

ཀླུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོས་ཞུས་པ།

The Questions of Vikurvāṇarāja

Vikurvāṇarājaparipṛcchā

འཕགས་པ་རྣམ་པར་འཕྲུལ་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོས་ལྷུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་

ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa rnam par 'phrul pa'i rgyal pos zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa
chen po'i mdo

The Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Questions of Vikurvāṇarāja”

Āryavikurvāṇarājaparipṛcchānāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 167 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 59 (mdo sde, ba), folios 175.b–210.b



First published 2026

Current version v 1.0

84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha is a global non-profit initiative to translate all the Buddha's words into modern languages, and to make them available to everyone.

This work is provided under the protection of a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution - Non-commercial - No-derivatives) 4.0 copyright. It may be copied or printed for fair use, but only with full attribution, and not for commercial advantage or personal compensation. For full details, see the Creative Commons license.

This print version was generated at 8.31am on thursday, 4 june 2026 from the online version of the text available on that date. If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time. For the latest online version, with bilingual display, interactive glossary entries and notes, and a variety of further download options, please see <https://84000.co/translation/toh167>.

Contents

Summary

Acknowledgements

Introduction

The Translation

Colophon

Abbreviations

Notes

Glossary

Bibliography

Summary

- s.1 *The Questions of Vikurvāṇarāja* is a discourse about what are called the four “magical displays” of bodhisattvas. It begins with a series of questions put to the Buddha by the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja, whose name means “King of Magical Displays,” about how bodhisattvas should perform magical displays for the sake of the Great Vehicle and for the sake of establishing others in the Great Vehicle. The Buddha answers by providing an extensive explanation of the four magical displays of moral conduct, superknowledge, knowing, and wisdom. Included in the Buddha’s answer to Vikurvāṇarāja is a presentation of the four reliances as well as a unique presentation of the ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, and eighteen qualities unique to the bodhisattvas, parallel to the ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, and eighteen qualities unique to the buddhas.

Acknowledgements

- ac.1 Translated, introduced, and annotated by Nathaniel Rich based on a draft translation by David Jackson.
- ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. Nathaniel Rich edited the translation and the introduction, and Ven. Konchog Norbu copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.
- ac.3 The generous sponsorship of Nomura Shin, Biao Dong and Ozer Dong, which helped make the work on this translation possible, is most gratefully acknowledged.

Introduction

- i.1 *The Questions of Vikurvāṇarāja* is an extensive and elaborate account of the “magical displays” of bodhisattvas, the four reliances, and specific sets of qualities that are unique to bodhisattvas (and perhaps to this sūtra). The discourse begins with a series of questions in which the bodhisattva *Vikurvāṇarāja*, whose name means “King of Magical Displays,” asks the Buddha about how bodhisattvas should produce magical displays for the sake of the Great Vehicle, for the sake of causing others to desire the Great Vehicle, for the sake of establishing them in it, and for the sake of fulfilling their own aspirations.

i.2

The Buddha answers with a detailed account of each of the four magical displays of bodhisattvas: the magical displays of moral conduct, the magical displays of superknowledge, the magical displays of knowing, and the magical displays of wisdom. This account constitutes the bulk of the discourse. In the context of the Buddha’s description of the first, the magical displays of moral conduct, he also narrates an episode from the life of a bodhisattva in the past named Vajranābhi, in which Vajranābhi—eventually revealed to be the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja himself in a past life—engages in an extensive dialogue with a māra named Vikrama. The Buddha’s description of the magical displays of superknowledge is a detailed description of the five superknowledges: divine sight, divine hearing, knowledge of others’ minds, knowledge of past lives, and miraculous powers. Particularly significant here is that the Buddha’s description of divine hearing includes an account of the so-called “four reliances” (*rton pa bzhi*): to rely on the meaning, not the wording; to rely on the definitive meaning, not the provisional meaning; to rely on gnosis (*ye shes*), not consciousness; and to rely on the Dharma, not the person. In the present discourse, the Buddha does not call these “the four reliances,” but he details each one as he describes to Vikurvāṇarāja how bodhisattvas listen to the Dharma taught by the buddhas with their extraordinary faculty of hearing.¹

i.3 The bodhisattvas' magical displays of knowing are the knowledge of the aggregates, knowledge of the elements, knowledge of the sense bases, knowledge of dependent origination, and knowledge of the truths. The Buddha's description of these magical displays provides the occasion for a treatment of each of these foundational themes in Buddhist thought and practice. And finally, his description of the magical displays of wisdom includes, among other things, a presentation of the familiar category of the four correct discernments. This extensive presentation of the four magical displays of bodhisattvas is not only a treasure trove of teaching on different elements of the bodhisattva's practice and attainment, many of them not often found in other Great Vehicle discourses, but it also echoes teachings that feature most prominently in the Perfection of Wisdom sūtras and points toward teachings on the equality or "sameness" of all phenomena and the dharmadhātu.

i.4 Following the Buddha's answer to Vikurvāṇarāja's questions, Vikurvāṇarāja causes a magical display of his own, lavishing an offering of a rain of flowers on the Buddha, the assembled bodhisattvas, and the entire retinue, whose bodies, when touched by those flowers, are transformed into bodies bearing the major and minor marks of a great person. The Buddha briefly narrates the circumstances in which he, in a past life and in the dispensation of a previous buddha, was introduced to the four magical displays. Then, Vikurvāṇarāja poses another question to the Buddha, asking if bodhisattvas possess their own ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, and eighteen unique qualities just as the buddhas do. Answering in the affirmative, the Buddha provides another extensive reply to Vikurvāṇarāja's query, detailing each of these in an exceptional and inspiring presentation of the qualities that characterize the bodhisattva. The Buddha concludes by narrating another past life episode, this time one of his own previous lives in the very distant past when he heard this discourse from a buddha named Devarāja, underlining the significance of this discourse and ensuring that his listeners recognize its transformative power.

- i.5 There is no known Sanskrit version of this sūtra extant. The sūtra was translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 407 CE (Taishō 420, *zì zài wáng pú sà jīng* 自在王菩薩經). Its title does not appear in either of the surviving imperial-era catalogs, but it does appear in the ninth-century Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon known as the *Mahāvyutpatti*,² and the available Tibetan recensions contain a colophon indicating that the text was translated into Tibetan by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman and the great Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé. This would place the translation of the text in the late eighth or early ninth century, as would its inclusion in the *Mahāvyutpatti*, but it remains curious that the title was not included in the Denkarma or Phangthangma catalogs. Given its inclusion in the *Mahāvyutpatti* and the information contained in the colophon, it would appear that the text was indeed translated in the imperial period but omitted for some reason from the two surviving catalogs. But we cannot rule out the possibility that the colophon itself is not authentic, though its presence in the available versions suggests that, if it is *not* authentic, it became associated with the text relatively early on in its transmission. The earliest indigenous Tibetan text in which the sūtra is quoted appears to be the late eleventh/early twelfth-century treatise *The Great Stages of the Teaching* (*bstan rim chen mo*), by the Kadam master Drolungpa (gro lung pa, d.u.).³
- i.6 The present translation is based on the Degé Kangyur version, in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace Kangyur. Where variant readings have been adopted, this has been recorded in the notes.

The Translation

1.

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

The Questions of Vikurvāṇarāja

1.1 [B1] Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

- 1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in Śrāvastī, in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park, together with a vast saṅgha of twenty thousand monks and ten thousand bodhisattvas, including the bodhisattvas Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Siṃhamati, Siṃhaketu, and Going with the Prowess of a Lion, all of whom had only one birth remaining.
- 1.3 The bodhisattva great being Vikurvāṇarāja was also present and seated in that assembly. At that time the Blessed One, within an assembly of many hundreds of thousands, was teaching the Dharma related to entering the Great Vehicle.
- 1.4 The bodhisattva great being Vikurvāṇarāja then rose from his seat, covered one shoulder with his robe, and knelt with his right knee on the ground. Paying homage to the Blessed One with his palms joined, he said to him, “If the Blessed One would grant me the opportunity to seek answers, I would pose questions about a few matters to the Blessed One, the Thus-Gone One, the Arhat, the Perfectly Complete Buddha.”
- 1.5 The Blessed One replied, “Vikurvāṇarāja, the Thus-Gone One grants you the opportunity to have your questions answered. Ask whatever you wish, and I will delight you by answering whatever questions you pose.”
- 1.6 Given the opportunity by the Blessed One, the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja was satisfied, pleased, and delighted. With joy, gladness, and his mind at ease, he asked, “Blessed One, how should bodhisattva great beings perform magical displays for this Great Vehicle? How should they cause other beings and other persons to desire this Great Vehicle? How, after defeating⁴ all māras, all conceited ones, all opponents, and all who cling to objectifying views by means of such magical displays, should they establish them in this Great Vehicle? And how are their aspirations fulfilled—that is, how does their discipline for reaching unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening get perfected?”

- 1.7 The Blessed One replied, “Excellent, Vikurvāṇarāja! It is excellent that you thought to ask the Thus-Gone One about such things. Therefore, Vikurvāṇarāja, listen well and remember this. I will explain how bodhisattva great beings perform magical displays for this Great Vehicle; how they cause other beings and other persons to desire this Great Vehicle; how, after defeating all māras, all conceited ones, all opponents, and all who cling to objectifying views by means of such magical displays, they establish them in this Great Vehicle; and how their aspirations are fulfilled— that is, how they are disciplined for reaching unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening.”
- 1.8 “Excellent, Blessed One,” said the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja, and he listened just as the Blessed One had instructed him.
- 1.9 The Blessed One said, “Vikurvāṇarāja, these four are the magical displays of bodhisattvas. Which four? The magical displays of moral conduct, magical displays of superknowledge, magical displays of knowing, and magical displays of wisdom. Vikurvāṇarāja, those four are the magical displays of bodhisattvas.

1.10

“Vikurvāṇarāja, what are the magical displays of moral conduct? Vikurvāṇarāja, they are the excellent moral conduct of a bodhisattva: moral conduct that is unbroken; moral conduct that is undestroyed; moral conduct that is unadulterated; moral conduct that is untroubled; moral conduct that is unobjectifying; moral conduct that is unimpaired;⁵ moral conduct that is irreproachable; moral conduct that is without anguish; moral conduct that is well observed; moral conduct that is praised by the learned; moral conduct that matures beings; moral conduct that protects the sublime Dharma; moral conduct that gladdens, overjoys, and pleases others; moral conduct that is not focused on birth in any of the states of existence;⁶ moral conduct that is based on calm abiding; moral conduct that is connected to special insight; moral conduct that is inclined toward the profound Dharma; moral conduct in which the superknowledges are unimpaired; moral conduct that cultivates emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness; moral conduct that is peaceful, tranquil, and pacified; moral conduct that collects the Buddha’s Dharma and correctly teaches it; moral conduct that does not abandon any being; moral conduct that is guarded by kindness; moral conduct whose root is compassion; moral conduct that is correct and clear; moral conduct whose activity is certain;⁷ moral conduct that is based on the ascetic practices and minimizing possessions; moral conduct that renders one a meritorious object worthy of gifts; moral conduct that is utterly pure; moral conduct that does not interrupt the line of the thus-gone ones; moral conduct that protects the line of the Dharma; moral conduct that summons⁸ the noble saṅgha; moral conduct that is based on the mind set on awakening; moral conduct that is supported by the six perfections; moral conduct that cultivates the foundations of mindfulness, the correct efforts, the bases of miraculous powers, the faculties, the powers, the factors of awakening, and the path; and moral conduct that accomplishes all the qualities in harmony with the factors conducive to awakening. A bodhisattva whose moral conduct is excellent in those ways, Vikurvāṇarāja, will achieve whatever they wish.

- 1.11 “What might they wish? Let us suppose that the trichiliocosm were filled with the fire of the conflagration at the end of a great eon. If a bodhisattva whose moral conduct is excellent made the aspiration, ‘May that fire be extinguished!’ it would be extinguished and cease to exist. Or if they wished, they could, with their transformative power, cause the trichiliocosm to be filled with fire. If they wished, they could, with their transformative power, cause it to be covered with flowers. If they wished, they could, with their transformative power, cause everything to have the nature of jewels. If they wished, they could, with their transformative power, cause all the Sumerus, kings of mountains, in world systems as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River to become a single mountain.
- 1.12 “Vikurvāṇarāja, if such a bodhisattva whose moral conduct is excellent were to wish it, they could, with their transformative power, cause all the great oceans of world systems as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River to become a single great ocean. If they are established in moral conduct, they achieve whatever they wish, and whatever they have determined will come to be. Vikurvāṇarāja, a bodhisattva who is established in moral conduct will come to possess these four magical displays. And one who possesses moral conduct will also achieve what they wish with their mind set on unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening.
- 1.13 “Vikurvāṇarāja, previously—countless, exceedingly countless, boundless, immeasurable, inconceivably many eons in the past—there appeared in the world a thus-gone one named King of Light Rays of Immaculate Light, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a well-gone one, a knower of the world, a guide who tames beings, unsurpassed,⁹ a teacher of gods and humans, a buddha, and a blessed one. Vikurvāṇarāja, in the teachings of the thus-gone one King of Light Rays of Immaculate Light there was a bodhisattva named Vajranābhi, who possessed the power of being established in moral conduct and whose moral conduct was utterly pure.

1.14

“Vikurvānarāja, when the bodhisattva Vajranābhi wandered in the wilderness, he exerted himself energetically in the noble Dharma and Vinaya,¹⁰ and while established in the Buddha’s Dharma he applied himself correctly in this way. He thought, ‘Not apprehending any phenomena is moral conduct. Not fixating on any entity is moral conduct. Allaying all defilements is moral conduct. Knowing the body to be like a reflection is moral conduct. Knowing the voice to be like an echo is moral conduct. Discerning the mind to be like an illusion is moral conduct. Not dichotomizing virtues and nonvirtues is moral conduct. Discerning the unattractiveness of the objects of desire is moral conduct. Cultivating love in the face of hatred is moral conduct. Shredding the net of ignorance through¹¹ wisdom is moral conduct. Not apprehending the reality¹² of desire, hatred, and ignorance is moral conduct. To not conceive of, to not conceptualize, to not think of, and to not regard any phenomena is moral conduct. To have no view of a self, no view of a being, no view of a life force, no view of a person, no view of annihilation, and no view of permanence is moral conduct. Not fabricating any phenomena¹³ is moral conduct. To be without fear is moral conduct. To not dwell in the three realms is moral conduct. To have confidence in the fact that phenomena are unborn is moral conduct. To be intent on acceptance of the fact that phenomena are unborn is moral conduct. To not seek gain or honor is moral conduct. To not be afraid of emptiness is moral conduct. To cultivate the signless is moral conduct. To be free from wishes is moral conduct. Not having any conceits on account of that very store of moral conduct is moral conduct. Not praising oneself or disparaging others on account of that moral conduct is moral conduct. To have no hankering for the sense bases is moral conduct. To not wander toward objects¹⁴ is moral conduct. The equality of the aggregates and the collections of the Dharma is moral conduct.¹⁵ The equality of the elements and the dharmadhātu is moral conduct.¹⁶ To prioritize not disputing or fighting is moral conduct. To not abandon the striving for virtues is moral conduct. To know that all phenomena are utterly at peace and tranquil, and to embody and dwell in that fact, is moral conduct.’

- 1.15 “Vikurvānarāja, thus did the bodhisattva Vajranābhi possess that kind of firm basis in moral conduct. He adhered to this application of himself to the noble Dharma and this correct and unmistakable attentiveness, and that monk who was established in moral conduct, applied himself to the noble Dharma, and was correctly attentive walked on his path for walking meditation.¹⁷
- 1.16 “A son of Māra named Vikrama came to create obstacles, together with his retinue of eighty-four thousand māras—a horde of troops and attendants, all of them armed with swords. Magically causing¹⁸ their bodies to become very small, they made themselves invisible. Looking for an opportunity to harm the mental conduct of that monk, they followed him for a thousand years. And during those thousand years, they did not see a single instance in which the monk’s mind was distracted by a thought of hatred or a thought of malice.
- 1.17 “Then, after the thousand years had passed, Vikrama, a son of Māra, together with his attendants, displayed their full-sized bodies, brandishing swords, bows and arrows, spears, and clubs, menacing that monk. Seeing the horde of māras brandishing swords, bows and arrows, spears, and clubs, menacing him, the monk Vajranābhi said, ‘By the power of the truth and these true words of mine— that when I applied myself to the noble Dharma I utterly purified my store of moral conduct and my correct application—may all of the swords, bows and arrows, spears, and clubs brandished by the māras and their attendants become flowers such as blue water lilies, lotuses, red water lilies, white lotuses, magnolias, jasmine flowers, vārśika flowers, and garlands of frankincense,¹⁹ and may the māras and deities of the class of māras all come to have appearances, bodies, complexions, and aspirations just like mine!’

- 1.18 “Vikurvāṇarāja, as soon as the bodhisattva Vajranābhi uttered those words, all the swords, bows and arrows, spears, and clubs brandished by the māras and the attendants of the māras transformed into garlands of multicolored flowers that were fragrant, pleasing, and lovely to look at. And the māras, too, assumed the appearance of the monk, and they were all included among those gone forth, wearing saffron robes and with their heads and faces shaved.
- 1.19 “Vikurvāṇarāja, the māra Vikrama saw the monk’s great magical display and was amazed. He and his attendants bowed at the monk’s feet, saying, ‘Monk, what Dharma did you obtain to wield such transformative power?’
- 1.20 “Vikurvāṇarāja, the bodhisattva Vajranābhi replied to the māra Vikrama, ‘Friend, this transformative power has not come from getting something; it has come from not apprehending any phenomena. Friend, this transformative power has not come from getting something; it has come from not getting anything. Friend, this transformative power has not come from dwelling in body, speech, and mind; it has come from not dwelling in any phenomenon. Friend, this transformative power has not come from grasping at phenomenal signs; it has come from signlessness. This transformative power does not dwell in any phenomenon whatsoever; it has come from not dwelling in any phenomenon.’
- 1.21 “Then the māra Vikrama said to the bodhisattva Vajranābhi, ‘Monk, when I observed your mind for a thousand years, I did not see any movement in it.’
- 1.22 “The bodhisattva Vajranābhi replied, ‘Friend, even if you had carefully observed my mind for as many eons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, you would not have found it. Why not? Because the mind is not found within, nor is it found without, nor is it found in neither of those. Friend, would you²⁰ find any movement of the mind in what is conjured by a magician?’

- 1.23 “ ‘Monk, I would not find any. How could any be found if what is conjured by a magician lacks both mind and thoughts?’
- “ ‘Friend, the Thus-Gone One has taught that all phenomena have the nature of conjured illusions. Hence you would not find in them either mind or thoughts.’
- 1.24 “ ‘If, monk, you find neither mind nor thoughts, how do you then go or come or speak?’
- “ ‘Here is an analogy. Just as a person conjured by a magician comes, goes, and speaks, so too are my own coming, going, and speaking.’
- 1.25 “ ‘Monk, what do you hold this exertion, this being established in moral conduct, this applying yourself to the noble Dharma, this engagement to be?’
- “ ‘I hold them to be without foundation.’²¹
- 1.26 “ ‘What do you hold the lack of foundation to be?’
- 1.27 “ ‘Because it is without going, there is no present or future going whatsoever. Friend, that which is called *the lack of foundation* is an expression for wishlessness. And when you asked me, Vikrama, “What do you hold this exertion, this being established in moral conduct, this applying yourself to the noble Dharma, this engagement to be?” I do not hold that form arises. I do not hold that it ceases. I do not hold that it abides. I do not hold that feeling, perception, mental formations, or consciousness arise. I do not hold that they cease. I do not hold that they abide.
- 1.28 “ ‘Vikrama, the engagement that does not grasp²² form and that does not grasp feeling, perception, mental formations, or consciousness—that is what I hold, and that is what I observe. Vikrama, the engagement of the noble ones is my engagement.’

1.29 “ ‘Monk, how do you engage?’

“ ‘Vikrama, all the qualities of ordinary people and the qualities of buddhas are the same and without duality. The qualities of trainees and the qualities of buddhas are the same and without duality. The qualities of those for whom there is no more training and the qualities of buddhas are the same and without duality. The qualities of pratyekabuddhas and the qualities of buddhas are the same and without duality. The qualities of the past, the qualities of the future, and the qualities of the present are the same and without duality. And they are the same by virtue of their equality in being without arising. They are the same by virtue of their equality in being without origination. They are the same by virtue of their equality in being without cessation. Because of teaching the equality that consists in not rejecting those kinds of equality, I maintain that I teach the Dharma to beings.

1.30 “ ‘Friend, this correct engagement does not enter²³ the realm of desire, nor does it enter the form realm. It does not enter the formless realm. That which is established in equality has not moved from reality and will not move from it; it does not go and it does not *not* go. Friend, these are what we call *correct engagements*.

1.31 “ ‘That which is the engagement with suchness is also the engagement with all phenomena. That which is the engagement with the dharmadhātu is also the engagement with all phenomena. That which is the engagement with the very limit of reality is also the engagement with all phenomena. And that which is the maintaining of such engagements is without any maintaining at all. I do not observe or fixate on the lack of any engagement whatsoever. Friend, this is what we call *correct engagement*.’

1.32 “Then the māra Vikrama asked the bodhisattva Vajranābhi, ‘Monk, what Dharma do you understand by means of this correct application?’

1.33 “ ‘Friend, by means of this correct application, I understand a Dharma that lacks sublimity. Since its also lacks aggrandizement²⁴ and conceit, I have understood its equality. Also, when you asked me, “What Dharma do you understand?” this correct application is not distinguished by conceptual thought. Rather, this correct application is without excessive pride. This correct application is not distinguished by being gained. Rather, this correct application is free from being distinguished by being gained. There is no understanding of any Dharma whatsoever by means of this correct application. This²⁵ so-called “correct application” is a designation for the lack of application.’

1.34 “Then the māra Vikrama asked the bodhisattva Vajranābhi, ‘Monk, what will you obtain by adopting moral conduct?’

“ ‘Vikrama, by my adoption of moral conduct, I will fully awaken to unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening to the fact that all phenomena are without cessation and without arising.’

1.35 “ ‘What awakening will you awaken to?’

“ ‘I will fully awaken to full awakening to the equality of form. I will fully awaken to full awakening to the equality of feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.’

1.36 “The māra Vikrama asked, ‘Monk, where is awakening to be sought?’

“The bodhisattva Vajranābhi replied, ‘Friend, awakening is to be sought in the nature of the view that the transitory aggregates are, or possess, a self.’

1.37 “ ‘How should it be sought?’

“ ‘It should be sought by not in any way giving rise to²⁶ awakening or a view of awakening.’

1.38

“Then the māra Vikrama asked the bodhisattva Vajranābhi, ‘Monk, who is your teacher? With whose instruction did you attain such eloquence?’

“ ‘Friend, the fact that I obtain awakening to the fact that the transitory aggregates have not been destroyed²⁷ is my teacher. That I do not dwell in defilement or purification is my teacher. That consciousness does not dwell in the conditioned or the unconditioned is my teacher.²⁸ That I crossed over the flowing river without effort, having not learned from anyone, is my teacher.²⁹ That consciousness does not engage with any phenomena and that cognition does not move toward phenomena is my teacher. That I use language without wavering from the reality that is inexpressible is my teacher. That the wheel of Dharma has been turned because all phenomena are unborn and so that all birth does not occur is my teacher. That I do not dwell here, there, or in between is my teacher. That there is arising because all phenomena do not arise is my teacher. That there is parinirvāṇa because all phenomena are without cessation is my teacher. Having been instructed in those ways, I attained such eloquence.’

1.39 “The māra Vikrama asked, ‘How did that thus-gone one turn the wheel of Dharma?’

“The bodhisattva Vajranābhi replied, ‘That thus-gone one turned the wheel of Dharma like this: The aggregate of form is not engaged with, nor is it turned away from. The suchness of form, the reality of form, the emptiness of form, the signlessness of form, the wishlessness of form, the tranquility of form, the voidness of form, the birthlessness of form, the essence of form, and the nature of form are not engaged with, nor are they turned away from. In the same way, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are not engaged with, nor are they turned away from. The suchness of consciousness, the reality of consciousness, the emptiness of consciousness, the signlessness of consciousness, the wishlessness of consciousness, the tranquility of consciousness, the voidness of consciousness, the birthlessness of consciousness, the essence of consciousness, and the nature of consciousness are not engaged with, nor are they turned away from.³⁰ And he turned the wheel of Dharma so that all phenomena are not engaged with. Whether he turns the wheel of Dharma or not, he does not abandon the immeasurable limit³¹ of the dharmadhātu. And everything understood by way of that turning of the wheel of Dharma becomes that very turning.’

1.40 “Then the māra Vikrama and his attendants were accepted as students of the monk Vajranābhi and said, ‘We go for refuge in you, monk.’

1.41 “He replied to them, ‘Do not go for refuge in me. Go for refuge instead in the thus-gone one King of Light Rays of Immaculate Light, since he has taught such a Dharma.’

1.42 “They said, ‘Come! Let us now go into the presence of that thus-gone one.’

- 1.43 “Then the bodhisattva Vajranābhi, the māra Vikrama, and the eighty-four thousand māras went together to where the blessed, thus-gone King of Light Rays of Immaculate Light was. Arriving there, they bowed down at the blessed one’s feet and, with their palms joined, took their seats before him. The thus-gone one then taught them the Dharma, beginning with being established in moral conduct and applying oneself to the noble Dharma, such that they all would be certain to attain irreversibility from progress toward unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening.
- 1.44 “Vikurvāṇarāja, if you think that then, at that time, the bodhisattva Vajranābhi was someone else, do not see it that way. Why not? Because, Vikurvāṇarāja, you yourself were then, at that time, the bodhisattva called Vajranābhi. And the bodhisattva Dharaṇīdhara was then, at that time, the māra called Vikrama. Vikurvāṇarāja, these are the magical displays of bodhisattvas’ moral conduct. Based on such magical displays, inconceivably many types of aspirations are taught to bodhisattvas, and immeasurably many beings are matured for awakening. Even the hostile māras, having been defeated, are swiftly and fully awakened to unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening.
- 1.45 “Vikurvāṇarāja, if you ask what the bodhisattvas’ magical displays of superknowledge are, there are five magical displays of superknowledge: the divine eye, the divine ear, knowledge of others’ minds, recollection of past lives, and miraculous powers.

“Vikurvānarāja, you may ask what the bodhisattvas’ magical display of superknowledge of the divine eye is like. By means of the magical display of superknowledge of the eye, the visual faculty of a bodhisattva is not hindered by walls. It is not hindered by trees, not hindered by mountains, not hindered by forests, not hindered by the ring of mountains or the outer ring of mountains, not hindered by Sumeru, and not hindered by the intervening spaces of a world system. With that unhindered eye, they see the countless, innumerable buddhafiels in all ten directions and know them all as a single buddhafiels, just as space has no separation. They do not join one buddhafiels to another, nor do they separate them. They see all the buddhas dwelling in those buddhafiels together with their retinues of śrāvakas, and they see all the buddhas in the manner of the inseparability of the dharmadhātu. And in the manner of the inseparability of the dharmadhātu, they regard³² all buddhas as a single buddha. Seeing a single buddha purifies the seeing of all buddhas. Seeing all buddhas purifies the seeing of a single buddha. With that pure seeing of buddhas, they engage in the pure seeing of self. And with that very purity, they engage in the pure seeing of all phenomena. The perceptions of the pure seeing of self and the pure seeing of phenomena are nondual. They understand that seeing the śrāvakas of those blessed buddhas is nothing other than the pure seeing of buddhas. By seeing the śrāvakas, they see the buddhas, and by seeing the buddhas, they see the śrāvakas. By seeing correctly, they see them as the same.

- 1.47 “They see those in the classes of beings that dwell in the limitlessly, boundlessly many world systems, whether hell beings, animals, hungry ghosts, asuras, gods, or humans, and except for those in the formless realm, they see all their deaths, births, good complexions, bad complexions, fortunate rebirths, unfortunate rebirths, misfortune, and fortune. And they know this to be the mere appearances of those beings. They know and comprehend that everything that appears as physical form is all the result of the maturation of karma. Although they see beings and know the maturation of karma, by taking as their measure the limit of nonself, they do not perceive beings as beings.
- 1.48 “That divine eye sees everything included in form, and because of the very lack of substantial entities, everything that appears as form is understood to be a mere appearance. Everything that appears as form is understood to be nonexistent because it is unborn in the past.³³ But that unhindered divine eye does not accomplish anything. Since it possesses the power of wisdom, if one wishes, one can see objects as if they were nearby. If one wishes, one can also not see them. If one wishes, objects will not appear before the eyes even in the slightest. Even in the midst of many hundreds of thousands of beings, the bodhisattva dwells in the meditative concentrations, emancipations, absorptions, and attainments, and hence no beings appear in their field of vision. That is so because bodhisattvas understand the reality³⁴ of nonself.
- 1.49 “If they wish, bodhisattvas can reveal their bodies to gods in the form realm whose bodies are subtle, whose bodies are exquisite, whose bodies are luminous, and whose bodies are invisible. Those gods will see the bodhisattvas’ bodies, and the bodhisattvas will see their bodies. If they wish, the gods will see their bodies, but will not see their own bodies. If they wish, the gods will see their own bodies, but not the bodhisattvas’ bodies. Such is the divine eye they possess.

- 1.50 “Bodhisattvas possess the divine ear. Their faculty of the divine ear hears all the sounds in the limitlessly, boundlessly many world systems—the sounds of gods and the sounds of nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, and the sounds of humans and nonhumans. And though it hears all those sounds, it does not distinguish them as separate, but regards all sounds as unuttered. It regards them as inexpressible.
- 1.51 “Bodhisattvas do not engage with the perception that all of those sounds are self, or the perception that they are beings, or the perception that they are sounds. Rather, they realize that all sounds are inexpressible as sounds in the beginning or as sounds at the end, and they have the conviction that all phenomena are inexpressible. The element of consciousness of the auditory faculty is unhindered. Having heard those sounds, it understands what they mean. What do sounds mean? The meaning of all sound is a meaning that is inexpressible. It is a meaning that is unuttered. The meaning of all sound is a meaning at peace. That meaning is the reliance upon meaning. And all sounds, though heard, do not abide anywhere, since all phenomena are unarisen.
- 1.52 “With that ear, they hear all the Dharma taught by all the buddhas who live and dwell in the innumerable world systems in the ten directions, teaching the Dharma. There is nothing that obscures or distorts their hearing. Rather, they hear all those Dharma teachings, and they retain them exactly as they heard them. And, having retained them, they never forget any part of them. How is it that they never forget anything? Because they do not fail to understand any word, they do not forget. Having heard those Dharma teachings—whether with defilements or without defilements, whether conditioned or unconditioned, whether worldly or transcendent, whether virtuous or nonvirtuous, whether blameworthy or blameless, whether belonging to the Śrāvaka Vehicle, belonging to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, or belonging to the Great Vehicle—they are engaged with the fact that all of those Dharma teachings have the savor of the nature of a single Dharma teaching, since they possess the single savor of the element of voidness.³⁵

- 1.53 “And though bodhisattvas hear and explain the Dharma, they are without attachment to any object. Though they hear the Dharma, they do not dwell together with any phenomenal signs. Relying on the Dharma, they do not rely on non-Dharma. What is the Dharma? That which is called *Dharma* is freedom from attachment. That which is called Dharma is signlessness. That which is called Dharma is unconditioned. That which is called Dharma is limitless, incomparable, unchanging, unapprehended, unborn, and unarisen. That which is called Dharma is the sort of Dharma with respect to which there are no conceits, and that is without conceptual thought, without the elaborations of perception and mental activities, without acceptance, and without rejection.
- 1.54 “Bodhisattvas rely on the meaning and do not rely on the wording, but they do not rely on the meaning by rejecting the wording. They listen to the Dharma with a mind that alights on the meaning. How is it that the mind alights on the meaning? Because of the meaning of emptiness, it does not fall into views. Because of the meaning of signlessness, it does not fall into phenomenal signs. Because of the meaning of wishlessness, it does not fall into wishes. That is how the mind alights on the meaning. Bodhisattvas do not apprehend the meaning in terms of those from whom they hear the Dharma or that through which they rely on the meaning, and they do not apprehend it even in terms of nonapprehending. They hear the Dharma from the blessed buddhas, and they rely on sūtras of definitive meaning, not on sūtras of interpretable meaning.
- 1.55 “What are sūtras of definitive meaning? All sūtras are of definitive meaning because they are³⁶ inexpressible. Therefore, bodhisattvas rely on sūtras of definitive meaning. Those who do not rely on sūtras of definitive meaning do so on what is called the interpretable. Why are they called *interpretable*? Since they dwell in teachings that contradict the definitive meaning, they must be interpreted. By what means are they interpreted? They are interpreted by means of their language.

- 1.56 “Those who rely on sūtras of definitive meaning do not interpret them by means of language. Why is that? Because they realize that the ultimate is inexpressible, and because they understand all phenomena of the past, present, and future, without adding or omitting anything. Vikurvāṇarāja, regarding this aspect of the meaning, when one thus relies on this reality, then all sūtras will be of definitive meaning. When one does not so rely, then all sūtras will be of interpretable meaning.
- 1.57 “Moreover, Vikurvāṇarāja, when bodhisattvas hear the Dharma from the blessed buddhas, they rely on gnosis, not on consciousness. Why is that? Because they understand that consciousness is like an illusion, void, without a nature, without form, indemonstrable, unimpeded, and unknowable. To realize consciousness in that way is gnosis. Although they rely on gnosis and do not chase after consciousness, they teach consciousness to others. Not grasping at phenomenal signs, and giving rise to the thought that in consciousness there is gnosis, they do not fixate on consciousness or gnosis. Fixating on the reality of consciousness, they do not articulate the reality of gnosis.
- 1.58 “Vikurvāṇarāja, bodhisattvas who rely on gnosis do not dwell together with consciousness. And they do not teach the Dharma to other beings as that which is *not* consciousness. Vikurvāṇarāja, this is the bodhisattvas’ magical display of superknowledge. The bodhisattva who obtains the divine ear will realize the element of gnosis.
- 1.59 “Vikurvāṇarāja, bodhisattvas learn the Dharma in connection with the language of persons and rely on the Dharma itself,³⁷ not on the person. Why is that? Because, Vikurvāṇarāja, if there were a person in this well-spoken Dharma and Vinaya, no beings whatsoever would be utterly pure and liberated.

- 1.60 “Therefore, Vikurvāṇarāja, though all phenomena indeed are without a person, the Thus-Gone One taught *persons* as a convention of the world. Thus bodhisattvas rely on the Dharma, not on the person. Vikurvāṇarāja, *Dharma* is a designation for the dharmadhātu. Vikurvāṇarāja, *dharmadhātu* is a designation for the element of the birthless. Vikurvāṇarāja, *birthless* is a designation for nonorigination. Vikurvāṇarāja, *nonorigination* is a designation for the inexpressible. Why is that? Because whatever the phenomena expressed by whatever the words, those phenomena do not exist in those words, and that which is not existent is a designation, and therefore it is called *designation*.
- 1.61 “All phenomena are wordless; they are not articulated in words. In that regard, there are no words spoken by me—the words spoken by me are wordless. There is no expression since expression is unarisen and nonexistent. Why is that? Whatever has the characteristic of expression is not the words of the Buddha, because it is the inexpressible that is the words of the Buddha. Thus it is called *the words of the Buddha*. Whoever engages with the words of the Buddha engages with the wordless. If one engages with words, one does not engage with the words of the Buddha.
- 1.62 “Vikurvāṇarāja, if one wishes to engage with the words of the Buddha, one should not view as words the words with which *person* and *Dharma* are taught. Why is that? Because whatever is dual is not the words of the Buddha. The words of the Buddha are nondual. Whatever possesses language is not the words of the Buddha. The words of the Buddha are without language. That which possesses expression is not the words of the Buddha. The words of the Buddha are without expression. Therefore, Vikurvāṇarāja, whatever bodhisattva has engaged with the words of the Buddha is said to have obtained superknowledge, and by means of the divine ear, they realize the awakening of the Buddha in harmony with the reality of all language. Thus, Vikurvāṇarāja, this divine ear is the second superknowledge of the bodhisattvas.

1.63 [The Noble Questions of *Vikurvāṇarāja*]

1.64 [B2] “Moreover, *Vikurvāṇarāja*, the bodhisattva obtains the superknowledge of the knowledge of others’ minds; they know the minds of other beings and other persons. In whichever assembly they go to teach the Dharma, they first examine the minds of those in the assembly, considering the kinds of thoughts, fetters,³⁸ causes, and characteristics each being possesses. Having examined them, they teach them the Dharma accordingly. Because their own minds are pure, they engage in purifying the minds of those in the assembly. *Vikurvāṇarāja*, here is an analogy. Whatever are the colors, features, and shape of a physical form that appears on the clean surface of a mirror, their reflection appears just as they are, without adding or omitting anything, because the surface of the mirror is clean. They appear on the surface of the mirror even without conceptual thought or intentions.

1.65 “*Vikurvāṇarāja*, in the same way, because the bodhisattva’s own mind, too, is pure and the sphere³⁹ of the *dharmadhātu* is pure, they understand all the mental activities of beings just as they occur. The bodhisattva’s mind is unobscured, and the minds of others unobscured. In that regard, if those in the assembly experience attachment, they understand that mind. And they observe the mind that is free from attachment. Why is that? Because the nature of the mind is without attachment. If anyone in the assembly experiences hatred, they understand that mind. And they observe the mind that is free from hatred. Why is that? Because the nature of the mind does not hate. If anyone in the assembly experiences ignorance, they understand that mind. And they observe the mind that is free from ignorance. Why is that? Because the nature of the mind is not ignorant.

- 1.66 “If those in the assembly are inclined toward the vehicle of the śrāvakas, bodhisattvas understand their experience⁴⁰ exactly as it is and do not regard the dharmadhātu as lesser. If those in the assembly are inclined toward the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, they understand their experience exactly as it is and do not regard the dharmadhātu as middling. If those in the assembly are inclined toward the Great Vehicle, they understand their experience exactly as it is and do not regard the dharmadhātu as highest. And though they teach the Dharma by knowing the experience of the mental constitutions of all beings, they do not conceptualize the nature of the mind. They teach the Dharma by way of the determination of all vehicles, but they do not differentiate the dharmadhātu. Because the dharmadhātu is without differentiation, they understand the experience of all beings. They mentally observe minds, but they do not engage in any mental activity with respect to minds, nor do they act in any inharmonious way with them.⁴¹ They understand the mental elements of all beings, and they understand that that which is the dharmadhātu is that which is the mental element.⁴²
- 1.67 “Thus, Vikurvāṇarāja, bodhisattvas obtain the superknowledge that knows others’ minds, and through that superknowledge they know directly⁴³ the world together with its gods.
- 1.68 “Moreover, Vikurvāṇarāja, bodhisattvas obtain the superknowledge that makes manifest the knowledge of previous lives, and without articulating anything, by composing their mental faculties they remember previous lives. They teach the Dharma in relation to the previous lives of themselves and others, from as many eons ago as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River. They know, ‘In such and such a place I had this name, this family, with such and such a lifespan, and I experienced this or that happiness and suffering.’ They also know such things about the previous lives of other beings.

1.69 “They know what has arisen for beings as a result of previous roots of virtue. They know, ‘These beings possess the power of causes, these possess the power of conditions, the cause for these beings is the Śrāvaka Vehicle, the cause for these beings is the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the cause for these beings is the Great Vehicle.’ Knowing the previous causes of beings, they teach them the Dharma accordingly. By making manifest previous lives, they obtain excellent connections with the past. They remember all the previous roots of virtue produced in the presence of buddhas that were not dedicated to awakening, and they dedicate them to unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening. They remember previous lives, but they understand that all phenomena are without movement in the past. They see that there is no going from the past to the future. They see that there is no going from the future to the past. And they understand that all phenomena do not go or come from anywhere. When they remember the past, they do not observe the past. When they remember⁴⁴ the future, they do not observe the future. They understand all phenomena to be without edges or center.

1.70 “They remember the previous lives of all beings, but they understand form to be void of the past. They understand feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness to be void of the past. They understand that all five aggregates are void of the past, void of the future, and void of the present. They understand that all phenomena have the nature of being empty of the past, the nature of being empty of the present, and the nature of being empty of the future.

- 1.71 “Vikurvānarāja, the bodhisattvas’ remembering past lives is not the decline of previous roots of virtue, but it is the exhaustion of previously performed acts. Why is that? Because they know that all phenomena are neither new nor old. By virtue of such knowledge, they regard everything included in mental formations to be like a dream. Here is an analogy. In a dream, one dreams of being born or dying, of happiness or suffering. They regard all mental formations in the same way. Regarding them in that way, they are not wearied by samsāra, and they feel compassion for all beings. They perceive that all phenomena are contrived, thinking that though they have wandered in samsāra for thousands of eons, that was unreal and nonexistent. They think⁴⁵ that the wandering of all beings, which cannot exist where the elements are since the elements do not exist,⁴⁶ is similar—it is unreal and nonexistent.
- 1.72 “Vikurvānarāja, the bodhisattva remembers previous lives and sees that the elements and mental formations are impermanent. Why is that? They remember the pleasures of a universal monarch, and that they are impermanent and subject to change. They remember the pleasures of Śakra, and that they are impermanent and subject to change. They remember the pleasures of Brahmā, and that they are impermanent and subject to change.
- 1.73 “They remember experiencing and enjoying the array of good qualities of the fields of previous blessed buddhas, the array of good qualities of śrāvakas, and the array of good qualities of bodhisattvas, and they also remember the excellence of the physical bodies of those blessed buddhas and the excellence of their turning the wheel of Dharma. Their remembering thus is a perception that does not see any conditioned, substantial entities or any grasping.⁴⁷ Why is that? They think, ‘The vast buddhafiels and the physical bodies of the buddhas have perished because⁴⁸ they have the nature of perishing, and hence what I have grasped⁴⁹ is also impermanent.’ Therefore, they teach that what one grasps is impermanent and subject to change. They think, ‘Alas, beings perceive permanence when all formations are totally impermanent,’ and they generate great compassion for beings but do not see any substantial entities.

- 1.74 “Vikurvāṇarāja, this is the fourth of the bodhisattvas’ magical displays of superknowledge. Realizing that all substantial entities are impermanent, bodhisattvas intentionally take birth in the states of existence in order to bring beings to maturity. They take up grasping in order to eliminate grasping, appropriating without appropriating, for the sake of maturing beings.
- 1.75 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what is the bodhisattvas’ magical display of miraculous powers? Vikurvāṇarāja, the bodhisattva obtains the bases of miraculous power that effect the aspect of power over the mind through aspiration, diligence, attention, and discernment. They obtain miraculous power that is entirely without any performance. If they wish, in a single instant of thought they can journey through world systems as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River, and they know that they have gone there, but without moving from here. And there they appear to teach the Dharma while continually speaking here.

1.76 “Vikurvānarāja, this is the bodhisattvas’ magical display of miraculous powers. With that magical display, they train beings who are to be trained by means of the display of miraculous powers, whether gods or humans. To those beings who perceive permanence, they manifest the conflagration at the end of the eon. They then see the trichiliocosm aflame, but the world system is not destroyed. To beings who are excessively proud, they manifest in the form of the yakṣa Vajrapāṇi. Wielding his fearsomely blazing and flaming vajra, they terrify the excessively proud, who are humbled and prostrate to them. To those who are inspired by the appearance of a universal emperor, they teach the Dharma by assuming the appearance and physical form of a universal emperor. To those who are inspired by the appearance of Śakra, they teach by assuming the appearance and physical form of Śakra. To those who are inspired by the appearance of Māra, they teach by assuming the appearance and physical form of Māra. To those beings who are inspired by the appearance of Brahmā, they teach by assuming the appearance and physical form of Brahmā. To those who are inspired by the appearance of a śrāvaka or a pratyekabuddha, they teach by assuming their appearance and physical form. To those beings who are inspired by the appearance of a buddha, they teach by assuming the appearance and physical form of a buddha.

1.77 “To some beings they teach the Dharma seated in the cross-legged posture in the sky, emanating light rays.⁵⁰ To those beings inspired by vastness, they teach the Dharma after having covered the entire trichiliocosm with a canopy, hung it with garlands of woven silk,⁵¹ ornamented it with parasols, banners, and pennants, arrayed it with fluttering nets of bells and variegated flowers, enveloped it with incense, and caused it to resound with the sounds of many hundreds of thousands of cymbals. For some beings they transform the entire trichiliocosm into a single ocean covered with blue water lilies, white water lilies, and white lotuses. Emanating a lion throne in the middle of the ocean, they seat themselves atop it and teach the Dharma.

1.78 “For some beings, they teach the Dharma by manifesting themselves seated on the peak of Sumeru, speaking in the voice of Brahmā. For some beings, they teach the Dharma while remaining invisible, proclaiming it in a pleasing tone. For some beings, they teach the Dharma in the form of a gandharva, with the joyous accompaniment of song and music. For some beings, they teach the Dharma accompanied by a circle of nāgas, manifesting clouds, thunder, lightning, and rainfall. They teach the Dharma for some who are afflicted by hunger and thirst, having gratified them with divine food and drink. They teach the Dharma to those beings in the hells who are utterly tormented by suffering, having extinguished the fire of the hells with the strength of their miraculous power, filling their pores with radiance and gladdening them.

1.79 “They teach the Dharma to beings who are blind, having granted them sight and restored their vision with the strength of their miraculous power. They teach the Dharma to beings who lack ears or are deaf, having restored their hearing with the strength of their miraculous power. They teach the Dharma to beings who are tormented by various illnesses, having cured their illnesses and restored them to health. They teach the Dharma to beings who are being dragged off to their executions and about to lose their lives, having emanated others who look just like them with the strength of their miraculous power, freeing them and saving their lives. They teach the Dharma to beings with damaged limbs or digits and lacking their faculties—who are ugly, lack confidence, and are discouraged about their bodies—having restored all of their limbs and digits with the strength of their miraculous power, so that they have excellent physical bodies. They train beings in the womb who are dull and live in impurity with the strength of their miraculous power, teaching the Dharma to them after gladdening them by transforming the womb into a jeweled mansion. They teach the Dharma to children who have been born and whose faculties are not yet fully developed, proclaiming it verbally with the strength of their miraculous power.

- 1.80 “Vikurvānarāja, bodhisattvas who possess such miraculous power teach the Dharma by means of other inconceivable displays.⁵² To tame beings inspired by the sun and moon, with the strength of their miraculous power they shine like the sun and moon in the solar and lunar celestial palaces, placing the disks of the sun and moon and the trichiliocosm in the palms of their hands and proceeding through the limitlessly many world systems. They appear to go, without moving at all from their place.
- 1.81 “If they wish, after inserting within a single tuft of hair⁵³ as many buddhafiels as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, while seated in the Brahmā realm they fling them to limitlessly many world systems without harming a single being. Then they return them to where they were before, without the beings knowing that they were taken away or brought back. With a single breath they can blow out as many eon-ending conflagrations as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River. Seated only in the cross-legged posture, they can go to buddhafiels as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River. Covering the sun and moon with their hands, they teach the Dharma having lowered those buddhafiels.
- 1.82 “Vikurvānarāja, if, when a bodhisattva is seated in the presence of a thus-gone one, they so wish, they can worship the thus-gone one by strewing flowers over the thus-gone one’s body from flower baskets like Sumeru, and as soon as they have strewn them from the flower baskets, they appear within the body of the thus-gone one. They can transform all the wood and grass in the trichiliocosm into votive lamps and water offerings in order to worship the thus-gone one. They can light votive lamps and cause a shower of lamps and water offerings to appear to rain down. They can display their own bodies before all beings, displaying themselves in whatever ways are inspiring—displaying themselves as Śakra, displaying themselves as Brahmā, displaying themselves as a śrāvaka, displaying themselves as a pratyekabuddha, or displaying themselves as a buddha.

- 1.83 “Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the bodhisattvas’ magical display of superknowledge—the divine eye that is unhindered in seeing forms, the divine ear that is unhindered in hearing sounds, knowledge that is unhindered in knowing the mental activities of all beings, and remembering countless eons and revealing everything about lives over countless eons, without hindrance and without obscuration, doing so without acceptance and without rejection—this is what is called the magical display of superknowledge.
- 1.84 “Vikurvāṇarāja, superknowledge for the sake of revealing all buddhas, superknowledge that knows all inferior beings, superknowledge that knows those tamed through the Śrāvaka Vehicle, superknowledge that knows those tamed through the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, superknowledge that knows those tamed through the Great Vehicle, superknowledge that knows deaths and rebirths, superknowledge that knows the maturation of beings, superknowledge that is the knowledge and practice of renunciation,⁵⁴ superknowledge that is skill in means, superknowledge of the dedication of generosity, and superknowledge of the dedication of moral conduct, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom, the defeat of māras, and applying oneself to roots of virtue—all of those are what is called superknowledge.
- 1.85 “Moreover, Vikurvāṇarāja, bodhisattvas who have obtained the superknowledges will be directly known⁵⁵ by means of their physical form, appearance, radiance, charm,⁵⁶ fame, strength, family, clan, wealth, and entourage. Hence it is called superknowledge. Moreover, Vikurvāṇarāja, bodhisattvas who have obtained superknowledge will be directly known by gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans; by Śakra, Brahmā, and the Guardians of the World; and by the thus-gone ones, the arhats, the unsurpassed and perfectly complete buddhas. Hence it is called superknowledge. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is what is called superknowledge. By means of that superknowledge, bodhisattvas do not forsake their prior vows and they demonstrate everything that is to be done.

- 1.86 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what are the magical displays of knowing? They are knowing the aggregates, knowing the elements, knowing the sense bases, knowing dependent origination, and knowing the truths.
- 1.87 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what is *knowing the aggregates*? Form is empty—the past of form is empty, the future of form is empty, and the present⁵⁷ of form is empty. Similarly, Vikurvāṇarāja, with feeling, perception, mental formations, or consciousness—it is empty—the past of consciousness is empty, the future of consciousness is empty, and the present of consciousness is empty.⁵⁸ Knowing that the five aggregates of appropriation are empty, utterly empty, is what is called knowing the aggregates.
- 1.88 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what is *knowing the elements*? The earth element is the dharmadhātu, the water element is the dharmadhātu, the fire element is the dharmadhātu, and the wind element is the dharmadhātu. Why is that? Because all four elements are a single element as the dharmadhātu. It is like this: With the space element, the space element and the dharmadhātu are not elements, because they are not the earth element, not the water element, not the fire element, and not the wind element. Why is that? Because the immovable element is the dharmadhātu, the nondual element is the dharmadhātu, the birthless element is the dharmadhātu, the undefiled element is the dharmadhātu, and the utterly pure element is the dharmadhātu. Just like the dharmadhātu, so too is the element of self; so too the element of beings; so too the element of life force; so too the element of persons; so too the element of saṃsāra; and so too is the element of nirvāṇa. And just like the element of nirvāṇa, so too is the desire realm that element,⁵⁹ the form realm that element, the formless realm that element, the conditioned element that element, and the unconditioned element that element. Therefore, it is called the element of nirvāṇa. In that way, Vikurvāṇarāja, that which is the independent knowing of the realms⁶⁰ of form is what is called the elements.

1.89 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what is *knowing the sense bases*? The eye has not arisen or originated from any nature,⁶¹ and it has no creator whatsoever. Similarly, Vikurvāṇarāja, the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind have not arisen or originated from any nature, and they have no creator whatsoever. Vikurvāṇarāja, the eye is without an owner and has no viewer whatsoever. The ear is without an owner and has no listener whatsoever. The nose is without an owner and has no smeller⁶² whatsoever. The tongue is without an owner and has no taster whatsoever. The body is without an owner and has no experiencer of touch whatsoever. The mind is without an owner has no knower whatsoever.

1.90 “Vikurvāṇarāja, the nature of the eye is that it does not see forms.⁶³ The nature of the ear is that it does not hear sounds. The nature of the nose is that it does not smell scents. The nature of the tongue is that it does not taste flavors. The nature of the body is that it does not feel tactile objects. The nature of the mind is that it does not know mental phenomena. Why is that? Because the eye is without an agent. It is like grass, a tree, an enclosure,⁶⁴ or gravel, and similarly the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are without agents. They are like grass, a tree, an enclosure, or gravel.

1.91 “Vikurvāṇarāja, the eye is not attachment, nor is it the lack of attachment. Why is that? Because the eye by nature is without attachment. Vikurvāṇarāja, the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are not attachment, nor are they the lack of attachment. Why is that? Because mind by nature is without attachment.⁶⁵ Vikurvāṇarāja, understanding that about all of the *sense bases* while being without attachment is what is called knowing the *sense bases*.

1.92 “Having known that about the aggregates, the elements, and the sense bases—that although they are without arising, without origination, and utterly at peace, still they arise and are originated—they take up the aggregates, the elements, and the sense bases; they do not reject the aggregates, the elements, or the sense bases. That is the bodhisattvas’ magical display of knowing. They understand what the characteristics of the aggregates, the elements, and the sense bases are, and that which is their nature. They do not reject them, and although they appear in the three realms, they do not dwell together with the defilements, revealing birth and origination but without being born and without passing away. That is the bodhisattvas’ magical display of knowing.

1.93 “What is *the knowing of dependent origination*? Although ignorance is indeed the condition for mental formations, ignorance does not think, ‘I produce the formations.’ Although formations are indeed the condition for consciousness, formations do not think, ‘We produce consciousness.’ Although consciousness is indeed the condition for name and form, consciousness does not think, ‘I produce name and form.’ Although name and form are indeed the condition for the six sense bases, name and form do not think, ‘We produce the six sense bases.’ Although the six sense bases are indeed the condition for contact, the six sense bases do not think, ‘We produce contact.’ Although contact is indeed the condition for feeling, contact does not think, ‘I produce feeling.’ Although feeling is indeed the condition for craving, feeling does not think, ‘I produce craving.’ Although craving is indeed the condition for grasping, craving does not think, ‘I produce grasping.’ Although grasping is indeed the condition for existence, grasping does not think, ‘I produce existence.’ Although existence is indeed the condition for birth, existence does not think, ‘I produce birth.’ Although birth is indeed the condition for aging and death, birth does not think, ‘I produce aging and death.’

1.94

“Vikurvānarāja, when bodhisattvas thus discern dependent origination, they do not dwell either in views of annihilation or in views of permanence. They think, ‘All these phenomena depend upon causes and conditions.’ They search for those causes and conditions, and having searched for them, they do not find them. Then they engage in equality with dependent origination. What kind of knowing do they engage with? That dependent origination is equal to birthlessness; that dependent origination is equal to that which emptiness is equal to; that dependent origination is equal to that which signlessness is equal to; and that dependent origination is equal to that which wishlessness is equal to. That very equality by which the thus-gone ones fully awaken to all phenomena is equal to dependent origination. The equality of dependent origination is without the birth of a self, without the birth of a being, without the birth of a life force, and without the birth of a person. No phenomena whatsoever are born. Therefore it is called dependent origination.”

1.95 “Dependent origination should be seen as without origination. That which is the knowledge of the lack of origination is indeed the knowledge of dependent origination, but ignorance and knowledge are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Formations and nonformations are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Consciousness and nonconsciousness are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Name and form and the lack of name and form are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. The six sense bases and the lack of the six sense bases are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Contact and the lack of contact are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Feeling and the lack of feeling are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Craving and the lack of craving are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Grasping and the lack of grasping are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Existence and the nonconnection between births are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Birth and the lack of birth are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination. Aging and death and dreams⁶⁶ are nondual and cannot be separated. Knowing this is called knowing dependent origination.

1.96 “That which is dependent does not abide; that which is dependent is without a core; that which is dependent is impermanent; that which is dependent is empty; that which is dependent is without coming or going; that which is dependent is unoriginated; that which is dependent is without holding on to anything; and that which is dependent is without engagement. Knowing that is called knowing dependent origination.

- 1.97 “Whoever sees dependent origination does not see ignorance; they do not see formations; they do not see consciousness; they do not see name and form; they do not see the six sense bases; they do not see contact; they do not see feeling; they do not see craving; they do not see grasping; they do not see existence; they do not see birth; and they do not see aging and death. Whoever correctly sees phenomena in that way sees dependent origination. Whoever sees dependent origination sees the Dharma.
- 1.98 “What Dharma do they see? They see the Dharma that is freedom from attachment. Why is it said to be free from attachment? Because through it there is freedom from views of attachment toward all phenomena, hence it is said that they see the Dharma that is freedom from attachment. They see in that way without adding anything or taking anything away. They see in that way without any wavering from reality and without any attachment. They see in that way without engaging in any differentiation of the dharmadhātu. They see in that way the certainty of the very limit of reality.⁶⁷ They see in that way by seeing in the way in which seeing is nonseeing. They see in that way without seeing by means of the physical eye, or by means of the divine eye, or by means of the eye of wisdom. Why is that so? Because the physical eye is without activity, and since it is without activity it does not see. The divine eye is conditioned, so it does not easily see the unconditioned. The eye of wisdom is nonconceptual, and because it is nonconceptual it does not see.
- 1.99 “Vikurvāṇarāja, bodhisattvas who see phenomena in that way see the Thus-Gone One. But they do not see him as form, nor do they see him as feeling, as perception, as mental formations, or as consciousness. They do not see him as the major and minor marks, or as the dharmadhātu, or as moral conduct. They do not see him as absorption, or as wisdom, or as liberation, or as the knowledge and seeing of liberation. They do not see him as past, or as future, or as present. Those who see in that way see the Thus-Gone One.”

- 1.100 Then the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja asked, “Blessed One, are there divisions⁶⁸ of seeing the Thus-Gone One by seeing phenomena?”
- 1.101 “Vikurvāṇarāja, there are,” replied The Blessed One. “Why is that? Form is characterized by being exhaustible⁶⁹ and has the nature of being birthless. Whoever sees form in that way sees the Thus-Gone One. Feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are characterized by being exhaustible and have the nature of being birthless. Whoever sees consciousness in that way sees the Thus-Gone One.⁷⁰ Moral conduct is characterized by being without fabrication and is unconditioned. Whoever sees moral conduct in that way sees the Thus-Gone One. To see absorption as the same is pure. Thus, I purified seeing at the time of the buddha Dīpaṃkara. At that time, by seeing dependent origination I saw the Dharma. And by seeing the Dharma I saw the Thus-Gone One.”
- 1.102 The bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja asked, “Blessed One, how did you see the thus-gone ones that you saw before⁷¹ the buddha Dīpaṃkara?”
- 1.103 The Blessed One replied, “Vikurvāṇarāja, I saw them by imagining them to be characterized by form, but did not see them as nondual with the dharmakāya. Vikurvāṇarāja, have confidence! Understand this! Since⁷² giving rise to the mind of awakening, except for the buddha Dīpaṃkara I have never seen a thus-gone one. Why is that? Because seeing a thus-gone one characterized by form is not the pure seeing of a thus-gone one. Therefore, Vikurvāṇarāja, desiring to see the Thus-Gone One, you should see him in the way that I saw Dīpaṃkara—as one with reality and as nondual with reality.
- 1.104 “How is he one with reality? Just as my body is, so is the buddha Dīpaṃkara’s body. Just as the buddha Dīpaṃkara’s body is, so are the bodies of all beings. Hence, bodies are one, nondual, and cannot be separated. It is like this—you should know that they are one with reality because they are without characteristics, but you should not know this conceptually.

- 1.105 “Vikurvānarāja, this is what is called seeing dependent origination. By seeing dependent origination, one sees the Dharma. By seeing the Dharma, one sees the Buddha. Because of nonarising and being without apprehending, in every instant of thought one manifests cessation but does not enter parinirvāṇa.⁷³ This demonstration of saṃsāra through skillful means is one’s magical display of knowing.
- 1.106 “What is *knowing the truths*? The truths whose realization causes the liberation of the śrāvakas to be reached are understood by bodhisattvas, but having realized those truths, they do not reach liberation. This is their magical display of knowing. The truths whose realization causes the liberation of the pratyekabuddhas to be reached are understood by bodhisattvas, but having realized those truths, they do not reach liberation. This is their magical display of the birthless. However, what is called knowing the truths is to comprehend that suffering is unreal and nonexistent.⁷⁴ What is that *comprehension of suffering*? It is the knowledge that suffering is unreal and nonexistent because it arises in error, and that it is not a substantial entity and is without substantiality. When one knows that suffering is without birth and without origination, that is the comprehension of suffering.
- 1.107 “What is the *comprehension of the origin*? Insofar as phenomena originate, they are abandoned. How do they originate? That which is called *origination* is that as soon as phenomena originate, they are abandoned as without coming, and in originating, they are abandoned as without going. This is a principle of phenomena. In this regard, there is no origination whatsoever of a phenomenon that is to be abandoned. The latent tendency of craving that is the latent tendency of craving by which existence originates is what is called abandonment.⁷⁵

- 1.108 “What is the *cessation of suffering*? The complete cessation of both suffering and its cause, and the nonexistence of any destruction whatsoever of phenomena, are what is called cessation. What is called cessation is the cessation of all apprehending of phenomenal signs. Because the nature of phenomena is that they have ceased, they are not made to arise and they are not made to cease. That is what is called cessation.
- 1.109 “What is the *path*? The path is that by which all phenomena, when sought for, are not apprehended as virtuous or nonvirtuous, with defilements or without defilements, blameless or blameworthy, conditioned or unconditioned, or worldly or transcendent—that is called the path. Since all phenomena lack differences, the path is equality. Since there is no torment caused by any defilement, the path is tranquil. Since there is freedom from all evil destinies, the path is calm. Since all defilements are utterly extinguished, the path is undefiled. The path cannot be traversed by means of any views that involve apprehending. The path is easily realized by those correctly engaged in spiritual practice. The path was trodden and followed by past thus-gone ones. The path is signless because it has abandoned all conceptualizing in terms of phenomenal signs. The path by which one does not fall into duality or phenomenal signs is called the path. When bodhisattvas realize the four truths in these ways it is called knowing the truths.
- 1.110 “These four truths are taught to⁷⁶ the followers of the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. To act without any desire for those vehicles is known as the magical display of knowing the truths.
- 1.111 “Moreover, Vikurvānarāja, the magical display of knowing is the knowledge of the Śrāvaka Vehicle, but it is not known dwelling in that;⁷⁷ it is the knowledge of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, but it is not known dwelling in that; it is the knowledge of the Buddha⁷⁸ Vehicle, and it is known dwelling in that. This is the magical display of knowing.

- 1.112 “Moreover, the magical display of knowing is such that in a single instant of knowing, the minds of all beings are known, and with a single nature of the mind, the nature of the minds of all⁷⁹ beings is known, but it does not engage with mind and knowing dualistically. Moreover, the magical display of knowing is the unhindered knowing and seeing of the past, but there is no movement of a future mind to the past. It is the unhindered knowing and seeing of the future,⁸⁰ but there is no movement of a past mind to the future. It is the unhindered knowing and seeing of the present, but there is no proliferation of the mind toward the past, present, or future.
- 1.113 “Moreover, the magical display of knowing is knowing extinction,⁸¹ but knowing that the roots of virtue that are produced are inexhaustible, and knowing that they are without arising, but being skilled in means with respect to the four means of attracting students. This is the magical display of knowing.
- 1.114 “Moreover, the magical display of knowing is knowing independently the qualities of parinirvāṇa,⁸² and with the strength of that knowing, reaching parinirvāṇa for the sake of bringing all beings to maturity. This is what is called the magical display of knowing.

1.115 “Vikurvānarāja, bodhisattvas who wish to perform the magical display of knowing should do what is to be done⁸³ with gnosis, but they should not do so with conceit. What is an act of conceit? To the extent that a mind wavers, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that consciousness wavers, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that thoughts⁸⁴ waver, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that there is fixation on producing roots of virtue, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that there is giving that falls into views, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that there is moral conduct that falls into conceptions,⁸⁵ to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that there is patience that dwells on self and others, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that there is diligence that apprehends body and mind, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that there is meditative concentration with thought, conceptuality, and mental fabrication, to that extent there is an act of conceit. To the extent that there is wisdom produced by the construction of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ to that extent there is an act of conceit.

1.116 “Thinking ‘I am a bodhisattva’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I have set out for awakening’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I do not interrupt the norms⁸⁶ of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I have set out to benefit beings’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I will lead across those who have not crossed over,’ ‘I will liberate those who have not been liberated,’ ‘I will comfort those who need comfort,’ and ‘I will lead to parinirvāṇa those who have not reached parinirvāṇa’ are acts of conceit. Thinking ‘I am generous, and I possess moral conduct, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I dwell in loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I have few desires, am content, and delight in seclusion’ is an act of conceit. To have the conceit and to conceptualize by thinking ‘I promote the ascetic practices,⁸⁷ I am a forest-dweller’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I dwell in emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I speak truthfully, I speak correctly, I practice what I preach’ is an act of conceit. Thinking ‘I have transcended the works of Māra, am free from the four māras and all views, and I have obtained the acceptance of the fact of nonarising’ is an act of conceit. To have the conceit and to conceptualize by thinking ‘I have realized awakening and turned the wheel of the Dharma, and having liberated beings, I will reach parinirvāṇa in the element of parinirvāṇa in which there is no remnant of the aggregates’—all of those are acts of conceit. Vikurvāṇarāja, to the extent that there is examination of mental activity, a mind that is high or low, or consciousness, to that extent there is an act of conceit.

1.117 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what are acts of gnosis? That in which there is the nonexistence of mental activity, the nonexistence of the mind, and the nonexistence of consciousness is an act of gnosis, and that is what performs the acts that are done with gnosis.

- 1.118 “What are the acts of a bodhisattva? They are what is to be done by a bodhisattva. There are two types of a bodhisattva’s acts. What are the two? They are to mature all beings and to uphold the sublime Dharma. They mature beings exactly as they know the self. How do they know the self? They know the self to be groundless. Those who know the self to be groundless are without mind, without consciousness, and without thought,⁸⁸ and accordingly mature beings.
- 1.119 “How is the sublime Dharma upheld? Not taking up any phenomena is upholding the sublime Dharma.⁸⁹ Taking up form is not upholding the sublime Dharma. Taking up feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness is not upholding the sublime Dharma. Similarly, taking up the elements, taking up the sense bases, and taking up name and form is not upholding the sublime Dharma. Taking up virtues and nonvirtues is not upholding the sublime Dharma. Taking up the blameworthy or blameless, the defiled or undefiled, or worldly or transcendent qualities is not upholding the sublime Dharma.
- 1.120 “Taking up the sign of generosity is not upholding the sublime Dharma. Taking up the phenomenal signs of moral discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom is not upholding the sublime Dharma. Why is that? Because to the extent that phenomenal signs and apprehending⁹⁰ occur, to that extent it is not the Dharma and not the Vinaya. To abandon all grasping,⁹¹ and to not take up⁹² engagement, nonengagement, aspiration, phenomenal signs, or apprehending—this is upholding the sublime Dharma. Why is that? Because the thus-gone ones fully awaken to the signlessness and nonapprehending of phenomena, they cannot be taken up by means of phenomenal signs and apprehending.
- 1.121 “Knowing the acts of a bodhisattva in that way is gnosis. That gnosis performs all the acts of a bodhisattva, and that inexhaustibility is what is called the magical display of knowing.

1.122 [The Noble Questions of Vikurvāṇarāja]

1.123 [B3] “Vikurvāṇarāja, what is the magical display of wisdom? It is the investigation of phenomena and the analysis of words, and the four correct discernments—to obtain and teach the correct discernment of meaning, the correct discernment of the Dharma, the correct discernment of lexical explanations, and the correct discernment of eloquence.

1.124 “What is the correct discernment of meaning? All explanation of words should rely on the meaning itself. It should not rely on the wording. What is called *meaning* is the perception of the reality of all phenomena. What is called meaning, that is to say, is inexpressible. It is without forgetfulness and is the lack of different words. It is separate from prior and later sound. That is what is called meaning. One should not rely on the meaning of clearly expressed words. The sameness of words is their meaning. That is what is called the correct discernment of meaning. The correct discernment of all meaning is what is termed the correct discernment of meaning.

1.125 “What is the correct discernment of the Dharma? It is to rely on the Dharma, and not to rely on what is not the Dharma. In relying on the Dharma, what is not the Dharma does not appear. Why is that? Because with that, one knows that all phenomena are separate from nominal designation.⁹³ That which is called the correct discernment of the Dharma is that which knows the differences of the vehicles and the differences of the Dharma, but does not differentiate the characteristics of the dharmadhātu. Why is that? Because the dharmadhātu’s single characteristic is that it is without characteristics. The designations by which phenomena are designated are used insofar as they are the same as the sound of an echo. Those phenomena that are designated are known to be the same as the dharmadhātu. To be unhindered with respect to knowing and conventions is what is called the correct discernment of Dharma.

1.126 “What is the correct discernment of lexical explanations? Knowing the labeling⁹⁴ of gods, knowing the labeling of *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras*, *mahoragas*, humans, and nonhumans; knowing the labeling of *Śakra*, *Brahmā*, and the *Guardians of the World*; knowing single and compound words, multiple words, abbreviations, elaborate expressions, and masculine, feminine, and neuter designations;⁹⁵ and knowing past, present, and future designations. It is to realize and label in accordance with how phenomena are labeled, and the labels with which⁹⁶ the mental continua of other beings are labeled.

1.127 “One does not confuse one’s own lexical explanations with those of others, and one does not have any conceits about them. Why is that? Because with that, one knows that all phenomena have no lexical explanations. To think, ‘The phenomena due to which there is labeling and the phenomena that are labeled do not exist in that label, and that label by which there is labeling does not exist in those phenomena’—this is what is called the correct discernment of lexical explanations. If the terminology of a lexical explanation is correct, then for lexical explanations of virtues there will not be lexical explanations of nonvirtues. Therefore, lexical explanation should be known as emancipating. What is called the correct discernment of lexical explanations is to realize that all the words that are the labels are phenomena.⁹⁷ Why is that? One does not realize phenomena for the sake of well realizing all phenomena. The labeling and explanation of such realization is what is called the correct discernment of lexical explanations.

1.128 “What is the correct discernment of eloquence? It is why there is the appearance of all letters, the appearance of all sounds, and the appearance of all declarations.⁹⁸ How do they appear? They appear clearly, they appear as the Dharma, they appear as the Vinaya, and they appear correctly. For those who are inspired by the sound of the sūtras, they appear as the sound of the sūtras. Similarly, for those who are inspired by songs, prophecies, verses, inspired utterances, narratives, exemplary tales, ‘thus it was said’ stories, stories of former births, extensive teachings, marvels, and instructions,⁹⁹ they appear accordingly.

1.129 “For those who are inspired by past endeavors, they appear as past endeavors. The faculties of all beings appear—for those who possess faith, the faculty of faith appears; for those who are diligent, the faculty of diligence appears; for those who possess mindfulness, the faculty of mindfulness appears; for those who possess meditative absorption, the faculty of meditative absorption appears; and for those who are wise, the faculty of wisdom appears. The eighty-four thousand faculties of those who possess the twenty-one thousand types of attachment are known by the gnosis of the thus-gone ones, and in that regard, all those faculties appear to the thus-gone ones. The connections between them¹⁰⁰ appear to the bodhisattva. The eighty-four thousand faculties of those who possess the twenty-one thousand types of hatred are known by the gnosis of the thus-gone ones, and in that regard, all those faculties appear to the thus-gone ones. The connections between them appear to the bodhisattva. The eighty-four thousand faculties of those who possess the twenty-one thousand types of ignorance are known by the gnosis of the thus-gone ones, and in that regard, all those faculties appear to the thus-gone ones. The connections between them appear to the bodhisattva. The eighty-four thousand faculties of those who possess the twenty-one thousand types of all three equally are known by the gnosis of the thus-gone ones, and in that regard, all those faculties appear clearly to the thus-gone ones. The connections between them appear to the bodhisattva. That is what is called the correct discernment of eloquence.

1.130 “Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of all those correct discernments of bodhisattvas—the correct discernment of meaning, the correct discernment of the Dharma, the correct discernment of lexical explanations, and the correct discernment of eloquence—is wisdom. Their foundation is wisdom. They are included in wisdom. Bodhisattvas who are wise can perform these magical displays and others besides.”

1.131 “Blessed One, what is the root of wisdom? What is its foundation? In what is it included?”

“Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of wisdom is learning. Its foundation is learning. It is included in learning.”

1.132 “What is the root of learning? What is its foundation? In what is it included?”

“Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of learning is the spiritual friend. Its foundation is the spiritual friend. It is included in the spiritual friend.”

1.133 “What is the root of the spiritual friend? What is their foundation? In what are they included?”

“Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of the spiritual friend is devotion. Its foundation is devotion. It is included in devotion.”

1.134 “What is the root of devotion? What is its foundation?¹⁰¹ In what is it included?”

“Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of devotion is an excellent intention.¹⁰² Its foundation is an excellent intention. It is included in an excellent intention.”

1.135 “What is the root of an excellent intention? What is its foundation?¹⁰³ In what is it included?”

“Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of an excellent intention is to be without deceit. Its foundation is to be without deceit. It is included in the lack of deceit.”

1.136 “What is the root of being without deceit? What is its foundation? In what is it included?”

“Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of being without deceit is great compassion. Its foundation is great compassion. It is included in great compassion.”

1.137 “What is the root of great compassion? What is its foundation? In what is it included?

“Vikurvāṇarāja, the root of great compassion is all beings. Its foundation is all beings. It is included in all beings. Why is that? Because, Vikurvāṇarāja, the mind set on omniscience arises from the bodhisattva’s great compassion for the sake of liberating all beings. Vikurvāṇarāja, this is the bodhisattvas’ magical display of wisdom.

1.138 “Moreover, Vikurvāṇarāja, the bodhisattvas’ magical display of wisdom is that when they remain teaching in various ways for an eon or more, beginning with a single entryway into the Dharma, there is nothing whatsoever that they do that is in conflict with reality. If they wish, they teach the Dharma to beings while remaining invisible. They cause Dharma teachings to come forth from every pore of their bodies. They eloquently teach the Dharma in accordance with the thoughts and fetters¹⁰⁴ of beings. They teach the Dharma to beings by revealing the principles of the mind.¹⁰⁵ They cannot be bested by any opponent.

- 1.139 “In subsequent lives, bodhisattvas manifest, without being taught, knowledge of all subjects such as knowledge of the treatises of non-Buddhists who possess the five superknowledges, and of the sun, moon, planets, and stars; knowledge of dreams and phenomenal signs; and knowledge of the Vedas, mantras, vidyāmantras, sound, and engagement with the superknowledges; earthquakes; the application of Dravidian mantras;¹⁰⁶ the language of crows; herds of wild animals; the descent of gods, nāgas, yakṣas, and gandharvas; the marks, characteristics, and phenomenal signs of royalty; the phenomenal signs of good or bad harvests; the harm caused by demons; and, beyond that, the knowledge of worldly arts, knowledge of action, and knowledge of how to engage with letters, hand signals, counting, calculation, painting, song, dance, the lute, drums, cymbals, and instrumental music. They apply their knowledge to such subjects. They teach all of them to those who are wise so that they master them all. Knowing the treatises, mantras, and vidyāmantras, they dwell without harming any being and do not think of them as real.¹⁰⁷
- 1.140 “Vikurvāṇarāja, it is said that those bodhisattvas’ wisdom does not decline and they dwell together with one million brahmās. They display a view in keeping with their view; they display an appearance in keeping with their appearance; they display speech in keeping with their speech; and they display a complexion, luminosity, and brilliance in keeping with their complexion, luminosity, and brilliance, but they do not become attached to those brahmās.¹⁰⁸ The brahmās approach¹⁰⁹ the bodhisattvas and show their devotion to them.
- 1.141 “In the same way they display their sovereignty in every divine realm but are without attachment to them. They do not delight in them but give rise to the perception of impermanence. They give rise to the perception of suffering. They give rise to the perception of nonself. They rely on tranquility. They rely on bringing all beings to liberation. They rely on the seat of awakening. Vikurvāṇarāja, this too is a magical display of wisdom.

1.142 “Moreover, Vikurvānarāja, the bodhisattvas’ magical display of wisdom is that they tame the māras by means of the excellence of arrays that are a hundred sextillion times the arrays of the māras’ abodes. Arousing their desire, they then rid them of conceit. Establishing them in the mind set on perfectly complete awakening, they then teach them the Dharma.

1.143 “Vikurvānarāja, bodhisattvas should know that wisdom is universal.¹¹⁰ Whether they give a gift, receive it, or dedicate it, they should know that wisdom is universal. Whether they observe moral discipline, establish others in it,¹¹¹ or dedicate it, they know that it is wisdom. Whether they cultivate patience, establish others in patience, or dedicate patience to awakening, they know that it is wisdom. Whether they practice diligence, establish others in diligence, or dedicate diligence to awakening, they should know that it is wisdom. Whether they are absorbed in meditative concentration, establish others in it, or dedicate meditative concentration to awakening, they should know that it is wisdom. Whether they uphold the Dharma, teach it to others, or investigate the Dharmas just as they have learned them, they should know that it is wisdom. When they go or come from anywhere, in all of their activities, with every step, they should know that it is wisdom.

1.144 “The bodhisattva with the strength of wisdom will always have the strength of virtue. The bodhisattva who is the sovereign of wisdom will always obtain the power of supremacy.¹¹² The bodhisattva with the magical display of wisdom will always obtain the magical display of all phenomena. The bodhisattva who brandishes the sword of wisdom will sever and sunder all the defilements. The bodhisattva who abides in wisdom will uphold the abodes of all phenomena. The bodhisattva who kindles the light of wisdom will obtain the array of the buddhas’ light. The bodhisattva who possesses wisdom will spontaneously realize all virtues.

1.145 “Vikurvāṇarāja, here is an analogy: When you shoot an arrow into the sky, with whatever strength it was shot it will just fall to the ground again and you will not need to look for it. In the same way, Vikurvāṇarāja, the gnosis of a bodhisattva, the pure strength of wisdom, will just alight on all virtues and you will not need to look for them. It is the strength with which, in a single instant, one moves buddhafiels as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River. It is the strength that defeats the great hordes of Māra and is revealed at the seat of awakening. After attaining awakening, it is the strength by which one obtains the ten strengths that render one unassailable by the world with its gods, nāgas,¹¹³ and asuras.

1.146 “Vikurvāṇarāja, these magical displays of moral conduct, superknowledge, knowing, and wisdom will be heard about by bodhisattva great beings who produce roots of virtue, and when they hear this Dharma discourse they will be delighted, and they will all perform these four magical displays. Why is that? Because no śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha has them.”

1.147 Then the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja, having received the answer to his question,¹¹⁴ was joyous, pleased, and delighted, his mind at ease, and overjoyed, satisfied, and elated. He joined his palms before the Thus-Gone One, gazed unblinkingly at him, and said, “Just as the Blessed One, the Thus-Gone One, the Arhat, the Perfectly Complete Buddha has engaged in magical displays, in the same way may all beings engage in magical displays by means of those magical displays!”¹¹⁵

1.148 Then the bodhisattva great being Vikurvāṇarāja, with his transformative power, caused there to appear a heap of fragrant and multicolored divine and human flowers, and he strewed those flowers over the Thus-Gone One, all the bodhisattvas, and the entire retinue. As soon as those flowers were strewn, all those whose bodies were touched became golden in color, and they appeared to be adorned with the major and minor marks. From the sky a hundred thousand gods spoke: “Blessed One, those beings who, inspired by this magical display, give rise to the mind set on unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening are adorned with the ornaments of the buddhas. Why is that? Because all these magical displays are included in the mind of omniscience. If the Blessed One had not previously given rise to the mind set on awakening, how could we hear about inconceivable magical displays of the Dharma such as these?”¹¹⁶

1.149 The Blessed One applauded those gods with “Excellent!” Having done so, he said to the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja, “Vikurvāṇarāja, I remember that the seventieth buddha to appear after¹¹⁷ the buddha Dīpaṃkara was named Vast Brilliance of Pervasive Light Rays. That thus-gone one extensively taught parts of the entrance into the Dharma revealing only these four magical displays. There was a bodhisattva named Perfect Domain, and when the thus-gone one taught this Dharma discourse in response to his questions, eight thousand bodhisattvas obtained the ability to demonstrate these magical displays. They obtained acceptance of the fact that phenomena do not arise. Thirty-two thousand beings gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening. I learned these magical displays from them, and having learned them, I retained them. Having obtained acceptance through the thus-gone one Dīpaṃkara, I perfected them.

1.150 “Therefore, Vikurvāṇarāja, whether now or after my parinirvāṇa, any bodhisattvas who hear this Dharma discourse and, having heard it, retain it, uphold it, recite it, master it, and extensively teach it to others will swiftly obtain acceptance of the fact that phenomena do not arise.”

- 1.151 When this teaching was given, thirty-two thousand divine and human beings gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening, and the gods caused a great rain of flowers to fall and played cymbals in order to worship the Blessed One. By the power of the Buddha, there came forth from those cymbals these words: “Those beings who hear this Dharma discourse and are inspired by it, and who then retain it, uphold it, recite it, master it, and extensively teach it to others, will have great conviction, sharp faculties, zeal for the Buddha’s Dharma, and the practice of wisdom. They will be cared for by a spiritual friend, will have previously accumulated roots of virtue, and will possess great compassion for all beings.”
- 1.152 Then the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, just as the thus-gone ones possess the ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, and eighteen qualities unique to the buddhas, do bodhisattvas also possess the ten strengths of a bodhisattva, the four fearlessnesses of a bodhisattva, and the eighteen qualities unique to the bodhisattvas?”
- 1.153 “Vikurvāṇarāja, replied the Blessed One, “bodhisattvas who are purified and who have obtained the acceptance that is irreversible, who dwell on the eighth level, who are rising to the ninth level, and who are equipped with the perfection of wisdom and skill in means do possess them. Vikurvāṇarāja, those bodhisattvas do possess ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, and eighteen unique qualities.

“Vikurvānarāja, what are the ten strengths of a bodhisattva? They are the strength of a firm, excellent intention that gives rise to the mind set on omniscience; the strength of giving everything away because of perfect loving kindness; the strength of great compassion because of not seeking gain, honor, or praise, and not looking to be mixed up with anything worldly;¹¹⁸ the strength of perfect, great diligence because of giving rise to faith in all of the Buddha’s Dharma, and never being discouraged about perfecting it; the strength of dwelling in the strength of meditative absorption that is practiced with mindfulness and introspective awareness and is never disturbed in any activity; the strength of fulfilling the perfection of wisdom because of having abandoned the two extremes, having abandoned all views by being in accord with dependent origination, and having abandoned all thoughts, conceptuality, mental fabrications, elaboration, and analysis; the strength of the conviction that all formations are dream-like and of never being discouraged by saṃsāra for the sake of maturing all beings, embracing immeasurable saṃsāra,¹¹⁹ and never being satisfied with the accumulation of roots of virtue; the strength of obtaining acceptance of the fact that phenomena do not arise because of investigating the nature of phenomena and being convinced that they are without a self, without a being, without a life force, without a life, without a person, without arising, and without originating; the strength of obtaining liberation by looking toward the gateways to liberation, engaging with phenomena as empty, signless, and wishless, and by knowing the liberation of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha Vehicles, but without reaching it; and the strength of perfect gnosis that knows the profound Dharma without depending on others and is the unhindered seeing of the mental activity of all beings. Vikurvānarāja, those are the ten strengths of a bodhisattva.

1.155 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what are the four fearlessnesses of bodhisattvas? Bodhisattvas teach the Dharma fearlessly to those who follow them because they obtain retention by retaining all that they hear and because they never forget anything; bodhisattvas teach the Dharma fearlessly to those who follow them because they analyze all phenomena, are unhindered in their eloquence, are uninterrupted in their eloquence, and know all language; bodhisattvas teach the Dharma fearlessly to those who follow them by knowing how to craft remedies for those drawn to all the states of existence, in accordance with their wish to be liberated,¹²⁰ by knowing the faculties of all beings, and by teaching the Dharma to them as is individually appropriate; and they teach the Dharma fearlessly to those who follow them, free from fear in the midst of an assembly—whether someone has arrived from the east, from the south, from the west, or from the north, bodhisattvas do not consider the thought that they will be unable to teach them, whatever they do or do not ask,¹²¹ and when they give any being the opportunity to ask questions, they answer in accordance with what they are asked, free from fear and skilled at severing all doubts. Vikurvāṇarāja, those are the four fearlessnesses of bodhisattvas.

1.156 “Vikurvāṇarāja, what are the eighteen qualities unique to bodhisattvas? Bodhisattvas are generous without being taught. No one has to encourage them, saying, ‘You should give!’ As soon as they are born, they direct their minds toward generosity. Even if Māra himself arrives and says, ‘What is the use of you giving? Whoever gives will be born in the hells,’ there is no circumstance in which bodhisattvas are stingy. They direct their minds toward giving away all their possessions, they direct their minds toward giving gifts,¹²² and all of that giving is directed toward awakening. They do not hope for any result and they dedicate it to all beings. This is the first unique quality of a bodhisattva.

- 1.157 “Bodhisattvas possess moral conduct without being taught. Even when thus-gone ones do not appear and they do not receive the training and the prātimokṣa from anyone, they are restrained by the prātimokṣa and they delight in the training. Even those bodhisattvas who remain as householders observe the training exactly as prescribed, and after they renounce householder life, they observe the prātimokṣa as prescribed without needing to be taught. This is unique to bodhisattvas. They will not abandon the foundations of the training even for their lives, all their moral conduct is directed toward awakening, and they dedicate it so that the corrupt moral conduct of all beings is abandoned. This is the second unique quality of a bodhisattva.
- 1.158 “Though all beings may rebuke and insult them, their limbs and digits may be severed, and they may be insulted by the poor, by outcastes, by low-caste people, or by reed workers, the bodhisattva’s mind is not disturbed. Instead, they pervade them with loving kindness. And although they have the ability and the power to retaliate, they do not respond but rely on the Dharma. Relying only on the Buddha’s Dharma, they don the armor so that those very beings will give rise to faith. This is the third unique quality of a bodhisattva.
- 1.159 “Bodhisattvas do not forsake their diligence even in distress, and they never become discouraged. When they see śrāvakas reach parinirvāṇa, what they see is that wandering in samsāra is suffering, and they do not direct their minds toward the parinirvāṇa of śrāvakas. When they see pratyekabuddhas reach parinirvāṇa, what they see is that wandering in samsāra is suffering, and they do not direct their minds toward the parinirvāṇa of pratyekabuddhas. When they see the blessed buddhas, having accomplished all aims and performed all the deeds of buddhas, reach parinirvāṇa, but they themselves are unable to do so and have not perfected the qualities of the buddhas, they do not become discouraged about that. Rather, they rouse their diligence, thinking, ‘Having fulfilled my intent, I will reach parinirvāṇa in just the same way.’ This is the fourth unique quality of a bodhisattva.

1.160 “When they are in the presence of universal emperors, or Indra, lord of the gods, or powerful māras, or when they are encircled by many goddesses, enjoying divine music, dance, and song, they manifest meditative concentration. They manifest the immeasurable states, and their minds enter a state of seclusion. Their minds do not engage with distractions. They are not frightened by saṃsāra. They give rise to the strong perception of repulsiveness with respect to sense pleasures. They give rise to the perception that the aggregates are executioners. They give rise to the perception that the elements are poison, the perception that the sense bases are an empty village, the perception that their own attendants are the attendants of Māra, and the perception that their circle of wives is a charnel ground. They desire companions in the Dharma, they desire to see the buddhas, and they delight in the liberation of all beings. From the sound of those cymbals, stringed instruments, and song, there arises the sound of the limbs of meditative concentration. If the sounds of Māra are silenced, then by power of their previous roots of virtue, the sound of *Buddha*, the sound of *Dharma*, the sound of *Saṅgha*, and the sound of *bodhisattva conduct* will come forth from the sky. As a result, the bodhisattvas cast aside their kingdoms and their sovereignty and dwell in the forest. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the fifth unique quality of a bodhisattva.

1.161 “They perceive worldly forms of knowledge as without a core. They are skilled in analytical wisdom.¹²³ They are free from latent tendencies and views.¹²⁴ They rely on the meaning and on the Dharma. Even in a bodhisattva’s dreams, views of self and views of other do not occur. They are without all latent tendencies, views, and entanglements, and they are free from regret. When Māra the Evil One envelops them with regret, he is unable to generate in them the regret that would separate them from the Dharma. Even when they transgress the moral conduct to which they have applied themselves for the sake of bringing beings to maturity, they do not feel regret. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the sixth unique quality of a bodhisattva.

1.162 “After they die and are reborn, their physical conduct becomes pure naturally. They abandon taking life. They never harm any being with their hands, a clod of earth, a rod, or a sword. They cast aside sword and rod. They are content with their own possessions. They do not take anything that others have not given to them, even so much as a handful of grass. They do not give rise to attachment even if the whole world is filled with jewels. Even if they are impoverished and on the verge of death, and their clothing is tattered and worn out, they never sustain themselves through incompatible ways of making a living, and they remain celibate. Even in their dreams they do not partake of sense pleasures—they are without sense desires, conflicts, and defilements. They do not engage in bad acts for the sake of sense pleasures. That is unique to the bodhisattva. They are endowed with those physical actions that precede gnosis. Vikurvānarāja, that is the seventh unique quality of a bodhisattva.

1.163 “They are pure and they speak truthfully. They speak correctly and practice what they preach. They do not deceive themselves, thus-gone ones, gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, humans, or nonhumans. They do not slander anyone or act divisively. They are not attached to their companions and do not use harsh words. They speak joyfully. They speak gently. Their words are not coarse. Their words are faultless. They speak reasonably. They are of few words. They speak sincerely. They smile. They do not speak words that are unclear, cruel, coarse, harsh, menacing, upsetting, or harmful to themselves or others. They do not speak idly—if something is not the case, they say it is not the case, and if something is the case, they say it is the case. With words they have given thought to and with an excellent intention, they obtain this unique quality. With the words that they speak, those without faith come to have faith. Those with faith come to worship them even more. In all their lives they find the words to articulate such methods of the Dharma. With that unique, excellent intention, they will find the words that conform to the truth. Whatever they say will come to pass, and not otherwise. Vikurvānarāja, that is the eighth unique quality of a bodhisattva.

- 1.164 “They have power over their own minds.¹²⁵ They do not have covetous or malicious minds. Their view is correct. They never fall away from the mind set on awakening, the mind that is equal to the unequaled. They purify all dishonesty, all hypocrisy, and all wrath, and they spend night and day with a mind that pursues loving kindness. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the ninth unique quality of a bodhisattva.
- 1.165 “As soon as they have been born, they manifest a knowledge of the treatises, mantras, vidyāmantras, medicine, and astrology, as well as letters, palmistry, calculation, and divination,¹²⁶ without having learned and without a teacher. They are skilled in all the treatises and the arts. They possess independent knowledge of the transcendent dharmas and do not look to others. They think, ‘What can the world with its gods teach?’¹²⁷ I have learned and trained,’ and they look to themselves. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the tenth unique quality of a bodhisattva.
- 1.166 “When they provide ordinary treatments to other beings and other persons, they do not do so with the hope for gain, honor, or fame. They recollect the transcendent reality with a mind preceded by great compassion. When they provide ordinary treatments, bodhisattvas bring to mind the thought, ‘When will I free beings from these illnesses of imbalanced humors? Having freed them, I will dispel the illness of the defilements and establish them in the nirvāṇa in which all sufferings are extinguished!’ Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the eleventh unique quality of a bodhisattva.

1.167 “Without making such an aspiration and without such a hope, in this very life they become Śakra or Brahmā, or assume the sovereignty of a universal emperor. Bodhisattvas do not seek to be Śakra or Brahmā, nor do they seek the sovereignty of a universal emperor. Still, without needing to concentrate on that, they spontaneously become them. Bodhisattvas do not practice celibacy out of a desire for forms,¹²⁸ or out of a desire for enjoyments, or out of a desire for sovereignty, or out of desire for attendants. They do not practice celibacy out of a desire for fame, commendation, or words of praise.¹²⁹ Those are achieved naturally, without needing to seek them out and without hoping for them. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the twelfth unique quality of a bodhisattva.

1.168 “Even when bodhisattvas abide as sovereign lords, the gods who saw previous buddhas approach the bodhisattvas to remind them and encourage them, saying, ‘This should be done. This should not be done. This deed leads to awakening. This deed leads to ruin. If you practice in this way and dwell in this way, your faculties will be conducive to unsurpassed, perfectly complete awakening.’ Encouraged by the gods, they will naturally not waver from the path of the bodhisattva. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the thirteenth unique quality of a bodhisattva.

- 1.169 “Whatever beings there are that are angry and full of enmity, harsh, hateful, malicious, or with naturally base dispositions, they are unable to harm bodhisattvas physically, verbally, or mentally. Those angry, harsh, hateful, and malicious beings come to have faith at the mere sight of them. Those that are hostile to them are unable to harm them. Instead, they cause them to have faith so that they may apply themselves to the Dharma. Those beings that are hostile to them do not descend to the evil destinies. Why is that? Because bodhisattvas, from the very beginning, have perfected the pure unique qualities of moral conduct, the aspiration that they make with a mind that is endowed with that moral conduct is realized: ‘Whatever beings harm me physically, verbally, or mentally, may they, on that basis, not descend to the evil destinies!’ Vikurvānarāja, that is the fourteenth unique quality that originates from a bodhisattva’s aspirations.
- 1.170 “When beings without faith, who are miserly; who have mistaken views; who disregard karma; who do not rely on the maturation of karma; who have turned their backs on the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha; who have no faith in or devotion to other ascetics or brahmins, and who do not venerate them, honor them, or respect them, see bodhisattvas—see their behavior, or even just hear of them—they become faithful and devoted. They venerate, honor, and respect them. Vikurvānarāja, that is the fifteenth unique quality of a bodhisattva.
- 1.171 “Gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, ṛṣis, and brahmās perceive them as being their teacher, and among those in the world renowned as teachers, they become the most renowned. Those who perceive the teacher to be a god, nāga, yakṣa, gandharva, ṛṣi, or brahmā pay homage to and revere the bodhisattvas; they serve and honor them. They see them and perceive them with the thought, ‘This is our former teacher,’ and they approach¹³⁰ them to show their devotion. Thinking, ‘This one is foremost. This one is supreme,’ they come to have faith. Vikurvānarāja, that is the sixteenth unique quality of a bodhisattva.

- 1.172 “They are spontaneously born in households or towns where virtues flourish, where nonvirtues are abandoned, where beings are mature, and where the sublime Dharma is upheld. They have parents who have proceeded correctly and behaved properly. In the lands or regions where bodhisattvas have been born, they become the principle teachers there, and they are honored and worshiped. The beings from those regions are not reborn in the evil destinies. Why is that? Because they are embraced by the bodhisattvas’ roots of virtue. After dying, they are reborn as gods and humans. Vikurvāṇarāja, this is the seventeenth unique quality of a bodhisattva.
- 1.173 “In order to perfect the superknowledges and knowledge, they conform themselves to all the factors conducive to awakening. Even Māra will not find any opportunity to harm them. Vikurvāṇarāja, that is the eighteenth unique quality of a bodhisattva.
- 1.174 “Vikurvāṇarāja, why are the unique qualities called *unique*? They are called unique because they include all the qualities of the buddhas.”
- 1.175 Then Vikurvāṇarāja said to the Blessed One, “How wonderful that the Blessed One, the Thus-Gone One, bestows the great illumination of the Dharma on bodhisattva great beings, illuminating them immeasurably! As I understand the meaning of what the Blessed One has taught, bodhisattvas who hear this Dharma discourse will not come to possess the substance of such faith if they later hear something else. Those who, having heard this Dharma discourse, retain it, uphold it, recite it, and master it will uphold all the Buddha’s Dharma. Having upheld it, they will teach it to others and cause them to be matured in the Buddha’s Dharma.¹³¹ Those who correctly apply themselves to this Dharma discourse will approach all the qualities of the buddhas. Accepting it is the concordant acceptance.¹³² We should see that those who persevere in this are persevering in all of the Buddha’s Dharma. Blessed One, we should see that bodhisattvas who do not part from this Dharma discourse will obtain the superknowledges and will dwell at the seat of awakening.”

1.176 The Blessed One replied, “Vikurvāṇarāja, it is just as you say—it should be seen that bodhisattvas who do not part from this Dharma discourse will obtain the superknowledges and will dwell at the seat of awakening. Vikurvāṇarāja, previously, in the past, before¹³³ the thus-gone one Dīpaṃkara, even before the thus-gone one Yearning, even before the thus-gone one Tiṣya, even before the thus-gone one Puṣya, and even before the thus-gone one Pradyota,¹³⁴ there appeared in the world the thus-gone one named Devarāja, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a well-gone one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed guide who tames beings, a teacher of gods and humans, a buddha, and a blessed one.

1.177 “Vikurvānarāja, the buddhafield of the thus-gone one Devarāja was wealthy, vast, happy, with good harvests, and delightful. It was filled with gods and humans, and even like the palm of one’s hand. It was bedecked with vaiḍūrya jewels and lotuses of Jambu River gold. It was smooth to the touch like kācilindika cloth. At that time, the wealth of humans was just like the wealth and enjoyments of the gods of Tuṣita. Food and drink would appear just by thinking of them. The complexions, bodies, shapes, gardens, and palaces of humans were no different than those of the gods. They were distinguished only in name. In that trichiliocosm, there were no other kings except for the thus-gone one, so he was called the thus-gone one Devarāja.¹³⁵ Here is an analogy: Universal emperors, when seated in a Dharma assembly, teach only the Dharma and do not teach non-Dharma. In the same way, that thus-gone Devarāja, when seated on a Dharma seat, a virtuous throne, taught the inhabitants of the world the Dharma. When he taught the Dharma, the circle of followers before him and behind him extended for eighty-four thousand yojanas, and those to his right and left extended for eighty-four thousand yojanas, too. When the thus-gone one taught the Dharma, he filled a chiliocosm with his voice. The thus-gone one was worshiped by gods and humans with the worship of persevering in the practice of the Buddha’s Dharma. They honored and respected him. They made him their guru. There were no beings whatsoever inspired by anything inferior. They were all inspired by what is vast. That is, they were all inspired by the Buddha’s Dharma. Not even the names *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha* were heard of there, so what need is there to mention their practices? The attendants of that blessed one were exclusively bodhisattvas. There was not even the designation *woman* there, and there was not even a word for sexual intercourse. All the beings there were miraculously born, seated in the cross-legged posture upon lotuses. The gods and humans were endowed with three kinds of delight—the delight of being gladdened by the sight of the thus-gone one, the delight of hearing the Dharma, and the delight of investigating and analyzing the Dharma. The gods and humans were

always conscientious. They exerted themselves in discussing the Dharma with one another.

1.178 “There were immeasurably many gods and humans. When they passed away they would intentionally take rebirth in buddhafiels where the blessed buddhas dwelt. When a bodhisattva passed away, they would rise into the sky to the height of seven palm trees and announce that they were passing away by saying, ‘Friends, I am passing away from this buddhafielf.’ A great many bodhisattvas would be summoned by their voice, and enjoying the wealth of their acceptance of the Dharma, they would ask that one, ‘What is passing away? What is the phenomenon of birth?’

1.179 “That bodhisattva would reply to the bodhisattvas, ‘Friends! There is nothing whatsoever that dies or is born. The thus-gone ones fully awakened to the fact that all phenomena are without death and birth. Form does not die and is not born. Feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness do not die and are not born. Ultimately they are without any self, being, life force, person, descendant of Manu, child of Manu, death, or birth. The blessed ones fully awakened to the emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness of all phenomena, and there is no death or birth of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness. The blessed ones realized the end that is freedom from attachment. The blessed ones realized the end that is without any fabrication, the end that is birthless, and the end that is without origination. There is no death or birth whatsoever from the end that is free from attachment up to the end that is without origination. That which is called *passing away*¹³⁶ in passing away is to not possess conditions.¹³⁷ The which is called *birth* is an assemblage of conditions, and conditions do not pass away or take birth.’

1.180 “Having given such a Dharma talk to the assembled bodhisattvas, that bodhisattva would pass away. Having passed away, there would be no ash or smoke, and after passing away they would go to another buddhfield where a thus-gone one was presently dwelling. That thus-gone one and those bodhisattvas did not wear saffron robes, but all wore the pure robes of gods. There was no prescribed training there. All of them were thoroughbreds who possessed the quality of acceptance of the fact that phenomena do not arise. There was no need to extensively instruct them. They understood just by hearing a fraction, and all of them had sharp faculties.

1.181 “When that thus-gone one taught the Dharma to the bodhisattvas, all the gods and humans in that buddhfield understood that entire exposition. Some of them attained acceptance, some attained retention, some eloquence, and some the meditative absorptions. And the name of that thus-gone one became renowned in the ten directions.

1.182 “Vikurvānarāja, then, at that time, the thus-gone one Devarāja extensively taught this very Dharma discourse before the world with its gods, and he prophesied the perfectly complete awakening of seventy-two thousand bodhisattvas. Then, at that time, there was a bodhisattva named Stainless Pure Light, and that bodhisattva was not prophesied by the thus-gone one. He thought, ‘If none of the bodhisattvas who were prophesied have obtained better or superior conduct, behavior, perseverance, mindfulness, intelligence, understanding, wisdom, superknowledges, retention, or meditative absorptions than me, why were they¹³⁸ prophesied but I was not?’

1.183 “Then the thus-gone one Devarāja, knowing the thoughts of that bodhisattva, said to him, ‘Son of a good family, in the future there will appear a thus-gone one named Dīpaṃkara. He will give you a prophecy.’ Hearing those words, the bodhisattva Stainless Pure Light was overjoyed and pleased. He rose into the sky and said, ‘After as many eons as there are grains of sand in the River Ganges, after the thus-gone one Dīpaṃkara has appeared, I will obtain omniscience. The thus-gone ones do not speak falsely. The thus-gone ones speak correctly and speak truthfully.’

1.184 “Vikurvānarāja, if you think that the bodhisattva Stainless Pure Light was someone else, do not see it that way. Why? Because at that time I myself was the bodhisattva named Stainless Pure Light. Vikurvānarāja, after that¹³⁹ I pleased the thus-gone one Pradyota and from him, too, I heard this Dharma discourse and, having heard it, retained it. I also obtained the meditative absorption called *seal of illumination*. After that I pleased the thus-gone one Puṣya and from him, too, I heard this Dharma discourse and, having heard it, retained it. I also obtained the meditative absorption called *luminous*. After that I pleased the thus-gone one Tiṣya, and from him, too, I heard this Dharma discourse and, having heard it, retained it. I also obtained the meditative absorption called *illuminating*. After that I pleased the thus-gone one Yearning, and from him, too, I heard this Dharma discourse and, having heard it, retained it. I also obtained the concordant acceptance. After that, having pleased the thus-gone one Dīpaṃkara, I obtained through him acceptance of the fact that phenomena do not arise, and I manifested the four magical displays: the magical display of moral conduct, the magical display of superknowledge, the magical display of knowing, and the magical display of wisdom.

- 1.185 “Vikurvānarāja, that is the reason you should know this. Now or after I have passed away, sons or daughters of a good family who belong to the Bodhisattva Vehicle and who retain this Dharma discourse, uphold it, recite it, master it, and extensively teach it to others will all swiftly come to be endowed with the superknowledges for the sake of perfectly complete awakening. They will obtain these magical displays of the Dharma and, having obtained them, they will turn the wheel of the Dharma by means of these magical displays of the Dharma. And they will obtain the acceptance concordant with the unsurpassable gnosis of omniscience.”
- 1.186 When the Blessed One taught this Dharma discourse, sixteen thousand bodhisattvas obtained acceptance, twelve hundred thousand beings gave rise to the mind set on awakening, and the trichiliocosm shook.
- 1.187 A hundred thousand gods and nāgas¹⁴⁰ were inspired to proclaim, “You should know that wherever this Dharma discourse is practiced, buddhas will appear. Any beings who hear this Dharma discourse will not fail to amass roots of virtue, so what need is there to speak of those who retain it, up to master it. In no time at all they will obtain these magical displays.”
- 1.188 Then the venerable Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma discourse? How should we remember it?”
- The Blessed One replied, “Remember it as *Displaying the Miracle of the Magical Displays*.”
- 1.189 After the Blessed One had spoken, the bodhisattva great being Vikurvānarāja, the venerable Ānanda, the entire assembly, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.190 The noble Great Vehicle sūtra “The Questions of Vikurvānarāja” is concluded.

Colophon

- c.1 It was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman and the Tibetan editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

Abbreviations

C Choné (*co ne*)

D Degé (*sde dge bka' 'gyur*)

H Lhasa (*lha sa / zhol*)

J Lithang (*li thang*)

K Kanxi (*khang shi*)

N Narthang (*snar thang*)

S Stok Palace (*stog pho 'brang*)

U Urga (*phyi sog khu re*)

Y Yongle (*g.yung lo*)

Notes

1. For an example of the four reliances as taught in other sūtras, see [The Teaching of Akṣayamati](#) (Toh 175).
2. As entry 1409.
3. See pages 420 and 481 in Drolungpa Lodro Jungné, 2014.
4. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, C, U, and S: *tshar bkum*; D: *tshad bkum*.
5. “Unimpaired” renders the Tibetan *gnod pa med pa*.
6. This renders the Tibetan *srid pa'i 'gro ba thams cad du skye ba la mi gnas pa'i tshul khrims*.
7. This renders the Tibetan *spyod lam ma brtags pa'i tshul khrims*. The translation is tentative.
8. This renders the Tibetan *'gugs pa*.
9. In this stock formula of the epithets of a buddha, there are times when the Tibetan treats “unsurpassed” (*bla na med pa*) as its own epithet, since it is followed by a *shad*, a punctuation mark that indicates the end of a phrase or clause. Other times, the Tibetan follows the Indic sources more literally and treats “unsurpassed” as a qualifier of “a teacher of gods and humans” (i.e., “an unsurpassed teacher of gods and humans”).
10. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, H, and S: *chos 'dul ba*; D: *'du ba*.
11. This follows the reading in Y, K, H, and S: *kyis*; D: *kyi*.
12. Here “reality” renders the Tibetan *dngos po*.
13. This renders the Tibetan *chos thams cad la mngon par 'du mi byed pa*.
14. This renders the Tibetan *yul la mi 'phro ba*.
15. “Aggregates” and “collections” render the same word in the Tibetan (*phung po*).
16. “Elements” (Tib. *kham*s) renders the Sanskrit *dhātu*.
17. “Path for walking meditation” renders the Tibetan *'chag sa*.
18. This renders the Tibetan *byin gyis brlabs*, which has also been rendered “transformative power.”
19. This renders the Tibetan *mkhan pa*.
20. This follows the reading in H and S: *kyis*; D: *kyi*.
21. “Without foundation” renders the Tibetan *gnas med pa*.
22. Here, “does not grasp” renders the Tibetan *so sor mi 'dzin pa*, while the following instance renders the Tibetan *yongs su mi 'dzin pa*.
23. Note that both “engagement/engage” and “enter” render the Tibetan *'jug pa*.

24. “Aggrandizement” renders the Tibetan *lhag par byed pa*.
25. This follows the reading in Y and K: *'di*; D: *'dis*.
26. This follows the reading in Y, K, C, and S: *kun nas mi ldang ba*; D: *kun nas mi ldan pa*.
27. This follows the reading in N and H: *ma bshigs*; D: *ma gshigs*.
28. This renders the Tibetan *gang 'dus byas dang 'dus ma byas la rnam par shes pa mi gnas pa ni kho bo'i ston pa'o*.
29. This renders the Tibetan *gang gzhan las ma mnyan par blang ba med pa'i chu bo mi gnas pa rgal ba de ni kho bo'i ston pa'o*. The translation is tentative.
30. Although it is not explicitly indicated here, presumably we are meant to understand that the list has been abbreviated rather than that items have been omitted.
31. “Immeasurable limit” renders the Tibetan *mtha' tshad med pa*.
32. “Regard” renders the Tibetan *mos*.
33. This renders the Tibetan *gzugs su snang ba de dag thams cad kyang sngon gyi mtha' skye ba med pa'i phyir yang dag pa ma yin par rab tu shes la*. Alternatively, this could be rendered, “Everything that appears as form is understood to be nonexistent because the past is unborn.”
34. Here, “reality” renders the Tibetan *de kho na*.
35. “Element of voidness” renders the Tibetan *dben pa'i dbyings*.
36. Or perhaps “it is.”
37. This renders the Tibetan *chos nyid*.
38. “Fetters” renders the Tibetan *sbyor ba*. This translation is tentative.
39. The word rendered “surface” (*dkyil 'khor*) is here rendered “sphere,” so there is wordplay that is lost in translation.
40. Here, “experience” renders the Tibetan *spyod pa*, which might also be rendered “conduct” or “behavior.”
41. This sentence renders the Tibetan *de sems kyis sems la rnam par lta la/ sems kyis sems la spyod par yang mi byed cing mi 'thun par yang mi byed do*.
42. “Mental element” renders the Tibetan *sems kyi dbyings*, with *dbyings* being the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit *dhātu*, so there is wordplay here, lost in translation, between “mental element” (*sems kyi dbyings*) and “dharmadhātu” (*chos kyi dbyings*).
43. “Directly know” renders the Tibetan *mngon par shes*, with *mngon par shes pa* the Tibetan word rendered “superknowledge,” so here, too, there is wordplay that is lost in translation.
44. This might be better understood to mean “bring to mind,” but it is the same word that is rendered “remember” throughout.

45. This follows the reading in S (*sems*), while D inexplicably negates the verb (*mi sems*). The Comparative Edition reports no variants here.
46. This clause renders the Tibetan *'byung ba chen po rnams ni med pas gang na 'byung ba chen po rnams mi srid pa*. The translation is tentative.
47. Here, “grasping” renders the Tibetan *yongs su 'dzin pa*.
48. This follows the reading in S: *kyis*; D: *kyi*.
49. This follows the reading in S: *gis*; D: *gi*.
50. Here both D and S read *'od rnams las 'od zer phyung*. This follows the reading in J and C: *'od zer phyung*.
51. “Woven silk” renders the Tibetan *dar gyi chun kor*.
52. This follows the reading in Y and S: *cho 'phrul bsam gyis mi khyab pa gzhan dag gis*. D: *cho 'phrul bsam gyis mi khyab pa dang ldan pa gzhan dag gis*.
53. “Tuft of hair” renders the Tibetan *spu'i dra ba*. This translation is tentative.
54. This renders the Tibetan *mngon par 'byung ba yang dag par shes pa spyod pa dag mngon par shes pa gang yin pa*.
55. “Directly known” renders the Tibetan *mngon par shes par 'gyur*. The same wordplay—between “superknowledge” (*mngon par shes pa*) and “directly know/n” (*mngon par shes/par 'gyur*)—occurs throughout this passage and is lost in translation.
56. This renders the Tibetan *snyan pa*.
57. Here, “present” renders the Tibetan *dbus*.
58. Although it is not explicitly indicated here, presumably we are meant to understand that the list has been abbreviated rather than that items have been omitted.
59. Note that “realm” and “element” both render the Tibetan *kham*s (Sanskrit *dhātu*), so there is wordplay that is lost in translation. See also [n.16](#).
60. Or “the elements.”
61. “Nature” renders the Tibetan *rang bzhin*, almost certainly based on the underlying Sanskrit *prakṛti*, and likely referring in particular to an ultimately existent primal substance posited by certain non-Buddhist systems of thought such as the Sāṃkhya.
62. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, H, and S: *snom pa po*; D: *mnom* [sic] *pa po*.
63. This renders the Tibetan *mig gi rang bzhin gzugs mi mthong*. This is the same pattern with the remaining sense faculties, in which “is” is read by implication. Alternatively, this would be “the nature of the eye does not see forms,” and so forth, which is less clear.
64. This renders the Tibetan *rtsig pa*. See the entry for this word in the Indo-Tibetan Lexical Resource (ITLR).

65. Although it is not explicitly indicated here, presumably we are meant to understand that the list has been abbreviated rather than that items have been omitted.
66. Why “dreams” should be here is a mystery, but the Tibetan clearly reads *rga shi dang rmi lam*.
67. This renders the Tibetan *ci nas kyang yang dag pa'i mtha' skyon med pa de ltar mthong*.
68. “Divisions” renders the Tibetan *rnam grangs*.
69. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, H, and S: *ni*; D: *mi*. The reading in Degé is “inexhaustible,” which is clearly a mistake in light of what follows.
70. Although it is not explicitly indicated here, presumably we are meant to understand that the list has been abbreviated rather than that items have been omitted.
71. “Before” renders the Tibetan *pha rol tu*.
72. “Since” renders the Tibetan *tshun cad*. S reads *tshun chad*.
73. This renders the Tibetan *gang yang sems skyed pa thams cad la 'gog pa mngon du byed kyang yongs su mya ngan las mi 'da' zhing mi skye ba dang dmigs su med pa'i phyir*. The translation is tentative.
74. This renders the Tibetan *bden pa shes pa zhes bya ba ni gang yang dag par ma yin pa med pa sdug bsngal yongs su shes pa'o*. Note that we have read *yang dag par ma yin pa* and *med pa* as in apposition rather than as a double negative.
75. This renders the Tibetan *sred pa bag la nyal gang gis srid pa byung ba'i sred pa bag la nyal de spangs pa zhes bya'o*.
76. This follows the reading in S. D and the Kangyurs reported in the Comparative Edition do not have a case particle indicating whether these are taught “to” or “by” the followers of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha Vehicles.
77. This renders the Tibetan *de la gnas par shes pa yang ma yin pa*. This translation is tentative.
78. This follows the reading in Y, K, and S: *sangs rgyas*; D: *rang sangs rgyas*.
79. This follows the reading in Y, K, and S. D lacks *thams cad* (“all”).
80. This follows the reading in S (*ma 'ongs pa la shes pa dang/ mthong ba thogs pa med la*), which replicates the pattern of the previous line about the past, as we would expect. D and all of the Kangyurs reported by the Comparative Edition appear to be corrupt here, as they read *ma 'ongs pa la shes pa dang mthong ba med pa la*, which would mean that there is no knowing and seeing the future.
81. This refers to the extinction of the defilements. This follows the reading in S: *zad pa shes pa'ang shes la*. D and all the Kangyurs reported in the Comparative Edition read *zag pa yang shes la* (“knowing the defilements,” specifically those whose extinction is known), but *zad pa* pairs with what follows (*yongs su mi zad pa*). Therefore, we have opted to read *zad pa* for *zag pa*, but not the repetition of *shes pa* and *shes* in S.
82. Note that here “parinirvāṇa” renders the Tibetan *shin tu yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa*, rather than the usual *yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa* (as in the following instance). The Tibetan *shin tu* is an intensifier.

83. “What is to be done” renders the Tibetan *byas pa'i bya ba*.
84. Here, “thoughts” renders the Tibetan *sems*.
85. Here, “conceptions” renders the Tibetan *'du shes*. It could also be rendered “perceptions,” as it typically is in the case of the third of the five aggregates.
86. “Do not interrupt the norms” renders the Tibetan *tshul mi gcod*.
87. This follows the reading in Y and S: *sbyangs pa smra ba*; D: *sbyin gnas smra ba* (“I proclaim [myself] worthy of offerings”).
88. Here, “without thought” renders the Tibetan *sems med*.
89. “Taking up” and “upholding” both render the Tibetan *yongs su 'dzin pa*.
90. This follows the reading in S (*dmigs pa*). D and the Kangyurs reported in the Comparative Edition inexplicably read *dmigs pa med pa* (“nonapprehending”).
91. Here, “grasping” renders the Tibetan *'dzin pa*, another bit of wordplay. Although less obvious in English, note the subtle play between the images of “grasping” (i.e., holding on to something), “taking up,” and “upholding.”
92. This follows the reading in S (*yongs su mi 'dzin pa*). D and the Kangyurs reported in the Comparative Edition inexplicably read *yongs su 'dzin pa*, without the negation.
93. Here (and below) “designation/designate” renders the Tibetan *brjod pa*.
94. “Labeling/label” renders the Tibetan *gdags pa*.
95. Here and in the following item, “designations” renders the Tibetan *tshig bla dags*, with “abbreviations” rendering *mdor bsdus pa'i tshig bla dags* and “elaborate expressions” rendering *spros pa'i tshig bla dags*. “Masculine, feminine, and neuter” likely refers to the three grammatical genders in Sanskrit.
96. This follows the reading in Y, K, and S: *gis*; D: *gi*.
97. This renders the Tibetan *gang gdags pa'i tshig thams cad chos rtogs par ro*. This translation is tentative.
98. “Declarations” renders the Tibetan *ming bstan pa*.
99. These are the twelve categories of scripture (Sanskrit *dvādaśakadharmaprayacana*, Tibetan *gsung rab kyi yan lag bcu gnyis*).
100. “Connections between them” renders the Tibetan *de'i rjes su 'brel pa*. The translation is tentative.
101. This follows the reading in Y, K, U, and S. D omits.
102. “Excellent intention” renders the Tibetan *lhag pa'i bsam pa*.
103. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, C, U, H, and S. D omits.
104. See [n.38](#).

105. “Principles of the mind” renders the Tibetan *sems kyi tshul*.
106. This renders the Tibetan *'gro sding ba'i sngags kyi sbyor ba*.
107. “Do not think of them as real” renders the Tibetan *de dag gis yang dag par yang mi sems so*. Perhaps the referent is not beings, but the (worldly) treatises, mantras, and vidyāmantras, in which case this might be rendered “they do not think of them as correct/authentic.”
108. This sentence renders the Tibetan *lta bas kyang lta ba ston la/ kha dog gis kyang kha dog ston/ smra bas kyang smra ba ston/ kha dog dang 'od dang gzi brjid kyis kyang kha dog dang 'od dang gzi brjid ston la tshangs pa de dag la chags par yang mi 'gyur*. A more literal rendering of the Tibetan would be oddly redundant (“they reveal the view by means of the view,” etc.); nevertheless, the translation here is tentative.
109. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, C, and H: *tshur*; D: *bstsur* [sic].
110. “Universal” renders the Tibetan *kun tu 'gro ba*.
111. This follows the reading in Y, K, H, and S: *der*; D: *deng*.
112. “Supremacy” renders the Tibetan *dbang phyug*, which might also be a reference to Īśvara, often an epithet of Śiva but also a generalized reference to a supreme being regarded (by others) as a creator.
113. Here S reads “humans” (*mi*).
114. That is, the question with which this discourse began.
115. This renders the Tibetan *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas ji ltar rnam par 'phrul pa de bzhin du sems can thams cad kyang rnam par 'phrul pa de dag gis rnam par 'phrul par gyur cig*. The translation is tentative.
116. This renders the Tibetan *gal te bcom ldan 'das kyis sngon byang chub kyi sems ma bskyed du lags na chos rnam par 'phrul pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa 'di dag 'di ltar thos par ga la 'gyur lags so*. The translation is tentative.
117. This renders the Tibetan *pha rol na*.
118. “Not looking to be mixed up with anything worldly” renders the Tibetan *'jig rten thams cad dang 'dres pa la mi lta ba*.
119. “Embracing immeasurable saṃsāra” renders the Tibetan *'khor ba tshad med pa yongs su gzung*.
120. This renders the Tibetan *gnas thams cad la mos pa rnam par grol bas bsam pa ji lta ba bzhin du sman sbyor ba shes pa*. Note, however, that we have followed the reading in N, H, and S: *rnam par grol ba'i*.
121. Here, “thought” renders the Tibetan *snyam pa'i mtshan ma*.
122. This follows the reading in Y, J, K, N, C, H, and S: *sbyin pa rnam par 'gyed pa*; D: *sbyin pa rnam par bged pa*.
123. “Analytical wisdom” renders the Tibetan *shes rab rnam par 'byed pa*.
124. This follows the reading in Y and S: *yin*; D: *ma yin*.
125. This follows the reading in Y, K, and S: *bdag gi sems*; D: *dag gi sems*.

126. The Tibetan *rtsis* has been rendered “astrology” in the first instance and “divination” in the second. “Palmistry” renders the Tibetan *lag rtsis*.
127. This follows the reading in S: *'chad*; D: *'chang*.
128. “Forms” renders the Tibetan *gzugs*, which might be a reference to (rebirth in) the form realm specifically.
129. “Fame, commendation, or words of praise” renders the Tibetan *grags pa dang/ brjod pa dang/ sgra*. The translation of the second and third items is based on interpreting them contextually.
130. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, C, and H: *tshur*; D: *btsur* [sic].
131. This follows the reading in Y, K, and S: *sangs rgyas kyi chos*; D *sangs rgyas kyis chos*. Note that this might also be read to mean “the qualities of the buddhas,” as the following instance is read.
132. This renders the Tibetan *gang 'di la bzod pa de ni rjes su 'thun pa'i bzod pa lags so*.
133. Here and in what follows, “before” renders *pha rol*. Above, this has been rendered “after.”
134. This follows the reading in S: *rab gsal*; D: *rab stsal*. Below the spelling is *rab gsal*.
135. “King of the Gods” or “Divine King.”
136. This follows the reading in Y, K, N, H, and S: *gang 'chi 'pho ba la 'chi 'pho zhes bya ba de ni*; D: *gang 'chi 'pho ba la 'chi 'pho zhes*.
137. “Conditions” renders *de'i rkyen rnams*. The referent of *de* is not entirely clear.
138. This follows the reading in Y, K, and S: *'di dag*; D: *'di bdag*.
139. Here the Tibetan in D is *tshu rol*, and in S *tshur rol*.
140. There is no case particle clearly indicating that the gods and nāgas are the speakers here, but in context it is difficult to read this otherwise.

Glossary

absorption

ting nge 'dzin

samādhi

acceptance of the fact that phenomena are unborn

mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa

anutpattikadharmakṣānti

Anāthapiṇḍada's Park

zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba

anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ

ascetic practices

sbyangs pa'i yon tan

dhūtaguṇa

An optional set of practices that monastics can adopt in order to cultivate greater detachment. The list of practices varies in different sources. When thirteen practices are listed, they consist of (1) wearing patched robes made from discarded cloth rather than from cloth donated by laypeople; (2) wearing only three robes; (3) going for alms; (4) not omitting any house while on the alms round, rather than begging only at those houses known to provide good food; (5) eating only what can be eaten in one sitting; (6) eating only food received in the alms bowl, rather than more elaborate meals presented to the saṅgha; (7) refusing more food after indicating one has eaten enough; (8) dwelling in the forest; (9) dwelling at the root of a tree; (10) dwelling in the open air, using only a tent made from one's robes as shelter; (11) dwelling in a charnel ground; (12) having satisfaction with whatever dwelling one has; and (13) sleeping in a sitting position without ever lying down.

asura

lha ma yin

asura

attainments

snyoms par 'jug pa

samāpatti

Avalokiteśvara

spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug

avalokiteśvara

bases of miraculous powers

rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa

ṛddhipāda

The four supports for supernormal abilities: determination, discernment, diligence, and samādhi.

blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

bhagavat

Brahmā

tshangs pa

tshangs pa

brahman

brahman

Brahmā realm

tshangs pa'i 'jig rten

brahmāloka

calm abiding*zhi gnas**śamatha***child of Manu***shed bu**shed las skyes**manuja**mānava***chiliocosm***stong gi 'jig rten gyi khams**sāhasralokadhātu*

A great “thousandfold universe,” consisting of a thousand worlds each with its own own Mount Meru, four continents, sun, moon, and god realms.

concordant acceptance*rjes su 'thun pa'i bzod pa**ānulomikakṣānti***correct efforts***yang dag par spong ba**samyakprahāṇa*

A list of four actions that refers to the act of eliminating unwholesome states that have arisen and making sure they do not arise, as well as causing wholesome states to arise and developing them once they have arisen.

definitive meaning*nges pa'i don**nītārtha*

dependent origination

rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba
pratītyasamutpāda

The principle of dependent origination asserts that nothing exists independently of other factors, the reason for this being that things and events come into existence only in dependence on the aggregation of causes and conditions. In general, the processes of cyclic existence, through which the external world and the beings within it revolve in a continuous cycle of suffering, propelled by the propensities of past actions and their interaction with afflicted mental states, originate depending on the sequential unfolding of twelve links, commencing from ignorance and ending with birth, aging, and death. It is only through deliberate reversal of these twelve links that one can succeed in bringing the cycle to an end.

Devarāja

lha'i rgyal po
devarāja

A buddha in the past, prior to Dīpaṅkara, from whom the Buddha Śākyamuni in a previous life first heard the present discourse.

Dharaṇīdhara

sa 'dzin
dharaṇīdhara

The bodhisattva who, in this discourse, is said by the Buddha to have been the māra Vikrama in one of his previous lives. The Buddha narrates a dialogue from that life between the māra Vikrama and the bodhisattva Vajranābhi, a former life of the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja.

dharmadhātu

chos kyi dbyings
dharmadhātu

discipline

brtul zhugs grub pa

siddhavrata

Here “discipline” is meant in the sense that discipline is that which “accomplishes vows,” the literal meaning of the Sanskrit *siddhavrata*.

Dīpaṃkara

mar me mdzad

dīpaṃkara

A past buddha and the buddha before whom the Buddha Śākyamuni in a previous life made the bodhisattva vow.

eighteen qualities unique to the buddhas

sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa bcwa brgyad

aṣṭādaśāveṇikabuddhadharma

element

khams

dhātu

emancipations

rnam par thar pa

vimokṣa

A category of advanced meditative attainment such as those of the “eight emancipations.”

factors conducive to awakening

byang chub kyi phyogs dang 'thun pa'i chos

bodhipakṣikadharmā

bodhipakṣyadharmā

factors of awakening

byang chub kyi yan lag

bodhyaṅga

five aggregates

phung po lnga

pañcaskandha

The five aggregates (skandha) of form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. On the individual level the five aggregates refer to the basis upon which the mistaken idea of a self is projected.

foundations of mindfulness

dran pa nye bar gzhag pa

smṛtyupasthāna

The application of mindfulness to the body, the application of mindfulness to feeling, the application of mindfulness to mind, and the application of mindfulness to dharmas.

four correct discernments

so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi

catuḥpratisaṃvid

The correct discernments of meaning, the Dharma, lexical explanations, and eloquence.

four fearlessnesses

mi 'jigs pa bzhi

caturvaiśāradya

The four types of fearlessness possessed by buddhas: They have full confidence that (1) they are fully awakened, (2) they have removed all defilements, (3) they have taught about the obstacles to liberation, and (4) they have shown the path to liberation.

four means of attracting students

bsdud ba'i dngos po

saṃgrahavastu

A traditional list of four qualities by means of which buddhas and bodhisattvas build a group followers: giving gifts (dāna), kind speech (priyavādita), acting for their benefit (arthacārya), and having the same goals as they do (samānārthatā).

four māras

bdud bzhi

caturmāra

The deities ruled over by Māra are also symbolic of the defects within a person that prevent awakening. These four personifications are (1) devaputramāra (lha'i bu'i bdud), the divine māra, which is the distraction of pleasures, (2) mṛtyumāra ('chi bdag gi bdud), the māra of the Lord of Death, (3) skandhamāra (phung po'i bdud), the māra of the skandhas, which is the body, and (4) kleśamāra (nyon mongs pa'i bdud), the māra of the afflictive emotions.

gandharva

dri za

gandharva

Ganges River

gang gA'i klung

gaṅgānadī

garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

garuḍa

gnosis

ye shes

jñāna

Going with the Prowess of a Lion

seng ge'i rtsal gyis 'gro ba

One of the bodhisattvas present in the assembly in which the Buddha gives the present discourse.

great eon

bskal pa chen po

mahākalpa

A complete cosmogonic cycle that includes four intermediate eons: the eon of formation (*vivartakalpa*; *chags pa'si bskal pa*), the eon of stability (*vivartasthāyikalpa*; *gnas pa'i bskal pa*), the eon of dissolution (*saṃvartakalpa*; *'jig pa'i bskal pa*), and the eon of nothingness (*saṃvartasthāyikalpa*; *stong pa'i bskal pa*).

Guardians of the World

'jig rten skyong ba

lokapāla

Also known as the four great kings (*mahārāja*), *Vaiśravaṇa*, *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*, *Virūdhaka*, and *Virūpākṣa* are pledged to protect practitioners of the Dharma.

hungry ghost

yi dags

preta

immeasurable states

tshad med pa rnams

apramāṇa

interpretable meaning

drang ba'i don

neyārtha

Jambu River

'dzam bu'i chu bo

jambunadī

Jeta's Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

jetavana

kinnara

mi 'am ci

kiṃnara

kācilindika

ka tsa lin di ka

kācilindika

level

sa

bhūmi

magical display

rnam par 'phrul pa

vikurvāṇa

mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

mahoraga

Mahāsthāmaprāpta*mthu chen thob**mahāsthāmaprāpta*

One of the eight great bodhisattvas. He serves alongside Avalokiteśvara as one of Amitābha's two attendants in the buddhafiield of Sukhāvātī. As his name suggests, he is renowned for possessing (Skt. prāpta; Tib. thob pa) great strength and power (Skt. mahāsthāma; Tib. mthu chen). In Tibetan Buddhism, he is identified with Vajrapāṇi.

Maitreya*byams pa**maitreya***major and minor marks***mtshan dang dpe byad bzang po**lakṣaṇānuvyañjana*

The thirty-two major and the eighty minor distinctive physical attributes of a buddha or a universal monarch.

meditative concentration*bsam gtan**dhyāna***moral conduct***tshul khrims**śīla*

Māra

bdud

bdud sdig can

māra

mārapāpīyas

“Wicked Māra.” The Sanskrit *pāpīyān* and the Tibetan *sdig can* (literally meaning “wicked” or “sinful”) is both the epithet of the great demon Māra, the embodiment of evil and obstruction who repeatedly tries to thwart the Buddha and his teachings, and an epithet used for all his kind, the “wicked māras.” They are portrayed as the primary adversaries and tempters of people who vow to take up the religious life, and are held responsible for perpetuating the illusions that keep beings bound to the world and worldly attachments. In some sources Māra and his kind are said to primarily reside in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations.

name and form

ming dang gzugs

nāmarūpa

Fourth of the twelve links of dependent origination. “Name” (*nāma*) is typically considered to refer to the mental constituents of the person, while “form” (*rūpa*) refers to the physical. The two together can thus be seen as referring to mind and matter.

nirvāṇa

mya ngan las ’das pa

nirvāṇa

noble one

’phags pa

ārya

nāga*klu**nāga***parinirvāṇa***yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa**parinirvāṇa***Perfect Domain***yul phun sum tshogs pa*

The bodhisattva during the time of the past buddha Vast Brilliance of Pervasive Light Rays at whose request the buddha Vast Brilliance of Pervasive Light Rays taught the four magical displays.

powers*stobs**bala*

Here, the five powers: faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and wisdom. These are the same as the five faculties but at a greater stage of development.

Pradyota*rab gsal**pradyota*

A buddha in the past from whom the Buddha in a previous life learned the present discourse.

pratyekabuddha*rang sangs rgyas**pratyekabuddha*

prātimokṣa*so sor thar pa**prātimokṣa*

Prātimokṣa is the name given to the code of conduct binding on monks and nuns. The term can be used to refer both to the disciplinary rules themselves and to the texts from the Vinaya that contain them. There are multiple recensions of the Prātimokṣa, each transmitted by a different monastic fraternity in ancient and medieval India. Three remain living traditions, one of them the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya of Tibetan Buddhism. Though the numbers of rules vary across the different recensions, they are all organized according to the same principles and with the same disciplinary categories. It is customary for monastics to recite the Prātimokṣa Sūtra fortnightly. According to some Mahāyāna sūtras, a separate set of prātimokṣa rules exists for bodhisattvas, which are based on bodhisattva conduct as taught in that vehicle.

Puṣya*rgyal**puṣya*

A buddha in the past from whom the Buddha in a previous life learned the present discourse.

retention*gzungs**dhāraṇī***saṃsāra***'khor ba**saṃsāra***seat of awakening***byang chub kyi snying po**bodhimaṇḍa*

sense bases*skye mched**āyatana***six perfections***pha rol tu phyin pa drug**ṣaṭpāramitā*

Practices of the bodhisattva path: generosity (Tib. sbyin pa; Skt. dāna), moral conduct (Tib. tshul khriṃs; Skt. śīla), patience (Tib. bzod pa; Skt. kṣānti), diligence (Tib. brtson 'grus; Skt. vīrya), concentration (Tib. bsam gtan; Skt. dhyāna), and wisdom (Tib. shes rab; Skt. prajñā).

Siṃhaketu*seng ge'i tog**siṃhaketu*

One of the bodhisattvas present in the assembly in which the Buddha gives the present discourse.

Siṃhamati*seng ge blo gros**siṃhamati*

One of the bodhisattvas present in the assembly in which the Buddha gives the present discourse.

skill in means*thabs mkhas pa**upāyakaśālyā***special insight***lhag mthong**vipaśyanā*

spiritual friend*dge ba'i bshes gnyen**kalyāṇamitra*

Literally, “virtuous friend.” A spiritual teacher who can contribute to an individual’s progress on the spiritual path to awakening and act wholeheartedly for the welfare of students.

Stainless Pure Light*dri med rnam dag 'od*

The name of the Buddha in a previous life at the time of the buddha Devarāja when, as a bodhisattva who had not received a prophecy of full awakening, he first heard the present discourse.

suchness*de bzhin nyid**tathatā*

The quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms.

Sumeru*ri rab**sumeru***superknowledge***mngon par shes pa**abhijñā*

ten strengths

stobs bcu

daśabala

The ten strengths of a thus-gone one (tathāgata), a list that overlaps with some of the superknowledges (abhijñā). The ten are (1) knowing what is possible and what is impossible; (2) knowing the results of actions or the ripening of karma; (3) knowing the various inclinations of beings; (4) knowing the various elements; (5) knowing the supreme and lesser faculties of beings; (6) knowing the paths that lead to all destinations of rebirth; (7) knowing the concentrations, emancipations, absorptions, attainments, afflictions, purifications, and abidings; (8) remembering one's previous lives; (9) knowing the death and rebirth of beings, which is the same as the divine eye; and (10) knowing that the defilements have been destroyed.

three realms

kham s gsum

Tiṣya

skar rgyal

tiṣya

A buddha in the past from whom the Buddha in a previous life learned the present discourse.

transformative power

byin gyis rlab

byin gyis rlob

adhiṣṭhāna

trichiliocosm

stong gsum gyi stong chen po

stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi kham

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

Tuṣita*dga' ldan**tuṣita***universal monarch***'khor los sgyur wa'i rgyal po**cakravartīrāja***Vajranābhi***rdo rje'i lte ba*

The name of a bodhisattva who was one of the previous lives of the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja. His dialogue with the māra Vikrama is narrated in this discourse by the Buddha.

Vajrapāṇi*lag na rdo rje**vajrapāṇi*

He first appears in Buddhist literature as the yakṣa bodyguard of the Buddha, ready at times to shatter a person's head into a hundred pieces with his vajra if they speak inappropriately to the Buddha. His name means that he wields a vajra.

Vast Brilliance of Pervasive Light Rays*kun nas 'od zer gzi brjid rgya chen*

A buddha in the past who taught the four magical displays in response to a question from a bodhisattva named Perfect Domain.

very limit of reality*yang dag pa'i mtha'**bhūtaḥkoṭi*

vidyāmantra*rig sngags**vidyāmantra*

A type of incantation or spell used to accomplish a ritual goal.

Vikrama*rnam par gnon pa**vikrama*

The name of a māra during one of the previous lives of the bodhisattva Vikurvāṇarāja, when he was a bodhisattva named Vajranābhi. His dialogue with Vajranābhi is narrated in this discourse by the Buddha.

Vikurvāṇarāja*rnam par 'phrul pa'i rgyal po**vikurvāṇarāja*

The bodhisattva whose name gives the present discourse its title and whose question elicits the Buddha's response that constitutes the bulk of the discourse itself. His name means "King of Magical Displays."

well-gone one*bde bar gshegs pa**sugata***wisdom***shes rab**prajñā***yakṣa***gnod sbyin**yakṣa*

Yearning

rab tu gdung ba

A buddha in the past from whom the Buddha in a previous life learned the present discourse.

yojana

dpag tshad

yojana

Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ānanda

Śakra

brgya byin

śakra

śrāvaka

nyan thos

śrāvaka

Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

śrāvastī

ṛṣi

drang srong

ṛṣi

Bibliography

- 'phags pa rnam par 'phrul ba'i rgyal pos zhus pa (Vikurvāṇarājaparipṛcchā). Toh 167, Degé Kangyur vol. 59 (mdo sde, ba), folios 175.b–210.b.
- 'phags pa rnam par 'phrul ba'i rgyal pos zhus pa. bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma) [Comparative Edition of the Kangyur], krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang (The Tibetan Tripitaka Collation Bureau of the China Tibetology Research Center). 108 volumes. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House), 2006–9, vol. 59 (mdo sde), pp. 480–562.
- 'phags pa rnam par 'phrul ba'i rgyal pos zhus pa. Stok Palace Kangyur vol. 66 (mdo sde, ba), folios 317.b–368.b.
- Mahāvvyutpatti (bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa chen po). Toh 4346, Degé Tengyur vol. 204 (sna tshogs, co), folios 1.b–131.a.
- Drolungpa Lodro Jungné (gro lung pa blo gros 'byung gnas). bstan rim chen mo. Delhi: brag g'yab brtan bzhugs go sgrig tshogs chung, 2014. BDRC bdr:MW1KG24221, Accessed May 11, 2025.
- Zì zai wáng pú sà jīng 自在王菩薩經 (Vikurvāṇarājaparipṛcchā), Taishō 420 (CBETA; SAT).