, mats, seats, medicines, and the various other necessities of life.

“They will forcibly seize the wealth and provisions offered to the saṅgha of the four quarters destined only for those pure bhikṣus possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, who make effort and apply themselves to the paths of training and no training, up to those who have gained the fruits of dwelling in solitude. Instead, they will be given to bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated, who commit bad deeds, and who live as householders and do householder work. Some they will share, and some they will give to individuals. When those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated have gotten them, some they will share, some they will use privately, and some they will give to householders and share in it.

“Because of this, the gods, nāgas, yakṣa spirits, and so forth who possess pure thoughts and unshakeable faith toward the Three Jewels will become angry with those of the barbaric royal caste down to barbaric Brahmins, and before long, the limbs of their bodies will be cut into pieces. For many days their tongues will be tied. They will endure unending illness and a great suffering of fever. When they die, without doubt they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

8) “Son of the family, furthermore, in a time in the future, in this buddha land there will be those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on who devote themselves to bad teachers, whose roots of virtue are few and weak, and who do not see the results of suffering that await them in their next lives. They will show contempt, abuse, criticize, and slander those ordained into my teachings who are of sharp intelligence, greatly learned, able to teach completely both word and meaning, and able to teach the Dharma of the śrāvakas; who have understood and are able to teach the Dharma of the pratyekabuddhas; or are able to teach the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and teach for the benefit and happiness of sentient beings greatly. They will harm them and place obstacles in the way of their teaching the Dharma.

“Because of this, the gods, nāgas, yakṣa spirits, and so forth who possess pure thoughts and unshakeable faith toward the Three Jewels will become angry with all those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on, and before long, the limbs of their bodies will be cut into pieces. For many days their tongues will be tied. They will endure unending illness and a great suffering of fever. When they die, without doubt they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

9) “Son of the family, furthermore, in the future, in this buddha land there will be those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on who devote themselves to bad teachers, whose roots of virtue are few and weak, and who do not see as fearful the results of suffering in their next lives. They will seize the wealth offered to the saṅgha of the four quarters, farms belonging to the temples, cattle, gems, flowering trees, fruit trees, dye trees, shady trees, aromatic trees, medicinal trees, and the various other necessities of life. Those of the barbaric royal caste down to barbaric Brahmins will forcibly seize and urge others to seize provisions destined only for my disciples, the pure bhikṣus possessed of ethics, excellent qualities, who make effort, and who apply themselves to the paths of training and no training, up to those who have gained the fruits of dwelling in solitude. They will use these provisions for themselves and encourage others to use them.

“Because of this, the gods, nāgas, yakṣa spirits, and so forth who possess pure thoughts and unshakeable faith toward the Three Jewels will become angry with those of the barbaric royal caste down to barbaric Brahmins, and before long, the limbs of their bodies will be cut into pieces. For many days their tongues will be tied. They will endure unending illness and a great suffering of fever. When they die, without doubt they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

10) “Son of the family, furthermore, in the future, in this buddha land there will be those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on who devote themselves to bad teachers; whose roots of virtue are few and weak; whose minds are impure; who live by deceit and cunning; who are stupid and confused, made arrogant by their little knowledge; whose words are without truth; who have abandoned spiritual guides; who doubt the Dharma of the āryas; who do not see as fearful the results of suffering in their next lives; who guard the vows of evil deeds; who take pleasure in the acts of killing, down to the possession of wrong views; who are seized by pride; who deceive the world; and who proclaim, ‘I dwell in the vows of ethics.’

“These of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on will destroy my teachings by various means. They will attack again and again those ordained into my teachings; criticize, disparage, and abuse them; interrogate them; cast them into prison; cut off their limbs; and deprive them of their lives. They will have no faith in what I have taught. They will destroy shrines and temples, force bhikṣus to become householders, and employ various means to bring obstacles to those who have shaved their heads and faces, and wear the saffron robes.

“Because of this, the gods, nāgas, yakṣa spirits, and so forth who possess pure thoughts and unshakeable faith toward the Three Jewels will become angry with those of the barbaric royal caste down to barbaric Brahmins, and before long, the limbs of their bodies will be cut into pieces. For many days, their tongues will be tied. They will endure unending illness and a great suffering of fever. When they die, without doubt they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.”

Negativities of those who engage in the ten wheels of bad deeds

“Son of the family, if those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric merchants, barbaric

mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on commit even some of these ten wheels of bad deeds spoken of here, every root of virtue they had gathered in the past will be burned, turned to ash, and vanish. Before long, the limbs of their bodies will be cut into pieces. For many days, their tongues will be tied. They will endure unending illness and a great suffering of fever. When they die, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite.

“If they find it difficult to gain the bodies of even the lowest of disreputable humans, then of course, in the future they will have no opportunity to gain the enlightenment of the two vehicles or the peerless enlightenment. If those bad beings find it difficult to hear even the name of the Great Vehicle, what need is there to say that they will not gain the fruits of peerless buddhahood? Such people have made themselves unfit and others unfit, and therefore they will be left unprotected by all the buddhas.

“Son of the family, it is like this. A person is pressing grain to extract oil. In each grain, there is a worm. By pressing on it, oil emerges. In one day, how many sentient beings does this grain-presser kill? If that grain-presser has ten places in which to press grain, and in each of those places, thousands of measures of grain are pressed each day continuously for a thousand years, would that person gather a great store of the bad karma of killing?”

The bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣīṭigarbha replied, “He would gather much. Bhagavān, he would gather a great store. Tathāgata, that person would have committed immeasurable acts of killing. Such misdeeds are beyond measure, beyond calculation, beyond count, and beyond illustration. Only the Tathāgata knows these things. Others cannot know.”

The Bhagavān replied, “Son of the family, it is like this. Should someone, for the sake of gain and profit, open ten brothels for prostitutes, and in each of those places he puts thousands of prostitutes, and should each of those women bedeck themselves with various jewels and ornaments, beguile men, and engage them in acts of lust continuously for thousands of years, the misdeeds

of that person would be beyond measure, beyond calculation, beyond count, and beyond illustration. The bad deeds gathered in the ten places for pressing grain is equal to the bad deeds accumulated in just one of those places for prostitutes.

“Son of the family, it is like this. Suppose someone, for the sake of gain and profit, should open ten places for the selling of alcohol, and they adorn each of those places with beautiful decorations, and by various means they lure thousands of those attracted to alcohol and ply them with alcohol continuously, day and night for a thousand years, the bad deeds of that person too would be beyond measure, beyond calculation, beyond count, and beyond illustration. The bad deeds gathered in the ten places for prostitutes is equal to the bad deeds accumulated in just one of these places for the selling of alcohol.

“Son of the family, furthermore, it is like this. Should someone open up ten slaughterhouses, and each day in each of those places, thousands of cattle, sheep, camels, deer, and pigs are slaughtered continuously for thousands of years, the bad deeds of that person too would be beyond measure, beyond calculation, beyond count, and beyond illustration. The bad deeds gathered in the ten places for selling alcohol is equal to the bad deeds accumulated in just one of these slaughterhouses.

“In this way, the bad deeds accumulated in those ten slaughterhouses is equal to the accumulation of evil from those of the barbaric royal caste, barbaric mendicants, barbaric Brahmins, and so on committing just some of the ten wheels of bad deeds for a single day.”

Then, the Bhagavān spoke these verses:

The bad deeds gathered in the ten places of grain-pressing
Equals that gathered in one place of prostitutes.

The bad deeds gathered in the ten places of prostitutes
Equals that gathered in one place of alcohol selling.

The bad deeds gathered in the ten places of selling alcohol
 Equals that gathered in one place of butchery.
 And bad deeds gathered in the ten places of butchery
 Equals that gathered by just one of those of the barbaric
 royal caste.

Merit of Those Engaged in Virtuous Deeds

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣīṭigarbha addressed the Bhagavān, “Venerable Bhagavān, there will be virtuous rulers, virtuous ministers, virtuous householders, virtuous merchants, virtuous mendicants, and virtuous Brahmins who care for themselves and others; who are restrained by the fears of future lives; who honor, serve, and make offerings to those who dwell in the teachings of the Buddha, who—whether they are suitable vessels for ordination or not, or lack even a modicum of ethics—have shaved their heads and faces and wear the saffron robes.

“Furthermore, they make offerings with devotion to the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and to the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They listen to them, have faith in them, retain them, and make offerings to them. They provide protection and support to those who abide in the Great Vehicle and are possessed of ethics, excellent qualities, and perseverance, up to those who abide in the resultant states. They ask them questions, they listen to and remember them, they speak pleasantly to them, and discuss them.

“They have cast far away those bhikṣus who commit bad deeds and whose ethics have degenerated. They encourage others not to waste the wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters and will take great care of it. They will not steal the wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters or of the shrines and will not encourage others to steal it. They will not use it for themselves and not encourage others to use it. They make offerings with devotion to those who propound the Dharma of the three vehicles and will support them.

They do not engage in the criticism, slander, and disparagement of others, but serve them and bring them joy.

“Where the ordained and the Dharma of the Buddha are found, with great faith they will protect and preserve them. They will not destroy shrines and will guard the residences of the saṅgha and the temples. They will not show contempt for, or criticize those who have shaved their heads and faces and wear the saffron robes. They will not engage in the ten wheels of bad deeds, and others too will turn far from these ten wheels. They will preserve the kingdom by following the religious ways and traditions of the kings of the past. They will preserve and develop the lineage of the Three Jewels. Constantly, they will rely upon spiritual masters and, with loving minds, they will care for all. They will tame and teach everyone by way of the Dharma through whatever means is appropriate.

“These virtuous beings from kings down to Brahmins who have abandoned wrong views and strive in the perfect Dharma, how much merit do they gain, how much demerit will they accrue?”

The Buddha replied, “Son of the family, if a being of great power were to appear in the world, and in the morning filled the world with the seven types of jewels and offered them to the Buddha and his saṅgha, and if at noon filled the world with the seven types of jewels and offered them to the Buddha and his saṅgha, and if in the evening, too, filled the world with the seven types of jewels and offered them to the Buddha and his saṅgha, and likewise, if each day, continuously for a hundred thousand years, practiced the act of giving—would that result in a large amount of merit?”

The bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha replied, “He would gather a great store. Bhagavān, he would gather a great store. That being would have accumulated an immeasurable store of merit. Sugata, the amount of such merit is beyond measure, beyond calculation, beyond count, and beyond illustration. Only the Buddha knows these things. Others cannot know.”

The Bhagavān replied, “Son of the family, so it is. It is like that. It is as you have said. If those virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins do not engage in the ten wheels of bad deeds, and if they teach others to abandon those ten wheels, their amount of merit is more beyond measure, more beyond calculation, more beyond count, and more beyond illustration than the merit above.

“Son of the family, if a being of great power were to appear in the world and were to build a temple and living quarters of exquisite quality as vast as the four continents for the sake of the saṅgha of the four quarters; and were to arrange in those places seats, clothes, alms, medicines for illness, and all provisions for living; and were to make offerings and devotions day and night for millions of years without laziness to the Tathāgata and his close śrāvaka and bodhisattva disciples and entourage who were residing there, while striving in various virtuous practices—would that being amass a great store of merit?”

The bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣīṭigarbha replied, “He would gather a great store. Bhagavān, he would gather a great store. That being would have accumulated an immeasurable store of merit. Sugata, the amount of such merit is beyond measure, beyond calculation, beyond count, and beyond illustration. Only the Buddha knows these things. Others cannot know.”

The Bhagavān replied, “Son of the family, so it is. It is like that. It is as you have said. Son of the family, furthermore, it is like this. If a being of great power were to appear in the world and were to build a shrine of great beauty, vast and tall, and equal in size to the great three thousandfold system in order to house the relics of the Buddha, the merit of building such a shrine for the relics of the Buddha would outweigh that of building a temple and living quarters for the saṅgha of the four quarters. The latter would not come near a hundredth, a thousandth, a hundred-thousandth, a ten-millionth, a hundred-millionth, not to a fraction of the measure, a fraction of the calculation, a fraction of the count, a fraction of the illustration, and a fraction of the result of the former.”

“Son of the family, it is like this. Imagine if this world of the great three thousandfold world system were filled solely with great arhats who had mastered the perfections, were possessed of the eight freedoms, were absorbed in concentration, and yet had been bound by five chains and imprisoned in groves made of stalk, sesame, bamboo, reeds, and sugarcane for millions of years. Then, a person of great power appears in the world and, wishing to create merit, frees the arhats from their chains; bathes them in scented water; offers them robes and begging bowls for thousands of years; and provides them with seats, clothes, alms, medicines in case of illness, and various provisions for living according to their wishes. When those arhats pass into nirvāṇa, he makes offerings, and after their cremation, he gathers their relics and places them in shrines made of the seven types of jewels. Furthermore, he makes offerings of victory standards, banners, parasols, incense, flowers, and various kinds of music. Greater than the merit of doing this is the building of a shrine to house the relics of the Buddha. The merit of freeing the arhats and making offerings would not come near a hundredth, a thousandth, a hundred-thousandth, a ten-millionth, a hundred-millionth, not to a fraction of the measure, a fraction of the calculation, a fraction of the count, a fraction of the illustration, and a fraction of the result of the former.

“Son of the family, for those virtuous beings from kings down to Brahmins who do not commit the ten wheels of bad deeds and who counsel others not to commit the ten wheels of bad deeds, their amount of merit is immeasurably and inexpressibly greater than the amount of merit described previously. The amount of merit they create purifies an equal amount of demerit.

“Son of the family, if those virtuous kings, virtuous ministers, virtuous householders, virtuous merchants, virtuous mendicants, and virtuous Brahmins at a time in the future, during the last five hundred years of the teachings when the sacred doctrine is drawing to a close, protect the eyes of the Dharma, bring restraint

upon themselves, protect others, be conscientious of their future lives, be conscientious toward those who shave their heads and faces and wear the saffron robes—down to those having no ethics at all—and make offerings to them with great devotion, and show them no harm regardless of whether they are suitable vessels for being disciples ordained into my teachings or not; protect, listen to, and retain the Dharma of the three vehicles; do not slander or disparage the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Dharma of the Great Vehicle nor show envy toward the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Great Vehicle when they pay devotions to, listen to, and retain the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle; do not slander or disparage the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Dharma of the Great Vehicle nor show envy toward the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Great Vehicle when they pay devotions to, listen to, and retain the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle; and do not slander or disparage the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle nor show envy toward the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle when they pay devotions to, listen to, and retain the Dharma of the Great Vehicle—these virtuous beings from kings down to Brahmins, because they possess such qualities and live this way, their conduct does not go to waste.

“If these virtuous beings, toward those persevering individuals who do not actualize the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, but who actualize the perfect Dharma of the Great Vehicle, and by abiding in the Great Vehicle, are possessed of ethics, of excellent qualities, and who persevere—up to those who abide in the resultant states—show them constant devotion, assist them, make offerings to them, devote themselves to them with minds of faith, ask them questions, listen to them, and retain what they have taught; cast far away those bhikṣus who commit bad deeds and whose ethics have degenerated; do not waste through ways opposed to the Dharma the wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters that was

offered by the faithful; do not forcibly use for themselves the wealth of the saṅgha of the four quarters, the shrines, and the individual shares of the saṅgha nor encourage others to do the same; offer to and support with devotion those who propound the Dharma of the three vehicles; do not engage in the slander, disparagement, or criticism of others; have faith in the ordained and are filled with joy; have faith in and retain words of the āryas who were spoken of by the buddhas; do not destroy shrines; care for the temples and residences of the saṅgha of the four quarters; do not exert control over disciples ordained into my teaching nor force them to become householders; do not engage in the ten wheels of bad deeds, but encourage others through discourse to give up completely the ten wheels of bad deeds; rule and live by the traditions of the kings of the past; teach and gather in many worlds by way of the path of the ten virtues; always rely upon spiritual guides; maintain and propagate the lineage of the Three Jewels; and guard and protect so that the eyes of the Dharma are never shut—these virtuous beings from kings down to Brahmins, because they possess such qualities and live this way, their conduct does not go to waste.

“The gods, humans, yakṣas, ghosts, kaṭapūtanās, and so on will be pleased and will protect them. Those who are vessels of the Dharma and who have become perfect fields of merit will rejoice and will protect and care for them with compassion. Because of this, all sentient beings will be happy. External enemies will not be able to harm them, and these enemies will obey the law and be gathered in without being defeated. In this way, they will strive in virtuous deeds, and all streams of their nonvirtue will dry up. Gods and humans will increase everywhere, offering protection to all, and as a result, life will be long. They will destroy their own afflictions and banish those of others. They will embrace the six perfections, which is the path of bodhicitta, and consequently will destroy all paths of wrong views, turning away from their long-time wandering through the ocean of saṃsāra. They

will abandon bad spiritual guides and rely constantly on virtuous spiritual guides. Wherever they are born, they will meet with the buddhas and bodhisattvas, to whom they will pay devotions and make offerings constantly. Before long, joyfully in accordance with their wishes, they will attain the perfect buddhahood of peerless and perfected enlightenment in various buddha realms.”

Promise to Protect Those of Virtue

At that time, from among the entourage, the ruler of the gods and his entire retinue, down to the ruler of the flesh-eating *piśāca* spirits rose from their seats, touched their heads to the feet of the Bhagavān, and with devotion addressed the Bhagavān, “Venerable Bhagavān, in the time of nonexistence, in the last five hundred years when the sacred Dharma is close to disappearing in the buddha lands, if those virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins give up the ten wheels of bad deeds and engage others in discussion urging them to do the same; if they are wise in guarding themselves and others, and wise in being restrained in concern over their future lives; if they protect the sacred Dharma, protect the lineage of the Three Jewels, and work constantly to propagate it and so on as the Bhagavān has described; and if they listen to and retain with devotion the Dharma of the three vehicles, not hiding it, protecting those beings who abide within the three vehicles, making offerings to them, not causing them any harm, guarding well the wealth of the Three Jewels and never decreasing it, we and our retinue will guard those virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins, protect them, and will ensure and increase ten conducive conditions. What are these ten? We will ensure and increase a long life. We will ensure and increase freedom from obstacles. We will ensure and increase a healthy life free from sickness. We will ensure and increase family and friends. We will ensure and increase wealth. We will ensure and increase provisions for livelihood. We will ensure and

increase high rank and status. We will ensure and increase fame and reputation. We will ensure and increase virtuous friends. We will ensure and increase knowledge. Venerable Bhagavān, if those virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins give up the ten wheels of bad deeds, engage others in discussion urging them to do the same, and are endowed with the qualities previously mentioned, we will guard them, protect them, and will ensure and increase these ten things.

“Bhagavān, furthermore, if those virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins are endowed with the qualities previously mentioned, we and our retinue will guard them, protect them, and ensure that they are free from ten obstacles. What are these ten? We will ensure complete freedom from conflict with enemies; complete freedom from unpleasant forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and physical sensations; complete freedom from epidemics and all diseases; complete freedom from holding wrong notions and bad views; complete freedom from wrong refuge; complete freedom from all bad omens; complete freedom from all wrong actions; complete freedom from all bad spiritual guides; complete freedom from the mire of living as a householder; and complete freedom from sudden and untimely death. Venerable Bhagavān, if those very virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins are endowed with the qualities previously mentioned, we will guard them, protect them, and will ensure that they possess these ten freedoms.

“Bhagavān, furthermore, if those virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins strive wholeheartedly for the qualities previously mentioned, we and our retinue will guard them and give them protection. We will ensure that the king, his entourage, and all the people that live in that land are possessed of ten freedoms. What are these ten? They are complete freedom from enemies from other lands; complete freedom from enemies within their own land; complete freedom from harmful ghosts; complete freedom from droughts; complete freedom from harmful rains;

complete freedom from the harms of untimely heat, cold, wind, frost, and hail; complete freedom from bad omens and planetary influence; complete freedom from the harm of famines; complete freedom from death caused by untimely illness; and complete freedom from wrong apprehension and bad views. Venerable Bhagavān, if those virtuous beings from the kings down to the Brahmins strive for, and perfect those qualities previously mentioned, we and our retinue will guard them and give them protection. We will ensure that the king, his entourage, and all the people that live in that land are possessed of ten freedoms.”

Then, the Bhagavān praised the ruler of the gods, and his entire retinue down to the ruler of the flesh-eating piśāca spirits, who rose from their seats, saying, “Excellent! Excellent! These things that you have promised, it is right you should do. By these deeds, you too will find benefit and happiness for a long time to come.”

Offering of the Dhāraṇī of Protection

Then, Mahābrahmā Devagarbha addressed the Bhagavān, “In the time of nonexistence, in this buddha land, for all the virtuous kings, I offer this dhāraṇī of the irreversible mind to protect the land. By the power and radiance of the syllables of this great dhāraṇī known as the ‘Irreversible Wheel,’ offered in order to completely guard the land, all the virtuous kings in this buddha land at the time of nonexistence will not be overcome by external enemies and all such enemies will be pacified and naturally turned away. Their actions of body, speech, and mind will be restrained. They will be praised by the wise. They will abandon bad Dharma and constantly strive in virtuous Dharma. They will abandon evil ways and strive with firm perseverance in the Great Vehicle.

“They will completely ripen immeasurable and countless sentient beings who have become suitable vessels. They will develop the nature of a scholar without needing to depend on others. They will wholeheartedly strive for the precious treasure

of the six perfections so that anger, miserliness, envy, and all other taints of afflictions will be eradicated. All humans and nonhumans will guard them with devotion. They will not forget their actions, and by taking great joy in the four ways of gathering disciples, they will not give up on sentient beings. They will never be separated from those who are vessels of Dharma and fields of merit.”

Again, the Bhagavān addressed Devagarbha, “Speak the words of this great dhāraṇī known as ‘Essence of the Irreversible Wheel’ in order to protect the lands of those virtuous kings in this buddha land at a time in the future. In order to completely guard the land, speak this great dhāraṇī known as ‘Essence of the Irreversible Wheel,’ the power and radiance of the syllables of which will ensure that at a time in the future in this buddha land all the virtuous rulers in this buddha land will not be overcome by external enemies and so on, up to never being separated from the Buddha and the entourage of the Buddha.”

Then, Mahābrahmā Devagarbha, in order to protect the land, spoke these words of the great Irreversible Wheel dhāraṇī:

TADYATHĀ / MUNIMORI / MUNAGARBHE / MUNIKHILIDHAYE /
 MUNIROGAVICALE / MUNIHALITE / MUNIGAME /
 ŚUKLAPAKṢE / PĀLALAPAKṢE / MRILAPAKṢE /
 SOURISAKRITI / TORAṆAKRICALĒ / PATAGAŚAKRITĒ /
 KUKULAMRILE / APAKṢASARA / ODAHAKILIVA
 MUNIPĀTHAVA SVĀHĀ

When he had recited this dhāraṇī, Mahābrahmā Devagarbha addressed the Bhagavān, “Having spoken this great dhāraṇī, I request the Bhagavān and this great entourage to rejoice.”

“Excellent! Excellent!” said the Bhagavān. The entourage also replied, “Excellent! Excellent!”

Then, the Bhagavān, at that time, addressed the youth Maudgalyāyana and the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya, “Sons of the family, remember these words of the great Irreversible Wheel dhāraṇī offered by Mahābrahmā Devagarbha in order to

protect the land. At a time in the future, in this buddha land, teach it widely to all virtuous kings. By this cause, by this circumstance, happiness and benefit will be brought to all those virtuous kings and their retinues, and to all those living in those lands. They will turn the wheel of Dharma constantly. Great will be their fame, great will be their splendor. They will destroy wrong views and establish perfect views. They will protect the eyes of Dharma and preserve without break the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will ripen immeasurable, countless sentient beings. Their faith in the Great Vehicle will be strong. For a long time, they will dwell in the meditations on the six perfections, dispelling all obstacles, and soon they will come to fulfillment.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

At that time, Mahābrahmā Devagarbha requested
This of the supreme among human beings:

‘There are those of great intelligence
Who meditate upon samādhi
And delight in gathering merit.
There are wise kings who follow the way of Dharma.
In order raise up and liberate those who are lost,
Dispel irrevocably any doubts concerning these three types of
conduct.’

The Bhagavān replied with these words:

‘Those who have not restrained from those activities
That they should not commit or abide in,
Though they are wise and of sharp intelligence,
Will fall to the Hell of No Respite.

‘Those who are truly without learning
And delight in the ten wheels of bad deeds—
Their roots of virtue will all be destroyed
And quickly, they fall to the realms of hell.

‘Samādhi cuts away all affliction,
Something not gained from the merit of listening.
Therefore, those who wish for nirvāṇa
At all times should be absorbed in concentration.

‘The learned initiate great perseverance;
They guard and preserve my perfect teachings.
With faith and respect for those who wear the saffron robes,
They will cross the ocean of affliction.

‘Living in complete isolation and solitude,
They cast far away all deeds of immediate repercussion.
Holding ethics and meditating on samādhi,
With faith, they will cross the ocean of existence.

‘With faith in all three vehicles,
Working to spread my perfect Dharma,
And making offerings to those in the saffron robes,
Without doubt, they will enter the ocean of excellent qualities.

‘Taming the difficult-to-tame mind,
Not talking of the faults of the bhikṣus,
Living a life of contentment worthy of āryas,
They will, without doubt, become the best among humans.

‘Abandon the bhikṣus of bad deeds,
Rely upon the conduct of the āryas,
Do not use or consume the wealth of the saṅgha,
And soon you will gain the great enlightenment.

‘All happiness and joy in the three realms
Arises from the Three Jewels.
Therefore, if you desire happiness and joy,
Always make offerings to the Three Jewels.

‘Those barbaric kings and others
Who consort with bhikṣus of bad deeds,
Find fault with the Three Jewels
And will fall to the Hell of No Respite.

‘The bad deeds of the ten places of pressing grain
Equal the bad acts of one place of the prostitutes.
The bad deeds of all ten places of the prostitutes
Equal the bad acts of one place selling alcohol.

‘The bad deeds gathered in all ten places of alcohol
Equal the bad deeds in just one slaughterhouse.
The bad deeds amassed by all ten slaughterhouses
Equal the bad deeds of just one king.

‘Those kings of perfect virtue
Who spread my perfect Dharma,
Who make offerings to all Three Jewels,
Will without doubt enter the great ocean of qualities.

‘The merit gained from filling the world
With the seven types of precious jewels
And offering it to the Buddha and his saṅgha
Comes nowhere near that of guarding the Buddhadharma.

‘The merit gained from building residences
For the Buddha and the saṅgha
Equal in size to ten of the four-continent worlds
Comes nowhere near that of guarding the Buddhadharma.

‘The merit gained from building a shrine of the Buddha
Equal in size to the three-thousand-fold world system
Comes nowhere near that of guarding the Buddhadharma.

‘Greater than freeing arhats from their chains
And making various offerings to them all
Is the merit of making no hindrances to the Dharma.

‘The wise meditating in samādhi for millions of years
Will develop very special aspects of mind,
But greater is the merit of guarding the Dharma.

‘For those very virtuous kings
Who abandon the ten wheels of bad deeds,
Who guard and protect my perfect Dharma,
Or who protect those who wear the saffron robes,

‘Who do not disparage or show contempt for
The three vehicles taught by me and their followers,
Who listen and make offerings to them all,
Who are the shelter and the protector for teachers of Dharma,

‘Who do not waste the wealth of the Three Jewels,
Who do not obstruct those who wear the saffron robes,
Who show respect to those who are suitable vessels and
to those who are not—
Their merit cannot be shown.

‘Just as the rising of the five suns
Will dry up all the great oceans,
Likewise, protecting my Dharma
Will dry up the oceans of affliction.

‘When destruction by wind arrives,
All mountains will be swept away.
Likewise, protecting my Dharma
Will sweep away all affliction.

‘When destruction by water comes to pass,
The great earth will be washed away and destroyed.
Likewise, protecting my Dharma
Will destroy all unwanted results.

‘Just as the precious wish-fulfilling jewel
Fulfills completely all desires,
Likewise, the Dharma of the three vehicles
Will grant the wishes of all living beings.

‘Whoever comes across a wish-fulfilling vase,
Will not be poor and will gain happiness.
Likewise, those who come across the Buddhadharma
Will sever their doubts and gain enlightenment.

‘Just as the moon on the fifteenth day
Fills the entire sky with its light,
So the person who protects the Dharma,
By their wisdom, will pervade the dharmadhātu.

‘Just as the sky is equal everywhere,
Devoid of substantiality, devoid of characteristics,
Likewise, the person who protects the Dharma
Will know all things to be of one taste.

‘Just as the rays of the sun spreading far
Will dispel the darkness of the world,
So, too, will the person who protects the Dharma
Constantly bring happiness to the world.’

4. *Dharmas to Abide in and to Practice*

Questions of Vajragarbha

From among the entourage, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Vajragarbha stood up, bowed his head to the feet of the Bhagavān, folded his upper robe, placed his hands together, and with head bowed, spoke these verses:

Those who, by degenerating their ethics,
Have thrown away all excellent qualities,
Are not vessels worthy of the āryas,
Are not your spiritual sons, you have said.

They have abandoned the ways of the practitioner
And are like dust, not resplendent in your entourage.
Those who have been tainted by the three stains,
Having thrown away the path and the cessation,
Are not to receive any special offerings.

You do not allow them to partake in
Even a part of the wealth dedicated to
The saṅgha of the four quarters.

Those who degenerate just one of the four root ethics
Are not to be included in the monastic entourage,
For they are like the taste of the ocean.

Why then here, do you urge that,
Motivated by compassion, there should be
No punishment for bhikṣus of bad deeds,
And that again, we should make offerings to them?²³

Also, with compassion they should abandon the bad mind,
 And if they listen to the teachings with devotion,
 They will amass merit and wisdom.

You of great compassion, who with clairvoyance protects
 the world,
 Have said in other sūtras to have faith in the Great Vehicle—
 The profound and subtle path to perfect enlightenment—
 And to abandon the liberation taught by the two vehicles.

Why then here, do you teach the three vehicles,
 Urging all to listen to them and make offerings to them?
 The powers, forces, and the fruits of virtuous practice for
 enlightenment
 Are found in this sūtra, but are not taught in others.

Here, you teach that all three vehicles will enter
 The incomparable path of the āryas with its eight branches;
 And if they wish for liberation, with perseverance,
 Each, according to that wish, will gain enlightenment.

Leader of all living beings, you have presented these points.
 If these past and present teachings are taught without
 contradiction,
 The entire entourage of gods, humans, and bodhisattvas
 Will understand the truth and take joy in liberation.

By teaching the Great Vehicle, to what does it bring benefit?
 By teaching the Great Vehicle, to what does it bring harm?
 The Śrāvaka Vehicle is taught by ten aspects of liberation.
 By listening, what does it benefit, what does it harm?

Having listened to this Dharma, how will one rise?
 Having listened to this Dharma, by what will one rise and fall?
 Made weary by the faults of all compounded phenomena,
 How will the ocean of old age and death soon dry up?

Those who day and night endeavor in virtue,
 In what great state will they abide?
 By what vehicle will they journey
 To be free of the four wide and deep rivers?

Savior of the world, please differentiate these,
 And protect us all.

Then, the Bhagavān spoke to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Vajragarbha, “Excellent! Excellent! Son of the family, for the sake of the happiness and benefit of countless living beings, for the sake of the great purposes of gods, humans, demi-gods, and so on, you raise these very profound points with the Tathāgata. Excellent! Listen well and keep this in your mind. I will differentiate these and explain them.”

The bodhisattva mahāsattva Vajragarbha listened to the Bhagavān.

Ten Activities Not to Practice

“Son of the family, there are ten types of person who will circle in saṃsāra and find it hard to gain a human form. Who are these ten? It is like this. Those not growing roots of virtue; those not performing meritorious acts; those who take a thoroughly afflicted rebirth; those who follow bad companions; those who have no fear of the sufferings of the next life; those who possess unbounded attachment, hatred, and ignorance; those who have a crazed and disturbed mind; and those who follow those with wrong views.

“Through ten activities not to abide in and not to practice, the root of ethics will be destroyed, causing descent into the lower realms. What are these ten? It is like this. 1) For some who are ordained into my teachings, their conduct has degenerated, but their belief has not degenerated. 2) For some, their belief has degenerated, but their conduct has not. 3) For some, both belief and conduct have degenerated. 4) For some, ethics have

degenerated, but their view has not. 5) For some, their view has degenerated, but their ethics have not. 6) For some, both their ethics and view have degenerated. 7) For some, their conduct, belief, ethics, and view have not degenerated, but they themselves have come under the power of bad friends and commit those activities not to abide in and not to be practiced. 8) Some are under the power of reliance upon a teacher, but being of a foolish nature, like stupid sheep, they do not discriminate between specific actions. They hear the teacher teach the virtuous and nonvirtuous Dharmas, but they do not understand them, do not retain them, and do not know them. Because of this, they commit activities not to abide in and not to be practiced. 9) Not wearied by wealth, gems, and provisions, they search for them everywhere, by which cause their minds become disturbed, and they become tormented by the many illnesses of being intoxicated with compounded phenomena. 10) They rely upon worldly deities, perform mantras, and so on. In this way, they perform activities not to abide in and not to be practiced. In this way, by these activities not to abide in and not to be practiced, the ethical roots in sentient beings degenerate, and they are evidently not fit to become āryas. With their ethics degenerated, they fall to the lower realms.

“Son of the family, those beings whose conduct has degenerated, but their belief has not, will commit an activity not to abide in and not to be practiced, and thereby degenerate one of the four root ethical precepts. However, if they become afraid, filled with restraint, and ashamed, and from then on, do not commit such bad activities again, and if they abandon bad deeds, the Tathāgata, in order to help them, declares them to be ‘practitioners who uproot the path.’ Why is this? Although they have committed such bad deeds, they at once declare and confess them; and if they are remorseful, with shame and restraint, then by confessing, their bad deeds are nullified; and from then on, the continuity of such deeds is ended.

“Such a being is not included in any of the activities and rituals of the monastic practitioners, is one who should be expelled, and has no authority to use the provisions of the monastic practitioners. However, they are suitable vessels for the Dharma of the three vehicles. Therefore, from compassion, sometimes I teach them the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, sometimes I teach them the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and sometimes I teach them the Dharma of the peerless vehicle. In this way, the bad deeds they have committed will be dispelled by the power of prayer, and by the power of the teacher in two or three lives. Some will gain the fruits of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, some will gain the fruits of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and some will comprehend the meanings of the vast and peerless vehicle. As has been described, the same should be known for those whose ethics have degenerated, but not their view.

“In order to benefit those beings whose belief has degenerated, but whose conduct has not, the Tathāgata teaches the accomplishment of the four pure states of Brahmā. Such persons are a fit vessel for the Śrāvaka Vehicle and for the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. Those beings whose belief and conduct have degenerated are not fit vessels for the Dharma of any of the vehicles. However, in order to benefit them, the Tathāgata teaches and praises the practice of giving. Those beings whose view has degenerated, but whose ethics have not, are not fit vessels for the Dharma of any of the vehicles. However, in order to benefit them, the Tathāgata teaches them the Dharma of dependent origination. They leave behind the non-virtue of wrong views, and I ensure that they will gain the insights of a śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha in this body or in another birth. Those beings in whom both view and ethics have degenerated are not suitable vessels for the Dharma of the āryas. However, in order to benefit them, the Tathāgata teaches and praises the practice of giving. In order to benefit those beings whose conduct, belief, and ethics have not degenerated, but who

have fallen under the sway of and rely upon bad teachers, the Tathāgata teaches and praises the paths of the ten virtues.

“In order to benefit those beings who rely upon a teacher, but being of foolish and bad nature, are stupid like sheep, not discriminating between the characteristics of good and bad actions, the Tathāgata teaches the benefits of becoming acquainted with recitation. There are those beings who are persecuted by the various sicknesses of desire, and are intoxicated with views towards various phenomena. To help them so that they may search for freedom, the Tathāgata teaches them the four truths of the āryas, the vehicle of the śrāvakas, which will lift them out of saṃsāra. To those with nihilistic views, he teaches and praises the Dharma of dependent origination. To those with views of permanence, he teaches impermanence and the moving on from death to another birth, which, like the potter’s wheel, circles unceasingly.

“Son of the family, all that the Tathāgata has taught, whether by way of names, signs, letters, words, or sounds is not without result, not without meaning. There is nothing that is not taught for the complete ripening of sentient beings. Therefore, to disparage and criticize the Dharma that the Tathāgata has taught is to commit the bad deed of destroying the eye of the perfect Dharma for all sentient beings, thereby incurring the immeasurable misdeed that is beyond the deeds of immediate repercussion or those similar to deeds of immediate repercussion.

“You should know that to criticize and disparage, cause obstruction and hindrance to, or commit the act of concealing even one verse of the sacred Dharma that I have taught for the benefit and happiness of living beings—whether by way of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, by way of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, or by way of the Great Vehicle—is to disparage the sacred Dharma, is to destroy the eightfold path of the āryas, and is to weaken the eye of the sacred Dharma of all sentient beings. Therefore, they commit meaningless deeds in that way, and cause others to commit meaningless deeds. Moreover, they rely upon immodest and shameless

saṅgha, and criticize and disparage the sacred Dharma of the Tathāgata.”

Four Kinds of Bhikṣus

“Son of the family, furthermore, there are four kinds of bhikṣus. What are they? They are the ‘ultimate bhikṣu,’ the ‘conventional bhikṣu,’ the ‘bhikṣu like a stupid sheep,’ and the ‘shameless and immodest bhikṣu.’

“Who is the ultimate bhikṣu? It is like this. The Bhagavān Buddha; the great bodhisattva bhikṣus possessed of great achievements with control over all phenomena; those of pratyekabuddha enlightenment; the arhat; the non-returner; the once-returner; and the stream-enterer—any of these seven types of person make up the category of ultimate bhikṣu. Also, those who live in houses, who do not shave their heads and faces, who do not wear the three robes, who have not taken all the monastic pratimokṣa ethics, and who do not take part in requesting, ceremonies, purification rituals, and monastic activities—if they possess the dharmas of the āryas and they possess the fruits of those Dharmas—they are also known as ‘ultimate bhikṣus.’ This is the meaning of being an ultimate bhikṣu.

“Who is the conventional bhikṣu? He who shaves his head and face, dons the orange robes, and goes forth to become endowed with the pratimokṣa ethics is a conventional bhikṣu.

“Who is the bhikṣu like a stupid sheep? He is ignorant of whether he has weakened his root vows or not. He is ignorant of whether the fault is heavy or light. Although he incurs various small breaches, he shows no remorse and does not declare them. He does not think about the faults he commits. He pays no heed and has no regard for minor faults. He does not devote himself to wise beings. He does not honor or serve the learned and those of great wisdom from time to time. He does not approach them with devotion and ask them questions. He does not ask, ‘What is

good? What is bad? What is not bad? Why is this good? Why is this wrong?’ Such a person is a bhikṣu like a stupid sheep.

“Who is the shameless and immodest bhikṣu? He is ordained into my doctrine merely for a livelihood, is without shame and modesty, and breaks all the ethics of the pratimokṣa, paying no heed to and having no fear of the suffering of the next life. He is filled with filth like a worm. He behaves like a dog at the sound of a conch. He constantly lies and does not know words of truth. He is in the grip of miserliness, envy, pride, and ignorance, and is far from the three supreme activities. Attracted to gain, honor, and reputation, he delights in the six objects. Distracted by desire, he is drawn to objects of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Such a person is shameless and immodest, and is included among those who ridicule and slander the holy Dharma. This is the shameless and immodest bhikṣu.

“Son of the family, some ultimate bhikṣus are known as ‘practitioners victorious through the ārya path.’ This title refers to those who dwell in the eightfold path of the āryas. As well as saving themselves from the river of afflictions, they save others too. How is this? The Buddha Bhagavān, the pratyekabuddha, and the arhat: these three types of beings have cast far away the branches of saṃsāra and therefore, are victorious through the ārya path. Furthermore, the bodhisattva saṅgha who, without relying upon others, possess the exalted wisdom that sees without hindrance or obstruction all dharmas, and gather all sentient beings in order to bring them happiness and benefit are also practitioners who are victorious through the ārya path.

“Some ultimate bhikṣus and some conventional bhikṣus are known as ‘practitioners who reveal the path.’ Those who possess the ethics of the pratimokṣa, those ordinary beings of pure virtue, up to those of pure worldly views who rely upon instructions of insight and explain and teach the Dharmas of the path of the āryas to others by miraculous display, are the lowest of those practitioners who reveal the path. Those beings who have gained the

fruits of the stream-enterer are the next highest. Those who have gained the results of the once-returner are the third. Those who have achieved the results of the non-returner are the fourth. The bodhisattva mahāsattva saṅgha is the fifth type. Those abiding in the first *bhūmi* up to the tenth, and who occupy their last body in saṃsāra are also known as ‘practitioners who reveal the path.’

“Those possessed of the ethics of the pratimokṣa and are of pure conduct are known as ‘practitioners who live by the path.’ Because they are sustained by the path, they are known as ‘practitioners who live by the path.’ Those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who gather all sentient beings in order to bring them happiness and benefit, and who strive assiduously in the six perfections, are also practitioners who live by the path.

“Therefore, practitioners victorious through the ārya path, practitioners who reveal the path, and practitioners who live by the path are pure fields of merit in the world. Besides those three, practitioners who uproot the path are not pure, but are also included as fields of merit.

“Those beings who rely upon and dwell with shameless and immodest bhikṣus are like corpses within the perfect monastic discipline Dharma that I have taught. They are to be expelled from the great ocean of the pure saṅgha. They are not fit vessels for the Dharma, and so to them I do not say that I am their teacher. Such beings are not my śrāvakas.

“Those shameless bhikṣus who are not fit vessels for the Dharma and yet hold me as their teacher—showing great faith towards my relics and my form and having great faith in my Dharma, saṅgha, and in the ethics of the āryas—hold no wrong views themselves nor cause others to become attached to wrong views. They spread the Dharma taught by me and are to be greatly praised, are not to be criticized or disparaged, and are to be constantly prayed to. As soon as they commit bad deeds, they confess again and again, show remorse, abandon such deeds, and will remove many karmic obstructions. In this way, by the force

of their faith in the Three Jewels and the ethics of the āryas, they are thousands of times greater than those of the ninety-five non-buddhist schools. Although they will not enter the city of nirvāṇa, if even the cakravartin rulers do not disparage them, what need to mention that others should not do so?

“Therefore, the Tathāgata knows the characteristics of the actions and dharmas experienced by all sentient beings, and he says that kings and others should not express contempt or criticism or deliver punishment to those who have faith in my Dharma, shave their heads and faces, and wear the saffron robes. For those who show contempt for, revile, and mete out punishment to those who have been ordained, the ripening results of such heavy actions are as have been described.

“Moreover, those who become ordained into my teachings, moving from home into homelessness; who shave their heads and faces; and wear the saffron robes are cared for with compassion by all the bhagavān buddhas of the past, present, and future. Regardless of conduct, appearance, or robes, they are cared for with compassion by all the bhagavān buddhas of the past, present, and future. Therefore, those who revile and show contempt for the ordained who shave their heads and faces and wear the saffron robes, show contempt for all the buddhas of the past, present, and future. Therefore, because of that, the wise who with their intelligence are afraid of and wearied by suffering, and who wish for the happiness of humans, gods, and nirvāṇa, should not have contempt for and criticize those who have become ordained by going forth from home into homelessness, and who shave their heads and faces and wear the saffron robes.

“Those shameless and immodest bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated, who are not vessels for the ārya Dharma of the three vehicles, and are attached to bad views will say to others who are attracted to bad views, ‘There are no righteous kings, no pure practitioners, no Brahmins, no officials, no merchants, no noble caste, no working caste, no men, and no women.’

“Furthermore, they say, ‘There are no fathers, no mothers, no virtue, no nonvirtue, no ripening of actions, and no attainment of the fruits of the ārya path in the world. Phenomena are not born from causes.’

“They hold form realms to be permanent and not subject to disintegration. They hold formless realms to be permanent and not subject to disintegration. Some hold that the specialized conduct of the non-buddhist tīrthikas will bring a perfect purification.

“Some hold that the Śrāvaka Vehicle alone will achieve perfect purification, and that the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and Great Vehicle will not. They have faith and belief in the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They praise it, disseminate it, and teach it, while the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Great Vehicle they hold in contempt, slander, belittle, obstruct, and will not teach.

“Some hold that the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle alone will achieve perfect purification, and that the Śrāvaka Vehicle and Great Vehicle will not. They have faith and belief in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They praise it, disseminate it, and teach it, while the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Great Vehicle they hold in contempt, slander, belittle, obstruct, and will not teach.

“Some hold that the Great Vehicle alone will achieve perfect purification, and that the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle will not. They have faith and belief in the Great Vehicle, and cause others to have faith in it. They perform devotions to and pay service to the Great Vehicle, while causing others to perform devotions to and pay service to it likewise. They praise and honor it, and cause others to praise and honor it. They compose works on it, and urge others to compose works on it. They read and recite it, and encourage others to read and recite it. They listen to and retain it, and urge others to listen to and retain it. They contemplate and take it into their minds, and urge others to contemplate and take it into their minds. They teach and explain the very profound and highest truths of the Great Vehicle to others, regardless of whether they are fit vessels for the Dharma or not,

while the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Śrāvaka Vehicle they hold in contempt, slander, belittle, obstruct, and will not teach.

“They do not have faith in these vehicles and so cause hindrance to others who have faith in them. They do not perform devotions to these vehicles and so cause hindrance to others who perform devotions to them. They do not praise these vehicles and so cause hindrances to others who praise them. They do not compose works on these vehicles and so create hindrances to others who compose works on them. They do not read, recite, listen to, retain, contemplate, and take into mind these vehicles and so cause hindrances to others engaged in reading, reciting, listening to, retaining, contemplating, and taking into mind these vehicles.

“Some maintain that it is by giving alone that one will achieve perfect purification, and not by ethics, patience, and so on, up to wisdom. Some maintain that it is by ethics alone that one will achieve perfect purification, and not by giving, patience, and so on, up to wisdom. Some maintain that it is by patience alone that one will achieve perfect purification, and not by giving, ethics, and so on, up to wisdom. Some maintain that it is by joyful effort alone that one will achieve perfect purification, and not by giving, ethics, and so on, up to wisdom. Some maintain that it is by concentration alone that one will achieve perfect purification, and not by giving, ethics, and so on, up to wisdom. Some maintain that it is by wisdom alone that one will achieve perfect purification, and not by giving, ethics, and so on, up to wisdom.

“Some maintain that it is by achieving skills and knowledge in various worldly crafts that one will achieve perfect purification. Some assert that it is by the many and varied specialized behaviors of jumping off cliffs, jumping into fires, fasting, and so on that one will achieve perfect purification, and these they teach.

“Son of the family, in this way, those bhikṣus whose ethics have degenerated, who commit bad deeds, and who are not vessels for the Dharma will deceive those who are pure vessels

for the perfect Dharma and will bring many into wrong views. By the force of their wrong and bad views, they will do damage to those righteous kings, down to those pure beings of merchant caste, laboring caste, and men and women, and cause them to weaken their ethics, learning, giving, and wisdom. They transform all into barbaric kings and so on, and therefore, they are not suitable vessels for the Dharma. Those bhikṣus whose ethics have weakened, and those barbaric kings and so on, together with their teachers and students, have severed their roots of virtue and will fall to the Hell of No Respite.

“Son of the family, just as everyone is repulsed by a rotting and putrid corpse, and as soon as they smell it, are almost overcome or are defiled, likewise, those righteous kings, down to those of the virtuous working caste—should they become close to, associate with, stay with, or work with those who have weakened their ethics, commit bad deeds, and become unfit vessels for Dharma—are immediately tainted with wrong views. Son of the family, likewise, for those righteous kings, down to those of the virtuous working caste, their ethics, learning, giving, and wisdom will all degenerate, and they will become barbarous. Together with their teachers and disciples, they will sever all roots of virtue and will fall to the Hell of No Respite.

“Son of the family, look at these countless living beings, such as those of the royal caste of kings and so forth. By relying upon those bhikṣus who degenerate their ethics, they commit wrongdoing and have become unfit vessels for the Dharma. They will suffer from the weakening of all their virtuous Dharmas, down to being reborn into the realms of hell. Therefore, those who seek the happiness of birth in the higher realms, up to that of nirvāṇa should serve, make offerings to, and pay homage to those practitioners victorious through the path, and request to listen to the sūtras of the three vehicles. Moreover, they should seek out practitioners who reveal the path and practitioners who live by the path. If practitioners who abide in those three paths are

not present, they should seek out practitioners who uproot the path. Although the latter have degenerated their ethics, they are possessed of the right view, belief, and excellent conduct; and so it is right to serve them, make offerings to them, and ask them the points of the three vehicles. However, do not serve and make offerings to those whose conduct, views, and belief have completely degenerated.

“There are those whose ethics have degenerated, but who do not possess wrong views. Because they have belief, good conduct, and views, you should make requests to them and listen to their teachings on the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the Dharma of the Great Vehicle wherever they go, and not disparage or criticize them.”

Having Respect for All Three Vehicles

“Though you have faith in, make prayers to, make efforts in, and train in one of the three vehicles, you should not disparage or criticize the others. As for those who disparage or criticize just a single verse from one of the three vehicles, do not pay homage to them, do not serve them, do not associate with them, do not dwell with them, and have no accord with them. If someone pays them homage, relies upon them, associates with them, dwells with them, or works with them, without doubt, he will fall to the hells.

“Therefore, son of the family, those who abide in one of the three vehicles, and who have aspiration for passing beyond suffering, and aspiration for happiness, and who are wearied by suffering, should have complete faith in and reverence for the sacred Dharma taught by the Tathāgata, which is taught in dependence upon the Śrāvaka Vehicle, in dependence upon the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and in dependence upon the Great Vehicle. They should not slander it, disparage it, obstruct it, or hinder it, even down to obstructing a single verse. You should

strive constantly to understand it by the firm pledge to read, recite, and listen to it with devotion. As for those who slander and disparage a single verse from one of the three vehicles, do not associate with them, do not pay homage to them, and do not listen to their dharma for even a single day.

“Someone who relies upon, and asks questions of those who slander and disparage one of the three vehicles, or who slander and disparage all of the three vehicles, will fall to the Hell of No Respite, where they will suffer greatly and from where it will be difficult to escape, by such an act. Why is this?

“Son of the family, at times in the past, when I was engaged in the deeds of the bodhisattva and persevering in the search for the peerless wisdom, sometimes, with desire for the sacred Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, with desire for just one verse, I sacrificed my hands, legs, flesh, blood, skin, bones, head, eyes, marrow, and brain. Sometimes, with desire for the sacred Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, with desire for just one verse, I sacrificed my hands, legs, flesh, blood, skin, bones, head, eyes, marrow, and brain. Sometimes, with desire for the sacred Dharma of the Great Vehicle, with desire for just one verse, I sacrificed my hands, legs, flesh, blood, skin, bones, head, eyes, marrow, and brain. In this way, through such great hardship, if I found just a single verse from the three vehicles, I was full of joy. I retained it and memorized it with devotion, putting into practice exactly what it said. Without ever giving up even a little, I practiced all such austerities for immeasurable eons, and by completing them from beginning to end, I gained the fruit of peerless wisdom.

“Furthermore, for the sake of the happiness and well-being of all sentient beings, I categorized and explained the sacred Dharma. Therefore, do not disparage or slander it. Do not hinder it or obstruct it. Do not conceal even a single verse of it. With constant devotion, make the firm pledge to read, recite, and listen to it.

“Son of the family, in this way, the bhagavān buddhas of the past, future, and present, as many in number as the grains of sand

in the Ganges valley, speak with one voice on the sacred Dharmas of the three vehicles; and by their blessings, all are blessed. In order to deliver and free all sentient beings from the immense sufferings of saṃsāra, and to preserve the lineage of the Three Jewels, these vehicles are to be held. Therefore, everyone should have faith in and show reverence for all the sacred Dharmas of the three vehicles, and not disparage them, cause hindrance to them, or bring obstruction to them. One who destroys just a verse from the sacred Dharmas of the three vehicles will definitely fall to the Hell of No Respite.

“Son of the family, furthermore, at a time in the future, in this buddha land, there will be those of barbaric royal caste, of barbaric Brahmin caste, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric traders, those of barbaric merchant caste, and barbaric men and women of the laboring caste, who live by deceit and cunning; who are stupid and confused, and yet arrogant in their little wisdom; who by nature are angry and short-tempered; who do not look with fear on the sufferings of the next life; who take joy in the ten nonvirtues, from killing up to holding wrong views; who take joy in being miserly, envious, of great attachment, desire, and so on; who turn their backs on virtuous teachers and turn to non-virtuous teachers; and who are not fit vessels for the ārya Dharma of the three vehicles. When they hear a little of the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, they disparage, slander, show contempt for, hinder, and obstruct the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Dharma of the Great Vehicle, which are accepted by all the buddhas, thereby preventing their propagation.

“Some hear a little of the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and disparage, slander, show contempt for, hinder, and obstruct the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Dharma of the Great Vehicle, which are taken hold of by all the buddhas, thereby preventing their propagation.

“Some hear a little of the Dharma of the Great Vehicle, and disparage, slander, show contempt for, hinder, and obstruct the

Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, which are taken hold of by all the buddhas, thereby preventing their propagation. For profit and fame, they declare, ‘I am a practitioner of the Great Vehicle. I am a friend of the Great Vehicle. I have a liking for listening to, retaining, and memorizing only the Great Vehicle. I have no liking for the Dharmas of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha Vehicles, and I have no wish to rely upon these two vehicles.’ Thus, by falsely proclaiming that they are practitioners of the Great Vehicle, they are clasped by ignorance, ruled by pride, and therefore disparage, slander, show contempt for, hinder, and obstruct the perfect Dharma of the three vehicles, thereby preventing their propagation. They also disparage and slander the disciples of the three vehicles, and by showing contempt, they weaken them.

“Son of the family, all the bhagavān buddhas of the past, present, and future, and all the bodhisattva mahāsattvas, in order to bring happiness and welfare to all sentient beings, with the force of their great compassion, thoroughly embrace two things. What are they? In order to preserve the unbroken lineage of the Three Jewels, they go forth into homelessness, shave their heads and faces, and don the saffron robes. Secondly, they embrace the sacred Dharmas of the four truths of the āryas and so on that arise from the three vehicles. These two phenomena are only embraced by the bhagavān buddhas and the bodhisattva mahāsattvas, and not by the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and so on. Moreover, they are not embraced by the millions and millions of Brahmās, or by Śakra, ruler of the gods, or by the cakravartin kings who rule the four continents.

“At a time in the future, in this buddha land, those of the barbaric royal caste will seek to argue and find fault with those who are ordained into my doctrine, shave their heads and faces, and don the saffron robes. They will abuse them, ridicule them, disparage them, humiliate them, beat them, whip them, cast them into prison, seize their means of livelihood, take away their robes

and turn them into householders, forcing them to do the work of householders. They will forcibly make use of them, punish them, expel them, deprive them of food and drink, and deprive them of their lives.

“These of the royal barbaric caste, being stupid and confused, will be seized by pride and will disparage, humiliate, and severely punish those disciples held by the buddhas and bodhisattvas with the power of compassion. Moreover, they will wrongly criticize and slander the very profound Dharma held by all the buddhas and bodhisattvas with the force of compassion. They will obstruct and hinder the sacred Dharma of the three vehicles held by the buddhas of the three times and all the bodhisattvas.

“Those of the barbaric royal caste, down to those of the barbaric merchant caste and the barbaric men and women of the laboring caste, being stupid and confused, and seized by pride, will claim to be practitioners of the Great Vehicle. If they are not suitable vessels for the vehicles of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, what need is there to say that they are not fit vessels for the peerless Great Vehicle? Out of desire for profit, fame, homage, and offerings, they will deceive the foolish and confused world, proclaiming that they are Great Vehicle practitioners, and will criticize and slander the sacred Dharma of the other two vehicles of the Tathāgata.

“Such foolish and confused people live by way of deceit and cunning. They are in the grasp of pride and, motivated by miserliness, envy, and desire, will damage and quickly destroy the spiritual eyes of my Dharma. They commit the bad deed of transgressing the pledges of all the bhagavān buddhas of the three times. They commit the bad deed of transgressing the pledges of all the bodhisattvas of the three times. They commit the bad deed of transgressing the pledges of all the śrāvakas of the three times. After a short time, the limbs of their bodies will be severed and, inwardly, they will be persecuted by great ills.

“Those of the barbaric royal caste, down to those of the barbaric merchant caste and the barbaric men and women of the laboring caste, by committing such bad deeds and holding wrong views, will sever all roots of virtue. Therefore, even if they indulge in many acts of giving, at a later time in the future they will be reborn as ghosts and animals, and never enjoy the happiness of wealth. If they are not able to generate even a few roots of virtue to be reborn into the form and formless realms, what need is there to say that they will not be able to generate the seeds of the roots of virtue of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, the Great Vehicle, or the wisdom of omniscience?

“Furthermore, their tongues will be continually afflicted by disease, and they will be struck dumb and be unable to speak for many days. They will experience the sufferings of terrible illness and fevers, and when they die, they will fall to the Hell of No Respite.

“Therefore, the Tathāgata, in order to bring long-lasting happiness to those of the virtuous royal caste, down to those of the virtuous merchant caste and virtuous men and women of the laboring caste, has said again and again, ‘Do not cause harm to, abuse, or ridicule those who have shaved their heads and faces, donned the saffron robes, and become ordained into my doctrine. Do not criticize, slander, disparage, obstruct, or hinder the sacred Dharma of the three vehicles that I have taught.’

“For those who greatly transgress my doctrine, the ripening results will be as have been expounded. Why is that? Those who go for refuge to my doctrine, who shave their heads and faces, and who wear the saffron robes—thereby possessing the appearance of the ordained—will be completely held with the blessing of great compassion by the bhagavān buddhas of the past, present, and future, and by all the bodhisattvas. Those who shave their heads and faces, wear the saffron robes, and possess the conduct of the ordained are the victory standards of the liberation of the āryas. They are the victory standards of the taste of Dharma

enjoyed by all śrāvakas who gain liberation. They are the victory standards of the taste of Dharma enjoyed by all those of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle who gain liberation. They are the victory standards of the taste of Dharma enjoyed by all those of the Great Vehicle who gain liberation. They are the sacred Dharma of the three vehicles spoken by the Tathāgata. They are completely held by the blessings of the great compassion of the bhagavān buddhas of the three times, and all the bodhisattvas. They are the domain of the liberation of the āryas. They are the domain of the taste of Dharma enjoyed by all those of the Śrāvaka Vehicle who gain liberation. They are the domain of the taste of Dharma enjoyed by all those of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle who gain liberation. They are the domain of the taste of Dharma enjoyed by all those of the Great Vehicle who gain liberation.

“Son of the family, therefore, those who seek liberation should serve, make offerings to, and honor those who go for refuge to my doctrine, who shave their heads and faces, and who wear the saffron robes and are ordained. They should think, ‘I have faith in the vehicle of the śrāvakas. If I listen to and retain it, I will encourage others to listen to and retain it. If I read and recite it, I will encourage others to read and recite it. If I inquire about the scriptures, I will encourage others to inquire about the scriptures. If I practice giving, I will encourage others to practice giving. If I teach and explain it, I will encourage others to teach and explain it, to take it to mind, to practice it, and to propagate it.’

“They should think, ‘Just as I have faith and trust in the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, if I listen to and retain it, I will encourage others to listen to and retain it. If I read and recite it, I will encourage others to read and recite it. If I inquire about the scriptures, I will encourage others to inquire about the scriptures. If I practice giving, I will encourage others to practice giving. If I teach and explain it, I will encourage others to teach and explain it, to take it to mind, to practice it, and to propagate it.’

“They should think, ‘I have faith and trust in the Great Vehicle. If I listen to and retain it, I will encourage others to listen to and retain it. If I read and recite it, I will encourage others to read and recite it. If I inquire about the scriptures, I will encourage others to inquire about the scriptures. If I practice giving, I will encourage others to practice giving. If I teach and explain it, I will encourage others to teach and explain it, to take it to mind, to practice it, and to propagate it. If someone is not a suitable vessel, I will not listen and encourage others not to listen and so on as described previously.’

“Cast bad deeds far away. Cast away the false friend; devote yourself to a virtuous teacher. Apply yourself with perseverance to the six perfections. Confess and have remorse again and again for nonvirtuous deeds. Make genuine prayers for whatever you have faith in. Whosoever follows this, will be a fit vessel for the Śrāvaka Vehicle, will not turn away from the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not turn away from the Great Vehicle in this very life.

“Therefore, train and make efforts in all three vehicles. Do not claim with great pride to be a practitioner of the Great Vehicle and then criticize and disparage the vehicle of the śrāvakas, and the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas.

“Previously, when talking about being solely committed to becoming a suitable vessel for the Great Vehicle and saying ‘I will achieve the goal by meditating solely on the Great Vehicle’ does not contradict with what has been said here.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

In the presence of this great congregation,
Vajragarbha asked of me, ‘Why is it that
Offerings are to be made to those bhikṣus
Whose ethics have degenerated?’

Of those whose qualities have weakened,
Who are foolish and hold to wrong views,
Who are not suitable vessels, who have uprooted the path—
I do not allow the humiliation and punishment.

When they hear, like excellent medicine,
The teachings on the perfect liberations
Of the sacred Dharma of the three vehicles,
They will find the peace of nirvāṇa.

He asks, ‘Why in other sūtras is it taught
That by the Great Vehicle alone liberation is found
And that the other two are to be abandoned,
Yet here, all three vehicles are explained?’

‘With great compassion for all living beings,
You eradicate all deeds done with wrong views.
For our happiness and well-being, I request
That you liberate us and dispel all doubt.’

For the benefit of the royal caste of kings,
And the merchants down to the working caste,
I do not allow them to harm the bhikṣus,
For such would be a bad deed.

Those with shaven heads and saffron robes
Are standard bearers of the Dharma of the Buddha,
Are the eyes of the path to freedom,
And are blessed by all the buddhas.

Even though their conduct is degenerate,
They have not abandoned their liberation.
By eradicating the bad deeds of wrong views,
They will quickly achieve nirvāṇa.

Just as medicine, though unpleasant,
Will be of benefit in curing all disease,

So the one whose conduct is degenerate
Will dispel the sufferings of others.

Such bhikṣus are forbidden to take part in
Requesting ceremonies and purification rituals.
Teaching the Dharma to others
Is a great source of merit for both.

By having faith and turning to the Three Jewels,
And by regarding me as the great teacher,
Many bad deeds will be purified.
That is far superior to being
Surrounded by many tīrthikas.

Just as those terrified merchants
Lost in the land of rakṣas
Escaped unharmed from the ocean
By clinging to a small tuft of the horse's mane,²⁴

Similarly, those of degenerate ethics,
If they eradicate nonvirtuous and wrong views,
Just by the cause of a single instance of faith,
Will be delivered from the rakṣas of affliction.

If you do not harm those of degenerate ethics
Who guard the victory standard of liberation,
Who have been blessed by many buddhas,
You will avoid a heavy misdeed.

For those who have faith in the gathering of merit,
Who have great liking for the perfect liberation,
Who guard equally those suitable or unsuitable vessels,
Liberation will not be difficult.

Those stupid and in the grasp of pride,
Claiming to be Great Vehicle practitioners,
Have no power to understand.

Being ignorant of the two vehicles,
 How can they possibly know the Great Vehicle?
 When the eyes are weak, color cannot be seen.
 Likewise, when faith is weak or nonexistent,
 One cannot know the Great Vehicle.

If you cannot drink even a little water,
 How could you possibly suck up an ocean?
 If you cannot meditate on the two vehicles,
 How can you train in the Great Vehicle?

If you have faith in the Dharma of the two vehicles,
 You will have faith in the Great Vehicle.
 Without faith in the Great Vehicle,
 Speaking of it is just meaningless.

Those inwardly possessing the nihilist view
 And claiming to be a Great Vehicle practitioner
 Will not guard against the three nonvirtues²⁵
 And will ruin and destroy my sacred teachings.

Such people, when they pass from this life,
 Will without doubt fall to the Hell of No Respite.
 Therefore, I teach those of sound faculties,
 But unworthy vessels I do not.

Those devoid of love and kindness, filled with pride,
 Who are angry and harsh, of inferior faculties,
 Are those of nihilistic views—
 And this the wise should know.

They are unworthy vessels for the Śrāvaka Vehicle,
 For the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and for the Great Vehicle.
 They slander and disparage all the buddhas
 And are definitely bound for the Hell of No Respite.

Those who prefer company, who guard their ethics,
 Who rely upon a master, and are frightened of suffering—
 These the wise should know are of the Śrāvaka Vehicle.

Those who delight in giving,
 Who contemplate arising and cessation,
 And prefer to dwell in isolated places—
 These the wise should know to be of the Pratyekabuddha
 Vehicle.

Those who possess every root of virtue
 And who, with minds of love and compassion,
 constantly delight in bringing benefit to others
 Are those of the Great Vehicle.

Those who would give their lives away
 In order to guard their ethics,
 Who do not harm sentient beings,
 And who strive in the dharmas of emptiness—
 Know them to be of the Great Vehicle.

Those who are able to bear all dharmas,
 Whose words are kind and who are without avarice,
 Who constantly delight and rejoice in the Dharma—
 They too are of the Great Vehicle.

Those who have equal regard for
 And work to benefit those who may be worthy or
 unworthy vessels,
 And who are not tainted by worldly dharmas—
 Know them too to be of the Great Vehicle.

Therefore, those who are wise and intelligent:
 Develop faith for all three vehicles,
 Do no harm to the saṅgha,
 And soon you will gain peerless enlightenment.

The Ten Wheels of the Śrāvakas

“Son of the family, furthermore, those virtuous members of the royal caste, virtuous Brahmins, virtuous ministers, virtuous householders, virtuous traders, virtuous mendicants, virtuous members of the merchant caste, and virtuous men and women of the working caste, if they are possessed of ten wheels to abide in and practice, then in this body of this life they will not turn from nor weaken the family of the vehicle of the śrāvakas. In this very life, they will become worthy vessels for the ārya Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and will not become vessels of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Great Vehicle.

“What are these ten? These are: 1) by way of a mind of pure faith, having conviction in the existence of the fruits of virtuous and nonvirtuous deeds; 2) by possessing modesty and conscientiousness, abandoning completely all false friends and wrong views; 3) abiding well in the vows, from completely abandoning killing, down to drinking thoughtlessly; 4) abiding in a mind of love, and abandoning anger and resentment; 5) abiding in a mind of compassion, and liberating all wretched sentient beings; 6) abiding in a mind of joy, and abandoning the four nonvirtues of speech; 7) abiding in equanimity, and abandoning completely desire, miserliness, and envy; 8) moving towards the truth and abandoning all deceptive good and bad omens, and not relying upon the fallacious tīrthikas; 9) being possessed of great perseverance, striving in every virtuous Dharma; and 10) constantly delighting in monastic life, and never tiring of searching for the meanings of the Dharma.

“Son of the family, if those virtuous members of the royal caste, down to the virtuous members of the merchant caste and the virtuous men and women of the laboring caste possess these ten wheels, then in this very body, they will not turn away from nor weaken the family of the vehicle of the śrāvakas. In this very life, they will actualize the ārya Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle,

become worthy vessels of the ārya Dharma of the śrāvakas, and will not become vessels of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Great Vehicle.

“From this you should know that these apply to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and the Great Vehicle. Son of the family, in this way, these ten wheels to abide in and practice are common to all the śrāvakas, the pratyekabuddhas, the bodhisattvas, and bhagavān buddhas.”

The Ten Wheels of the Pratyekabuddhas

“Son of the family, moreover, there are ten wheels to abide in and practice that are not common to the śrāvakas, but are common to the pratyekabuddhas, the bodhisattvas, and the bhagavān buddhas. If those virtuous members of the royal caste, down to the virtuous members of the merchant caste and the virtuous men and women of the laboring caste possess these ten wheels to abide in and practice, then in their very body, they will not weaken or turn away from the family of the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas. In this very life, they will come to know the ārya Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and become worthy vessels for the ārya Dharma of the pratyekabuddhas.

“What are these ten? They are: 1) possessing pure behavior in acts of body, speech, and mind; 2) possessing modesty and conscientiousness, being made despondent by their own bodies; 3) having great fear for the five appropriated aggregates; 4) looking at the great difficulty of transcending the attachment to saṃsāra; 5) constantly delighting in isolated places and eschewing company; 6) delighting in remote hermitages, and not speaking of the faults of others; 7) binding the senses and engaging in samādhi with constant tranquil minds; 8) being wise in dependent origination, thinking deeply about cause and effect; 9) constantly delighting in meditative equipoise on the concentrations; and 10) gaining complete cessation of the all-arising dharmas.²⁶

“Son of the family, should those virtuous members of the royal caste, down to the virtuous members of the merchant caste, and the virtuous men and women of the laboring caste possess these ten wheels to abide in and practice, then in their very body, they will not weaken or turn away from the family of the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas. In this very life, they will actualize the ārya Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and become worthy vessels for the ārya Dharma of the pratyekabuddhas.

“Son of the family, these are known as ‘the wheels to abide in and practice for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.’ If the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas abide in these wheels, then quickly they will cross the ocean of the three worlds and arrive at the great city of nirvāṇa.”

Suitability for the Great Vehicle

“Son of the family, what is the meaning of these words, ‘wheels to abide in and practice’? ‘Abiding’ means accompanied by holding; accompanied by abiding in one’s own domain; accompanied by gathering; and accompanied by connecting. ‘Practice’ refers to the aggregates, the basic constituents, the sensory sources, and the practices to which to connect. ‘Wheel’ means trained and pledged. For example, in the title ‘kings who rule by the wheel,’²⁷ ‘wheel’ refers primarily to this wheel or to the chariot wheel.

“In this way, all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas rely upon these wheels, and seek out nirvāṇa. Therefore, these two are not worthy vessels for the Great Vehicle. Why is that? They rely upon inferior and weaker practices; and therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle. They hold to practices of their own aggregates, and are despondent and afraid. They seek complete freedom only from their suffering, and do not strive for the freedom of all living beings. Therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle. They abide in the practices of their own basic constituents, and are despondent and afraid. They seek complete freedom from their suffering and do not strive for the freedom of all living beings.

Therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle. They gather the practices of their own sensory sources, and are despondent and afraid. They seek complete freedom from their suffering and do not strive for the freedom of all living beings. Therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle.

“They abide by connecting to practices connected to the above. They abide by supports and gather their supports. They do not like to gather all sentient beings. They have no love or compassion. That is their connection; and therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle.²⁸ Though they see much suffering in others, they dismiss it, and are not made despondent by it. They seek only freedom from their suffering; and therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle.

“They cut off the head of their own afflictions, and have no delight in cutting off the head of the afflictions of all other sentient beings. Therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle. They will not arrive at enlightenment with the wheel of the Great Vehicle; and therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle. They will not arrive at enlightenment with the wheel of great light; and therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle. They like to travel alone to the city of nirvāṇa and work toward that. Therefore, they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle.

“Son of the family, if a sentient being who does not work for, and does not make efforts in the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, whose faculties are not fully ripened, whose faculties are weak, and who is of little perseverance should be taught the sacred Dharma of the profound Great Vehicle, both teacher and disciple incur a great misdeed, which insults all the buddhas. Why is this?

“If a sentient being who does not work for, and does not make efforts in the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, whose faculties are not fully ripened, whose faculties are weak, and who is of little perseverance should listen to the sacred Dharma of the profound Great Vehicle, that sentient being,

stupid and confused, will claim that they have understood, but will hold a nihilistic view and wrong perception. They will say that there are no causes. They will hold that there are no results of karmic actions, and will therefore assert that virtuous and non-virtuous deeds do not exist. They speak untruths about the Great Vehicle, and disparage my sacred Dharma. That which is non-Dharma, they explain as being Dharma. Those who are non-practitioners, they explain as being practitioners. Those who are perfect practitioners, they explain as not being perfect practitioners. That which is non-monastic discipline, they explain as being monastic discipline. That which is pure monastic discipline, they explain as not being pure monastic discipline.

“Being stupid and confused, they will be in the grasp of pride, and devote themselves completely to envy and miserliness. They will praise and protect the Great Vehicle Dharma and propagate it, but they disparage and criticize the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and make no attempt to propagate them. Even though they may rely upon the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the peerless, perfect vehicle, and go forth from home into homelessness to become ordained, they do not know what it is to be a bhikṣu. They do not know the causes for accumulating all virtuous dharmas. Therefore, they will humiliate, and complain about my disciples by various means, whether they are worthy vessels for the Dharma or not; whether they make efforts in training or not; whether they have gained the fruits of fulfillment or not; and whether they are virtuous beings who guard their ethics, or who have weakened their ethics, or who have no ethics. They cause them harm, take away their robes and begging bowls, refuse to provide them with provisions for living, and seize them and bind them.

“In this way, those who hold the view of the nonexistence of causes and their effects, and who propound the extreme of nihilism may live among humans, but are in truth, demons. In the future, for countless great eons, they will find it difficult to gain a

human form. Experiencing the limitless sufferings of hell is easy, but dwelling among humans with a nihilistic view is not. Before long, the limbs of those foolish beings will be cut to pieces. Their tongues will be tied and they will be unable to speak for many days, and they will experience unending illness and fever. When they pass from this life, without doubt, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite, and circle the lower realms like a wheel, experiencing great suffering with no relief. They will find it difficult to gain a human form for thousands of eons. Even if after countless eons have passed, they should find a human form, they will be born into a world of the five troubles; where there has been no buddha; blind; deaf; stupid; with no tongue; beset by many illnesses; short in stature; ugly; unattractive; with unwise speech; with unpleasant words; with a mind constantly crazed; and ignorant. Born into an impoverished family, they will be deprived. They will not meet a virtuous teacher, but will follow a bad teacher and delight in bad deeds. They will become attached to wrong views, and take pleasure in committing bad deeds of immediate repercussion, and so again they will be reborn into the Hell of No Respite, where they will find it difficult to escape the lower realms.

“In this way, the foolish and confused who propound nihilism and nothingness disparage my sacred Dharma and strive to punish my disciples—be they those who guard their ethics, weaken their ethics, or have no ethics—and will deprive them of the chance to joyfully engage in the practice of virtue. Because of this, they will fall to the lower realms for many thousands of eons with no relief.

“In this way, the ripening of the bad deeds of those beings has come about by listening to, and making efforts in the sacred Dharma of the very profound Great Vehicle, and making no efforts to listen to the Dharma of the vehicles of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas. Therefore, if it is difficult for those foolish and confused beings who propound the views of nihilism to gain even the body of the lowest of humans, what need is there to mention that they will not become vessels for the ārya Dharma? If they do

not gain the nirvāṇa of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, what need is there to mention the peerless, perfect and complete enlightenment? The fault of those beings was to enter the Great Vehicle without training in the Dharma of the vehicles of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas.

“Son of the family, if ghee and milk were poured into an unfired clay pot, it would ruin both the container and its contents. Why? Because of the fault of the pot. Likewise, if sentient beings who do not work for, and do not make efforts in the Dharmas of the Śrāvaka Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, whose faculties are not fully ripened, whose faculties are weak, and who are of little perseverance should be taught the sacred Dharma of the profound Great Vehicle, both teacher and disciple incur a great misdeed, which insults all the buddhas, as explained before.

“Also, it is like this. If a precious jewel is put inside a broken-down treasure store, it will be lost. Similarly, if someone who slanders and criticizes the two vehicles, has no faith in them, and does not train in them is taught the Great Vehicle, he will not comprehend it correctly. Because of that, he commits bad deeds and will not know the end of saṃsāra.

“If a leaky boat with no ability to move²⁹ or support its passengers is boarded, it will sink into the sea. Likewise, someone who is under the influence of miserliness and envy, who makes no effort in the two vehicles, and who claims ‘I am of the Great Vehicle’ is someone of nihilistic view, arrogant, and whose body, punctured with deceit and cunning, cannot sail the great ocean of omniscience.

“It is like this. A blind person is not someone who can be shown precious jewels. Likewise, someone ruled by pride, who is thoughtless, who is attached to views of nothingness, and who does not train in the two vehicles is devoid of the eyes of wisdom, and is therefore blind. Such a person is not someone who can be shown the precious jewels of the excellent qualities of the peerless Great Vehicle.

“It is like this. A putrid, smelly body may be anointed with various aromatic oils, but it will not produce a beautiful aroma. Similarly, those beings who are foolish and confused, who are in the grasp of pride, who make no efforts to develop faith in the two vehicles, and who have not given up killing and so on, down to possessing wrong views, may make efforts in the Great Vehicle, but they cannot know its profound Dharmas.

“It is like this. A fertile seed may be planted on stony ground and given great attention, but no fruit or harvest will appear. Similarly, someone who is arrogant and lazy with regard to the Dharmas of the two vehicles and makes no effort in them, and who is attached and has not renounced the five sense pleasures may make efforts in the difficult practices that belong to the Great Vehicle in that life, but he will accomplish nothing.

“It is like this. If even a small amount of sugar is put into a clay pot that once was a container for poison, it becomes unusable. Similarly, someone who makes no efforts in the Dharma of the two vehicles, and who propounds the view of no-cause may be taught the Great Vehicle, but it will be of no benefit to him or others.

“It is like this. If even a small amount of poison is put into a clay pot that once was a container for sugar, it becomes unusable. Similarly, if someone who makes no efforts in the Dharma of the two vehicles is taught the Great Vehicle, both teacher and disciple are ruined and doomed to wander.

“It is like this. If various musical instruments are played in the presence of someone who is crazed and of a disturbed mind, he will be unable to distinguish them. Similarly, those who make no efforts in the Dharma of the two vehicles; whose minds are tainted by afflictions, such as attachment, hatred, and ignorance, so that they hold views of no-cause and propound nihilistic views; and whose faculties are not ripened, even though the Great Vehicle is taught to them for a long time, will not understand or comprehend it.

“It is like this. Should someone go to battle wearing no armor and holding no weapons, he will undoubtedly be wounded and suffer greatly. Similarly, if those who make no efforts in the Dharma of the two vehicles, who are of little wisdom, whose faculties are weak, and who are unworthy vessels were to be taught the Great Vehicle, they will undoubtedly hold wrong views, thus ensuring that they will commit all manner of bad deeds, to which there will be no end.

“Before long, the limbs of those foolish beings will be cut to pieces, and their tongues will be tied and they will be unable to speak day and night. They will endure the great suffering of unending illness and fevers. When they die, without doubt, they will fall to the great Hell of No Respite and circle in the lower realms, as explained in detail previously.

“Son of the family, therefore, the wise will first examine the minds of others, and then teach the Dharma. The wise should first develop a mind of love, a mind of compassion, a mind of joy, a mind that wishes to help, a mind free of laziness, a mind of great patience, a mind freed from pride, a mind without miserliness, and a mind dwelling in the samādhi of equipoise, and then they should teach the sacred Dharma to others. Having taught the Dharma, they do not cause those beings to fall into the great chasm of circling in saṃsāra.”

The Wheels of Unsullied and Nonappropriating Activities

“Therefore, the Tathāgata comprehends the characteristics of the minds of all sentient beings, and teaches the sacred Dharma by way of the wheels of unsullied and nonappropriating activities. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas, who wear the great armor of patience, also teach others similarly. Because they possess great love and compassion, they teach the sacred Dharma to eradicate all affliction; to bring others across the ocean of the three realms; and to bring them into one of the three vehicles that they have

faith in; and to quickly perfect it. They never teach in order to cause beings to fall into the great chasm of circling in *samsāra*.

“Why are these teachings called ‘the wheels of unsullied activities’? ‘Unsullied’ means that when teaching the Dharma, it is not done for the existence of the aggregates; for the existence of the sensory sources; for the existence of the basic elements; for the desire realm; for the form realm; for the formless realm; for the existence of this world; for the existence of the next world; for the compositional factors; for feelings; for the aggregate of recognition; for concepts; for cognition; for mental engagement; for ignorance; and so on, up to for old age and death; and for going or not going. It is like this. It is by the aggregates, the sensory sources, the basic elements, and so on, up to going and not going, being thoroughly pacified that the sacred Dharma is taught to sentient beings. Therefore, these activities are unsullied.

“Regarding ‘activities,’ it is like this. It is for completely eradicating the process of going from here to death to birth in the next world that the Dharma is taught to sentient beings. It is for completely eradicating the aggregates, the sensory sources, the basic elements, and so on, up to going and not going that the Dharma is taught to others. These are the activities.

“Regarding ‘wheels,’ the full moon appears unobstructed in the sky, very cooling and bright, to be enjoyed without hindrance by all. Likewise, all magical displays; acts of clairvoyance; declarations of insight; precepts to be held; and the three wheels of victory of the Tathāgata and the bodhisattvas appear without hindrance in all world realms. And in order to bring peace and happiness to beings who are worthy vessels—unmixed with those who go for refuge to others, unmixed with worldly materialists, and unmixed with the *śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas*—they eradicate the sufferings of *samsāra* and create the happiness of the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. These are the ‘wheels.’ In this way, they are the wheels of unsullied activities of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

“Why are they called ‘wheels of nonappropriating activities’? They are unhindered with regard to all phenomena. Just as the disc of the sun illuminates everywhere without hindrance, the buddhas and bodhisattvas teach the sacred Dharma without attachment, according to the faculties and recipients of the three vehicles.

“Just as the sky lacks the characteristics of distinction, the Tathāgata, by way of limitless samādhis, and held by the arrays and power of manifestation, teaches without attachment the sacred Dharma to sentient beings. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wear the great armor of patience also teach others in this way.

“The teaching of the Dharma is not existing and not nonexisting. The form aggregate itself is not empty, and that which is other than form aggregate is not empty, and so on, up to the consciousness aggregate itself is not empty, and that which is other than consciousness aggregate is not empty. Eyes themselves are not empty, and that which is other than eyes is not empty, and so on, up to mind itself is not empty, and that which is other than mind is not empty. Form itself is not empty, and that which is other than form is not empty, and so on, up to mental phenomena itself is not empty, and that which is other than mental phenomena is not empty. Visual consciousness itself is not empty, and that which is other than visual consciousness is not empty, and so on, up to mental consciousness itself is not empty, and that which is other than mental consciousness is not empty.

“The form realm itself is not empty, and that which is other than the form realm is not empty, and so on, up to the sense field of limitless space itself is not empty, and that which is other than the sense field of limitless space is not empty. The sense source of limitless consciousness itself is not empty, and that which is other than the sense source of limitless consciousness is not empty. The sense source of nothing-at-all itself is not empty, and that which is other than the sense source of nothing-at-all is not empty. The

sense source of no recognition and no nonrecognition itself is not empty, and that which is other than the sense source of no recognition and no nonrecognition is not empty.

“The four close placements of mindfulness themselves are not empty, and that which is other than the four close placements of mindfulness is not empty, and so on, up to the eightfold path of the āryas itself is not empty, and that which is other than the eightfold path of the āryas is not empty. Arising by dependence itself is not empty, and that which is other than arising by dependence is not empty. The three phenomena to be guarded themselves are not empty, and that which is other than the three phenomena to be guarded is not empty. The four states of no-fear themselves are not empty, and that which is other than the four states of no-fear is not empty. The ten powers themselves are not empty, and that which is other than the ten powers is not empty. The eighteen unmixed Dharmas themselves are not empty, and that which is other than the eighteen unmixed Dharmas is not empty.

“Great love, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity themselves are not empty, and that which is other than great love, great compassion, great joy, and great equanimity is not empty. Nirvāṇa itself is not empty, and that which is other than nirvāṇa is not empty. These are known as the ‘insistence on the middle way’ in the Tathāgata’s and the bodhisattvas’ teachings to sentient beings.³⁰

“Son of the family, therefore, the Tathāgata teaches the sacred Dharma to other beings by way of the wheel of unsullied activities. The light of the full moon is very cooling and bright, and pervades the sky without obstruction, illuminating without obstruction all within its range and so on, as has been previously detailed.

“The sacred Dharma is also taught by way of the wheel of nonappropriating activities and is unhindered with respect to all Dharmas. Just as the light of the sun illuminates everywhere, the buddhas and bodhisattvas teach the sacred Dharma without attachment according to various faculties and to the worthy

vessels of the three vehicles. Just as the sky lacks the characteristics of distinction, the Tathāgata, without attachment, and by way of limitless samādhis held by the arrays and power of manifestation, teaches the sacred Dharma to beings, and brings them appropriately into one of the three vehicles.³¹

“The bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wear the great armor of patience teach the Dharma in this way. They cause sentient beings to hear the supreme and profound Dharma, and bring them into the vehicle that they have affinity with. They will completely ripen their roots of virtue, place them happily in one vehicle, prevent them from increasing their bad and nonvirtuous deeds while in saṃsāra, and make their attainment of nirvāṇa firm and irreversible.”

Comparison of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas with the Great Vehicle

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others in order to completely eradicate the saṃsāra of countless sentient beings. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma to others in order to eradicate only their own saṃsāra. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others so that limitless beings will cross the four rivers of suffering. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma to others so that they alone will cross the four rivers. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others to relieve limitless sentient beings of the sickness of mental affliction. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma to others in order to relieve their own sickness of affliction. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others in order to sever the continuum of the remaining imprints of affliction in the aggregates of all sentient beings. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma to others in order to sever the continuum of the remaining imprints of affliction in their own aggregates.

“The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others with great compassion as the cause in order to produce the fruit of great compassion. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas do not teach the Dharma to others with great compassion as the cause in order to produce the fruit of great compassion. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others focusing on all sentient beings. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma to others not focusing on all sentient beings. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others in order to dispel the suffering of all sentient beings. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma solely to dispel their own suffering.

“The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others so that all sentient beings will be permeated by the taste of Dharma. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma to others so that they alone will be permeated by the taste of the Dharma. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma to others so that all beings will gain the light of the Dharma of the Victorious One. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma so that they alone will gain the light of the Dharma of the Victorious One.

“Son of the family, in short, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas teach the Dharma by way of limitless disciplines in order to dispel completely the great darkness of ignorance of all sentient beings, to dispel great fears, and to dispel all harm; and to achieve the great light, to achieve great renown, and to achieve the exalted wisdom of omniscience that knows things as they are. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma to others by way of a few disciplines in order to dispel their own ignorance and to achieve the small light, the small renown, and the small wisdom of comprehending the Dharma.

“Son of the family, the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have no perfect focus on others; no perfect compassion for others; no perfect mind of respect for others; no perfect mind of bringing peace and happiness to others; no perfect mind of bringing liberation to others; no perfect mind of raising others up; no perfect

mind of praising and exalting others; no perfect praise of others free from cunning and deceit; no perfect achievement of the peace and happiness of others with disregard to their own bodies; and no perfect nonweakening of the deeds of body, speech, and mind with respect to others.

“Son of the family, for those who dwell in the Great Vehicle, there is no focus at all on that belonging to self, and so on, up to there being no harm at all to others in their deeds of body, speech, and mind.”

Those Outside the Three Vehicles

“Son of the family, furthermore, there are those beings who are of a malicious mind; who are of harsh words; who are stupid and ignorant; who are arrogant; who have not abandoned killing and so on up to wrong views; who become envious when they see the profit and renown of others, the offerings and honor given to others; who are never content and constantly seek profit, honor, offerings, and renown; who praise themselves and belittle others; who never restrain their deeds of body, speech, and mind, forever delighting in committing acts of nonvirtue; who are of a malicious mind, of a mind without compassion, of no restraint, and of no shame; who take joy in harming others; who divide those who are fields of merit into good and bad; who find fault with those who have become ordained in my teachings, and delight in looking for opportunities to harm them; who, when a small fault arises, never examine to see whether it is true or not but immediately criticize, slander, disparage, and complain; whose minds are untamed, wild, and distracted; who delight in causing harm to the ordained; and who do not think of their own faults, but criticize others.

“When they hear praise of the good qualities of the Great Vehicle, they seek it out and wish to enter it, but delight in engaging in heavy misdeeds. They are not pacified, and in order to deceive others, they make a play of listening to the Dharma

of the Great Vehicle and encouraging others to do likewise. They make a play of reading and reciting the scriptures, and of encouraging others to read and recite them. They criticize others in order to praise themselves. Although they praise the Great Vehicle by paying it homage, they do not train in practices of the scope of the Great Vehicle, and therefore do not understand it. They claim to be followers of the Great Vehicle, and yet for the sake of profit, fame, and livelihood, they encourage others to settle and study. Take, for example, someone who appears as a holder of monastic discipline—but whose ethics have degenerated, and who engages in bad deeds—who establishes, for the sake of fame and profit, others in the study of the scriptural collection of monastic discipline.

“With their dishonest minds, such crooked and deceiving beings will find it difficult to gain rebirth as the lowest form of human being, and if birth as a higher realm god, and the nirvāṇa of the two vehicles has been lost, what need is there to mention not finding the Great Vehicle? There will be no cause for it. When they die, they will fall to the hell realms with no chance of freedom. Therefore, the wise should not rely upon them. In the midst of others, without shame and embarrassment, and for the sake of fame and profit, they claim with the roar of a lion, ‘I am a follower of the Great Vehicle!’ Who would associate with such foolish and ignorant beings?

“For example, a donkey might wear the hide of a lion, claiming, ‘I am a lion!’ And from afar, someone might see the donkey as a lion. Then, he lets out a donkey’s bray, and everyone realizes that he is a donkey. They spit at him and revile him, saying such things as ‘Look at this filth-eating, evil donkey!’

“Likewise, those people that I have described who delight in engaging in the path of the ten nonvirtuous deeds burn the seeds of birth in the realms of gods and humans. If they fall from the vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, what need is there to mention that they are not worthy vessels for the Great

Vehicle? In this way, those foolish and ignorant people in the grasp of pride, while seeking fame and profit, deceitfully say to others that they are followers of the Great Vehicle. A foolish man with no hands or legs may go into battle to confront the enemy, but he gains nothing except exhaustion. Similarly, those who deceitfully claim to be of the Great Vehicle, whose hands of faith and legs of ethics are incomplete, cannot judge their own deeds and conduct, and their battle with the afflictions leads nowhere but to their own exhaustion.”

Qualities of the Three Vehicles

“Someone who has no restraint over the actions of body and speech, who only commits bad deeds, and who claims to be a Great Vehicle practitioner is not a worthy vessel for the three vehicles; and has no basis for destroying the enemies that are the afflictions within all sentient beings, for teaching the eightfold path of the āryas to sentient beings, or for leading them to the city of fearless nirvāṇa.

“Why is this? Son of the family, the Great Vehicle is the pure guarding of the highest ethics. It is endowed with the deeds of greatest virtue. It relies upon pure conscientiousness and modesty. It looks to and is fearful of resultant suffering in the next world. It abandons completely all nonvirtuous deeds and takes delight in striving for all dharmas of virtue. It pervades all beings with love and compassion. It makes great effort in order to bring peace and happiness to all beings. It liberates and rescues all sentient beings from the sufferings of saṃsāra. Its practitioners do not look to the happiness of themselves, but grant peace and happiness to all sentient beings. That is the domain of the Great Vehicle.

“Son of the family, what are the characteristics of those endowed with the Śrāvaka Vehicle? They happily dwell in perfect mindfulness and possess constant perseverance by way of a great liking for the meditative equipoise of samādhi. They have

great faith in the results of karma, having abandoned deceit and cunning; are unattached to the five sense pleasures and are untainted by the eight worldly dharmas. They make great efforts in the practice of virtue as if their head was on fire. They contemplate greatly the aggregates, basic constituents, and sensory sources; and are constantly possessed of a great liking for dwelling joyously in the ārya family. Those possessed of these characteristics are of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. If such persons are not vessels of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, what need is there to mention that they are not vessels of the Great Vehicle?

“Son of the family, what are the characteristics of one endowed with the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle? Possessed of all the above qualities of the śrāvakas, they contemplate again and again the impermanence of the five aggregates. They contemplate again and again birth and cessation. They contemplate phenomena of dependent origination as being subjects of cessation. Those possessed of such characteristics are of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and are not vessels for the Dharmas of the Great Vehicle.”

Summary Verses

Then, the Bhagavān, in order to reiterate these points, spoke these verses:

If those of virtuous royal caste, virtuous merchant caste,
Down to those virtuous beings of the laboring caste
Practice the ten wheels of faith and so on,
They will become worthy vessels of the Śrāvaka Vehicle.

Pure in body, speech, and mind;
Possessed of modesty and conscientiousness;
Made fearful by the aggregates;
Aware of the faults—they delight in solitude.

Guarding the senses with mindfulness, with tranquil mind,
With an understanding of dependent origination,

They meditate on the concentrations,
And are wise in the understanding of the aggregates,
Constituents, and sensory sources.³²

With these ten activities and ways of abiding
Of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, they will become vessels
For the supreme vehicle, and cross the ocean of existence.

By these two wheels, not of the third vehicle,
A person works for their own freedom from afflictions.
The imprints are not abandoned and such a person
Does not liberate all beings, and so
Is not a vessel for the Great Vehicle.

The childish, lazy, and weak of faculties
Who make no effort in the two vehicles
Do not possess the wheel of the Great Vehicle.
Such people are no vessel for the great and vast vehicle.

The childish seek their own liberation.
Their minds and deeds are weak;
They have no minds of love.
They are attached to nihilistic views,
And are bound for the lower realms.

They abandon the perfect Dharma
And teach that which is not Dharma,
Slander the two vehicles, and lose their vows.

They become ordained and claim to be of the Great Vehicle
but destroy my teachings and deceive all sentient beings.
And so, they will find it hard to gain a human form.

Those who would harm, attack, criticize,
And disparage those ārya beings who dwell in my teachings
And those who wear the saffron robes,
Or steal their begging bowls and robes

Will for a long time be deprived
Of the happiness of gods and humans.

Therefore, those who wish for a human form,
Who wish to avoid the faults of stupidity at death,
And who wish to constantly meet the buddhas
Should protect all Dharmas of the three vehicles.

Those who seek the supreme vehicle from the three
Should be wise in the ways of the three vehicles
And, with joy and delight, propagate them to others.
They will become buddhas, have no doubt.

Those whose ethics are weak, who are miserly and of
great pride,
Who praise themselves and criticize others,
Claiming to be followers of the Great Vehicle—
Abandon them, rely upon the wise, and definitely
You will become a buddha beyond the three realms.

By teaching with love and compassion
The Dharmas of the three vehicles
In accordance with what is suitable,
Thereby fulfilling the hopes of each person—
You will become a buddha, have no doubt.

Know the pacification of the aggregates,
Constituents, and sensory sources
To be like space, not dwelling in anything.
By teaching Dharma, gathering many beings,
You will gain the immeasurable wisdom.

Those who are full of bad deeds and delight in degenerate ethics
Who hear the supreme qualities of the Great Vehicle
For the sake of fame and profit
But claim to be of the Great Vehicle
Are like donkeys wearing lions' hides.

Today I give this teaching to those assembled.
Those who wish to quickly gain the supreme enlightenment
Strive in the path of the ten virtues.
Do not disparage my Dharma, guard it well.

In other discourses in the past, I have said:
'If you wish for the great enlightenment,
Practice the Great Vehicle and abandon
The vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.'

That was Dharma taught to a pure assembly
Who, by making offerings to countless buddhas,
Had abandoned bad deeds and trained in pure mind.
To those beings of great endeavor,
I taught only the one vehicle.

In this assembly gathered here today
Are those who are vessels of all three vehicles.
Some are of the Śrāvaka Vehicle,
Made fearful by the phenomena of many deeds.
They are not vessels for the supreme enlightenment.

Some delight in solitude and their own enlightenment.
They too are not vessels for supreme enlightenment.
Some are worthy to be brought to supreme wisdom.
Therefore, according to disposition, I teach the three vehicles.

Those who desire freedom merely by developing qualities
Would fall to the lower realms if they heard the Great Vehicle;
Like giving milk to someone with phlegm disease,
It would turn to poison and not cure the illness.

Therefore, if unsuitable vessels of the Śrāvaka Vehicle
Were to hear the Great Vehicle, they would be confused.
They would propound nihilism and fall to the lower realms.
Therefore, I examine the faculties and teach the Dharma.

5. Confession

Confessions of the Assembly

Those who deny cause and effect

When the Bhagavān had spoken these verses, hundreds of thousands of beings among the assembly, having heard this discourse, whose minds had gone astray from previously listening to a dharma and thinking that all was empty; who had developed the view that there was no cause and effect; and who had destroyed their roots of virtue and were bound for the lower realms were again possessed of the right view.

They rose from their seats and, in the presence of the Buddha, were ashamed. To confess their faults, they placed their palms together, bowed to the Bhagavān, and spoke these words: “Venerable Bhagavān, in the past, we grew roots of virtue in the family of the vehicle of the śrāvakas. Not fully developing that vehicle, we listened to the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas. We were confused in that vehicle too and nothing was actualized. Because of that, we held to the view of emptiness³³ and that there was no cause and effect. As a result, we have committed countless acts of nonvirtue through body, speech, and mind, which would have led us to the lower realms. But now, having heard this discourse in the presence of the Bhagavān, we have again found the perfect view. We confess with shame and embarrassment and do not try to hide it. May we be purified. Protect us now from committing such deeds of obscuration again. Bhagavān, with your compassion, care for us and purify us of these bad deeds. Ensure that we do not commit them again. With your compassion,

protect us from experiencing the sufferings of the lower realms in the future. We will again strive in the ways of the Śrāvaka Vehicle in which we previously trained. Bhagavān, with your compassion, please teach us.”

The Bhagavān replied, “Excellent! Excellent! It is excellent that with shame and embarrassment you have confessed as you did. Within my teachings there are two types of excellent beings who do not decline. One is naturally pure and, from the beginning, commits no faults; and one commits faults but then with shame and embarrassment, confesses them. These two types of beings make pure efforts in my Dharma.”

Then, the Bhagavān taught them the four truths of the āryas according to their dispositions. As a result, some in the assembly achieved the lowest forbearance, some gained the intermediate forbearance, and others gained the highest forbearance. Some gained the highest worldly dharma. Some gained the result of stream-enterer, some the result of once-returner, and some the result of non-returner. Furthermore, eighty-four thousand bhikṣus achieved the cessation of all downfalls. Their minds were liberated, and they became arhats of pure cognition. With great joy, they prostrated to the Buddha and returned to their seats.

Moreover, within the assembly, there were sentient beings numbering fifty-seven multiplied by a hundred thousand, multiplied by ten billion, multiplied by ten million who had listened to a previous dharma and had mistaken it to mean that all was empty. As a result, they had held that there was no cause and effect, had severed completely their roots of virtue, and were bound for the lower realms.

Now, having heard this discourse, they had again found the correct view. They rose from their seats, bowed their heads to the feet of the Bhagavān, and in his presence, confessed with shame and embarrassment. Placing their palms together, they spoke these words to the Bhagavān: “Venerable Bhagavān, in the

past we grew roots of virtue in the family of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, but we did not develop as worthy vehicles for the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. Therefore, we listened to the Dharmas of the Great Vehicle. We developed faith and aspiration, but were blinded by ignorance and gained no insight. Consequently, we developed the view of emptiness and held that cause and effect did not exist. As a result, we have committed countless nonvirtuous deeds by way of body, speech, and mind, and we would have been born into lower realms to experience dreadful sufferings for countless eons. But now, having heard this discourse in the presence of the Bhagavān, we have again found the right view. With shame and embarrassment and with minds that do not hide these matters, we confess them all. Protect us now from ever committing such deeds of obscurations again. Bhagavān, with your compassion, purify our wrong actions. Care for us so that we do not commit them again. Bhagavān, with your compassion, protect us from having to experience the sufferings of the lower realms in the future. We will again practice and strive in the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas as we did before. Bhagavān, please teach us.”

The Bhagavān replied: “Excellent! Excellent! It is excellent that with shame and embarrassment you have confessed as you did. Within my teachings there are two types of excellent beings who do not decline. One is naturally pure and, from the beginning, commits no faults; and one commits faults but then with shame and embarrassment, confesses them. These two types of supreme beings make pure efforts in my Dharma.”

Then the Bhagavān, in accordance with their dispositions, taught them dependent origination. Making efforts in the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, they perfected the samādhi known as Focusing upon the Victory Standard, and they attained irreversibility within the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They prostrated to the Bhagavān happily, and returned to their seats.

Those Who Slander the Teachings of the Buddhas

Moreover, within the assembly there were beings numbering eighty multiplied by a hundred thousand, multiplied by ten million who had slandered the teachings of the buddhas of the past, down to the slander of criticizing just a single stanza of the Buddha's teachings. As a result, they had been born into the lower realms and experienced great suffering. Even though they had regained a human rebirth, they were dumb, stammered, did not speak clearly, or could not speak at all. Having heard this discourse, they had again found the right view. They rose from their seats, bowed their heads to the feet of the Bhagavān, and in his presence, confessed with shame and embarrassment. They placed their palms together and gazed unblinkingly at the Bhagavān.

The Bhagavān blessed them to be able to speak again and, with prescience, said to them: "In the past, you committed bad deeds and, in this assembly, you were those unable to speak."

They replied to the Bhagavān; "Venerable Bhagavān, in the past, during the time of the Dharma taught by Tathāgata Vipāśvin, some of us slandered the Dharma of the Great Vehicle, some slandered the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and some slandered the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, down to the slandering of just a single stanza. As a result of our nonvirtuous deeds, for ninety-one eons we have wandered in saṃsāra, constantly being reborn into hell, as animals, as ghosts, dumb, stammering, not speaking clearly, not being able to speak, and experiencing unspeakable suffering. Now in this life, although we have found a human form, we were dumb, stammering, and beset by diseases of the tongue. Yet by the blessings of the Bhagavān, we can now speak and can remember all the various obscurations of nonvirtuous deeds we committed in times past."

Some among them said: "Venerable Bhagavān, in the past, during the time of the Dharma taught by Bhagavān Śikhin, some of us slandered the Dharma of the Great Vehicle, some slandered

the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and so on, as was described previously.”

Some among them said: “Venerable Bhagavān, in the past, during the time of the Dharma taught by Bhagavān Viśvabhū, some of us slandered the perfect Dharma of the Great Vehicle, some slandered the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and so on, as was described previously.”

Some among them said: “Venerable Bhagavān, in the past, during the time of the Dharma taught by Bhagavān Krakucchanda, some of us slandered the perfect Dharma of the Great Vehicle, some slandered the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and so on, as has been described previously.”

Some among them said: “Venerable Bhagavān, in the past, during the time of the Dharma taught by Tathāgata Kanakamuni, some of us slandered the perfect Dharma of the Great Vehicle, some slandered the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and so on, as has been described previously.”

Some among them said: “Venerable Bhagavān, in the past, during the time of the Dharma taught by Tathāgata Kaśyapa, some of us slandered the Dharma of the Great Vehicle, some slandered the Dharma of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and some slandered the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, down to the slandering of just a single verse. As a result of our nonvirtuous deeds, up to now we have wandered in saṃsāra, constantly being reborn into hell, as animals, in the realm of Yama, struck dumb, stammering, with no tongues, unable to communicate, and experiencing unspeakable suffering. Now in this life, although we have found a human form, we were dumb, stammering, beset by diseases of the tongue, and unable to communicate. Yet by the blessings of the Bhagavān, we can now speak and can remember all the various obscurations of nonvirtuous deeds we committed in times past. Now, having heard this discourse in the presence of the Bhagavān, we have again found the right view.

“With shame and embarrassment, and with minds that do not hide these matters, we confess them all. Protect us now from ever committing such deeds of obscuration again. Bhagavān, with your compassion, purify our wrong actions. Care for us so that we do not commit them again. Bhagavān, with your compassion, protect us from having to experience the sufferings of the lower realms in the future. Bhagavān, please teach us the sacred Dharma.”

The Bhagavān replied: “Excellent! Excellent! It is excellent that with shame and embarrassment you have confessed as you did. Within my teachings there are two types of excellent beings who do not decline. One is naturally pure and, from the beginning, commits no faults; and one commits faults but then with shame and embarrassment, confesses them. These two types of beings make pure efforts in my Dharma.”

Then, the Bhagavān, in accordance with their dispositions, taught and explained various aspects of the Dharma, thereby bringing them to happiness, whereupon they prostrated to the Bhagavān and returned to their seats.

Those who commit obstructing acts of nonvirtue

In that assembly at that time were hundreds of thousands of śrāvaka disciples and millions of bodhisattvas, who on hearing this discourse, recalled obstructing acts of nonvirtue they had committed in the past. They bowed their heads to the feet of the Bhagavān, and in his presence with minds of shame and embarrassment, they confessed. With palms pressed together and with great devotion they addressed the Bhagavān: “Venerable Bhagavān, during the times of the teachings of countless buddhas of the past, some of us were resentful about, were angry at, complained about, disparaged, looked down upon, were contemptuous of, criticized, and slandered in various ways close disciples of those buddhas, whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. We searched for opportunities to harm them, we spoke not of their qualities, and proclaimed their faults. As a result of

these nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we sank to the lower realms and experienced dreadful suffering. Later, we served and made offerings to countless buddhas. Furthermore, we served, made offerings to, and were attendants to countless bodhisattva mahāsattvas.

“To each buddha and to each bodhisattva mahāsattva, we confessed with great shame and embarrassment those obstructing and nonvirtuous deeds. In the presence of each buddha and each bodhisattva mahāsattva we listened to countless types of Dharma. Having listened, we made great efforts and practiced with countless hardships. However, because of remaining karmic obscuration, we did not gain the bliss of nirvāṇa. We did not achieve the features or qualities of the gateways of the samādhis.

“Now, in the presence of the Bhagavān, having heard this discourse, with minds of great shame and embarrassment, and without concealing, we confess each of these deeds. Please purify us. Protect us from ever again committing these deeds of obscuration. Bhagavān, with your compassion, purify us of these bad deeds, and care for us so that we never commit them again. Bhagavān, we plead that with your compassion you protect us from experiencing the suffering of the lower realms in the future. By the power of the Bhagavān’s blessings, we ask that, in keeping with our dispositions, we soon attain the happiness of nirvāṇa and gain the various qualities of the gateways of samādhis.”

Some among them said: “In the past, we hurt and caused harm to close disciples of such and such a buddha with harsh and cruel words, whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. As a result of those nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we sank to the lower realms...” and so on, as was described in detail previously.

Some among them said: “In the past, we hurt and caused harm to close disciples of such and such a buddha by beating and kicking, whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. As a result of those nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we

sank to the lower realms...” and so on, as was described in detail previously.

Some among them said: “In the past, we seized the begging bowls of close disciples of such and such a buddha, whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. As a result of those nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we sank to the lower realms...” and so on, as was described in detail previously.

Some among them said: “In the past, we seized the provisions of close disciples of such and such a buddha, whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not, thereby causing them much deprivation of their food and drink. As a result of those nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we sank to the lower realms...” and so on, as was described in detail previously.

Some among them said: “In the past, we seized the robes of close disciples of such and such a buddha, forcing them to become laymen and commit all manner of acts, whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. As a result of those nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we sank to the lower realms...” and so on, as was described in detail previously.

Some among them said: “In the past, we chained, bound in irons, and tied up close disciples of such and such a buddha, whether they had committed a crime or not and whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. As a result of those nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we sank to the lower realms...” and so on, as was described in detail previously.

Some among them said: “In the past, we hurt and caused harm to close disciples of such and such a buddha with minds of contempt, whether they were worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. As a result of those nonvirtuous deeds, for countless eons we sank to the lower realms and experienced dreadful suffering. Later, we served, made offerings to, and pleased countless buddhas. Furthermore, we served, made offerings to, and pleased countless bodhisattva mahāsattvas.

“To each buddha and to each bodhisattva mahāsattva, we confessed those nonvirtuous deeds with great shame and embarrassment. In the presence of each buddha and each bodhisattva mahāsattva, we listened to countless types of Dharma and practiced with great effort. Although we practiced with great hardships, because of remaining karmic obscuration, we still have not gained the bliss of nirvāṇa and have not achieved various qualities of the gateways of the samādhis.

“Now, in the presence of the Bhagavān, having heard this discourse, with minds of great shame and embarrassment, and without concealing, we confess each of these deeds. Please purify us. Protect us from ever again committing these deeds of obscuration. Bhagavān, with your compassion, purify us of these bad deeds and care for us so that we never commit them again. Bhagavān, we plead that with your compassion you protect us from experiencing the suffering of the lower realms in the future. By the power of the Bhagavān’s blessings, we ask that, in keeping with our dispositions, we soon attain the happiness of nirvāṇa and gain the various qualities of the gateways of samādhis.”

Then, the Bhagavān replied to the śrāvakas and bodhisattvas: “Excellent! Excellent! It is excellent that with shame and embarrassment you have confessed as you did. There are two types of excellent beings who do not decline. One is naturally pure and, from the beginning, commits no faults; and one commits faults but then with shame and embarrassment, confesses them. These two types of beings make pure efforts in my Dharma.”

The Nonvirtue of Causing Harm to Ordained Disciples

“Son of the family, when compared to the nonvirtue of causing harm to those disciples ordained into the teachings of the Buddha, the deeds of immediate repercussion and those that come close to deeds of immediate repercussion, described earlier, are just names. They are not even nonvirtues. If you cause harm to those

disciples ordained into the teachings of the Buddha, that non-virtue is infinitely greater than the nonvirtue of the five deeds of immediate repercussion described earlier. Why is that? Even a bhikṣu whose ethics are degenerate and who commits wrong has the potential to show the unerring path to nirvāṇa to millions of sentient beings. He is a treasury of immeasurable precious qualities and so on, as was described previously. If that is so, what need to mention those who guard their ethics and practice virtuous dharmas?

“Therefore, you should know that those who hurt and cause harm to disciples ordained into the teachings of the Buddha are destroying the lineage of the Three Jewels. They pluck out the Dharma eye of all sentient beings. They damage the precious Dharma, which has only been discovered by much previous hardship. They cause great harm to all sentient beings. Therefore, the nonvirtue of harming those disciples ordained in the teachings of the Buddha is infinitely greater than the nonvirtue of the five deeds of immediate repercussion described earlier.

“Therefore, in my presence, because you have confessed each and every obscuring nonvirtuous act committed in the past with pure mind and shame, and with much effort, I will care for you with great compassion, and gradually, you will be purified of your nonvirtuous and obscuring deeds. Also, in the presence of the thousand tathāgata buddhas to appear in this buddha land in this fortunate eon, you should likewise confess the nonvirtuous acts committed in the past. Moreover, guard yourselves against faults in the future. In the presence of the last of the thousand buddhas of this fortunate eon, known as Roca, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, the Wise, the Virtuous, the Sugata, Knower of the World, the Peerless, the Tamer of Beings, the Cakravartin, Teacher of Gods and Men, the Buddha Bhagavān, you should confess the nonvirtuous acts committed in the past, and you will be purified of the remaining obscurations.”

Then, the śrāvakas and the bodhisattvas said: “It is as you have said. Bhagavān, if at the time of Tathāgata Roca, the last of the thousand buddhas, we gain the perfect view and all false views are abandoned, all obscuring nonvirtuous acts committed in the past are purified, and we become free of all suffering, then even if we are born into this fortunate eon in the Hell of No Respite and experience much suffering, we will bear it.”

The Buddha replied: “Excellent! Excellent! By the power of your courage, your efforts, and your prayers at the time of Tathāgata Roca,³⁴ without doubt, you will be purified of your past karmic obscurations. Without doubt, you will serve him with devotion and make offerings to him with the purest of minds. Without doubt, Tathāgata Roca will bring you to the state of being an arhat with all mental afflictions removed. Without doubt, he will help you to achieve the excellent qualities of the gateways of samādhis.”

The śrāvakas and the bodhisattvas joyfully prostrated to the feet of the Bhagavān, and returned to their seats.

Beings who Rely on Nonvirtuous Teachers

The Bhagavān addressed the bodhisattva mahāsattva Vajragarbha: “Son of the family, when I look at the world with the buddha eye, I see that in the future in this buddha land there will be countless millions of barbaric beings of the royal caste, barbaric Brahmins, barbaric ministers, barbaric householders, barbaric traders, barbaric mendicants, barbaric beings of the merchant class, barbaric men and women from the working caste, and so on. They will have developed a few roots of virtue and so will have gained a human form, but they will rely upon nonvirtuous teachers, develop wrong views, and thereby commit all number of bad deeds. In doing so, they will destroy my peerless and profound Dharma. They will not propagate my teachings, will destroy those already propagated, and will have no liking for them.

“They will criticize and slander the sacred Dharma of those belonging to the Śrāvaka Vehicle of my teachings. They cause

obstacles and hindrances to it and will not propagate it. At times, they will criticize and slander the sacred Dharma of those belonging to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle of my teachings. They cause obstacles and hindrances to it and will not propagate it. At times, they will criticize and slander the sacred Dharma of those belonging to the peerless vehicle of my teachings. They cause obstacles and hindrances to it and will not propagate it.

“At times, they will become angry with those ordained into my teachings, whether they are suitable vessels or unsuitable vessels. They will complain about them, humiliate them, show them contempt, and seek opportunities to verbally abuse them. They will slander them, will not speak of their qualities and proclaim their faults, and bring them all kinds of harm with contemptuous minds. These beings, unfit for the Dharma of the āryas, are foolish and confused. They are arrogant and proud with their little knowledge, and when they die, will immediately fall to the lower realms where they will experience without limit the most dreadful suffering. For millions of eons they will find it difficult to gain a human form and so on, as was described previously.

“Son of the family, those sentient beings abide in the Hell of No Respite and experience great suffering, but that is easy, compared to those beings who are in the grasp of pride, following false teachers and wandering in saṃsāra because of the nonvirtuous deeds they have committed, and are trapped and constantly tormented by suffering.”

Pledges of the Assembly

At that time, countless beings of great intelligence in the assembly stood up, and prostrated to the feet of the Bhagavān. Placing their palms together in the direction of the Bhagavān and with tears in their eyes, they addressed the Bhagavān: “Venerable Bhagavān, those sentient beings, although they gain a human form so difficult to achieve, abandon faith, pure prayer, pure belief, and the

pure view. They abandon the virtuous teacher, the auspicious occasions, the auspicious place, pure ethics, pure samādhis, and pure knowledge.

“Those sentient beings, although they gain a human form so difficult to achieve, commit those bad deeds described previously because of their stupidity and their pride. They will criticize and slander the sacred Dharma of the Bhagavān, and harm those disciples ordained into the teachings of the Bhagavān.

“Now, in the presence of the Bhagavān, we make this pure pledge with single-pointed minds. From now on, for as long as we circle in saṃsāra and until we gain liberation, we will never associate with such nonvirtuous friends. We will never commit such bad deeds, and never slander the sacred Dharma of the Buddha. We will never cause harm to ordained beings, never pluck out the Dharma eye of sentient beings, and never sever the lineage of the Three Jewels. Bhagavān, with your great compassion toward us, please guard these pledges of ours.”

At that time, countless beings of great intelligence stood up in the assembly and prostrated to the feet of the Bhagavān. Placing their palms together and with heads bowed, they addressed the Bhagavān: “Venerable Bhagavān, today in the presence of the Bhagavān, we make a pledge with firm resolve. From this time onward, for as long as we circle in saṃsāra and until we gain the forbearance of dharmas, may we never become kings. May we never become ministers. May we never become local teachers. May we never become lords of villages, towns, and cities. May we never become those who have power over war. May we never become traders. May we never become those who have power over offerings and temples. May we never become lords of traders, householders, and mendicants. May we never become masters and gurus. May we never have the bodies of householders. May we never have the power of passing legal judgments. May we never become wealthy and powerful.

“If we are born into those positions before we gain the forbearance of dharmas, they will become causes for acts of nonvirtue toward the teachings of the Buddha. We will commit great misdeeds and criticize and slander the sacred Dharma spoken by the Bhagavān. We will harm those ordained into the teachings of the Buddha. We will pluck out the Dharma eye of many sentient beings. We will sever the lineage of the Three Jewels. We will cause harm to immeasurable living beings. As a result of that, without doubt, we will be born into the Hell of No Respite, and wander in the lower realms with no chance of release. Bhagavān, with your compassion toward us, please bless this prayer.”

At that time, the gods, nāgas, yakṣa demons, gandharva spirits, humans, and nonhumans in the assembly rose from their seats. They prostrated to the feet of the Bhagavān, and with tears in their eyes, and with their palms placed together, they addressed the Bhagavān: “Venerable Bhagavān, since beginningless time we have wandered in saṃsāra, and through stupidity, ignorance, and pride, have committed all manner of bad deeds. We have committed nonvirtuous acts of the body, nonvirtuous acts of speech, and nonvirtuous acts of the mind. We have encouraged others to do likewise, and rejoiced when seeing and hearing of these nonvirtuous deeds. All these wrong acts, now in the presence of the Bhagavān, with shame and embarrassment, and without hiding them, we confess. Please protect us from ever doing them again. May we be purified of these obscuring bad deeds until none remain.”

Once, twice, and thrice they spoke this. Then, “From now until the end of saṃsāra, may we never meet with nonvirtuous friends and fall under the sway of bad deeds. If we should meet them, we pledge with firm resolve not to follow them. May we never commit those nonvirtuous deeds. May we never come to experience suffering for a long time. Bhagavān, with your compassion, guard and protect these prayers.”

Then, the Bhagavān addressed the gathered assembly: “Excellent! Excellent! From fear of suffering in the future and from shame, you have confessed. This is excellent. In order to be rescued from the great river of saṃsāra and to arrive at nirvāṇa, the great city of fearlessness, you have made these prayers. Excellent!”

*The Ten Practices for the Forbearance of Dharmas*³⁵

“Son of the family, endowed with ten dharmas, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas. What are these ten? Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas not abiding in the inner form, not abiding in the outer form, not abiding in the outer and inner form, not abiding in past form, not abiding in future form, not abiding in present form—by this first dharma, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas not abiding in the inner feeling, not abiding in the outer feeling, not abiding in outer and inner feeling, not abiding in past feeling, not abiding in future feeling, not abiding in present feeling—by this second dharma, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas not abiding in the inner recognition, not abiding in the outer recognition, not abiding in outer and inner recognition, not abiding in past recognition, not abiding in future recognition, not abiding in present recognition—by this third dharma, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas not abiding in the inner compositional factors, not abiding in the outer compositional factors, not abiding in outer and inner compositional factors, not abiding in past compositional factors, not

abiding in future compositional factors, not abiding in present compositional factors—by this fourth dharma, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas not abiding in the inner consciousness, not abiding in the outer consciousness, not abiding in outer and inner consciousness, not abiding in past consciousness, not abiding in future consciousness, not abiding in present recognition—by this fifth dharma, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the mahāsattva bodhisattvas, by the sixth dharma of not abiding in this world, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the mahāsattva bodhisattvas, by the seventh dharma of not abiding in the next world, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the mahāsattva bodhisattvas, by the eighth dharma of not abiding in the desire realm, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the mahāsattva bodhisattvas, by the ninth dharma of not abiding in the form realm, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.

“Furthermore, son of the family, the mahāsattva bodhisattvas, by the tenth dharma of not abiding in the formless realm, will gain the perfect path, the unerring forbearance of dharmas.”

At the time of the Bhagavān teaching these ten dharmas, bodhisattva mahāsattvas numbering seventy-two multiplied by a hundred thousand, multiplied by ten million achieved the forbearance of unborn dharmas. Bodhisattvas numbering eighty-four multiplied by a hundred thousand, multiplied by ten billion, multiplied by ten million achieved a similitude of forbearance of dharmas. Hundreds of thousands of śrāvakas severed all afflictions and became arhats. Millions of sentient beings newly developed the mind of peerless and perfect enlightenment and dwelled at the

level of irreversibility in the wisdom of the Tathāgata. Countless sentient beings newly produced the mind of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. Furthermore, countless sentient beings newly produced the mind of the Śrāvaka Vehicle.

Beings who Have Not Achieved the Forbearance of Dharma

Then, the Bhagavān addressed the vast assembly: “Of the sentient beings who have achieved the forbearance of dharmas, I allow those of the royal caste to be crowned as kings, to enjoy all kinds of wealth, and to enjoy the position of having great status. Other beings I do not.”

The bodhisattva Vajragarbha addressed the Bhagavān: “Of those who have not achieved the forbearance of dharmas, does the Bhagavān definitely not allow those of the royal caste to be crowned as kings, to enjoy all kinds of wealth, and to enjoy the position of having great status? Or, are there circumstances where permission is given?”

The Bhagavān replied: “Even though someone has not attained the forbearance of dharmas, if they should engage in the path of the ten virtues, and encourage others to do the same, then I allow those who are the royal caste to be crowned as kings, to enjoy all kinds of wealth, and to enjoy the position of having great status. Those who have not attained the forbearance of dharmas; who do not engage in the path of the ten virtues; who do not encourage others to do the same; and who with force and much effort are crowned as kings, enjoying all kinds of wealth, and enjoying the position of great status are barbaric members of the royal caste. They are barbaric masters of wealth and privilege. Stupid and seized with pride, they will destroy my profound and sacred Dharma. They will sever the lineage of the Three Jewels and extinguish the lamp of the sacred Dharma.

“They commit all kinds of harm against those ordained into my teachings. They will beat them, kick them, punish them, and

seize their robes, begging bowls, and provisions. Taking away their robes, they will make them into householders and force them to commit all manner of acts. They will bind and imprison them and deprive them of their lives. They will criticize and slander my teachings, the sacred Dharma. They will create obstacles for it, put hindrances in its way, and make no attempts to propagate it. They will steal the wealth of shrines and of the saṅgha. Such people will, without doubt, fall to the Hell of No Respite. There they will experience much suffering, wandering throughout the lower realms with no hope of release.”

Then, Vajragarbha again addressed the Bhagavān: “Bhagavān, for those beings who have not attained the forbearance of dharmas; who do not practice the path of the ten virtues; who do not encourage³⁶ others to do the same; and who, with force and effort, are crowned as kings, enjoying all kinds of wealth and enjoying the position of great status, are there causes and methods by which they will escape the sufferings of the Hell of No Respite and be free of the sufferings of the other lower realms?”

The Bhagavān replied: “There are causes and methods by which they will be able to escape. If those of the royal caste who are crowned as kings and are enjoying all kinds of wealth—although they have not attained the forbearance of dharmas and do not follow the path of the ten virtues—possess the power of faith, show service and devotion to the Three Jewels, and they do not slander, criticize, oppose, or hinder the sacred Dharma, down to a single verse, or those endowed with the three vehicles of the Buddha’s teachings; if they do not harm, beat, and kick those disciples ordained into the teachings of the Buddha, regardless of whether they are possessed of ethics, are of degenerated ethics, or have no ethics at all, but have shaved their heads and faces and wear the saffron robes; if they do not punish them and seize their robes, begging bowls, and provisions; if they do not take away their robes, make them into householders, and force them to

commit all manner of acts; if they do not bind and imprison them, and deprive them of their lives; if they do not steal the wealth of shrines and of the saṅgha; if they do not engage in harming those bhikṣus who have committed bad deeds; if they do not engage in stealing and using the wealth of the Three Jewels; if with respect they listen to, and retain the sacred Dharma endowed with the three vehicles of the Buddha's teachings; if, having heard and retained it, they put into practice what was taught with effort and enthusiasm; if they make offerings to, and serve with respect and veneration those disciples elevated by the three vehicles of my teachings; if they have a firm resolve toward the Great Vehicle, without developing any doubts about it and the possibility of turning away from it; and if they encourage sentient beings to have faith and trust in the Great Vehicle, to retain it, and train in it with enthusiasm—then I allow these barbaric beings of the ruling class and other barbaric beings of great status to be crowned as kings and to enjoy all kinds of wealth. The buddhas of the past also have allowed them to be crowned as kings and to enjoy all kinds of wealth.

“Furthermore, even if they enjoy wealth and lordship over towns and villages, they will not fall to the Hell of No Respite nor fall to other lower realms. I allow those beings to be crowned as kings and to enjoy all kinds of wealth. Therefore, although they enjoy lordship over towns and villages, they will not fall to the Hell of No Respite nor fall to other lower realms.

“Those beings who wish to purify themselves of all remaining obscurations of nonvirtuous deeds should train well in and retain the various sacred Dharmas that I have taught. Those who, in the presence of the saṅgha, confess with shame and embarrassment will be completely purified of all nonvirtuous acts committed in the past.”

6. *The Ten Virtues*

The Ten Wheels of Bodhisattvas

At that time, the bodhisattva Vajragarbha again addressed the Bhagavān: “Venerable Bhagavān, how are the bodhisattva mahāsattvas not mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle? How are they not mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle? How are they not mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle? How are they not mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle? How are they not mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle? How are they not mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle?

“How do they constantly develop the lineage of the Three Jewels? How are they not mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not? How do they constantly rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and become irreversible? How do they constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue? How do they gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds? How do they ensure that they will always meet and be in accord with a teacher?

“How are they never divorced from seeing all the buddhas? How are they never apart from the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples? How are they never apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha? How do

they develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue? How do they develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the varieties of practices for enlightenment?”

The Bhagavān addressed the bodhisattva mahāsattva Vajragarbha: “Son of the family, there are the ten wheels of the bodhisattvas. Those bodhisattvas possessed of these ten wheels will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will constantly rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle, and become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and follow a teacher.

“They are never divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They are never apart from seeing the bodhisattvas and the pratyekabuddha³⁷ disciples. They are never apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the varieties of practices and prayers for enlightenment.

“With the wisdom of the dharmas of the āryas, which like a vajra is sharp and firm, they will destroy completely all non-virtuous deeds done in the past, and they will never experience the ripening of those deeds. They will not commit any new non-virtuous deeds. With a mind that is not discouraged and lazy, they will turn the wheel of the peerless Dharma. With a mind that is not discouraged or lazy in striving for the seven jewels that are the branches of enlightenment, and with a mind that is not discouraged or lazy in freeing all sentient beings from the sickness of mental affliction, they will appear and live in the forms and dwelling places of all beings.

“Son of the family, the cakravartin ruler possessed of the seven precious jewels, wherever he goes, the jewel of the precious wheel goes first and the other jewels follow. They travel throughout the four continents dispelling all grief of body and mind for all sentient beings, and creating and increasing well-being of body and mind for all beings. Likewise, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas endowed with these ten wheels will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle and so on, up to appearing and living in the forms and dwelling places of all beings.

“Son of the family, it is like this. The chariot has four wheels. Many people travel in it along the great roads. On those roads, the earth, gravel, pebbles, grass, twigs, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits are all run over by the wheels of the chariot and are broken, crushed, and rendered unfit for use. Similarly, the bodhisattva endowed with these ten wheels will destroy the obscurations of the afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, and the obscurations of phenomena, rendering them unfit for ripening.

“Son of the family, it is like this. A sharp weapon wheel when thrown will cut off the head and limbs of the enemy and render him incapable. Likewise, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas endowed with these ten wheels will destroy all the great sufferings for the five kinds of sentient beings. They will completely remove all non-virtuous and bad deeds, rendering them unfit to ripen.

“Son of the family, it is like this. When the eon of fire arrives, five suns will appear at once, and even if there are the valleys, the seas, the rivers, and all that is comprised of the element of water, there will be nothing that is not completely dried up. Similarly, when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are endowed with these ten wheels, there will be none of the four rivers,³⁸ the obscurations of the afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and all that ripens as the root of suffering that are not completely dried up.

“Son of the family, it is like this. When the eon of wind arrives, four great winds will blow simultaneously from the four directions, and in all worlds the great and small mountains and the entire land will be destroyed and scattered far and wide. Likewise, when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are endowed with these ten wheels, none of the four wrong perceptions in the world³⁹ and none of the great mountains of pride will be left undestroyed. The obscurations of the afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and all roots that ripen as aspects of suffering will be scattered far and wide.

“Son of the family, it is like this. When the great maned lion roars just for a short time, all other beasts flee, and every being is afraid and rendered unable to move. Likewise, when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas proclaim, just for a moment, the sound of the Dharma when possessed of these ten wheels, all tīrthikas and those nonvirtuous friends who teach falsely will become afraid. Their words will become confused, and they will be unable to argue or reply.

“Son of the family, it is like this. Śakra, the ruler of the gods, when doing battle with the demi-gods, is surrounded by the celestial army, and with a vajra in his hands, goes forward into battle. The demi-gods are afraid and are turned back. Similarly, when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are endowed with these ten wheels, all tīrthikas with their false views and all nonvirtuous friends who teach falsely will become afraid and flee.

“Son of the family, it is like this. When the wish-fulfilling jewel is placed on the top of the victory standard, jewels will fall like rain, providing for all those sentient beings beset by poverty. Likewise, when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are endowed with these ten wheels and place them upon the victory standard of pure ethics, the great rains of Dharma will fall, providing for limitless sentient beings.

“Son of the family, it is like this. At night when the world is dark, people are confused and lost. When the full moon rises, the darkness disappears and those who are lost are shown the path. Likewise, when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are endowed with these ten wheels, those beings who are blind with ignorance, and who have lost the eightfold path of the āryas are taught the sacred Dharma by the bodhisattvas. The darkness of their ignorance will disappear, the light of Dharma will shine, and the eightfold path of the āryas will become clear. All mental affliction will be removed and suffering will come to an end.

“Son of the family, it is like this. When the great disc of the sun shines on the world, crops grow and develop into harvests. All flowers bloom and leaves appear. Smells and pollution disappear. Grains and medicinal fruit are brought to ripening. The snows on the mountains melt and fall and flow as rivers, eventually to reach the great sea. Similarly, when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are endowed with these ten wheels, they dwell in a great state of giving. Their qualities of the ethics of discipline, joyful patience, joyful effort, concentration, wisdom, method, love, compassion, and confidence will grow and increase greatly. They will teach the Dharma to all sentient beings. By the brilliance of the light of that Dharma, the various crops of the roots of virtue of sentient beings will grow and develop. The supreme flowers and leaves of virtuous conduct will bloom. All the bad deeds of the afflictions will completely disappear. The fruits of higher rebirth and nirvāṇa will be brought to ripening. The mountain snows of wrong views and pride will melt and fall, and the rivers of faith, ethics, learning,

giving, wisdom, and concentration will flow and fill the great sea of nirvāṇa. All sentient beings, as is their wish, will enter the great city of fearless nirvāṇa.

“Son of the family, what are these ten wheels of the bodhisattva mahāsattvas? Son of the family, these ten wheels are not designated to some other Dharma because you should know them to be the path of the ten virtues themselves. Those endowed with these ten wheels are known as the bodhisattva mahāsattvas. They will be liberated from all bad deeds. They will accumulate all virtues exactly as they wish. They will fill the great ocean of nirvāṇa. With the light of the wisdom of skillful means, they will ripen and bring well-being and happiness to all living beings.

“Why is this? Son of the family, all the bhagavān buddhas of the past also abandoned the path of the ten nonvirtues, and by praising the path of the ten virtues, they attained their fruits. Therefore, those who, having heard these teachings of the ten virtues, guard them without degeneration for their entire life will gain all those supreme and unexcelled results described previously.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Killing

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon the deed of killing for their entire life will grant all sentient beings freedom from fear. They do not create fear and anxiety in those beings and, consequently, they do not generate the suffering of fear. They will quickly, therefore, complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through the act of killing. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of afflictions, the

obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obscurations to a long life.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the act of killing, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by and attractive to all gods and humans and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and they will live a long time.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not see any frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.⁴⁰ After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are born, they will be free from sickness, blessed with a long life, of beautiful face, intelligent, and very happy.

“Furthermore, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the deed of killing. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment. Sentient beings will be born into a buddha land that will be free of weapons and where even the names ‘enemy’ and ‘harm’ will not be known, where fear will be absent and all will be blissful, and where there will be no sickness and life will be long. The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings

in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the first wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning the deed of killing.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and all varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Stealing

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon the deed of stealing for their entire life will grant all beings freedom from fear. They do not bring torment or harm. Content with wealth lawfully gained, they have no wealth or profit that runs contrary to Dharma. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through the act of stealing. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and are obscured with regard to wealth and jewels.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the act of stealing, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by and attractive to all gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and they will enjoy all wealth and possessions.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not see any frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him. After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, they will have wealth, have beautiful faces, be intelligent, be very happy, and not succumb to the five fears⁴¹ or be endowed with ordinary wealth.

Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the deed of stealing. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas, and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment. Sentient beings will be born into a buddha land that will be adorned with a variety of jewels, filled with jeweled trees, jeweled lakes, and jeweled palaces, and decorated with all ornaments for which thoughts of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are absent.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the second wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning the deed of stealing.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly

create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every virtuous root. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Adultery

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon the deed of lustful adultery for their entire life will grant all beings freedom from the fear of being distracted by the winds of desire, and freedom from jealousy, harm, and disturbance. Content with their own wives, they have no thoughts about the wife of another. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through the act of adultery. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obstructed with regard to a wife.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the act of adultery, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to all gods and humans, and thus will feel no

anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and they will not have an unfaithful wife.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him. After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are born, they will be surrounded by perfect friends and relatives, of beautiful face, intelligent, and very happy. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the deed of adultery. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment. In their buddha land, the sentient beings will not be female. They will have no desire, commit no adultery, and be possessed of the supreme chastity. All will be born by miraculous means, and unclean birth by the womb will be absent.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the third wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning the deed of adultery.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not

be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Lying

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon the act of lying will always be venerated by others. Their words will be held as trustworthy, listened to and respected, and generate no doubt. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through the act of lying. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of mental afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obstructed with regard to spoken words.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the act of lying, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to the gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and all that they say will be listened to, and trusted by others.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.

“After they die, they will be reborn with a human form. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, their words will be trusted. They will have beautiful faces, be intelligent, and be very happy. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the deed of stealing. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless

enlightenment. Sentient beings born into their buddha lands will be honest in speech, devoid of cunning, blessed with the speech of the gods, without deceit and of honest mind, engaged only in perfect behavior and in virtuous conduct, wearing the aromatic apparel of the gods, and adorned with precious jewels.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the fourth wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning the act of lying.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the

Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Divisive Speech

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon divisive speech for their entire life will be constantly venerated and regarded as a teacher. Their words will be listened to, bring harmony, and not sow suspicion. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through the act of divisive speech. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of mental afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and are obscured with regard to bringing harmony.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the act of divisive speech, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to the gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and all their words will be listened to, and will spread harmony.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their

bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.

“After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, their words will be gentle and harmonious. They will have beautiful faces, be intelligent, and be very happy. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the deed of divisive speech. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment.

“Their buddha lands will be strong and indestructible, adorned with the materials and substances of the gods. There will be accord, an absence of dissension, peace, and harmony, and they will be populated by sentient beings seeking virtuous dharmas. In harmony and with great respect, they will listen to the sacred Dharma.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the fifth wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning divisive speech.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great

Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Harsh Speech

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon the act of harsh speech for their entire life will be constantly venerated and regarded as a teacher. All their words will bring joy to others and be listened to, and they will not cause suspicion. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through

the act of harsh speech. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of mental afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obstructed with regard to peace and harmony.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the act of harsh speech, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to the gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and all their words will be pleasant and attractive to others.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.

“After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, their speech will be gentle and harmonious. They will have beautiful faces, be intelligent, and be very happy. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the deed of harsh words. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment.

“In their buddha lands there will be no unpleasant sounds. Instead, these will be filled with beautiful melodies and the sounds

of Dharma. The beings born there will be mindful and intelligent, blessed with the beautiful voice of Brahmā, and very peaceful. They will constantly encourage each other with gentle words.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the sixth wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning the act of harsh words.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content

with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Idle Gossíp

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon the act of idle gossip for their entire life will be constantly venerated and regarded as a teacher. All their words will be meaningful. Those who hear their words will listen with respect and not fall prey to doubt and suspicion. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through the act of idle gossip. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of mental afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obstructed with regard to meaningful speech.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the act of idle gossip, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to the gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and all their words will be meaningful.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.

“After they die, they will be reborn with a human form. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, their words will be meaningful. They will have beautiful faces, be intelligent, and be very happy. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the acts of idle talk. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment.

“In their buddha lands all idle gossip will be absent, and these will instead be pervaded by the many varieties of the supreme sounds of the Dharma of the bodhisattva teachings. They will be populated by beings who, by way of immeasurable prayers and perfect wisdom, will be skilled in teaching the various points of the Dharma.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the seventh wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning the act of idle gossip.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning a Mind of Attachment

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon the mind of attachment for their entire life will be constantly venerated and regarded as a teacher. Their minds will be pure and free of strife. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through a mind of attachment. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of mental afflictions, the

obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obstructed with regard to a mind free of desire.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning the mind of attachment, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to the gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and their minds will be pure and free of strife.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.

“After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, their minds will be pure and free of strife. They will have beautiful faces, be intelligent, and be very happy. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the desirous mind. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment.

“Their buddha lands will be as smooth as the palm of a hand and awash with a variety of jewels; permeated by various jeweled trees; and filled with jeweled clothes, provisions ornamented with jewels, jeweled victory standards, banners, parasols, gold, silver, pearl nets, and so on. They will be places of beauty and delight.

Beings born there will have no pride, be beautiful to look at, be of sound faculties, and be of balanced minds. They will be places adorned by the excellent qualities of minds free of desire.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the eighth wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning the mind of attachment.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha.

They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Malice

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon malice for their entire life will be constantly venerated and regarded as a teacher. Their minds will be pure and free from taints. Because of this, they will complete the accumulation of all roots of virtue.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through malice. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of mental afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obstructed with regard to having good will.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning malice, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to the gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their minds will be pure and free from taints.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.

“After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, their words will be meaningful. They will have beautiful faces, be intelligent, and be very happy. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and abandon the harmful mind. They will cut off all nonvirtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment.

“In their buddha lands there will be no pollution, imperfection, clouds, mist patches, dust, bad smells, ugliness, or anything repellent. The inhabitants there will be fulsomely adorned with jewels and gems. They will be attractive, without pride, beautiful, and with all faculties intact, and their minds will always be peaceful and blessed with love, compassion, and other excellent qualities.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the ninth wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning malice.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the prayers and varieties of practices for enlightenment. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Wheel of Abandoning Wrong Views

“Son of the family, furthermore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who abandon wrong views for their entire life will be honored and venerated as teachers. Their minds will be pure and they will be freed from wrong conceptions.

“Sunk in the great ocean of wandering through the realms of the five kinds of beings since time without beginning, beings commit nonvirtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind through wrong views. They encourage others to do the same, and rejoice when seeing or hearing of these acts. Because of this, they will become obstructed by the obscurations of mental afflictions, the obscurations of sentient beings, the obscurations of phenomena, and obstructed with regard to the perfect view.

“Therefore, by this wheel of abandoning wrong views, all these obstructions are completely removed and destroyed, and their ripening will not come to pass. In this life, they will be liked by, and attractive to the gods and humans, and thus will feel no anxiety. Their bodies and minds will be wholesome, and their minds will be pure and freed from wrong conceptions.

“When they pass from this life, their minds and bodies will not be tormented by suffering. Surrounded by their beautiful sons, wives, and inner circle, they will not behold the frightening messengers of the Lord of Death. Furthermore, they will meet with a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. Their bodies and minds will be filled with joy, and with great devotion, they will generate faith in him.

“After they die, they will be reborn among humans. Their faculties will be complete, and all parts of their body will be whole. Wherever they are reborn, their minds will be pure and free of wrong conception. Again, they will meet a wonderful teacher who is tamed by the Dharma, possessed of ethics and excellent qualities, and a true field of merit. They will train in his teachings and completely abandon wrong views. They will cut off all non-virtuous dharmas and perfect all the excellent virtuous dharmas. They will seek out the various dharmas of the Great Vehicle, gradually immerse themselves in all the prayers and practices of the bodhisattvas and, having entered the ocean of vast exalted wisdom, attain the peerless enlightenment.

“Their buddha lands will not have the Śrāvaka Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. There will be no cohorts of the celestial māras and no groups of tīrthikas. The inhabitants there will be adorned with various jewels. They will be possessed of the perfect view and blessed with all that is wonderful and all good fortune. They will have completely abandoned views of wrong conduct, views of permanence, views of nihilism, views of self and mine.

They will have very long lives, and will enjoy the one taste of the Great Vehicle.

“The life of these tathāgatas will be immeasurable, and they will teach the Dharma to sentient beings in accordance with their suitability to be trained. Even after they pass into nirvāṇa, their sacred Dharma will remain a long time, bringing happiness and well-being to limitless living beings.

“Son of the family, this is the tenth wheel, known as ‘the bodhisattva mahāsattva wheel of abandoning wrong views.’ The bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessed of this wheel will not be mistaken with regard to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will not be mistaken with regard to the Great Vehicle, and will not be mistaken with regard to a person of the Great Vehicle.

“They will constantly develop and increase the lineage of the Three Jewels. They will not be mistaken with regard to those ordained within the teachings of the Tathāgata who wear, at the very least, a fragment of the robes and who shave their heads and faces, regardless of their being worthy vessels of the Dharma or not. They will rise higher and higher within the Dharma of the Great Vehicle and will become irreversible. They will constantly create and develop discriminating wisdom and the varieties of virtue. They will gain mastery over, and become irreversible in the samādhis, the retentions, the forbearances, and the grounds. They will always meet and be in accord with a teacher.

“They will never be divorced from seeing all the buddhas. They will never be divorced from seeing the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be apart from hearing the Dharma, and from making offerings and devotions to the saṅgha. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content

with their perseverance in every root of virtue. They will develop a state of mind in which they are never content with the varieties of practices for enlightenment, the prayers, and the six perfections. They will gain other fruits, as have been described.”

The Path of the Ten Virtues

“Son of the family, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas endowed with these ten wheels will soon gain the perfect and complete enlightenment. Why is that? All the tathāgatas, arhats, and perfect and complete buddhas of the past abandoned the ten nonvirtues, and praised the fruits of the path of the ten virtues. In order to bring happiness and well-being to all beings; to generate and develop the path to enlightenment; to dispel the sufferings of the karma and afflictions of all living beings; to wither away the three suffering realms; to preserve the lineage of the Three Jewels; to completely do away with the existence of the three realms; to sever the continuum of the aggregates, spheres, and sensory sources; and to quickly bring all beings to the fear-free city of nirvāṇa, they abandoned, as mentioned, the fruits of the ten nonvirtues.

“Therefore, son of the family, if someone who has not practiced properly these paths of the ten virtues, or has not even properly guarded just a few of the paths of the ten virtues should claim ‘I am a perfect practitioner of the Great Vehicle’ or ‘I will gain the perfect and complete enlightenment,’ that person is telling a great lie. They deceive the world in the presence of the bhagavān buddhas of the ten directions. They know no shame and no modesty, and are purveyors of nothingness, holders of the view of nihilism, deceivers, and of great ignorance. When they die, they will fall to the lower realms.

“Son of the family, if someone is satisfied with just speaking words or merely listening, and sees no need to practice or make efforts in the paths of the ten virtues, and yet holds that they will attain enlightenment or nirvāṇa, that has as much basis as the

number of sentient beings equal to the number of particles in the earth element of all the buddha lands of the ten directions becoming buddhas and reaching nirvāṇa in a single moment of an eon. Why is that? The paths of the ten virtues are the very root of the Great Vehicle. They are the causes of enlightenment and are like steps leading to nirvāṇa.

“Son of the family, if someone is satisfied with just generating intentions or merely making prayers, and sees no need to practice or make efforts in the paths of the ten virtues, and yet holds that they will attain the enlightenment of a buddha or nirvāṇa, that has as much basis as the number of sentient beings equal to the number of particles in the earth element of all the buddha lands of the ten directions becoming complete and perfect buddhas and reaching nirvāṇa in a single moment of an eon. Why is that? The paths of the ten virtues are the causes of the special features and excellent qualities of the world and beyond the world.

“Son of the family, if someone makes no efforts in the paths of the ten virtues, and for as many eons as the number of particles in all the buddha lands of the ten directions they say that they are a practitioner of the Great Vehicle, and they teach, listen, generate intentions, and make prayers, they will not attain nirvāṇa, and furthermore, they will not be freed from suffering.

“Son of the family, it is by making efforts in the paths of the ten virtues that the great castes, such as the royal castes and the Brahmins; the celestial beings of the four great kings, up to those gods of no recognition and no nonrecognition; and beings of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, up to those of the great attainment of the perfect and complete enlightenment, come into existence. These are all features and characteristics of making efforts in the paths of the ten virtues.

“Therefore, son of the family, those who wish for the swift attainment of complete and perfect enlightenment should be adorned with the ornament of making efforts in the paths of the ten virtues because restraining from the ten nonvirtuous acts

and not abiding in them will produce the complete and perfect enlightenment of a buddha. Those who wish to swiftly engage in the domain of the Great Vehicle, or who desire to quickly attain the complete and perfect enlightenment, or who wish to quickly complete all virtuous dharmas should guard well the paths of the ten virtues. Why is this? The paths of the ten virtues are the causes of every virtuous dharma, bases for the formation of excellent qualities, and causes for the attainment of all that is supreme in the world and beyond. Therefore, make efforts in the paths of the ten virtues.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

If you wish to dispel the sufferings of existence
 And to quickly attain the great enlightenment,
 Do not be lax, but make efforts in the attainment of
 The wheels of the ten virtues.

By doing so, you will make no mistake
 Regarding the sacred Dharma of the three vehicles,
 The beings of the three vehicles,
 And those ordained into my teachings.

You will gain faith in the Great Vehicle practices,
 And having understood the supreme Dharma
 That brings comfort to all in saṃsāra,
 You will quickly attain the great enlightenment.

If you completely abandon the act of killing,
 You will be revered by all and become a teacher.
 Never sick, you will live a long life,
 Happy and well, and causing no harm.

In all the places that you are reborn,
 You will have great liking for the paths
 That lie within the domain of the Buddha.
 You will meet buddhas and the saṅgha,
 And quickly gain peerless enlightenment.

If you completely abandon the act of stealing,
 You will be respected by the wise,
 And be regarded as a teacher.
 All paths that generate desire will cease,
 And the path of no desire will be born.

In all lives you will be blessed with wealth,
 And become a great benefactor
 Adorned with many jewels and gems,
 And will gain a beautiful buddha land.

If you completely abandon the act of adultery,
 The pollution of affliction will cease.
 The ocean of the realm of desire will dry up,
 And quickly you will gain a pure buddha land.

From the swamps of desire
 You will pull many beings,
 And bringing them into the Great Vehicle,
 Will place them into the celibacy of Brahmā.

If you completely abandon the act of lying,
 You will gain the power and wisdom of the āryas.
 Constantly you will delight in telling the truth
 And conquer the suffering of lying.

Planting words that are trustworthy,
 You will meet the Buddha and saṅgha.
 Becoming familiar with not telling lies,
 Soon you will attain the great enlightenment.

If you completely abandon words of divisive speech,
 You will become a vessel fit for virtuous dharmas.
 You will behold the Buddha, Dharma, and saṅgha,
 And not succumb to nihilistic views.

You will delight in the nonattachment of the āryas,
 Attain the precious treasure dhāraṇī,
 Come to understand the deep ocean of the profound,
 And soon attain the peerless enlightenment.

If you completely abandon harsh speech
 And speak only gentle and pleasing words,
 You will be revered by all living beings,
 And all previous unvirtuous acts will cease.

Those around you will be brought to joy.
 You will become the teacher of bodhisattvas,
 Come to know the domain of many buddhas,
 And travel beyond the ten grounds.

If you completely abandon idle gossip,
 You will be respected by the wise,
 And be regarded as a teacher.
 All words spoken to others
 Will have the five qualities.⁴²

Constantly you will hear the words of the āryas
 And delight in seeking the path of the āryas.
 You will cross the great ocean of the buddhas,
 And soon gain the state of omniscience.

If you completely abandon the mind of attachment,
 You will not deride the ārya beings.
 You will make offerings to those in the saffron robes
 And gain the enlightenment of the three vehicles

You will always be born into a pure realm
 And dwell where the teacher resides.
 Riding the vehicle of the peerless vehicle,
 You will swiftly gain the wisdom of the buddhas.

If you completely abandon malice
 And meditate solely on a mind of love,
 You will quickly gain meditative equipoise,
 And become enamored of the domain of the āryas.

You will be born into a pure buddha land
 Free from all the defects of faults.
 Staying there, you will gain enlightenment.
 Therefore, abandon completely all malice.

If you completely abandon all wrong views
 And meditate on a mind of pure faith,
 You will delight in teaching the three vehicles,
 And make offerings to all the buddhas.

You will be free from the three suffering realms,
 Meet the ārya saṅgha,
 Be endowed with the qualities of the bodhisattvas,
 And attain the supreme wisdom.

It is by the paths of the ten virtues
 That the supreme enlightenment is gained.
 Meditative equipoise, the dhāraṇī retentions,
 The grounds and the forbearances will also be created.

By this wheel of great significance,
 You will destroy all lower realms.
 All obscurations of bad deeds are also vanquished,
 And you will quickly attain the great enlightenment.

7. The Characteristics of a Field of Merit

The Great Armor Wheel of Giving

The Wheel of Giving Material Goods

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the wheel of great armor that is the giving of material goods. It has ten aspects. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What are these ten? They are various foods; drinks; clothing; jewels; elephants; horses; chariots; parts of the body such as legs, arms, ears, nose, head, eyes, marrow, brain, skin, bones, flesh, and blood; land; kingdoms; children; wives; male and female servants; houses; fields; and so forth⁴³ that are all given away, and when each is given, no heed is paid to body or life.

“Moreover, they are not given away with the intention to gain for oneself worldly and nonworldly happiness, but rather, in order to grow the shoot of great love and compassion for all sentient beings. They generate the intention of giving in order to create skillful means and supreme wisdom. They generate the intention of giving in order to benefit and bring happiness to all sentient beings. They generate the intention of giving in order to relieve the sufferings of all sentient beings. They give without thought of receiving from others, without a mind of resentment, without a mind of envy, without a mind of miserliness, and without a mind of discouragement. Whether that which is given is of great value, of

little value, or is just a morsel of food, they generate the intention to give it without any hope of a result ripening. They generate the intention to give it without any hope of a result that is the Śrāvaka Vehicle. They generate the intention to give it without any hope of a result that is the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. Whether that which is given is of great value, of little value, or is just a morsel of food, they generate the intention of dedicating it for the great wisdom of omniscience.

“Son of the family, if the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the wheel of great armor that is the giving of material goods, they first generate the intention and abandon the five sense desires, and in doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, honor them, and protect them. Why is that? Generating the intention of giving as done by the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas is devoid of a mind of love and compassion. They give in order to alleviate their own poverty, to deliver themselves from suffering, to gain happiness for themselves, and for them alone to pass into nirvāṇa. They do not give for the sake of others. The deeds of giving performed by bodhisattva mahāsattvas are done with minds of love and compassion in order to alleviate the poverty of all living beings, to free all beings from suffering, to achieve happiness for all living beings, and to bring all beings to nirvāṇa. They do not give for themselves alone. Therefore, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become great fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, honor them, and protect them.

“If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas practice the perfection of the giving of material goods, they are not attached to the pleasures of the five senses. All possessions they own and which bring them joy, they give away to sentient beings. They give with the intention of gathering sentient beings, with a patience that ignores all their own suffering, with a mind that wishes to alleviate the suffering of

all beings, with the intention of bringing happiness to all beings, and with the intention of bringing all sentient beings to nirvāṇa. Therefore, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, honor them, and protect them.

“Son of the family, if someone is not attached to the five worldly sense objects and gives with love and great compassion, that person is known as ‘a mahāsattva bodhisattva.’ They are perfect fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. If someone has not abandoned attachment to the five worldly sense objects and gives without love and great compassion, even if they give away countless, immeasurable material goods, they are not known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas, are not perfect fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and therefore, they are not sealed by the authority of the āryas.

“Therefore, abandon attachment to the five worldly sense objects and give with love and great compassion. If someone has not abandoned attachment to the five worldly sense objects and gives without love and great compassion, they are not known as bodhisattvas and are not perfect fields of merit.

“Son of the family, if someone gives without having abandoned attachment to the five worldly sense objects, they have not alleviated even a tiny part of the suffering of their own body, and therefore, what need is there to mention that they have not alleviated the limitless suffering of all living beings?”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke these verses:

Being possessed of the wheel of giving material goods
Is admired by the wise with purity of mind.
Therefore, abandon the five objects of the senses
And bring benefit and happiness to all beings.

Give to bring joy to all living beings
 Without hope of any ripening reward.
 Even if the gift given is small,
 You become a perfect field of merit.

Even if you give away much,
 But remain within the five sense objects,
 You have no seal of authority from the āryas
 And remain in the uncertain category.

Even if the gift given is small, but is done
 Without remaining within the five sense objects,
 You become a perfect field of merit
 For the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

Therefore, abandon the five sense objects
 And constantly engage in pure giving.
 If it is done for the happiness of all beings,
 You become a perfect field of merit.

The Wheel of Giving the Dharma

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess a wheel of great armor that is the giving of the Dharma. It has ten aspects. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires, and quickly attain the samādhi known as Light of the Beacon of the Sun. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become great fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What are these ten? It is like this. The sacred Dharma taught by the tathāgatas comprises the sacred Dharma possessed of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the sacred Dharma possessed of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, the sacred Dharma possessed of the Great Vehicle, worldly Dharma, Dharma that is beyond the world, contaminated Dharma, uncontaminated Dharma, composite

Dharma, noncomposite Dharma, and nondual Dharma. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas have faith in and respect for these ten. As they have heard them, so they try to retain them as best they can. They contemplate them. Finally, they comprehend them and teach them as appropriate to others.

“When they teach these ten, they do so with a mind free of envy, a mind free of miserliness, a mind free of pride, a mind free of the thought of gain, a mind of not disparaging others, a mind of not praising self, a mind of service, a helpful mind, a mind of great love, and a mind of great compassion. They teach those of the Śrāvaka Vehicle the Dharma of the śrāvakas. They do not teach them the Dharma of the pratyekabuddhas or the Dharma of the Great Vehicle. To those of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, they teach the Dharma of the pratyekabuddhas. They do not teach them the Dharma of the śrāvakas or the Dharma of the Great Vehicle. To those of the Great Vehicle, they teach the Dharma of the Great Vehicle. They do not teach them the Dharma of the śrāvakas or the Dharma of the pratyekabuddhas.

“They teach the sacred Dharma according to the faculties and suitability of living beings. They do not teach the Dharma not in accordance with faculties, or to those who are not suitable vessels. They do not urge those of the Great Vehicle to practice the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas or the vehicle of the śrāvakas. Sometimes they will urge those of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle to make efforts in the Great Vehicle. Sometimes they will urge those of the Śrāvaka Vehicle to practice the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and sometimes to make efforts in the Great Vehicle. They urge them to have great faith and respect for the sacred Dharma of the Tathāgata—even down to a single verse or half a verse—and not to disparage or slander it, to hinder it or to obstruct it. They encourage them to see the teacher of the Dharma as the Buddha, the listeners themselves as patients, and the Dharma taught as excellent medicine. Abandoning the five sense objects, and with no hope of reward, thus they teach the Dharma.

“Son of the family, these are the ten aspects of the great armor wheel of the giving of the Dharma, possessed by the mahāsattva bodhisattvas. Those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who possess this wheel free themselves from the five sense desires, and quickly attain the samādhi known as Light of the Beacon of the Sun. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become great fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

The wise practice the giving of Dharma,
Teaching the vehicles in accord with suitability.
They do not teach the vehicles of others.
Having listened, they do not disparage the teachings.

They teach the sacred Dharma
According to faculties and suitability,
And not in contradiction to faculties and suitability.
Whatever Dharma accords with individual disposition,
With this they teach and please them.

To those who practice the Great Vehicle,
They do not teach the other two vehicles.
Sometimes, to those of the two vehicles,
They teach the middle and supreme vehicle.

They encourage listening with faith and respect,
And not with disparagement and slander;
To make offerings to teachers of the Dharma
And to recognize them as buddhas.

Because it dispels the illness of affliction,
 They urge listeners to hold the Dharma as medicine.
 Having abandoned thoughts of gain and reputation,
 They teach and explain the sacred Dharma.

The Great Armor Wheel of Pure Ethics

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of pure ethics. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What is this, the great armor wheel of pure ethics? Son of the family, the pure ethics of the bodhisattvas is of two kinds: the common and the exclusive. What is the common armor wheel of pure ethics? The vows of ethics taken by the male and female lay householder, or the vows of the monastic who is ordained by way of the pratimokṣa ethics are the common wheel of pure ethics of the bodhisattva because they exist in common with all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. This pure wheel of ethics will not eliminate the afflictions of all living beings nor dispel their wrong views, nor liberate them from the obscurations of karma or from saṃsāra, and therefore, it is not known as a great armor wheel. Such beings are not known as bodhisattva mahāsattvas, and are not perfect fields of merit for the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

“What is this, the great armor exclusive wheel of pure ethics of the bodhisattvas? It is those bodhisattvas who guard their ethics with a mind devoid of malice, a mind devoid of resentment, and a mind of equality toward sentient beings of the ten directions; and who completely guard their ethics by not discriminating, and making no distinctions between the best of sentient beings, the worst of sentient beings, and those in-between, such as those of

good ethics, those of bad ethics, those who give, those who are miserly, those who are kind, those who are angry, those who work hard, and those who are lazy. They are those who guard their ethics by having no anger, no hatred, and no bad conduct toward any sentient being; who guard their ethics by not contemplating the aggregates, spheres, and sensory sources of the three realms; who guard their ethics by not dwelling in the desire realm; who guard their ethics by not dwelling in the form realm; who guard their ethics by not dwelling in the formless realm; who guard their ethics by not dwelling in the ripened fruits of existence; who guard their ethics by not dwelling in gain or loss; and who guard their ethics by not dwelling in compositional factors. This is what is known as ‘the great armor exclusive wheel of pure ethics of the bodhisattvas.’

“Son of the family, if the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this great armor wheel of pure ethics, they develop their minds, abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

Dwelling as a householder, taking the vows
 And the pratimokṣa ethics of the ordained
 Are in common with the two vehicles,
 And are not of the great bodhisattvas.

The wise guard their pure ethics
 Meditating on the dharmas of emptiness,
 Not dwelling in and not relying upon all worlds,
 Not dwelling in all existence.

The pure ethics of abandoning signs
 Has no attachment and no affliction.
 The guarding of such ethics
 Is known as the perfect field of merit.

The Great Armor Wheel of Patience

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of patience. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What is this, the great armor wheel of patience? Son of the family, the patience of the bodhisattvas is of two types: worldly and nonworldly. What is the worldly patience of the bodhisattvas? It is patience that operates with affliction, by objectifying sentient beings, by appropriating, with identification, relying upon the results of ripening, and relying upon meritorious karma. It is patience that relies upon one’s form, sound, smell, taste, and physical sensations. It is patience that engages, a patience that cannot ignore suffering, a weak patience, a patience that gives up on sentient beings, a patience that deceives, a patience that deludes others, and a patience that does not bring happiness and well-being to sentient beings. This is the worldly patience of the bodhisattvas. This worldly patience is particular to the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and others. It is not a great armor wheel of patience. Such beings are not known as bodhisattva mahāsattvas and are not perfect fields of merit for the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

“What is this nonworldly great armor wheel of patience possessed by the bodhisattvas? It is patience without affliction, an unattached patience practiced in order to bring happiness and well-being to all sentient beings through the light of the great

dharmas of all āryas. It is patience practiced in dependence upon sensory sources severed from all functioning phenomena, spoken words, causes, identification, letters, and language. By meditating on this patience, the three thoroughly afflicted states, the three eons, the three characteristics, the three times, the three existences, the three compositional factors, the three root unvirtuous acts, the four rivers, the four knots, the four appropriations, the four knots of the body,⁴⁴ and so on are all eradicated. Therefore, when meditating on this patience, the mind and the intellect are very peaceful. Because of these factors, this patience is known as ‘the nonworldly great armor wheel of patience.’

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessing this great armor wheel of patience first develop their minds, and abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

Patience is of two kinds:

That with identification, and that without.

That with identification possesses attachment,

And is not praised by the wise.

Developing patience by relying upon

The three compositional factors,

And the aggregates, spheres, and sensory sources

Is patience with affliction;

It is not of the mahāsattva bodhisattvas.

Developing the unattached patience,

Having dispelled the four wrong perceptions,

Having pacified the three compositional factors—
Is a patience praised by all.

With all compositional factors pacified,
All conceptualization abandoned,
The mind as equalized as the sky—
Is a patience praised by all.

With the one taste of all phenomena,
Empty, without identification and at peace,
A mind not abiding anywhere and not attached—
Is a patience bringing great happiness and well-being.

The Great Armor Wheel of Effort

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of effort. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What is this, the great armor wheel of effort? Son of the family, the effort of the bodhisattvas is of two kinds: worldly and nonworldly. What is the worldly effort of the bodhisattvas? The bodhisattvas with great effort strive in the three acts of worldly merit. What are these acts of merit? They are the meritorious act of giving, the meritorious act of protecting ethics, and the meritorious act of meditating. These three acts are the three aspects of making effort. These three types of effort objectify sentient beings, are afflicted, possess appropriations, rely upon the results of ripening, and rely upon meritorious acts. This is the worldly effort of the bodhisattvas. It is effort shared by the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and others. It is not a great armor wheel. Those bodhisattvas are not bodhisattva mahāsattvas and are not perfect fields of merit for the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

“What is the nonworldly, great armor wheel of effort possessed by the bodhisattvas? It is the bodhisattvas who, with huge effort, equalize their minds toward all sentient beings, and dispel all afflicted karma and suffering. Such effort is praised by all the āryas. It is without affliction, without appropriation, without location, and without reliance. It is a mind of great effort with a recognition that does not discriminate between the best living beings, the worst, and those in-between; not making distinctions between those who make effort and those who are lazy, those who give and those who are miserly, those of good ethics and those of bad ethics, and those who are kind and those who are angry.

“It is effort of great perseverance that is equal for all sentient beings of the three realms, operates without objectifying, and operates with a mind that does not dwell in speech, conceptualization, and analysis. It is effort of great perseverance that does not conceptualize the aggregates, spheres, and sensory sources of the three realms of existence. It is an effort that does not dwell in the desire realm; an effort that does not dwell in the form realm; an effort that does not dwell in the formless realm; an effort that does not conceptualize the ripened fruits of existence; an effort that does not abide in gain or loss; an effort that does not abide in compositional factors; an effort that does not abide in the phenomena of the three worldly meritorious deeds; and is an effort that perseveres in the phenomena of the three meritorious deeds that are beyond the world. This is the nonworldly, great armor wheel of effort possessed by the bodhisattvas.

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessing this great armor wheel of effort first develop their minds, abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

The childish who are attached to the six faculties,
Carried away by the five rivers,⁴⁵
May make great efforts,
But this is not effort praised by the wise.

Effort made by objectifying sentient beings,
With affliction and with appropriation,
Is not a perfect field of merit;
And is not the effort of the great bodhisattvas.

The effort of the wise
Has cast far away all attachment,
Is of a mind unattached, dwelling nowhere,
And is a perfect field of merit.

It has no attachment to name and form;
Has abandoned aggregates, spheres, and sensory sources;
And is the support of all in existence.
This is the effort of a great bodhisattva.

Though acting in the world,
It is like the moon reflected in water
As they travel to the ends of effort.
The affliction that binds all beings
Is completely destroyed by this wheel.

The Great Armor Wheel of Concentration

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of concentration. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass

all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What is the great armor wheel of concentration? Son of the family, the concentration of the bodhisattvas is of two kinds: worldly and nonworldly. What is the worldly concentration of the bodhisattvas? The meditation on the concentration of the bodhisattvas dwelling in the aggregates; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the spheres; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in sensory sources; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the desire realm; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the form realm; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the formless realm; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the three vows; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the three liberations; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the four close placements of mindfulness; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the four perfect abandonments; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the four branches of miraculous powers; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the five forces; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the five powers; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the seven branches of enlightenment; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the eightfold path of the āryas; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the earth element; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the water element; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the fire element; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the air element; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the space element; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the consciousness element; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in feelings of pleasure; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in feelings of suffering; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the

feeling that is neither happiness nor suffering; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in limitless space; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in limitless consciousness; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in nothingness; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in no recognition and no nonrecognition; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in this world; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in the next world; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in limited recognition; the meditation on the concentration dwelling in vast recognition; and the meditation on the concentration dwelling in limitless recognition—these concentrations are afflicted, and are possessed of appropriation and attachment. It is concentration shared by the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and others. It is not a great armor wheel. Those bodhisattvas are not bodhisattva mahāsattvas and are not perfect fields of merit for the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

“What is the nonworldly, great armor wheel of concentration possessed by the bodhisattvas? The meditation on the concentration of the bodhisattvas divorced from the aggregates; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the spheres; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the sensory sources; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the desire realm; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the form realm; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the formless realm; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the three vows; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the three liberations; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the four close placements of mindfulness; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the four perfect abandonments; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the four branches of miraculous powers; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the five forces; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the five powers;

the meditation on the concentration divorced from the seven branches of enlightenment; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the eightfold path of the āryas; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the earth element; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the water element; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the fire element; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the air element; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the space element; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the consciousness element; the meditation on the concentration divorced from feelings of pleasure; the meditation on the concentration divorced from feelings of suffering; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the feeling that is neither happiness nor suffering; the meditation on the concentration divorced from limitless space; the meditation on the concentration divorced from limitless consciousness; the meditation on the concentration divorced from nothingness; the meditation on the concentration divorced from no recognition and no nonrecognition; the meditation on the concentration divorced from this world; the meditation on the concentration divorced from the next world; the meditation on the concentration divorced from limited recognition; the meditation on the concentration divorced from vast recognition; and the meditation on the concentration divorced from limitless recognition are concentrations that generate the great light of the āryas, and are freed from affliction, appropriation, and attachment. This is the nonworldly, great armor wheel of concentration possessed by the bodhisattvas.

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessing this great armor wheel of concentration first develop their minds, abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

In order to eradicate your own heavy burden,
Meditating on samādhi and objectifying,
And desiring to dispel all your own affliction
Do not possess the characteristics of the wise.

Depending upon the world and conceptualizing,
Though you wish for freedom and meditate on samādhi,
Dwelling within the extremes of here and there,
Will not bring benefit to sentient beings.

Meditating on samādhi, eradicating the burden,
And dispelling all affliction
In order to bring happiness to all living beings
Are possessed of the characteristics of the wise.

In order to satisfy all living beings,
Meditating on samādhi that dwells nowhere,
Severing all realms of desire—
Such a one is known as a great being.

Those who meditate on the samādhi of peace
In order to liberate all bound by saṃsāra,
And to bring them to the city of no fear
Are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas.

The Great Armor Wheel of Wisdom

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of wisdom. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit

for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“Son of the family, the wisdom of the bodhisattvas is of two types: worldly and nonworldly. What is the worldly wisdom of the bodhisattvas? It is like this. Those bodhisattvas rely solely upon reading, reciting, questioning, listening to, and teaching others the Dharmas of the three vehicles with the wish to dispel the darkness of ignorance of all sentient beings. In order to light the lamp of wisdom for all beings, they make great efforts to read, recite, question, listen to, and teach extensively to others the Dharma possessed of the vehicle of the śrāvakas as taught by the Tathāgata, and to persevere in that with proper effort. They make great efforts to read, recite, question, listen to, and teach extensively to others the Dharma possessed of the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas as taught by the Tathāgata, and to persevere in that with proper effort. They make great efforts to read, recite, question, listen to, and teach extensively to others the Dharma possessed of the Great Vehicle as taught by the Tathāgata, and to persevere in that with proper effort. It is not the search for the branches of the nonafflicted paths of the āryas, the search for the paths of the āryas, the search for the freedom contained in the paths of the āryas, nor a striving for the perfect pacifying wisdom. It is constantly beset by conceptualization. It is a striving for a wisdom possessed of wisdom. It is possessed of appropriation and of attachment. It is the worldly wisdom of the bodhisattvas. It is wisdom shared by the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and others. It is not a great armor wheel. Those bodhisattvas are not bodhisattva mahāsattvas and are not perfect fields of merit for the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

“What is the nonworldly wisdom of the bodhisattvas? Those bodhisattvas strive on the path to enlightenment, and read, recite, question, listen to, and teach extensively the perfect Dharmas of the three vehicles to the best of their abilities. However, they dwell in the practice of not objectifying, with mind unmoving, not

conceptualizing, and of perceiving no nature, and with a mind like space. They dwell with a mind pacified, a wisdom of no increase and no decline, a mind of no attachment, a mind of noncreation and noncessation, an irreversible mind, a mind perceiving the equality of all dharmas, a mind of suchness, a mind of the perfect limit, a mind of the dharmadhātu, a mind of no-self, a nonconceptualizing mind, a mind of peace, patience, and a mind devoid of concepts.

“Because they are skilled in the realm of no fear, they dwell in happiness. Because they are skilled in the supreme understanding of nonabiding and nonattachment, they dwell in happiness. Such a wisdom is devoid of appropriation and of attachment, and is known as ‘the nonworldly great armor wheel of wisdom possessed by the bodhisattvas.’

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessing this great armor wheel of wisdom first develop their minds, abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

The Great Armor Wheel of Skillful Means

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of skillful means. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What is the great armor wheel of skillful means? Son of the family, the skillful means of the bodhisattvas is of two types: worldly and nonworldly. What is the worldly skillful means of the bodhisattvas? It is like this. For the sake of themselves, for the

sake of others, or for the sake of both self and others, bodhisattvas conceptualize self and others, and with various crafts and skills, and in order to achieve the welfare of self and others, they make offerings and devotions to the Bhagavān Buddha, the bodhisattvas, the pratyekabuddhas, the śrāvakas, and to their mother and father. When they see the sick, the wretched, those bereft of protection and home, and those suffering under great harm, they will liberate them with great skillful means, and with the four ways of gathering disciples, they will completely ripen them.

“Those bodhisattvas, because they abide in the Great Vehicle, teach the subtle and profound Dharma to those who are not vessels of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, or Great Vehicle, and to those whose śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha faculties are not fully ripened. They encourage them to train in it, and to strive in the concentrations of the āryas. Furthermore, they teach the ultimate reality and encourage them to strive in it. They encourage them to understand going beyond the four wrong perceptions, to know the characteristics of the dharmas of no downfall, and to immerse themselves in the four individual knowledges. Furthermore, with the wisdom of skillfully engaging them in the four close placements of mindfulness, the four perfect abandonments, the four branches of miraculous powers, the five forces, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the eightfold path of the āryas, together with all remaining paths, they fully ripen these sentient beings.

“Those beings who are attached to material gain, renown, and possessions; whose minds are untamed; and whose roots of virtue are undeveloped, they fully ripen by encouraging them to read and recite the sūtras, the monastic discipline scriptures, and the classic scriptures, and to read and recite teachings of liberation taught by other buddhas. Those who are averse to giving, they fully ripen by encouraging them to give away their wealth and precious possessions. Those who are of a coarse and untamed nature, they encourage to train in the four Brahmā states. Those

who are angry, they encourage to train in patience. Those who are lazy, they encourage to train in perseverance. Those whose minds are distracted, they encourage to train in concentration. To those whose understanding is confused, they teach the perfect Dharmas, and being wise in giving teachings and explaining them, they fully ripen these sentient beings.

“Those who have no faith in the Three Jewels, who do not abide within them or follow their practices, they fully ripen by teaching them to take refuge in the Three Jewels, to have faith in the Three Jewels as well as the life-long precepts of the laity and the one-day precepts. Furthermore, by encouraging others to train in and practice various skills and crafts, they fully ripen sentient beings.

“These and many other varieties of the wisdom of worldly skillful means possessed by the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are greater than the number of grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed. In this way, with the wisdom of skillful means, great effort, and great practice in words, scripture, and crafts and skills, they tame those who follow the tīrthikas and other teachers. This is the worldly skillful means of the bodhisattvas.

“This skillful means is shared by all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. It becomes the cause for the creation of all the dharmas of the Buddha. It is the domain for skillful deeds. It is greatly skillful and effortless, and therefore becomes a dharma that is irreversible and nonconceptual.

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva who does not rely upon a skillful teacher, who does not depend upon a teacher, and who engages in worldly skillful means becomes confused by these skillful means, and will fall to the lower realms. Such a person is unable to dwell in or engage in the wisdom of nonworldly skillful means and is not the perfect field of merit for anyone. Not possessing any skillful means, they will not know the faculties and behavior of others. Being ignorant of skillful means, they will teach the Great Vehicle to those who are not vessels for the Śrāvaka

Vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the Great Vehicle, and to those whose Great Vehicle faculties are not developed, and encourage them to train in it. To those who are worthy vessels of the Great Vehicle, they will teach the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and encourage them to strive and train in these vehicles. To those who are worthy vessels of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, they will teach the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and encourage them to strive and train in the Śrāvaka Vehicle. To those who are worthy vessels of the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, they will happily teach the dharmas of saṃsāra, and will not teach them to generate distaste for the dharmas of saṃsāra.

“Furthermore, being ignorant of skillful means, they will teach the Dharma of the Great Vehicle to those who are disposed to killing, up to those who have a liking for wrong views. They will not teach them to fear and despair of the experience of the ripening suffering that comes from leaving this world and being reborn in the next, nor to abandon nonvirtuous acts. Being ignorant of skillful means, to those who are disposed toward guarding their ethics, they will encourage to practice giving. To those beings who are disposed to meditation on patience, they will teach the abandonment of patience and engagement in the guarding of ethics. To those beings who are disposed to meditation on joyful effort, they will teach the abandonment of joyful effort, and encourage them to engage in the practice of patience. To those beings who are disposed to meditation on concentration, they will teach the abandonment of concentration, and encourage them to engage in the practice of joyful effort. To those who are disposed to meditation on wisdom, they will teach the abandonment of wisdom, and encourage them to engage in the practice of concentration.

“Therefore, those bodhisattvas who are ignorant of worldly skillful means are unable to bring true happiness and well-being to sentient beings, and they become the false friends of all living beings. Such skillful means objectifies and is possessed of attachment. It is the worldly skillful means of the bodhisattvas.

It is skillful means shared by the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and others. It is not a great armor wheel. Those bodhisattvas are not bodhisattva mahāsattvas and are not perfect fields of merit for the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

“What is the nonworldly skillful means of the bodhisattvas? It is like this. These bodhisattvas abandon working for their own welfare, willingly take on the welfare of others, and teach various skills and crafts. In this way, in order to ripen others, they make offerings and devotions to the Bhagavān Buddha, the bodhisattvas, the pratyekabuddhas, the śrāvakas, and to their mother and father. When they see the sick, the wretched, those bereft of protection and home, and those suffering under great harm, they will liberate them with great skillful means, and with the four ways of gathering disciples, they will completely ripen them. They will teach the Dharma—the vehicle they are suited for—in keeping with their faculties, and in keeping with their dispositions.

“Furthermore, they will gradually encourage those of the Śrāvaka Vehicle to train in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. They will encourage those of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle to train in the Great Vehicle. To those whose faculties are not sufficiently ripened for the Śrāvaka Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, they will teach distaste for saṃsāra by way of the sufferings of saṃsāra, and encourage them to generate despair for saṃsāra and to seek nirvāṇa. To those beings who are disposed to killing, up to having attachment for wrong views, they will teach, in keeping with their faculties and dispositions, the Dharma of circling in saṃsāra, and the suffering experiences that result from having moved on from this world and taken birth in the next. By way of the dharma of nonvirtuous acts, they will teach fear and refuge.

“To some, they will teach Dharma possessed of the Śrāvaka Vehicle. To some, they will teach Dharma possessed of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. To others, they will perfectly teach the peerless vehicle and encourage them to gradually train in it. To those who are disposed to practice giving, they will teach the

pure guarding of ethics and so on, up to those who are disposed to meditation on concentration; they will teach the peerless wisdom and all that which constitutes the nonafflicted path of the āryas and encourage them to train in it. This skillful means does not objectify and is without attachment. It is known as ‘the nonworldly great armor wheel of skillful means possessed by the bodhisattvas.’

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessing this great armor wheel of skillful means first develop their minds, abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, in order to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

Striving in wisdom is of two kinds:
That which is worldly, and that which is not.
That with attachment is worldly;
That without is nonworldly.

Striving in skillful means
Is possessed of two distinct features:
That which objectifies is worldly;
That which does not is nonworldly.

Those who only teach one vehicle—
Such people do not teach Dharma well.
If they cannot fully ripen themselves,
How can they possibly ripen others?

Teaching Dharma of the three vehicles
To those beings who are without virtue

Is to be ignorant and confused,
And is not of the great enlightenment.

Teaching the Dharma of taking joy in saṃsāra
To those who wish to engage in the three vehicles
And who seek the perfect Dharma
Is not an act of the wise.

Examining with single-pointed mind,
And then teaching in keeping with disposition and desire
Is truly skillful means and praised by the wise.

If those beings who engage in bad deeds,
And yet are worthy vessels of the three vehicles,
Are taught in accordance with faculties,
They will be freed from their wrongful ways.

The Great Armor Wheel of Love

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of love. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What is the great armor wheel of love? Son of the family, the love of the bodhisattvas is of two types: that which focuses on the Dharma, and that which focuses on sentient beings.⁴⁶ Love that focuses on the Dharma is the great armor wheel of love. Love that focuses on sentient beings is not the great armor wheel of love. Why is that? Love that focuses on sentient beings is shared by the Śrāvaka Vehicle and Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, for the sake of their own happiness and well-being, make efforts in the forbearance of focusing on sentient beings. This the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas do for the sake

of their own peace, their own nirvāṇa, their own eradication of obscurations, and their own eradication of afflictions. It is not a joyful effort with love focused on sentient beings for the sake of all sentient beings. Therefore, this love is not great love. It is not the great armor.

“Love focused on Dharma is not found among the Śrāvaka Vehicle and Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, but is that which can be pursued solely by the mahāsattva bodhisattvas. The mahāsattva bodhisattvas, for the sake of the happiness and well-being of all living beings, strive in love focused upon Dharma with a great application of effort. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas strive in love focused upon Dharma with great effort in order to bring all sentient beings to nirvāṇa and to eradicate their afflictions. Therefore, this love is the great armor wheel of love.

“Furthermore, the bodhisattva who engages in the love focused upon Dharma does not abide within the aggregates, does not abide within the sensory sources, does not abide within the spheres, does not abide within the four close placements of mindfulness and so on, up to not abiding in the branches of the path to enlightenment. They do not abide in the form realm. They do not abide in the formless realm. They do not abide in this world, and they do not abide in the next. They do not abide in the extreme of here. They do not abide in the extreme of there. They do not abide in objectifying. They do not abide in nonobjectifying.

“Therefore, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who strive in love focused upon Dharma surpass the levels found in the vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. This is the great armor wheel of love focused upon love possessed by the bodhisattvas. Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessing this great armor wheel of love first develop their minds, abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

The śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas
Meditate on love focused on sentient beings,
Thereby possessing thirteen faults⁴⁷ in their minds,
And seeking happiness for themselves.

The greatly renowned bodhisattvas,
For the sake of all living beings,
Meditate on the exclusive great love
And rid themselves of the thirteen faults.

Having abandoned the thirteen taints,
They immerse themselves in the great enlightenment.
If you meditate on love focused upon Dharma,
Before long you become a field of merit.

Abiding happily in the thirteen powers,
You rise above all sentient beings,
Just as the mighty lion king
Rises above all other animals.

Overpowering the thirteen enemies,
Abandoning extremes of permanence and nihilism,
And when the mind is not tainted by anything—
Soon you will achieve the great enlightenment.

The Great Armor Wheel of Great Compassion

“Son of the family, furthermore, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of great compassion. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and

pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“Why is that? All those of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and Pratyekabuddha Vehicle practice compassion for the sake of their own happiness and well-being. They do not develop great compassion for the happiness and well-being of all living beings. Therefore, the bodhisattvas who possess the great armor wheel of great compassion surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them. The mahāsattva bodhisattvas, in order to bring happiness and well-being to all sentient beings, will fully ripen them by the four ways of gathering disciples. In order to bring happiness and well-being to all beings, they will with great compassion gather disciples by way of giving. They will give away without a trace of parsimony jewels, wealth, gems, carriages, servants, workers, land, kingdoms, children, wives, body, and life. With the application of the practice of nonobjectifying, they do not see the sentient beings they have gathered. They do not see the giving. They do not see the taking. They do not see the gift given. They do not see the practice of giving. They do not see the result of giving and so on, up to not seeing the nonobjectifying. This is the kind of great compassion they develop. For the sake of the happiness and well-being of all beings, they engage in gathering disciples by pleasant words, through consistency in words and deeds, and by taming them by whatever means is appropriate—by way of the above extensive description—up to not seeing the nonobjectifying.

“In this way, with a mind that is constantly disciplined; a mind at peace; a mind immeasurable; and a mind that does not construct within the aggregates, spheres, and sensory sources, the mahāsattva bodhisattvas, wherever they are reborn, possessed of this great armor wheel of great compassion, unmoving and not abiding, will never tire of fully ripening sentient beings. Therefore, this is the great armor wheel of compassion possessed by the

bodhisattvas. Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possessing this great armor wheel of compassion first develop their minds, abandon the five sense desires, and are known as mahāsattva bodhisattvas. They surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.”

Summary Verses

Then, to reiterate these points, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

The very profound dharmas
Have great compassion as their foundation.
They are difficult to understand, are like space,
With no location and no form.

The great effort of the bodhisattva
Is possessed of excellent qualities.
With great compassion and the wisdom of the Victorious One,
Such a hero transcends the world.

Those bereft of protection and refuge,
Chained by the troubles and sufferings of saṃsāra—
They will wash with the waters of compassion
And liberate them.

Generating the compassion of the bodhisattvas,
They will dry up the ocean of saṃsāra.
This is not the practice of
Those of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha Vehicles.

Those possessed of attachment, hatred, and ignorance
Who fall to the realms of suffering
Will be washed by the waters of compassion
And freed from all suffering.

The Great Armor Wheel of the Perfect Knowledge of Samādhi, Retentions, and Firm Forbearance

“Son of the family, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess the great armor wheel of samādhi, retention, and firm forbearance possessing the perfect knowledge of individual words, equal to the realm of space, immeasurable, limitless, vast, and possessing all the dharmas of every buddha. If the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“What is this great armor wheel of samādhi, retention, and firm forbearance possessing the perfect knowledge of individual words, equal to the realm of space, immeasurable, limitless, vast, and possessing all the dharmas of every buddha? It is like this. The bodhisattvas contemplating all dharmas is like the light of the moon pervading the entire sky. Their minds become all-equal, without signs, without basis, and without location. Their minds are without activity within the pure gateways of all samādhis and gateways of all retentions. Their minds are free of attachment to the coming together of eye, form, and visual consciousness. With its lack of activity, the mind dwells in peace and is nonattached to the inner feelings of pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain that arise from this coming together. Similarly, when the ear, sound, and audial consciousness come together; when the nose, smell, and olfactory consciousness come together; when the tongue, taste, and gustatory consciousness come together; when the body, physical sensations, and bodily consciousness come together, the mind and consciousness are constantly at peace and without attachment. When feelings of pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain arise from the mind, mental activity, and consciousness, the mind is constantly at peace and nonattached toward them.

“Towards the aggregates, spheres, and sensory sources of the three times, there is no appropriation and no activity of mind. Toward the three realms, the three compositional factors, the three kinds of physical sensations, the three types of feeling, the three faculties, the three vehicles, the three kinds of vows, and to the three freedoms, the mind is at peace, without location, without signs, without appropriation, and dwelling in equanimity. Toward giving, ethics, patience, joyful effort, concentration, wisdom, and toward all perfections, the mind is without activity and at peace. Similarly, toward the four close placements of mindfulness, the four perfect abandonments, the four limbs of miraculous powers, the five forces, the five powers, the seven limbs of enlightenment, and the eight branches of the paths of the āryas, the mind is without activity and at peace. Toward the nine successive absorptions,⁴⁸ the mind is without activity and at peace.

“Furthermore, toward the three compositional factors, the exalted wisdom of possessing no obscuration towards dharmas, the inducing of the branches of the paths, and the nature of the path, there is no appropriation of and no activity of mind. There is no appropriation of and no activity of mind toward a foundation consciousness and to that which is not the foundation consciousness; toward that which has appropriation and that which has no appropriation; toward that possessed of affliction and that not possessed of affliction; and toward here or there, small or great, limitlessness, activity and nonactivity, virtuous, nonvirtuous, and nonspecified acts. Toward all of them, there is an abiding in peace.

“There is no appropriation of and no activity of mind, but only an abiding in peace toward all dharmas, from fully ripening sentient beings with great love, great compassion, and skillful means, up to the three nonconcealed activities,⁴⁹ the four states of no-fear, and the eighteen unmixed dharmas of a buddha.

“By the force of this wheel possessed by the mahāsattva bodhisattvas, all faults of the three kinds of feelings are removed, all conceptualizing ceases, and all signs and marks of phenomena are

abandoned. Furthermore, those who abide in this bodhisattva wheel will also develop the great armor wheels of the samādhi of the Eye of Space, of the samādhi of the Crown of the Head, and of skillful means in the retentions. Any remaining nonvirtuous acts done in the past will not cause the sufferings of the lower realms; and all remaining karma that brings about circling in saṃsāra is removed and its ripening is not experienced.

“Furthermore, son of the family, it is like this. When the sun rises, the sky that is covered by thick darkness will shed itself of that darkness. Similarly, the bodhisattva’s perfect knowledge of individual words is equal to the realm of space, immeasurable, limitless, and vast. Therefore, by possessing all the dharmas of every buddha, they possess the great armor wheel of samādhi, retentions, and firm forbearance.

“Furthermore, abiding in the great armor wheels of the samādhi of the Eye of Space, the samādhi of the Crown of the Head, and the skillful means in the retentions, the sun of the space-like exalted wisdom will completely clear the darkness of the four wrong perceptions; and any remaining nonvirtuous acts done in the past will not cause the sufferings of the lower realms; and all remaining karma that brings about circling in saṃsāra is removed, and its ripening is not experienced.

“Furthermore, they will gain control over the dharmas of the buddhas. They will attain the irreversible stage, and not fall under the sway of false friends or follow their ways. They will never be separated from beholding the buddhas. They will never be separated from beholding the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be separated from listening to the Dharma, and from making offerings to, and serving the saṅgha. From the time of not being satisfied with the qualities they have attained until they gain enlightenment, they will, without interruption, never be separated from remembering the buddhas, even remembering them without hindrance in dreams.

“Son of the family, what is this great armor wheel of samādhi, retention, and firm forbearance possessed by the mahāsattva bodhisattvas that possesses the perfect knowledge of individual words, equal to the realm of space, immeasurable, limitless, vast, and possessing all the dharmas of every buddha? It is like this. The bodhisattvas abide in the absorption on the first concentration, up to the fourth concentration; and in the absorption on limitless space, up to the absorption of no discernment and no nondiscernment. Abiding in the absorption of the samādhi of the cessation of discernment and feelings, the three types of feelings and the three compositional factors are cut. There is no activity of mental movement and compositional actions. Feelings, discernment, mentality, knowledge, and mental engagement are all cut. Abiding in this samādhi, for one day or for seven days, they consume the food of mental concentration. Even when they arise from that samādhi, their mind is at peace, there is no appropriation, and they abide in stillness.

“Moreover, they abide in the samādhi of emptiness that reaches the limit of reality. Dwelling in that samādhi, the mind is all-equal and, like the sky, is without attachment. From the pores on their skin, star-like drops of sweet nectar emerge to dispel all torment brought on by the bondage of affliction. When they arise from that samādhi, they gain perfect mindfulness and their whole body is permeated by a special bliss. Just as entering the samādhis of Devaputra, Maheśvara, and all samādhis of bliss produce an experience of bliss from every pore of the body, so the bodhisattvas experience bliss in their bodies, and by such contact, they recall the Buddha. By recalling the Buddha, they see only the Buddha and nothing else. At that time, if those bodhisattvas bring to mind one buddha form, they will see one buddha form. If they bring to mind several buddha forms, they will see several buddha forms. If they bring to mind a small form of a buddha, they will see a small form of a buddha. If they bring to mind a large form of a buddha, they will see a large form of a buddha. If they bring to mind a form

of a buddha limitless in its size, they will see a form of a buddha limitless in size. If they bring to mind their own body marked by the perfect features of a buddha, they will see their own body marked by the perfect features of a buddha. If they bring to mind the bodies of others as being the bodies of a buddha, they will see the bodies of others as being possessed of perfect features like those of a buddha. If they bring to mind sentient beings and all inanimate forms as possessing the features of the body of a buddha, they will see sentient beings and all inanimate forms as possessing the features of the body of a buddha and will see no other forms.

“At that time, the bodhisattvas think, ‘All dharmas and all forms are like illusions. They are not real. Therefore, I will cut the three types of feeling, the three compositional factors, and all remaining dharmas.’ And thereby, they are absorbed into the samādhi of cessation. Within that samādhi, they cut off all the mental activity that they had engaged in previously and live off the food of samādhi. There they abide for one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, or eight weeks. There they abide for millions of eons, for as long as they are able, living off the food of samādhi. Rising from that samādhi, their minds are perfectly peaceful, they are attached to nothing, and they abide in bliss. Even if they engage in the samādhi of emptiness that reaches the limit of reality, as was explained earlier, they engage in practices from bringing to mind one buddha form and seeing one buddha form, up to thinking that all dharmas and all forms are like illusions and are not real.

“Son of the family, this is the great armor wheel of samādhis, retentions, and firm forbearances possessed by the mahāsattva bodhisattvas possessing perfect knowledge of individual words, equal to the realm of space, immeasurable, limitless, vast, and possessing all the dharmas of every buddha. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas who possess this wheel abide in the samādhi of the Eye of Space, the samādhi of the Crown of the Head, and the skillful means in the retentions. Any remainder of nonvirtuous acts

done in the past will not cause the sufferings of the lower realms; and all remaining karma that brings about circling in saṃsāra is removed and its ripening is not experienced.

“Furthermore, son of the family, in this world when the time of destruction by fire approaches, five suns will appear at the same time. The ponds, pools, small and large waterfalls, lakes, and oceans will all dry up. Similarly, the bodhisattvas will generate this great armor wheel of samādhis, retentions, and firm forbearances possessing the perfect knowledge of individual words, equal to the realm of space, immeasurable, limitless, vast, and possessing all the dharmas of every buddha. Furthermore, they generate and abide in the samādhi of the Eye of Space, the samādhi of the Crown of the Head, and the skillful means in the retentions. Any remainder of nonvirtuous acts done in the past will not cause the sufferings of the lower realms; and all remaining karma that brings about circling in saṃsāra is dried up and its ripening is not experienced.

“Furthermore, son of the family, it is like this. When destruction by water is upon the world, the four great continents; the eight lesser continents; Meru, the king of mountains; and all lesser mountains in the world realms of the three-thousand world universe will be washed away, and nothing will remain. Similarly, the bodhisattvas will generate this great armor wheel of samādhis, retentions, and firm forbearances possessing the perfect knowledge of individual words, equal to the realm of space, immeasurable, limitless, vast, and possessing all the dharmas of every buddha. Furthermore, abiding in the great armor wheels of the samādhi of the Eye of Space, the samādhi of the Crown of the Head, and the skillful means in the retentions, the sun of the space-like exalted wisdom will completely clear the darkness of the four wrong perceptions, and any remainder of nonvirtuous acts done in the past will not cause the sufferings of the lower realms; and all remaining karma that brings about circling in saṃsāra is removed and its ripening is not experienced.

“Son of the family, if the bodhisattva mahāsattvas possess this wheel, they first develop their minds and abandon the five sense desires. In doing so, they surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They become fields of merit for all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas make offerings to them, protect them, and honor them.

“By the force of this wheel, they will gain control over the dharmas of the buddhas. They will attain the irreversible stage, and not fall under the sway of false friends or follow their ways. They will never be separated from beholding the buddhas. They will never be separated from beholding the bodhisattvas and the śrāvaka disciples. They will never be separated from listening to the Dharma, and from making offerings to, and serving the saṅgha. From the time of not being satisfied with the qualities they have attained until they gain enlightenment, they will, without interruption, never be separated from remembering the buddhas, even remembering them without hindrance in dreams.

“In this way, those bodhisattvas quickly complete the accumulation of merit and wisdom, and before long, they will awaken to the peerless perfect and complete enlightenment in a pure buddha land. In that field, all beings will be born by miraculous ways. They will be like the buddhas in form and features. Their afflictions will be few, and they will abide solely in the Great Vehicle.”

Summary Verses

Then, the Bhagavān, in order to reiterate the main points, spoke these verses:

Those who wish to become worthy vessels for the Dharma
 Should completely sever all affliction.
 Meditatively absorbed in perfect emptiness,
 It is not difficult to separate out all phenomena.

In order to cut all the chains of existence,
 Strive to engage in meditative absorption.
 Possessed of the qualities of samādhi,
 Without doubt, you will attain profound wisdom.

Meditating on the concentration of the formless,
 And contemplating emptiness with the samādhi of cessation
 Produces the supreme mental state of being mindful of
 the buddhas,
 And all bad deeds come to an end.

All phenomena as existing or not existing
 Are destroyed when contemplating perfect emptiness.
 The causes of the lower realms are swept away,
 And constantly one beholds the buddhas.

Meditating upon the perfect emptiness,
 Make effort in all other virtues.
 If you make offerings to all the buddhas,
 Quickly you will gain the fruit of buddhahood.

Accompanied by the virtues of all sentient beings,
 If you eradicate the illness of affliction,
 You will soon be born into a pure buddha land,
 And attain the actual enlightened state of a buddha.

Sentient beings possessed of the marks of a buddha
 Will completely fill that buddha land.
 Striving in the vehicle of the buddhas,
 They will abandon the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha Vehicles.

8. Concluding Chapter: Fulfillment

Spontaneous Developments of Insight

When the Bhagavān had given these teachings on the aspects of the Great Vehicle, bodhisattva mahāsattvas present in the audience, as many in number as grains of sand in the Ganges riverbed, who in past times had meditated upon the recollection of the buddhas, as soon as they heard the Bhagavān teaching the practice of striving in the recollection of the buddhas, achieved the samādhi gateways of recollecting the buddhas.

Furthermore, immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings, achieved all the dhāraṇī gateways known as “Garland of Flowers,” the sustenance of samādhi. Also, immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, achieved all the dhāraṇī gateways known as “Warrior-Like in Reliance upon Lightning.” Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, achieved the facsimile forbearance known as “Control over Dharmas in Reliance upon Light.”

Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, became free of the dust and contamination, developed the pure Dharma eye on existence, and achieved the result of stream-enterer. Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, achieved the result of once-returner. Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, achieved the result of non-returner. Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān,

achieved the result of the supreme arhat. Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, made efforts to escape from the prison of the three realms, and relying upon the Bhagavān, they were ordained and dwelled in the perfect Dharma.

Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, dwelled happily on the path of the ten virtues for the rest of their lives, developed their minds toward the Śrāvaka Vehicle, and reached an irreversible level. Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, dwelled happily on the path of the ten virtues for the rest of their lives, developed their minds toward the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and reached an irreversible level. Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, dwelled happily on the path of the ten virtues for the rest of their lives, developed their minds toward the Great Vehicle, and reached a level irreversible from the peerless, perfect, and complete enlightenment.

Immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, gained the perfect worldly view, and by the force of this right view, they cleansed themselves of the causes of birth in the lower realms, of afflicted karma, and of all afflictions. They made perfect prayers, and generated and increased all virtuous karmas as well as the causes for birth in the higher realms.

Furthermore, immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, went for refuge to the Three Jewels and received the lay vows. They took delight in making offerings to the Buddha, in listening to the Dharma, and in being of service to the saṅgha, and their minds were applied without interruption to the generation of joyful effort day and night. Furthermore, immeasurable, countless sentient beings, having heard these teachings of the Bhagavān, completely

abandoned wrong ways, wrong cognition, and bad karma. They gained unchanging faith in the Dharma of the Buddha, abandoned the householder life, and with pure intention, became ordained.

Entrusting the Sūtra to Ākāśagarbha

Then, the Bhagavān addressed the bodhisattva mahāsattva Ākāśagarbha: “Son of the family, this great instruction, this Dharma gateway known as the *Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels*, I entrust to you. Retain and propagate these points of Dharma. Those beings who read it, recite it, contemplate it, teach it widely to others, or practice it purely, you must protect in ten ways, work for their happiness, and guide them for a long time.

“What are these ten? It is like this. Protect their wealth and their ways of obtaining it and do not let it diminish. Guard them from all harm and make them free from harm. Guard them from wrong views and wrong ways, and see that they eradicate the path of the ten nonvirtues. Guard their bodies and speech from all harm, and make such harm nonexistent. Protect them from, and eradicate all criticism and slander. Protect them from weakening their ethics and practice. Eradicate completely all harm from spirits, all disturbance of the elements, all untimely illness, and old age.⁵⁰ Guard them from untimely events, improper behavior, wrong views, and epidemics. Even if they should die, protect them so that they behold the buddhas, that they are reborn in the higher realms, and that they find happiness and well-being.

“Son of the family, those beings who read this Dharma, recite it, contemplate it, teach it widely to others, or practice it purely, protect them in these ten ways, bless them, and by these ten, work for their happiness and guide them for a long time.”

Then, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Ākāśagarbha addressed the Bhagavān: “In this way, Bhagavān, I shall retain these points of Dharma and propagate them. Those sentient beings who read this Dharma, recite it, contemplate it, teach it widely to others, or

practice it purely, I will protect them in these ten ways, and work for their happiness and guide them for a long time.”

Then after the Bhagavān had spoken this sūtra, in the assembly, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Ākāśagarbha, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kṣitigarbha, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Vajragarbha, the bodhisattva mahāsattva known as He Who Properly Puts Forward Doubts, Mahābrahma Devagarbha, the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, mahoragas, humans and nonhumans, and the entire assembly expressed their joy at the words of the Bhagavān.

The Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels Māhayāna Sūtra from the Great Collection is complete.

Colophons

Original Colophon:

Translated and edited by Chinese master Hashang Zabmo, the editor and lotsāwa, Venerable Nampar Mitog, and others.

Publisher's Colophon:

Translated from '*dus pa chen po las sa'i snying po'i 'khor lo bcu pa, Daśacakra kṣitigarbha nāma mahāyāna sūtra*, sde dge bka' 'gyur, Tōh. 239, BDRC W22084, 100a–241b, by Gavin Kilty, 2019. The lha sa bka' 'gyur edition (H240, BDRC W26071, 154a–371b) and the snar thang bka' 'gyur edition (N224, BDRC W22703, 154b–367b) were also consulted. Editorial services provided by Ven. Tenzin Tsomo, Michael Jolliffe, and Joon Repo. FPMT Education Services, 2022–2023.

Notes

- 1 Skt. *cakra*.
- 2 Not knowing Chinese, I am indebted to the Taiwanese scholar Ruhū Gan for helping me in this.
- 3 大乘大集地藏十輪經.
- 4 Back translated from *dri ma med par skyes*.
- 5 Tib. *bye ba khrag khrig stong phrag brgyad bcu*. The count of the entourage occurs three times in the sūtra, and each time it varies slightly.
- 6 Tib. *bye ba khrag khrig brgya stong phrag brgyad cu*.
- 7 A *yakṣa* is a class of demons.
- 8 “Forbearance of dharma” refers to being able to withstand the direct perception of emptiness on the path of seeing.
- 9 A *raṁṣa* is a blood-thirsty demon; a *bhūta* is a type of ghost; *piśāchas* are flesh-eating demons; *pūtanās* are foul-smelling spirits; *kaṭapūtanās* are spirits with putrid bodies, and *kumbhāṇḍās* are short spirits with large pot-shaped bellies or testicles.
- 10 A musically skilled celestial spirit.
- 11 A spirit which is half-man, half-horse.
- 12 A serpent-like spirit.
- 13 An evil spirit.
- 14 These lay practitioners refer to *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*.
- 15 Here, and in other sections of this text, a “buddha land” does not seem to refer to a pure land, but to a place where a buddha appears or where the Dharma exists.
- 16 Tib. *mi mjed*, lit. “enduring.” Another name for this world where suffering is “endured.”
- 17 In the vinaya scriptures, a dispute can be resolved by the participants bowing to each other like stalks of grass laid out with their tips touching each other.
- 18 Tib. *bye ba khrag khrig brgyad cu rtsa bzhi*.
- 19 There appear to be only eight “exceptional states of mind.” Those of ethics, within the six perfections, and the Dharma, within the Three Jewels, are missing.
- 20 Verbatim from the text with long vowel added.
- 21 Ancient Indian philosophical school that held materialistic views.

- 22 Tib. *dad pa'i dge dun*; refers to the fully ordained monks acting as preceptors and witnesses during the ceremony of ordination.
- 23 The Dege edition has “make offerings to me,” i.e., the Buddha, but the Lhasa and Narthang editions have “them,” which makes more sense.
- 24 This refers to the Jātaka tale of Prince Sudhana sent out on a frightening quest by the king.
- 25 Wrong views, malice, and envy: the three mental nonvirtues of the ten nonvirtues. It might also refer to the three poisons of attachment, anger, and ignorance.
- 26 The numbering here is somewhat arbitrary, as it is difficult to gauge where one ends and another begins. The Tibetan has no numbering. Moreover, in the summary verses at the end of the chapter, this list is given, but it varies from this one. The Dege, Lhasa, and Narthang editions all have the same listing.
- 27 i.e. cakravartin.
- 28 The meaning of the terms “abide” and “practice” in this section is somewhat unclear.
- 29 Tib. *skyod*, as per the Narthang and Lhasa editions. Preferred to *skyed* in the Dege.
- 30 It seems that the term “empty” (Tib. *stong pa*) as used in the above statements refers to nonexistence, or nothingness, and not to ultimate-truth emptiness.
- 31 This paragraph is basically a repetition of a paragraph above, but the second example in this paragraph differs in grammar, and therefore understanding. It also has *rnam par rol pa* (manifestation) as opposed to *rnam par grol ba* (freedom). I have gone with the grammar and vocabulary of this paragraph and amended the former accordingly.
- 32 It is possible to divide this list into ten separate activities in more ways than one.
- 33 As mentioned in the previous chapter, here “emptiness” equates with nothingness.
- 34 Tib. *snang ndzad*. This Sanskrit rendering is according to a list of the thousand (or 1004) in Chinese sources.
- 35 Usually “forbearance of dharma” refers to being able to withstand the direct perception of emptiness on the path of seeing.
- 36 Tib. *skul*, as in the Lhasa edition, as opposed to *skur* in the Dege edition.
- 37 The question mentioned “śrāvaka disciples” only.
- 38 The four rivers of suffering: birth, sickness, old age, and death.
- 39 Tib. *phyin ci log pa bzhi*. Seeing the impure as pure, no self as self, the impermanent as permanent, and suffering as happiness.

- 40 This sentence on the teacher might belong to the following section on the benefits reaped in the next life, as it is repeated there and seems a little out of place here. However, it could refer to meeting a teacher at the time of dying. The same formula is repeated for all ten wheels.
- 41 Fears experienced by bodhisattvas on the beginning paths: Fear of destitution caused by giving everything away, fear of losing reputation, fear of addressing assemblies, fear of death, and fear of the lower realms.
- 42 Possibly the five listed in the *Yogācārabhūmi*: Not the talk of townsfolk, light, bright, connected, and meaningful.
- 43 Whether “ten” here refers to ten categories that could be created from this list, or whether it is just a term meaning “several” is hard to say.
- 44 The three thoroughly afflicted states are mental affliction, karma, and birth. The three eons could refer to the three countless eons, the three eons of destruction, or to the three intermediate eons. The three characteristics could refer to the three natures (Tib. *mtshan nyid*), namely, imputation, other-powered phenomena, and completely established phenomena, as posited in Yogācāra literature, but is more likely to be the three identifications (Tib. *mtshan ma*), namely, cause, effect, and nature. The three compositional factors are either meritorious, nonmeritorious, and immovable compositional factors; or physical, verbal, and mental compositional factors. The three root unvirtuous acts are attachment, hatred, and ignorance. The four rivers are birth, sickness, old age, and death. The four knots are avarice, malice, holding one’s ethics to be supreme, and holding one’s conduct to be supreme. The four appropriations are those of desire, view, self, and wrong ethics. The four knots of the body I cannot identify.
- 45 It is difficult to say what the five rivers are. Normally, this term refers to the five great rivers of India, but it is difficult to accept that the sūtra is talking of actual children being carried away by actual rivers. They might be metaphors for the five sense objects but the first line mentions six faculties.
- 46 It seems, from the following description of these two, that “focus on sentient beings” refers to an objectifying of sentient beings, whereas the “focus on dharma” refers to the cognition of ultimate truth.
- 47 These thirteen faults and the following thirteen powers might refer to a classification made from the above list of phenomena they abide or do not abide in.
- 48 The four of the form realms, four of the formless realm, and the meditative absorption on cessation.
- 49 The enlightened physical, verbal, and mental activities of a buddha.
- 50 Tib. *rga ba*, as per the Narthang edition. The Dege and Lhasa editions have *mi dge ba* (nonvirtuous acts).

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Dharma materials contain the teachings of the Buddha and thus protect against lower rebirth and reveal the path to enlightenment. Therefore, they should be treated with respect.

Printed Dharma materials, as well as phones, tablets, laptops, and hard drives containing Dharma, should be kept off the floor, beds, chairs, meditation cushions, and all other places where people sit or walk. Dharma materials should not be stepped over or put in places where the feet or buttocks will point at them. They should be covered or protected for transporting and kept in a high, clean place separate from more mundane materials. Other objects, including statues, stūpas, ritual implements, *mālās*, reading glasses, and so forth, should not be placed on top of Dharma books and devices containing Dharma materials. Avoid licking the fingers to turn the pages of Dharma texts.

If it is necessary to dispose of printed Dharma materials, they should be burned rather than thrown in the trash. When burning Dharma texts, visualize that the letters transform into an A (ॐ) and the A absorbs into your heart. Imagine burning blank paper. As the paper burns, recite OM ĀḤ HŪḤ or the *Heart Sūtra*, while meditating on emptiness.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommends that images of holy beings, deities, and holy objects not be burned. Ideally, if undamaged, they should be put in a stūpa. Otherwise, put them high up in a tree inside a well-sealed structure, something like a bird house, so that the images are protected from the weather and do not end up on the ground.



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