དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་མི་འཁྲུགས་པའི་འཕྲུལ་འཁོར་པ།

The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya

Akṣobhyatathāgatasya vyūhaḥ

འཕགས་པ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་མི་འཁྲུགས་པའི་བཀོད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

’phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa mi ’khrugs pa’i bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya”

Āryākṣobhyatathāgatasya vyūhanāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 50 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 40 (dkon brtsegs, kha), folios 1.b–70a
For referencing Tibetan sources, please see our Scholar’s Edition

First published 2026

Current version v 1.0.1

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 5.31pm on monday, 12 october 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 If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time.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/toh50.

Contents

s.	Summary	6
ac.	Acknowledgments	6
i.	Introduction	7
tr.	The Translation	12
1.	Chapter 1	12
2.	Chapter 2	39
3.	Chapter 3	55
4.	Chapter 4	62
5.	Chapter 5	78
6.	Chapter 6	86
c.	Colophon	114
ab.	Abbreviations	115
n.	Notes	116
b.	Bibliography	118
g.	Glossary	120

Summary

s.1 When Śāradvatīputra requests a teaching on exemplary bodhisattvas of the past whom Buddhist practitioners in the present and future can emulate, the Buddha gives an extensive teaching on the previous bodhisattva training of the thus-gone one Akṣobhya. As a result of the unshakable resolve and firm commitment of Akṣobhya (whose name means 'Imperturbable') in his previous bodhisattva vows, the excellent arrays of qualities in his heavenly buddhafield are unexcelled among all buddhafields of all the buddhas of the Fortunate Eon. Anyone who takes rebirth in his heavenly pure land, which lies far to the east of our own world system, will themselves be sure to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

Acknowledgments

ac.1 Tenzin Bhuchung translated the text during his tenure as an 84000 Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. George FitzHerbert edited the translation and the introduction, and Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Sameer Dhingra was in charge of the digital publication process.

ac.3 The translation of this text has been made possible through the generous sponsorship of Zhou Tian Yu, Chen Yi Qin, Zhou Xun, Zhao Xuan and David.

Introduction

i.1 *The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya*, also referred to within the text as *Akṣobhya's Prophecy*, is the sixth sūtra in the Heap of Jewels (Skt. *Ratnakūṭa*; Tib. *dkon brtsegs*) collection. It is an extensive teaching on the wonders of Abhirati, a buddhafield far to the east of our own world system that is presided over by the thus-gone one Akṣobhya, whose name means "unperturbed." To be reborn in Akṣobhya's heavenly pure land is to be assured eventual full awakening. As the Buddha Śākyamuni explains in this sūtra, the particularly marvelous and bountiful qualities of this buddhafield are the result of the particular aspirations made by Akṣobhya when he first donned the armor of a bodhisattva by arousing the mind of awakening—the commitment to pursue awakening for all beings.

i.2 Although this sūtra is less well known than the very influential *Sukhavativyūha* (Toh 49), which describes the western buddhafield of Amitabha, the *Akṣobhyavyūha* is likewise a foundational scripture of great importance for the Pure Land Buddhism that is particularly popular in East Asia.

i.3 The setting of the discourse is Vulture Peak Mountain near Rājagṛha, capital of the ancient Magadha region located in what is now the Indian state of Bihar. The discourse begins when Śāradvatīputra requests the Buddha Śākyamuni to give a teaching on the qualities of exemplary bodhisattvas of the past, so that this may provide guidance for practitioners in the future. In response, the Buddha tells the assembled gods and humans about the career of Akṣobhya, a monk turned bodhisattva and then fully awakened buddha, in a world system far to the east of our own named Abhirati ("Joyful").

i.4 "At one time" the story begins, a certain monk approached the buddha of that far distant world, who was named Great Eyes, with the request to train as a bodhisattva. The Buddha Great Eyes replied that to train as a bodhisattva is very difficult, since bodhisattvas must remain "unperturbed" (Skt. *akṣobhya*,

Tib. *mi 'khrugs pa*) with regard to sentient beings. Undaunted, the monk arouses the mind of awakening and publicly declares, there and then, that he will never slacken in his unwavering commitment to his bodhisattva resolutions until he reaches unsurpassable and truly perfect awakening. He expresses this commitment through a series of aspirations (Skt. *praṇidhāna*, Tib. *smon lam*). Awed by the strength of his resolve to maintain these very challenging commitments, which include, among other things, adherence to strict ascetic practices, he is given the name Akṣobhya and, on account of his qualities, is prophesied by the Buddha Great Eyes to reach full awakening.

i.5 In chapter 2, the Buddha Śākyamuni describes the extraordinary qualities of the buddhafield of Abhirati after Akṣobhya's full awakening, and explains that these marvelous qualities are themselves direct results of the specific excellent qualities of the aspirations that Akṣobhya had made in the past as a bodhisattva. In this way, the Buddha encourages his followers to emulate Akṣobhya's commitments in every way and, thereby, to ensure similar wonders in their own buddhafields when they too reach full awakening.

i.6 The arrays of qualities in the heaven-like realm of Abhirati are then described in some detail. It is a world in which there are no lower rebirths, in which everyone quickly attains the liberation of the state of a worthy one, in which cool breezes blow, in which gods and humans intermingle freely, ascending and descending on staircases between their realms, in which music more delightful even than the divine music of the gods is heard, in which nothing is ever lacking, and in which everyone delights in practicing the Dharma. The qualities of the buddhafield, he says, are without equal in all the buddhafields of all the buddhas of the Fortunate Eon, and to be a human there is preferable to being a god in our own world. Anyone reborn there, he says, will be irreversible on the path to unsurpassable and truly perfect awakening. However, he warns, they will not achieve such rebirth by desiring it. On the contrary, rebirth there is achieved by being without desire and by pursuing virtue, Dharma, and purity.

i.7 The next chapters describe further arrays of excellent qualities, such as the perfect communities of śrāvakas (chapter 3) and bodhisattvas (chapter 4) in Akṣobhya's buddhafield. Chapter 5 describes the great parinirvāṇa of the thus-gone one Akṣobhya himself, and chapter 6 enumerates "the causes and conditions" for being reborn there, or, in other words, what one must do to ensure rebirth there. Prominent among these causes and conditions are learning, memorizing and widely propagating this very scripture.

i.8 *The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya* is among the earliest Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures to have been translated into Chinese. Therefore, it is an important early witness to the development of the Mahāyāna. Its literary style, with extensive formulaic repetition, is suggestive of oral transmission in the hands of dharmabhāṇakas, and its content indicates a primary audience of monastic communities that included both followers of the śrāvaka and bodhisattva vehicles. A Chinese translation of the scripture was made during the Han Dynasty sometime between 178 and 186 CE by the pioneering Yüeh-chih translator, Lokakṣema (Taishō 313).

i.9 The flourishing of a Mahāyāna tradition associated with the buddha Akṣobhya and his eastern buddhafield Abhirati in this early period is further attested by the recent discovery of what appears to be a related Akṣobhya sūtra among the birch bark scrolls in the Kharoṣṭhī language of the so-called Bajaur Collection which have been dated to the first two centuries CE.[1] The discovery of this Gāndhārī scroll adds further weight to the suggestions made by Jean Dantinne (1983) and Jan Nattier (2000), that the *Akṣobhyavyūhasūtra* may represent a significant "missing link" for understanding the early development of what came to be known as Pure Land Buddhism in East Asia.[2] The most important sūtra for Pure Land Buddhism is undoubtedly the *Sukhāvativyūhasūtra* (Toh 49). This text represents a parallel Mahāyāna scripture—also translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema—which describes the wonders of the western buddhafield of Amitābha and it has had an enormous influence on the devotional traditions of East Asian as well as Tibetan Buddhism. Like the *Sukhāvat-*

ivyūha, the *Akṣobhyavyūha* was also translated again into Chinese in the early eighth century by the south Indian monk Bodhiruci and his team as part of the full translation of the *Mahāratnakūṭa* (Heap of Jewels) collection (Taishō 310).[3] An abridged English translation of Bodhiruci's Chinese version is included in the anthology published by Garma C. Chang (1983).[4] A French translation of the first half of the text was also published in the same year by Dantinne.[5]

i.10 It is worth noting that the term "Pure Land" (Ch. *jìngtǔ*) is not itself found in the *Akṣobhyavyūhasūtra*. This is not surprising, as it is not an Indic term and is widely considered by scholars to have been first coined in China. However, the concept of the distant heavenly "buddhafield" (Skt. *buddhakṣetra*, Tib. *sang rgyas kyi zhing*) purified by its own presiding buddha, of which there are countless numbers spread in all ten directions, is lavishly described in this text.

i.11 According to its colophon, the *Akṣobhyavyūhasūtra* was translated into Tibetan, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi, together with the Tibetan senior editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé. This suggests a translation made from Sanskrit under Tibetan imperial patronage in the late eighth or early ninth century. This is confirmed by the inclusion of the text in both the Phangthangma and Denkarma imperial catalogs of Tibetan translations.[6]

i.12 *The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya* is not known to be extant in Sanskrit, and it does not appear to have been the subject of any dedicated Indian or Tibetan commentaries. Aside from the aforementioned works by Dantinne (1983) and Nattier (2000), and a PhD dissertation by Tai-wo Kwan (1985), it has not received extensive western scholarly attention. There is, however, a substantial body of modern scholarship on the text available in Japanese.[7]

i.13 This English translation, which is the first full translation of the text into any western language, has been made from the Tibetan based primarily on the

Degé Kangyur edition in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace Kangyur.

The Translation

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra

The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya

Chapter 1

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing at Vulture Peak Mountain near Rājagṛha together with a great saṅgha of one thousand two hundred and fifty monks all of whom were worthy ones, free from contaminations, devoid of afflictive emotions, with mastery, with minds thoroughly liberated, with wisdom thoroughly liberated, thoroughbreds, great elephants, who had performed their duties, accomplished their goals, removed their burdens, achieved their purposes, who had exhausted the fetters that bind to existence, who had liberated their minds through true knowledge, and who had attained sublime perfection through mastery over all mental states. With the exception, that is, of just one person, namely the venerable Ānanda, who was still a trainee, a stream-enterer.

1.2 There, he taught the Dharma to an assembly that included many bodhisattva mahāsattvas, the Four Great Kings, Śakra lord of the gods, and Brahma lord of the Sahā world, while surrounded and honored by many resplendent gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and other nonhuman beings.

1.3 Then, by the power of the awakened, the venerable Śāradvatīputra rose from his seat, draped his robe over one shoulder, and placing his right knee on the ground, bowed with the palms of his hands joined in the direction of the Blessed One, and addressed the Blessed One thus: “Honorable Blessed One,

please tell us in detail about the resolution, the conduct, the joy, and the arousal of the mind of awakening of those bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the past who were genuinely engaged on the path to unsurpassed and perfect awakening, such that their arousal of the mind of awakening, their armor, and their qualities are proclaimed as those of bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the past who were genuinely engaged on the path to unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

1.4 "Honorable Blessed One, please also tell us about the actions, the attitude of mind, the armor and the qualities of those bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the past who are proclaimed as such. Honorable Blessed One, please also tell us about bodhisattva mahāsattva conduct and qualities that are in keeping with the pure conduct and qualities of those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who strove for the welfare, benefit, and happiness of the world, together with its gods. To instruct us in this way will be of benefit to many beings, it will bring happiness to many beings, it will be an act of compassion toward the world. It will bring welfare, benefit, and happiness to the great multitude of beings, both gods and humans. Its illuminating light will be a lamp of the Dharma for bodhisattva mahāsattvas, both in the present and in the future. It will illuminate them with the light of the buddhas and bring them joy. For when individuals on the bodhisattva vehicle hear about the resolution, the conduct, the joy, the arousal of the mind of awakening, the armor, and the qualities of such bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the past, they too will train and practice in the same way. And by training and practicing in such a way, they will become irreversible on the path to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. And having attained that quality, they will continue to obtain ever more exalted qualities."

1.5 Such was his request, and the Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Excellent, Śāradvatīputra, excellent! It is excellent that for the sake of bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the future, you have thought to ask about the resolution, the conduct, the joy, the arousal of the mind of awakening, the armor, and the qualities of celebrated bodhisattva mahāsattvas of the past. To

that end, Śāradvatīputra, listen well, listen attentively, and commit this to memory, for I will tell you about such bodhisattva mahāsattvas of the past."

1.6 "Very well, Blessed One," replied the venerable Śāradvatīputra, and he listened just as the Blessed One had instructed.

1.7 The Blessed One said, "Śāradvatīputra, in the world system called Abhirati a thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha called Great Eyes was living and flourishing, teaching the Dharma based on the six perfections to bodhisattva mahāsattvas."

1.8 The venerable Śāradvatīputra thought to himself, "I wonder in which direction this world system Abhirati lies, where the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes was teaching the Dharma to bodhisattva mahāsattvas based on the six perfections. I must seek clarification on this point from the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha."

1.9 Knowing these thoughts in the mind of the venerable Śāradvatīputra, the Blessed One addressed him, "Śāradvatīputra, the world system Abhirati lies in the eastern direction, one thousand buddhafields distant from here. There, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes was residing, living and flourishing, teaching Dharma to many bodhisattva mahāsattvas.

1.10 "At one time, Śāradvatīputra, on a certain occasion, a monk there stood up from his seat, draped his robe over one shoulder, and placing his right knee on the ground, bowed with the palms of his hands joined in the direction of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes, and said to that blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes, 'Honorable Blessed One, may I train according to the training of a bodhisattva?'

1.11 "Such was his request, Śāradvatīputra, and the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes replied to that monk, 'Monk, in these times it is very difficult to train in the training of a bodhisattva. Why? Because, monk, so as not

to arouse any harmful thoughts,[8] bodhisattvas must remain unperturbed in their dealings with sentient beings.'

1.12 "Thus he spoke, Śāradvatīputra, and that monk replied to the blessed, thus-gone Great Eyes, 'Honorable Blessed One, henceforth, from today, with words neither false nor hypocritical, with words firm and unwavering, I arouse the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. I bow my mind and fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I bear any anger or malicious thoughts whatsoever or have a disturbed mind in any way toward any sentient being, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.13 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I become separated from the mind set on omniscience for even a single step, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.14 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I give rise to the intention of a śrāvaka or a pratyekabuddha, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.15 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I give rise to a desirous attitude of craving, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.16 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I give rise to an attitude of craving, or aversion, or ignorance, or inflicting harm, or sleepiness or drowsiness, or regret, or mental agitation, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.17 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I give rise to any doubt,[9] then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.18 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I ever have the intention to kill, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.19 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I ever have the intention to take that which has not been given, or engage in impure conduct,[10] or speak falsehood, slander, abusive speech or idle gossip, or indulge covetousness, or if I entertain any thoughts of inflicting harm, or if I harbor wrong views, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.’

1.20 “Thus he spoke, Śāradvatīputra, whereupon a monk present there thought to himself ‘O, it is amazing how this bodhisattva mahāsattva, as soon as he first dons the great armor of the mind of awakening, is completely unperturbed in mind by any sentient being. It would be right and fitting for this monk to be named Akṣobhya.’

1.21 “Śāradvatīputra, accordingly that monk became known by the name Akṣobhya the Unperturbed. The thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes rejoiced at the name. ‘Excellent, monk,’ he said, ‘Excellent! Monk, while you practice bodhisattva conduct, you shall bear this name. And monk, even after you have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, you will continue to be known by the name Akṣobhya the Unperturbed.’ The Four Great Kings, Śakra lord of the gods, and Brahmā lord of the Sahā world also rejoiced at the name, ‘Excellent, monk, excellent’ they said. ‘Monk, while you practice bodhisattva conduct, you will bear this very name, and monk, even after you have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, you will continue to be known by the name Akṣobhya the Unperturbed.’

1.22 “Then, Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, still present there, said to the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes, ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on

omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I do not act in accordance with what I have declared, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.'

1.23 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I do not maintain the mind set on omniscience with my mind focused on the buddhas during every step, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.'

1.24 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I do not sincerely go forth from home to homelessness in every lifetime, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.25 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if, having gone forth in lifetime after lifetime, I do not maintain the pledges to which I have committed with regard to trainings, ascetic practices, and abstinences by not being awilderness dweller, a receiver of alms, a wearer of discarded rags, one with a single mat to sit on, a second-sitting refuser [of food], one who eats whatever alms are received, a frequenter of charnel

grounds, an open air dweller, one who sits at the foot of trees, one who sleeps sitting upright, one who accepts whatever seating position is offered, a wearer of the three robes, a wearer of coarse felt,[11] one with few desires, one who has contentment, one who seeks the Dharma, one who delights in the Dharma, one who respects the Dharma, one who relies on Dharma, and one who teaches Dharma—then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.26 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve to henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if, having gone forth in lifetime after lifetime, I do not teach the Dharma, or do not attain unimpeded eloquence or inestimable eloquence, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.27 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I lie down instead of observing the three ways—standing, sitting, and walking—then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.28 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I incur a root downfall toward any sentient beings or have the intention of committing a root downfall, of being with a woman, or speaking falsehood, or using other forms of improper speech, or causing harm or despair in

others, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.29 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if, when teaching the Dharma to women on aspects of impermanence, aspects of suffering, aspects of emptiness, aspects of the absence of self, or any other such aspects—I take various aspects of their limbs and other features [of their physical appearance] as excellent signs, and show off, displaying my teeth or laughing and gesticulating unnecessarily, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.30 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I teach Dharma with arms folded,[12] then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.31 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if, upon seeing followers of the Thus-Gone One who have shaved off their hair and beards and become suitable vessels, or those who have not yet become suitable vessels but have the aspiration to don the saffron Dharma robes that are the victory banner of the thus-gone ones, and I do not arouse the perception of them as thus-gone, or the perception of [them as] objects of venera-

tion, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.32 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if, upon seeing other bodhisattvas I do not arouse the perception of them as teachers, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.33 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, when explaining the Dharma, if teachers of the Dharma are present and I do not listen to their teachings, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.34 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if besides the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas, I pay homage to any ascetics, brahmins,[13] or any rival gods, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.35 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and

perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I give rise to discriminatory attitudes towards sentient beings thinking, 'I will be generous to this person but not to that person,' then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.36 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I give rise to thoughts like 'I will make offerings to this worthy object, but will not make offerings to that worthy object,' then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.37 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I develop thoughts like 'I will bestow the gift of the sublime Dharma on this person but not on that person,' then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.38 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if, on seeing a creature being led away for slaughter, I am not willing to give up my own body to free it, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limit-

less, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.'

1.39 "For, Śāradvatīputra, it is said that bodhisattvas practicing bodhisattva conduct will not fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood until, on seeing a creature being led away for slaughter, they free it.

1.40 "Then Śāradvatīputra, a monk there had this thought: 'This bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya takes the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas as witness and proof, and by being one who takes a thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha as witness and as proof, will himself become witness and proof for the worlds together with their gods, humans, and asuras.'

1.41 "Śāradvatīputra, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes knew the thoughts of that monk and said to him, 'Indeed, monk, it is so. It is just as you have thought. Monk, those who take the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas as witness and as proof, will themselves before long be taken as witness and as proof by the worlds together with their gods, humans, and asuras. Indeed monk, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have genuinely embarked on the path to unsurpassed and perfect awakening with such great armor will themselves fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.'

1.42 "Then Śāradvatīputra, that bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya said to the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes, 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if when I see a monk, nun, male lay practitioner, or female lay practitioner who has committed a fault of transgression, I discuss the transgression with them saying "you incurred this fault of transgression," then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless,

countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.43 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, by every means, I will strive for and succeed in establishing a buddhafield for fully awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood in which not even a whisper of the transgressions of śrāvakas will be heard, nor will they occur in any respect nor at any time. By every means, I will strive to utterly purify that buddhafield for fully awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, and thoroughly uphold all good qualities.

1.44 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I so much as emit semen, even in a dream, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions. Honorable Blessed One, by every means, I will strive for and succeed in establishing a buddhafield for fully awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood in which noble sons and noble daughters of the bodhisattva vehicle and the śrāvaka vehicle who have renounced their homes and gone forth will likewise not so much as emit semen, even in their dreams.

1.45 “ ‘Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if any present-day women, or women with feminine faults, or any such feminine faults appear in that buddhafield for fully awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, then not only will I not fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, but I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless,

countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions.

1.46 " 'Honorable Blessed One, I hereby resolve henceforth to develop the precious mind set on omniscience and to dedicate, fully dedicate it to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, if I do not live up to these words, then I will have deceived the blessed buddhas who presently reside, live, and flourish, teaching the Dharma in all the limitless, countless, inconceivable, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions. Bodhisattvas who have this seed of Dharma, who develop their intention in just this way, will accordingly develop the qualities of buddhahood in just this way, and will likewise teach the Dharma in just this way,' he said.

1.47 "Śāradvatīputra, a monk there then addressed the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, 'Virtuous One, if these pledges you have made are genuine aspirations, if they are authentic, in that they will never fall away during your progress to unsurpassed and perfect awakening, then, by this truth and by these truthful words, may the toe of your right foot make the great earth of this world system of the great trichiliocosm quake, tremble, and shake, forcefully quake, tremble, and shake; and forcefully quake, tremble, and shake everywhere.'

1.48 "Then, Śāradvatīputra, at that very moment, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya did just that. By the power of his awakening, and through the strength of the roots of virtue generated through his sincere pledges, the toe of his right foot made the great earth of this world system of the great trichiliocosm quake in six ways. It quaked, trembled, and shook; it forcefully quaked, trembled and shook; it forcefully quaked, trembled and shook everywhere.

1.49 "In this way, Śāradvatīputra, the actions of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya are in accordance with his words. So, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who aspire to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddha-

hood should train by emulating the conduct of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who train by emulating the conduct of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya will come to occupy buddhafields of their own, similar to his, and they will swiftly fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood."

1.50 Then the venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, when the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya first set his mind on awakening, what varieties of gods were gathered there?"

1.51 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, when the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya first set his mind on awakening, the Four Great Kings, Śakra lord of the gods, Māra Pāpīyān, Brahmā lord of this Sahā world, and all the gods of the desire and form realms of the world system of the great trichiliocosm were gathered there. With the palms of their hands joined, they paid homage to him, saying, 'O, these mighty lion's roars, never heard before, are now heard through the declarations of this bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya.' Then, Śāradvatīputra, with gladness and rejoicing, the gods unanimously proclaimed, 'Honorable Blessed One, the roots of virtue of sentient beings who are born in the buddhafield in which the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya fully awakens to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood are not meager. No, indeed, the roots of virtue generated by sentient beings who hear this Dharma discourse—this mighty lion's roar, this great fearlessness of a bull, this great aspiration—are not meager!' they said."

1.52 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, I have never before heard the Thus-Gone One speak of any other bodhisattva mahāsattva having great armor comparable to that of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya."

1.53 "Indeed Śāradvatīputra," the Blessed One replied, "It is so. It is just as you have said. Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas like the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya—who once he made the great aspiration to don the great armor and embark on

the path to unsurpassed truly perfect awakening, did indeed don the great armor and embark on the path to unsurpassed truly perfect awakening—are few indeed among many hundreds of bodhisattvas, many thousands of bodhisattvas, many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas, and countless trillions of bodhisattvas. Śāradvatīputra, there is no bodhisattva among all the bodhisattvas of the Fortunate Eon who possesses the qualities of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya.

1.54 "Then, Śāradvatīputra, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great-Eyes gave this prophecy to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya: 'Noble son, at a certain time in the future, you will become a thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha, endowed with perfect wisdom and conduct, a well-gone one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed guide who tames beings, a teacher of gods and men, the buddha known as Blessed One Akṣobhya.' By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like the prophecy that the thus-gone one Dīpaṅkara made when he foretold that I would attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

1.55 "Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, a magnificent brilliance engulfed all the world systems of the great trichiliocosm and the great earth quaked in six different ways: it quaked, trembled, and shook; forcefully quaked, trembled, and shook; forcefully quaked, trembled, and shook everywhere. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when a magnificent brilliance likewise engulfed all the world systems of the great trichiliocosm and the great earth quaked in six different ways—as it quaked, trembled, and shook; forcefully quaked, trembled, and shook; forcefully quaked, trembled, and shook everywhere.

1.56 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisat-

tva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, all the trees, grasses, bushes, shrubs, and forests throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm leaned, bent, and bowed low in the direction in which the prophecy of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya was made. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when all the trees, grasses, bushes, shrubs, and forests throughout this world system of the great trichiliocosm likewise leaned, bent, and bowed low towards where I was.

1.57 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, all the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans in that world of the great trichiliocosm bowed with their palms joined and paid homage in the direction in which the prophecy of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya was made. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when all the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and nonhumans in this world system of the great trichiliocosm also bowed with their palms of their hands joined as they paid homage towards where I was.

1.58 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, pregnant women throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm gave birth happily and with ease; sentient beings who had been blind could see forms with their eyes; those that had been deaf could hear sounds with their ears; those that had been deranged regained their memory; and those that had been disabled regained all their faculties. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when throughout this world system of the great trichiliocosm, pregnant women gave birth with

happiness and ease; beings who had been blind could see forms with their eyes; those who had been deaf could hear sounds with their ears; those who had been deranged regained their memory; and those who had been disabled regained all their faculties.

1.59 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, at that time no sentient beings throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm, faced the moment of death in unfavorable circumstances. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when no sentient beings faced the moment of death in unfavorable circumstances.

1.60 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when that thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, a delightful divine fragrance pervaded that entire world system of the great trichiliocosm. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when a delightful divine fragrance pervaded this world system of the great trichiliocosm."

1.61 Thus he spoke, and venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, O, if it is so[14] that the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya was prophesied to acquire such qualities, then the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya must indeed be endowed with such great virtuous qualities."

1.62 The Blessed One replied, "Śāradvatīputra, the qualities of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya proclaimed by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes when he prophesied the awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya are not limited to these. Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya has perfected countless other qualities.

1.63 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, all the gods, humans, and asuras present throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm experienced joy and ease of mind. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when all the gods, humans, and asuras present throughout this world system of the great trichiliocosm experienced joy and ease of mind.

1.64 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when that thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great-Eyes prophesized the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, all the vajra-wielding lords of yakṣas present throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm followed him. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when all vajra-wielding lords of yakṣas present throughout this world system of the great trichiliocosm followed me.

1.65 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, all the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas present throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm made copious offerings of divine flowers, incense, and perfumes, gracefully tossing, throwing, and scattering them in the direction of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when all the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas present throughout this world system of the great trichiliocosm made copious offerings of divine flowers, incense, and perfumes, gracefully tossing, throwing, and scattering them in my direction.

1.66 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, two hundred million humans and three hundred million gods throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm set their minds on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. And each of them was prophesied by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes to achieve unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

1.67 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, that entire world system of the great trichiliocosm was covered with blooming lotuses—*utpala*, *padma*, *kumuda*, and white lotuses. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when the entire area around the seat of awakening was likewise entirely covered with lotuses—*utpala*, *padma*, *kumuda*, and white lotuses.

1.68 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, countless trillions of gods gathered in the sky above and, as offerings to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, gracefully threw countless trillions of divine garments in the direction in which his prophecy was made, intoning in unison ‘O may this bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya quickly fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood!’ By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when countless trillions of gods gathered in the sky above and gracefully threw countless trillions of divine garments in my direction as offerings to me.

1.69 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, the joyful love experienced among the gods, hu-

mans, and asuras throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm was beyond even the joyful love that parents feel for their children. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like when I fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, when the joyful love experienced among the gods, humans, and asuras throughout this world system of the great trichiliocosm was beyond even the joyful love that parents feel for their children.

1.70 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesied the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, due to the power of his awakening, all the gods and humans present throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm heard that prophesy for the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya. When they heard that prophecy, people in the desire realm practiced generosity and made merit by giving gifts of various kinds of food, drinks, and delicacies. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it was like how during the festival of the kumuda night lilies, which falls on the full moon of the fourth autumn month of Kārttika, when people in the desire realm practice generosity and merit making by giving gifts of various kinds of food, drinks, and delicacies to one another. In the same way, Śāradvatīputra, when the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Great Eyes prophesized the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya, people in the desire realm practiced generosity and made merit by giving gifts of various kinds of food, drinks, and delicacies to one another. Countless trillions of divine instruments sounded amid cries of ‘marvelous,’ and peals of delighted laughter, as countless billions of gods played with elation. Śāradvatīputra, such were the marvelous qualities that accompanied the prophecy of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya.”

1.71 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, the elegant teachings that honorable blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas give through their detailed knowledge of the thus-gone ones are indeed marvelous! Honorable Blessed One, the buddha realms of

the blessed buddhas are inconceivable; the meditative concentrations of meditators are inconceivable; the realms of the nāgas are inconceivable, and the karmic fruition of actions is likewise inconceivable. Honorable Blessed One, that the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya possessed such exceptional qualities from the moment he first set the mind on awakening is indeed a marvel, and Honorable Blessed One, that the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya's prophecy had such exceptional qualities is also inconceivable."

1.72 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Indeed, Śāradvatīputra, it is so. It is just as you have said. Śāradvatīputra, the prophecy of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya is indeed inconceivable."

1.73 Then the venerable Ānanda said to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Honorable Śāradvatīputra, the qualities of the armor donned by the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya when he first set the mind on awakening that have been mentioned here are but a fraction of the whole. The Thus-Gone One has taught them in condensed form. This is not the extensive teaching."

1.74 "You are right, Venerable Ānanda," the venerable Śāradvatīputra replied to the venerable Ānanda, "It is so. Indeed, Venerable Ānanda, the qualities of the armor donned by the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya when he first set his mind set on awakening that have been mentioned here are but a fraction of those described by the Thus-Gone One. Why? Because, Venerable Ānanda, the qualities of the armor donned by the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya when he first aroused the mind of awakening are inconceivable. Venerable Ānanda, listen attentively, for the Blessed One will give the extensive teaching."

1.75 The venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, the Blessed One has taught in condensed form the qualities and benefits of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya's armor when he first aroused the mind of awakening. Honorable Blessed One, so that present and future bodhisattvas may follow his example, please elaborate further this teaching of the

thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha on the qualities of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya's armor when he first aroused the mind of awakening."

1.76 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, the qualities of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya's armor when he first set his mind on awakening are inconceivably numerous. Nevertheless, Śāradvatīputra, a portion of them have been taught. Listen well, memorize correctly, and I will explain more."

1.77 "Very well, Blessed One," replied Śāradvatīputra and he listened as instructed by the Blessed One. The Blessed One continued, "Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya set his mind on awakening with the thought, 'The element of space may change, but my pledges will not change." Śāradvatīputra, such was the great armor donned by the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya when he donned his armor. Śāradvatīputra, among all bodhisattvas who have donned great armor in the Fortunate Eon, I have not seen a single bodhisattva donning great armor like that of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya.

1.78 "Śāradvatīputra, the conduct of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Ratnaketu does not even come close to a fraction of the conduct of the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, many hundreds of bodhisattvas, many thousands of bodhisattvas, many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas, countless billions of bodhisattvas do not possess great armor like the great armor donned by the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya.

1.79 "Śāradvatīputra, it was through his adoption of such steadfast great perseverance that the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, and is now known as the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya who presently resides, lives, and flourishes, teaching the Dharma, in the world system known as Abhirati.

1.80 "Śāradvatīputra, by means of the superknowledges, I know that when the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past,

there was nothing that could be undertaken by the hands, the legs, the head, the eyes, the limbs or the subsidiary limbs that he did not give freely.

1.81 "Śāradvatīputra, from the moment he first set the mind on awakening until his attainment for fully awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Akṣobhya never experienced headaches nor suffered any ailments caused by wind, bile, phlegm, or any combination of these. Śāradvatīputra, such are the wondrous and excellent phenomena that occurred when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

1.82 "Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he pleased the thus-gone ones in every lifetime and did not disappoint them. In every lifetime he practiced celibacy, came to be known only as Akṣobhya, and travelled from buddhafield to buddhafield taking rebirth wherever a blessed buddha was actually present.

1.83 "By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, anointed wheel-turning monarchs of the kṣatriya caste may travel from the upper story of one mansion to the upper story of another mansion without the soles of their feet ever treading on the great earth. In this way they may pass their whole lives atop these fine mansions, indulging in the five sense pleasures and enjoying the company of lovers. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he pleased the thus-gone ones in every lifetime and did not disappoint them. In every lifetime he practiced celibacy, came to be known only as Akṣobhya, and travelled from one buddhafield to the next, taking rebirth wherever a blessed buddha was actually present, without the soles of his feet ever treading on the buddhafield.

1.84 "Whenever he taught the Dharma, he would teach the Dharma based on the perfections. He would seldom teach from the level of śrāvakas. Even if he was teaching the Dharma from the level of śrāvakas, still he would teach the

Dharma based on the perfections. Even if he was teaching the Dharma from the level of pratyekabuddhas, he would teach the Dharma based on the perfections. By teaching the Dharma based on the perfections, he trained beings in the path to awakening, he brought them onto it, and he established them in it. He taught them the Dharma correctly based on unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and he inspired them, encouraged them, and brought them joy. Śāradvatīputra, such was the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya's great armor of steadfast perseverance when was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

1.85 "The roots of virtue acquired from giving the gift of Dharma he would dedicate sincerely to the attainment of unsurpassed and perfect awakening in the following manner: 'O, through these roots of virtue, may I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. May noble sons and noble daughters on the bodhisattva vehicle be reborn in the buddhafield in which I teach the Dharma, and by the power of my awakening may they listen to those teachings. Having learnt them, may they memorize them, uphold them, read them out loud, thoroughly comprehend them, and extensively propagate them to others. Even in subsequent lifetimes, may they never forget these Dharma teachings. In the same way that I presently travel from one buddhafield to another, may all bodhisattva mahāsattvas born in this buddhafield take rebirth in the buddhafields of their aspirations until they too fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. May they never be separated from the blessed buddhas, except for the bodhisattva mahāsattvas born in the Heaven of Joy who have only one birth remaining.[15] How so? Śāradvatīputra, by the nature of things, when bodhisattva mahāsattvas with only one birth remaining die and transmigrate from the Heaven of Joy, for their final physical body they enter the womb of their mother through the right side; and when such bodhisattva mahāsattvas with only one birth remaining are born, Śāradvatīputra, the great earth shakes.

1.86 “Śāradvatīputra, these are the attributes, indications and signs of bodhisattva mahāsattvas with one birth remaining. Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva mahāsattvas with one birth remaining enter their mothers’ wombs, they are untainted by any filth or impurity and do not experience any unpleasant smells. Even while they are inside the womb, they remain suspended in space.[16] By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, when monks with supernatural powers who engage in yogic practices enter a storied mansion or visit a series of storied mansions, they rise into the air and remain sitting there with composure, without touching the storied mansion. Likewise, Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva mahāsattvas with one birth remaining stay in their mothers’ wombs, they do so by rising into space and remaining there untainted by filth and impurity and without experiencing any unpleasant smell.

1.87 “Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he also thought to himself, ‘Just as while I am currently practicing bodhisattva conduct, no māras find any opportunity to harm me, so too may it be for any noble son or any noble daughter on the bodhisattva vehicle or the śrāvaka vehicle who practices bodhisattva conduct in the buddhafield in which I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. May both Māra and all the māra deities, in all their guises and in every way, fail to find any opportunity to harm them until they fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. And for as long as those bodhisattvas undertake to obtain such excellent qualities, may I continue to practice for the sake of their awakening.’

1.88 “Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya practiced bodhisattva conduct in the past, he seldom[17] faced any physical or mental discomfort while teaching or listening to Dharma. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because from when he first aroused the mind of awakening, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, while practicing bodhisattva conduct, intensively cultivated dharmakāya.

1.89 “Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct and listening to the Dharma in the past, he also thought to himself, ‘Just as I currently yearn for Dharma, so too may sentient beings in the buddhafield in which I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, never lose interest in the Dharma and yearn for the Dharma,’ he thought.”

1.90 *This is the first chapter from The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra Akṣobhya’s Prophecy.*

Chapter 2

2.1 The venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to the honorable Blessed One, “The blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha has taught us well concerning the qualities of the bodhisattva conduct with which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya practiced in past. Please now teach us in greater detail, Honorable Blessed One, about the array of buddhafield qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s present buddhafield. Please teach us extensively and comprehensively. For what purpose? So that when noble sons and noble daughters on the bodhisattva vehicle hear of the array of qualities in that buddhafield, the aspiration will arise in them to be reborn there so that they may witness, honor, make offerings to, serve, and rejoice in the presence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. So that when noble sons and noble daughters on the śrāvaka vehicle, even though their engagement is not flawless, hear of the array of qualities in that buddhafield, the aspiration will arise in them to be reborn there so that they may witness, honor, make offerings to, serve, and rejoice in the presence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.”

2.2 The Blessed One replied to Venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Very good, Śāradvatīputra, very good! Śāradvatīputra, it is very good that you have thought to inquire about the excellent arrays of good qualities in the buddhafield of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. So, Śāradvatīputra, listen well and commit this to memory, for I shall explain the excellent arrays of good qualities in the buddhafield of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.”

2.3 “Very well,” replied Śāradvatīputra and he listened, just as the Blessed One had instructed. The Blessed One then said to him, “Śāradvatīputra, when all the sentient beings in that world system of the great trichiliocosm came to know that the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya would fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood in seven days hence, they had

no thoughts of food or drink, they had no thoughts of hunger, no thoughts of thirst, no thoughts of sleeping in a bed, and no thoughts of physical or mental discomfort. Instead, all beings experienced only happy thoughts, thoughts of gladness, of supreme gladness, and they experienced joy and bliss. Why? They experienced these good qualities, Śāradvatīputra, due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.4 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when all the humans and gods of the desire realm present in that world system came to know that the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya would fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood in seven days hence, they had no thoughts whatsoever of engaging in sex. Why? It was due Śāradvatīputra, to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.5 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, a great radiance pervaded all the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, and the great earth quaked in six different ways. It quaked, trembled, shook, shuddered, rumbled, and roared; forcefully quaked, trembled, shook, shuddered, rumbled, and roared; forcefully quaked, trembled, shook, shuddered, rumbled; and roared everywhere. In this way, Śāradvatīputra, the buddhafield in which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience was truly endowed with arrays of buddhafield qualities.

2.6 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, all gods and humans present in that entire world system of the great trichiliocosm joined their palms together and

bowed in homage towards the seat of awakening. In this way, Śāradvatīputra, the buddhafield in which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, was truly endowed with arrays of buddhafield qualities.

2.7 "Śāradvatīputra, the arrays of buddhafield qualities with which this buddhafield was endowed, the buddhafield in which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya attained complete buddhahood in unsurpassed truly perfect awakening and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, and the arrays of buddhafield qualities with which this buddhafield is *still presently* endowed—the buddhafield in which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya attained complete buddhahood in unsurpassed truly perfect awakening and discovered the wisdom of omniscience— are absent from the buddhafields of many hundreds of buddhas, many thousands of buddhas, many hundreds of thousands of buddhas, countless billions of buddhas. This, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.8 "Thus, Śāradvatīputra, the arrays of buddhafield qualities are the fulfillment of particular aspirations. So it is also, Śāradvatīputra, with the aspirations that I made while practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.9 "Moreover Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, at that very moment, for just an instant, a fleeting instant, all sentient beings in that world system of the great trichiliocosm, both those with the divine eye and those without the divine eye, beheld him for a moment in their field of vision. This, Śāradvatīputra, was because of the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed,

thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.10 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya went to the seat of awakening and fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, the malevolent māras thought to themselves, ‘Why did we not think of suppressing and obstructing this thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya before he fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood?’ This was due, Śāradvatīputra, to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya while practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.11 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, the gods of that world system of the great trichiliocosm gathered in their countless trillions in the sky above to make offerings to the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, gently tossing, throwing and scattering divine flowers, divine fragrances, divine incense, divine flower garlands, divine sandalwoods, divine powders, divine garments, divine parasols, divine victory banners, divine flags, and divine precious ornaments in the direction of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya in order to worship him. By the power of his awakening, as soon as those divine flowers, fragrances, incenses, flower garlands, sandalwoods, powders, garments, parasols, banners, flags, and precious ornaments were thrown, they transformed into a single marvelous parasol of infinite dimensions that hovered in space directly above the crown of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s head. This too, Śāradvatīputra, was due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.12 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience, light radiated from his body that outshone and eclipsed the light of the sun and the moon, and all the world systems of the great trichiliocosm were bathed in the radiance of the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

2.13 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, that light that radiated from the body of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya outshone and eclipsed the radiance of all suns and all moons and all the gods in every world system of the great trichiliocosm such that they were no longer visible. This too, Śāradvatīputra, was due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.”

2.14 Then the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, O it is wonderful that when he practiced bodhisattva conduct in the past, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya made such particular and extensive aspirations when he donned his great armor, and that while practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he accrued roots of virtue by setting many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands, countless trillions of beings—infinite, innumerable, unutterable, inexpressible, utterly inexpressible numbers of living beings—on the path to unsurpassed and perfect awakening, and that he dedicated those roots of virtue to the attainment of unsurpassed and perfect awakening and the complete purification of his buddhafield, and that the aspirations he made in dedicating them in this manner, have been so completely fulfilled. It is wonderful indeed!”

2.15 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Indeed, Śāradvatīputra, it is so. It is just as you have said. Śāradvatīputra, such was the great armor donned by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he practiced bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.16 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, there is a bodhi tree, in front of which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya sat and fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and discovered the wisdom of omniscience. This bodhi tree is formed from the seven precious substances and is a hundred thousand leagues high. Its trunk is one hundred leagues high and half a furlong thick. The main branches around it are each seven thousand leagues in length with a canopy of forty thousand leagues. The sound of the breeze in its limbs, branches and leaves creates delightful and enchanting melodies.

2.17 “Śāradvatīputra, the delightful and enchanting melodies from the sound of the breeze in the limbs, branches and leaves of that bodhi tree are more delightful and enchanting even than the melodies of celestial instruments with a hundred thousand notes played by the most expert divine minstrels. The soft and pleasant sounds that came from that bodhi tree, of all the perfections, the superknowledges, the faculties and powers, the factors of awakening and the branches of the path, far exceed any celestial music. Every sentient being who hears those sounds attains the samādhi called *mindfulness of the mind devoid of desire*.

2.18 “Śāradvatīputra, listen well and correctly memorize this description of the arrays of qualities of the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. I will explain to you further.”

“Very well,” replied Śāradvatīputra, and he listened just as the Blessed One had instructed.

2.19 The Blessed One continued, “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, there are no beings whatsoever in the three lower realms. What three? Hell-beings, animals, and beings of the Yama realm. All sentient beings without exception who are born there adhere to the path of the ten virtues.

2.20 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield there is no distinction between lords and servants since the humans in that buddhafield, Śāradvatīputra, have no intent to bind others in servitude. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because beings in that buddhafield have no attachment at all to concepts of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’

2.21 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, the great earth of that buddhafield is throughout as smooth and even as the palm of a hand, soft to the touch like fine kācalindika cloth, with a color like gold and embellished with divine gemstones and lotuses each boasting billions of golden-colored petals and bedecked with māndārava and great māndārava flowers. There is no debris of fallen tree trunks, brambles, grit, or gravel, no gullies or garbage heaps, and no stones or hills. Śāradvatīputra, when one places one’s foot on that great earth, the ground gently sinks; when one raises one’s foot, the great earth gently springs back. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like when one places one’s head on a pillow filled with soft cotton, it gently sinks; when one lifts one’s head from it, it gently springs back. In that way, Śāradvatīputra, when one places one’s foot on the great earth it gently sinks and when one raises one’s foot, it gently springs back.

2.22 “Śāradvatīputra, humans in that buddhafield also have no ailments whatsoever caused by wind, bile, and phlegm, or by their combinations.

2.23 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, humans in that buddhafield have no trace of bad complexions or unpleasant odors. Why? Because, O Śāradvatīputra, sentient beings in that buddhafield have but little desire, little anger, and little delusion.

2.24 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, sentient beings in that buddhafield are free in every way and at all times from murder, confinement, or torture of any kind. Also, Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield there are no non-Buddhist sites at all, of any kind. Also, Śāradvatīputra, trees in that buddhafield are always in bloom and bearing fruit. Also, Śāradvatīputra, humans in that buddhafield wear fine

garments of the fives colors that grow from the wish-fulfilling tree. Their clothes are radiantly colorful and fragrant, with color and fragrance that never fades. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, in the same way that divine flowers emit various delightful scents—their garments likewise emit various delightful fragrances and the scent of those garments remains just as it was when they were still on the wish-fulfilling tree, without diminishing at all after being plucked from there. Likewise, their color never fades. Śāradvatīputra, people there have a great abundance of garments like this, so they can change clothes again and again, wearing one after another.

2.25 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, whenever humans in that buddhafield desire any kind of food, the foods appear in front of them just like that, laid out in fine dishes made from precious substances. By analogy Śāradvatīputra, just as whatever foods they think of will appear for the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, so too whatever foods humans desire in that world will appear in front of them just like that, in fine receptacles made from precious substances. Also, Śāradvatīputra, in terms of taste, fragrance and color, human foods in that buddhafield are fit for the gods.

2.26 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, humans in that buddhafield have neither feces, urine, spit nor snot. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how gods of the desire realm have neither feces, urine, spit nor snot. Similarly, humans in that buddhafield have neither feces, urine, spit nor snot.

2.27 "Śāradvatīputra, due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made in the past by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, as well as the ripening of the merit accrued by the humans born in that buddhafield, excellent arrays of buddhafield qualities manifest. Every place of human habitation is a storied mansion made from the seven precious materials and inside those storied mansions are thrones wrought from the seven precious materials upon which are fine cushions stuffed with soft cotton, beautifully laid out and arranged. The storied mansions have every kind of facility, with

various kinds of ponds for people to bathe and swim in, brimming with fresh water endowed with the eight qualities. Each pond is strewn with golden sand and surrounded by divine aśoka trees, and in them people enjoy themselves, delighting in the sublime Dharma. There, Śāradvatīputra, whenever people wish for ponds filled with water with the eight qualities, ponds filled with such water with the eight qualities will appear in front of them just like that. If they wish those ponds to follow them, then the ponds will follow them; if they wish the ponds to disappear, then the ponds will disappear.

2.28 "The winds that blow in that buddhafield, Śāradvatīputra, are neither too warm nor too cold. They are soft, peaceful, gentle breezes, pleasant breezes carrying delicious scents that serve as incense for the humans and the gods there. If anyone entertains the thought, 'may the wind blow now,' then the wind will blow for them. If others do not want the breeze, then it will not touch their bodies, but for anyone who wishes for it, at any time, the breeze will blow for them. Śāradvatīputra, this too is an excellent array of buddhafield qualities in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

2.29 "Also Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield women have none of those shortcomings, considered drawbacks for women, that women presently have here in my buddhafield. What are they, Śāradvatīputra? In this buddhafield, women have poor complexions and bad bodies; they smell bad and are filled with impurity; their lust is insatiable; they are unappreciative, angry and two-faced, and are driven by qualities of envy and miserliness. These, Śāradvatīputra, are female shortcomings that befall women in this buddhafield. But in that buddhafield, Śāradvatīputra, women have no such female shortcomings. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.30 "Women in that buddhafield, Śāradvatīputra, have every good quality. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, they are like precious queens whose qualities far exceed

those of [ordinary] human women and are instead the qualities of goddesses. Indeed, Śāradvatīputra, the qualities of a precious queen in this buddhafield of ours do not even come close to a hundredth part of the qualities of every single woman in that buddhafield. Not even a thousandth, a hundred thousandth, a billionth, a ten billionth, a trillionth, a quintillionth part—no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy or illustration can even come close.

2.31 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, men in that buddhafield do not join with women in sexual intercourse. In that buddhafield, Śāradvatīputra, when a man experiences lust, by merely gazing for a moment at a woman with desire, his lust is completely pacified, and with profound disenchantment he renounces and attains the samādhi of *being without attachment to the repulsive*. Through this samādhi, he is liberated from Māra's noose, and lustful thoughts no longer arise. The woman at whom he glanced becomes pregnant just like that, and her desire is likewise pacified. The infant boy or girl in her womb also experiences physical and mental bliss. By analogy, it is like the physical and mental bliss experienced by gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three when they indulge in pleasures, supreme pleasures, in celestial mansions made from precious materials. That is what it is like for boys and girls inside the womb, Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield. For seven days they remain in the womb in a state of bliss, and then they take birth, and at that time the pregnant woman also experiences physical and mental bliss. By analogy, it is like the all-encompassing bliss that a monk experiences when he enters meditative equipoise in the second concentration. When the woman gives birth, there are no impurities or bad smells. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, when he made the aspiration, 'O, may the buddhafield in which I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood be endowed with good qualities such as these.'

2.32 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, whenever men, women, boys or girls wish to wear ornaments in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, wish-fulfilling trees bow down and bestow them. This too, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.”

2.33 On hearing these praises of that buddhafield and about the qualities of its women, a certain monk there became very desirous and said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, may I too be sure to take rebirth in that buddhafield!”

2.34 The Buddha replied to that monk, “Ignorant people like you will not be reborn in that buddhafield! Why? Because those whose minds are consumed by desire cannot take birth in that buddhafield. On the contrary, monk, it is sentient beings who practice virtue, who practice the Dharma, who practice celibacy and who practice right conduct, who are sure to take rebirth in that buddhafield.

2.35 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, there are no other kings in that buddhafield except for the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, who is known there as the Unsurpassable Dharma King. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how among people of the northern continent, Uttarakuru, no one else may be referred to as ‘king,’ so it is too, Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield, where there are no other kings except for the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, who is known as the Unsurpassable Dharma King.. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, in the same way as the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three gather to pay homage to Śakra lord of the gods, so too, Śāradvatīputra, do gods and humans in that buddhafield gather around the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya to behold, pay homage, worship and serve him, and listen to the Dharma from him. Śāradvatīputra, this too is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.36 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, all people without exception in that buddhafield live with heedfulness. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because its prior cause was sown by their leader, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya himself. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.37 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, it is because when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya offered flowers, fragrant smoke, incense, flower garlands, ointments, powders, garments, parasols, banners and flags to the stūpas and statues of the thus-gone ones while making the aspiration that ‘through these roots of virtue may my buddhafield be endowed with the best of all aspects,’ that it came to be that way. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.38 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, there is no buying and selling, no trade, no agricultural labor and no farming in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Instead, the people live in great ease.

2.39 “Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield people do not sing songs out of yearning for sensual pleasure. Instead, people experience the simple joy of the Dharma.

2.40 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the wind blows through the rows of golden palms in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, the palms rustle with melodious, gentle, pleasing and delightful sounds. So melodious, gentle, pleasing and delightful are the rustling sounds produced by the wind in the rows of golden palms, Śāradvatīputra, that their like cannot be produced even by the most skilled musicians playing the finest celestial instruments capable of producing every kind of note and sound. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations

made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.41 "So, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to realize arrays of buddhafield qualities such as these, who wish to fully purify their buddhafields, should do as the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya has done. They should uphold excellent arrays of buddhafield qualities and purify their buddhafields just as he when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.42 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, the sun and the moon do not for the most part provide illumination in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. However, it is far from gloomy and there is no pitch-black darkness. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because the light of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya gives constant illumination to that entire world system of the great trichiliocosm. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how a precious jewel placed inside an enclosed space in a storied mansion with its doors shut, its windows shuttered, covered above and below, and coated in a layer of fine plaster—how that precious jewel can still provide illumination by the light of its own form, so that sentient beings in the house experience its illumination both day and night. So too, Śāradvatīputra, does the light of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya give constant illumination to that entire world system of the great trichiliocosm. Śāradvatīputra, that so-called enclosure in the storied mansion represents the world system of Abhirati, and Śāradvatīputra, the so-called precious jewel represents the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, the so-called light of the precious jewel represents the light of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, truly perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and Śāradvatīputra, the so-called sentient beings represent the people living in that buddhafield.

2.43 "Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, as the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya travels from one place to another, wherever he sets foot

upon the earth, golden lotuses with a thousand petals sprout and bloom. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past."

2.44 Thus he spoke and the venerable Śāradvatīputra then asked the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, do golden lotuses with a thousand petals also bloom beneath the feet of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he walks in the interior of a house?"

2.45 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, that blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya seldom travels to villages and cities. However, when he does go and stay there, golden lotuses with a thousand petals do indeed appear at those homes. Śāradvatīputra, if a noble son or daughter there should think, 'May all these lotuses that arose from beneath the feet of the Thus-Gone One who came to this house gather together in one place,' then through the Buddha's power, they will indeed gather in one place. Conversely, if they think, 'May the lotuses remain suspended in space,' then, by the power of his awakening, the flowers will remain suspended in space and, Śāradvatīputra, they will become objects of veneration for people throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm.

2.46 "Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, similar lotuses bloom in each of the world systems of the great trichiliocosm to which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya travels in order or teach the Dharma. In whatever region or world system the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya sends forth his emanations, by the power of his awakening, similar lotuses appear there as well. As a result, Śāradvatīputra, all the world systems of the great trichiliocosm are constantly adorned with thousand-petalled golden lotuses like these.

2.47 "Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, there are staircases made from gold, silver,

beryl, and the seven precious materials, which when erected in Jambudvīpa and extend all the way up to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. Śāradvatīputra, when the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three wish to behold, pay homage to, and serve the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, they descend from the divine realm of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three by means of these bejeweled staircases and, after descending these staircases, the following attitude of aspiration towards humankind arises in the minds of those gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three: 'As compared with our own divine excellent abundance, the excellent abundance of humans in this Jambudvīpa is by no measure even slightly inferior to our own. Moreover, since the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya resides here in this Jambudvīpa teaching the Dharma, theirs is superior to ours.' The gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three thereby aspire to human existence in that Jambudvīpa. On the other hand, Śāradvatīputra, when humans in that Jambudvīpa ascend to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, they do not aspire to it. Why? Because they think to themselves, 'Our excellent abundance as humans is in no way inferior to the excellent abundance of the gods and, moreover, since the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya resides in our Jambudvīpa teaching Dharma, the excellent abundance of our buddha outshines all the excellent abundances of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.'

2.48 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield, gods are visible to humans and humans are visible to gods. Therefore, humans can see the celestial mansions of the gods of the desire realm even while they remain in Jambudvīpa. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how humans in Jambudvīpa can see the stars, the sun, and the moon. So too, Śāradvatīputra, by the power of the awakened, can humans in the Jambudvīpa of that buddhafield see the celestial mansions of the gods of the desire realm. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.49 “Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and in every world system of the great trichiliocosm in which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya teaches the Dharma, that world system of the great trichiliocosm will not be devoid[18] of the fourfold community. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

2.50 *This is the second chapter from The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra Akṣobhya’s Prophecy.*

Chapter 3

3.1 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya teaches the Dharma, each Dharma teaching he gives tames immeasurable and countless sentient beings so that they realize the fruit of becoming a worthy one. Śāradvatīputra, this very discourse will tame immeasurable and countless sentient beings so that they realize the fruit of becoming a worthy one, for the most part as meditators on the eight liberations.

3.2 “Śāradvatīputra, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s saṅgha of śrāvakas is also immeasurable and countless. Śāradvatīputra, I have never witnessed a mathematician, even a great mathematician who can comprehend, by means of counting and calculation, the magnitude of so much as a *vāḍha*, a *kaṅkara*, a *bimbara*, a *pravara*, a *karanda*, an *overwhelm*, an *ayuta*, or an *infinity*.[19] Instead, Śāradvatīputra, the number of śrāvakas can only be estimated as immeasurability itself or countlessness itself. Alternatively, they may be considered as countable only by means of the wisdom of omniscience.

3.3 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, there are very few noble sons in that buddhafield who settle for the fruit of stream-entry, or the fruit of being a once-returner, or the fruit of being a non-returner. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how even lazy people who are present here during my own Dharma teachings will reach stream-entry within seven lifetimes, but they will not reach higher attainments. Similar to those present at my own teachings who will reach stream-entry within seven lifetimes, noble sons present at the Dharma teachings of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya who do not reach the fruit of becoming a worthy one in that very sitting will, by means of that first Dharma teaching alone, reach the fruit of stream-entry, with the second Dharma teaching will achieve the fruit of being a once-returner, with the third Dharma teaching will achieve the fruit of being a non-returner, and with the fourth Dharma teaching will reach the fruit of becoming a worthy one.

3.4 “In that place, they are referred to as the lazy ones. Unlike those lazy ones who are here now, Śāradvatīputra, who will take seven lifetimes to reach stream-entry, they realize the state of a worthy one in this very body. It is so. To categorize a result as ‘stream-entry’ is merely a label. Unlike here, where once-returners will return one more time to this world before bringing an end to suffering, there, they realize the state of a worthy one in this very body. It is so. To categorize a result as ‘once-returner’ is merely a label. Unlike here, where once-returners reach parinirvāṇa after returning once more, there, they realize the state of a worthy one in this very body. To categorize a result as ‘non-returner’ is merely a label. Śāradvatīputra, such worthy ones do not remain here, nor there, nor in the middle that is neither here nor there. They pass completely beyond all suffering in the expanse of nirvāṇa in which no aggregates remain. Maintaining these categories of attainments, Śāradvatīputra, is how the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya demonstrates the fruits of being an ascetic.

3.5 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, there, noble sons and noble daughters who understand the Dharma do not fall back while they are at the level of training even though, Śāradvatīputra, the so-called ‘level of training’ is a verbal designation for what is also known as ‘the level of degeneration.’ Śāradvatīputra, they then reach parinirvāṇa relying on the level of no more training and remaining at the level of no more training. Śāradvatīputra, for them, the so-called ‘level of no more training’ is a verbal designation for the state of a worthy one itself. Śāradvatīputra, the saṅgha of śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is known as ‘the excellence of remaining in the essence of purity.’

3.6 “Śāradvatīputra, the so-called ‘excellence of remaining in the essence of purity’ is a verbal designation for the saṅgha of śrāvaka worthy ones of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya who are free from contaminations, who are devoid of afflictive emotions, who have mastery, whose minds are thoroughly liberated, whose wisdom is thoroughly liberated, who are thor-

oughbreds, great elephants, who have performed their duties, accomplished their goals, removed their burdens, achieved their purposes, who have exhausted the fetters that bind them to existence, who having liberated their minds through true knowledge, and have attained sublime perfection through the mastery over all mental states—for the most part as meditators on the eight liberations. That too, Śāradvatīputra, is an excellent array of the śrāvaka saṅgha of śrāvakas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

3.7 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, śrāvakas do not think, 'where will we eat today? Who will give us food today?' Śrāvakas there do not need to go to households to collect alms. For them, whenever the time for a meal comes, food will appear in their alms bowls just like that. Whenever śrāvakas merely have the thought, 'it would be nice if these others would give us something to eat,' those others will indeed give them food, and they will be satiated by just two or three mouthfuls. Those śrāvakas need not search for their alms bowls or their monastic robes. They need not repair, sew, wash, or dye their robes or find someone to do it for them. Instead, by the power of the awakened, the robes will appear whenever they are needed.

3.8 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, unlike here, where I must teach śrāvakas about the four downfalls, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya has no need to teach śrāvakas about transgressions. Śāradvatīputra, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya has no need to give śrāvakas such teachings. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because in that buddhafield there is no degeneration of lifespan, no degeneration of the sentient being, no degeneration over time, no degeneration of view, no degeneration of afflictive emotion, and no diminishing of fortitude. Śāradvatīputra, because that buddhafield is entirely devoid of degeneration.

3.9 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya teaches the Dharma to śrāvakas there, he teaches the most exalted Dharma right from the start. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because in that buddhafield every sentient being can understand a teaching just from its title, without requiring elaborate or meticulous explanations. In that buddhafield, Śāradvatīputra, none of the saṅgha of śrāvakas have excessive pride. Indeed, Śāradvatīputra, the very words ‘those with excessive pride’ do not exist there. Śāradvatīputra, the saṅgha of śrāvakas there are always in every way devoid of any behavior that is considered impure for ascetics, behavior considered faulty for ascetics, behavior considered crooked for ascetics, behavior considered dishonest for ascetics, and behavior considered deceitful for ascetics. The very words ‘impurities of ascetics’ do not exist there. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because roots of virtue have fully ripened for sentient beings there such that they are pure and they fully understand the Dharma just as it is taught.

3.10 “In that buddhafield, Śāradvatīputra, teachings on the five acts with immediate retribution are always completely absent in every way. There, even the words ‘immediate retribution’ do not arise. There, Śāradvatīputra, śrāvakas do not strive for material gain, are not intent on being served, are not intent on alms bowls and dharma robes. Indeed, they are not intent in any way or at any time on attaining dharma robes and material necessities at all. Śāradvatīputra, they do not need to be taught the Dharma to transcend thoughts of material gain and their own veneration. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because śrāvakas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya have few desires and are content.

3.11 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, unlike how I currently have to promulgate a code of training for śrāvakas, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya has no need to promulgate a code of training for śrāvakas. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because śrāvakas there are without faults and their only training is this: to be mindful of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness.

3.12 “Śāradvatīputra, unlike how presently some foolish people, after going forth in my teachings, violate the foundations of my training, śrāvakas there do not violate the foundations of their training. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because the saṅgha of śrāvakas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya are all thoroughbreds; because, Śāradvatīputra, there are no degenerations in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. There, without having to stay alone or in pairs, śrāvakas diligently pursue their own goals of yogic practice. They delight in being without distraction and they exert themselves with perseverance to yogic practice without distraction. They are consistently virtuous and do not strive for material gain or their own veneration. Since peoples’ perseverance does not diminish there, none are regarded as lazy. These, Śāradvatīputra, are some of the qualities that śrāvakas have attained and are endowed with in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

3.13 “Śāradvatīputra, whenever the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya teaches Dharma to his śrāvakas there, the śrāvakas listen to the Dharma with their ears pricked, their eyes unmoving, and their minds undistracted. Those who listen to the Dharma standing up do not experience any fatigue of body or mind. Those who listen to the Dharma sitting down do not experience any fatigue of body or mind.

3.14 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, whenever the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya uses supernatural powers to ascend into the sky and teach Dharma to the śrāvakas there, by the power of awakening, all the monks, whether they themselves have attained supernatural powers or not, likewise ascend by means of supernatural powers into the sky. There, they remain suspended in space, listening to the Dharma in the three manners. What are the three? Standing, sitting, and walking.

3.15 “When they pass away in parinirvāṇa, they pass away in parinirvāṇa while seated cross-legged hovering in space. When each of the śrāvakas passes away

in parinirvāṇa, the earth quakes and, even after they have passed away in parinirvāṇa, gods and humans continue to venerate and honor them.

3.16 “Some worthy ones there pass away in parinirvāṇa by immolating their bodies with the element of fire in their own body. Some worthy ones there pass away in parinirvāṇa by making their bodies disappear like the wind as they pass away. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it like how clouds of the five colors that form can suddenly disperse and, with them, the rain also disappears. Likewise, Śāradvatīputra, some worthy ones, when they pass away in parinirvāṇa, make their bodies disappear without a trace. Śāradvatīputra, some śrāvakas there pass away in parinirvāṇa in this manner. Some śrāvakas ascend into the sky using supernatural powers. Streams of water then flow from their bodies that do not fall to the ground, but remain suspended in the sky, and likewise their bodies do not fall to the ground but remain suspended in the sky.

3.17 “Some śrāvakas there, Śāradvatīputra, pass away in parinirvāṇa in these and other ways of passing into parinirvāṇa. This, Śāradvatīputra, is due to the following aspiration made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past. ‘O’ he prayed, ‘May śrāvakas in that buddhafield in which I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood pass away in parinirvāṇa with these three kinds of miracles.’

3.18 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, there are very few among all the limitless śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, who have not attained the fourfold mastery. The majority have attained the fourfold mastery, and the majority likewise have attained the four bases of supernatural power. These, Śāradvatīputra, are some of the qualities with which śrāvakas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya are endowed.”

3.19 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, this excellent array of the saṅgha of śrāvakas in the

buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is a marvel."

3.20 "Indeed it is," the Blessed One replied, "Indeed, Śāradvatīputra, it is so. It is just as you have said. Śāradvatīputra, the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is endowed with great arrays of excellent abundance such as the excellent array of the saṅgha of śrāvakas.

3.21 *This is the third chapter from The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra "Akṣobhya's Prophecy."*

Chapter 4

4.1 The venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, the Blessed One has taught us well about the excellent array of the saṅgha of śrāvakas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. But the Blessed One has not spoken about the excellent array of bodhisattvas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Blessed One, please now tell us about the excellent array of bodhisattva qualities of its bodhisattvas. For what purpose? So that, Honorable Blessed One, all excellent abundances that are excellent abundances proper to bodhisattva may easily arise.”

4.2 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, in the world system called Abhirati, the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, there is a vast congregation of bodhisattvas—many hundreds of bodhisattvas, many thousands of bodhisattvas, many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas, immeasurable and countless billions of bodhisattvas. Śāradvatīputra, by the power of his awakening, every one of those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who has gone forth under the guidance of blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, upholds, retains, reads out loud the Dharma that has been taught to them by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and thoroughly comprehending it, in turn imparts it widely and correctly to others.

4.3 “Unlike the Dharma teachings that I give here, Śāradvatīputra, the Dharma teachings given by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya are immeasurable and countless. By comparison, the Dharma teachings that I give here do not even come close to a hundredth, or a thousandth, or a billionth, or a ten billionth, or a trillionth, or a quintillionth—no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or illustration can even come close—of those Dharma teachings. Śāradvatīputra, even compared to all the Dharma teachings that will be taught by the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya after he fully awakens to

unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, or compared to all the Dharma teachings taught by every blessed buddha of the Fortunate Eon, the Dharma teachings taught by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya are immeasurable and countless. By comparison, all the Dharma teachings imparted by all the blessed buddhas of the Fortunate Eon will not even come close to a hundredth part of those Dharma teachings, nor a thousandth, a billionth, a ten billionth, a trillionth, or a quintillionth—no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or illustration can even come close—of them.

4.4 "This is due, Śāradvatīputra, to the following particular aspiration made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past: "O' he prayed, 'In the buddhafield in which I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, may I teach Dharma to every bodhisattva mahāsattva who appears there and, by the power of the awakened, may they uphold, retain, and read out loud all those Dharma teachings, and, thoroughly comprehending them, may they in turn impart them widely and correctly to others.' And so, Śāradvatīputra, by the power of the awakened, and due to the ripening of their own roots of virtue, those bodhisattvas do indeed uphold, retain, and read out loud those Dharma teachings and, thoroughly comprehending them, in turn teach them widely and correctly to others.

4.5 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, if those bodhisattva mahāsattvas wish to travel to other buddhafields and other world systems to behold, venerate and serve thus-gone ones and listen to their Dharma, then, as soon as they generate the thought of doing so, by the power of the awakened, and due to the strength of their own generated roots of virtue, they will travel to those other buddhafields and other world systems, and, when they arrive in those buddhafields and world systems, they will pay homage and bow down to the blessed buddhas there and will serve and respect them as their guru; they will generate pure devotion towards them, worship them, seek guidance from them, and make inquiries of them. Having made inquiries, they will hear the Dharma, retain it,

and impart it to others. Having paid homage and bowed down to those blessed buddhas, having served and honored them as their guru, having cultivated pure devotion towards them, and having worshipped them, they will seek guidance from them and make inquiries of them, and having heard the Dharma from them and made inquiries of them, they will return once again to the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

4.6 "So, Śāradvatīputra, any bodhisattva mahāsattva who wishes to see each of the nine hundred and ninety-six buddhas of this Fortunate Eon should take rebirth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

4.7 "Śāradvatīputra, any bodhisattva mahāsattva who, after passing away and transmigrating from this or any other world system, has been born, is presently born, or will be born in that buddhafield, is assured never to regress to the level of a śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha. Why? Because, without exception, Śāradvatīputra, those bodhisattvas are to be recognized as having realization comparable to the thus-gone ones; those bodhisattvas are to be recognized as progressing in a manner comparable to the thus-gone ones; those bodhisattvas are to be recognized as impervious to the ploys of all Māra Pāpīyāns; those bodhisattvas are to be recognized as having severed connections to the levels of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas; and those bodhisattvas are to be recognized as connected to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. When bodhisattvas assemble, the thus-gone also assemble, and their coming together is to be recognized as being as hard and indestructible as a diamond. Śāradvatīputra, every bodhisattva, without exception, in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is utterly pure, abides in the essence, has the quality of irreversibility, the quality of unassailability, and the quality of never being turned back. Each is destined for awakening, and their commitment to awakening is imperturbable and unwavering. It is to be known that each and every one of those bodhisattvas, without exception, abides in a state of irreversibility from unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Śāradvatīputra, it is to be known that any bodhisattva

mahāsattva who, after passing away and transmigrating from this world system or passing away and transmigrating from any other world system, has been born, is presently born, or will be born in that buddhafield, enters the treasury of the thus-gone ones. It should be known that they enter the city of fearlessness.

4.8 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas in that buddhafield discourse on the perfection of wisdom teachings and consider one another as teachers.[20]

4.9 "Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, very few of the bodhisattva mahāsattvas in that buddhafield live as householders. The vast majority of bodhisattva mahāsattvas in that buddhafield renounce their homes and go forth.

4.10 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, whenever the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya gives Dharma teachings, those bodhisattvas, by the power of the awakened and the strength of their own generated roots of virtue, uphold, retain, read aloud, and thoroughly comprehend those Dharma teachings. And, Śāradvatīputra, any home-renouncing bodhisattva mahāsattvas who are unable to be physically present at the Dharma teachings, by the power of the awakened still hear all the Dharma teachings from wherever they are standing or sitting and, having heard them, they uphold, retain, read aloud, and thoroughly comprehend them.

4.11 "Śāradvatīputra, any lay bodhisattvas who have not renounced their homes and who are unable to be physically present at the Dharma teachings, by the power of the awakened still hear all the Dharma teachings from wherever they are standing or sitting, and, having heard them, they uphold, retain, read aloud, and thoroughly comprehend them, and those bodhisattva mahāsattvas will not forget them, even after their present lifetimes. They will take rebirth in whatever buddhafield they chose.

4.12 "This too, Śāradvatīputra, is an excellent array of buddhafield qualities in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. How

so? Due to the distinctive excellences of the aspirations made in the past. So, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to behold many buddhas in a single lifetime—hundreds of buddhas, thousands of buddhas, hundreds of thousands of buddhas, countless trillions of buddhas—should take birth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, as soon as they take birth there, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will behold many buddhas—hundreds of buddhas, thousands of buddhas, hundreds of thousands of buddhas, countless trillions of buddhas—and from those blessed buddhas they will generate many roots of virtue. With those roots of virtue, they will teach the Dharma to many hundreds of living beings, many thousands of living beings, many hundreds of thousands of living beings, countless trillions of living beings, so that they too set their minds on unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

4.13 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, consider a bodhisattva who has served each and every one of the nine hundred and ninety-six buddhas of this Good Eon, respecting them as gurus, generating pure devotion towards them, and honoring them with offerings of robes, alms, bedding, remedies, medicines, and all other necessities. The merit accumulated by serving all the blessed buddhas in this way, respecting them as gurus, generating pure devotion towards them, and honoring them with offerings, combined with the merit accrued by renouncing, going forth, and taking vows of celibacy in the presence of each of those blessed buddhas, does not even come close to a hundredth part, a thousandth part, a billionth part, a ten billionth part, a trillionth part, or a quintillionth part—no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy or illustration can even come close—of the merit, endowed with perfection, accrued by a bodhisattva mahāsattva in a single lifetime in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is an excellent array of buddhafield qualities in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

4.14 “Śāradvatīputra, all bodhisattvas who, after dying and transmigrating from this world or from any other world, have taken, are taking, or will take rebirth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, will receive a prophecy as being irreversible from unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Why? Because Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield there is no Māra Pāpīyan or māra deities to create obstacles, and there being none disposed to māra activities, there is nothing to harm them. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. When a person neutralizes the poison of a venomous snake with the power of a mantra or the power of a medicine, then, as soon as it is ingested, the poison will be rendered ineffective, incapable of causing harm or injury to that person, and no longer a cause for fear among other living beings. Nevertheless, even though that snake is now harmless to beings and poses no danger to them, Śāradvatīputra, its physical form, manifested due to its past karmic formations, is still known by the label *venomous snake*. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, because when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya made the following aspiration, ‘May I, by all and every means, when I have fully awakened, subdue all evil māras, neutralize their poison, and make them incapable of creating obstacles,’ and fully dedicated his roots of his virtue in the same way, after the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, no further obstacles whatsoever arose to hinder the progress of bodhisattvas, śrāvakas, or ordinary people in that world system of the great trichiliocosm. Nevertheless, Śāradvatīputra, in that buddhafield, those who due to past karmic formations are reborn as deities in the Heaven of Mastery Over Others’ Emanations, still carry the label *māra*. But those beings disparage the designation, listen to the Dharma as it is taught, and, having heard the Dharma, develop faith and take delight in śrāvakas, thinking, ‘May we too one day have few desires like them, achieve contentment like them, and embrace a life of solitude like them.’ In this way, those māras generate the thought of renunciation and live without creating obstacles.

4.15 “This too, Śāradvatīputra, is an excellent array of buddhafield qualities in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, due to the past aspirations, the past diligence, and past human efforts of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, all bodhisattva mahāsattvas, śrāvakas, and ordinary people in that buddhafield live with great happiness.”

4.16 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, if noble sons or noble daughters, delighting in that buddhafield, wish to turn away from the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha levels and wish to achieve a state of certainty, then, even if they were to fill this world system of the great trichiliocosm with the seven precious materials and present it as a gift, and by doing so take rebirth in that buddhafield, it will have been a deed well-done. Why? Because they are not destined to turn back to being śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.

4.17 “Why? Because being at the level of irreversibility, they will travel from one buddhafield to another until they fully awaken to perfect buddhahood, and in every way they will please those who have reached the state of thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas, and they always will seek the awakening of buddhahood. They will behold many buddhas—many hundreds of buddhas, many thousands of buddhas, many hundreds and thousands of buddhas, countless trillions of buddhas—and in the presences of those blessed buddhas they will produce roots of virtue.

4.18 “Honorable Blessed One, if, in this manner, noble sons or noble daughters, for the sake of taking rebirth in the buddhafield of buddha Akṣobhya were to fill this world system of the great trichiliocosm with the seven precious materials and present it as a gift, and if by giving that gift they consequently take birth there, then, honorable Blessed One, by giving that gift, they are beings who have done well. Such bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be well-settled in that buddhafield.”

4.19 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, indeed, it is so. It is just as you have said. They have gone well, they have taken rebirth well. That buddhafield is full of such bodhisattva mahāsattvas. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. There is a particular variety of gold that is just its pure essence, free from any pebbles, grit, stone or dust, that has been refined through double smelting. After refining, it is made into different kinds of ornaments and worn on the body. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, all bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya abide in the pure essence. Śāradvatīputra, it should be known that bodhisattva mahāsattvas assembled in the buddhafield of the thus-gone Akṣobhya are pure. Śāradvatīputra, all those who have been reborn, are being reborn and will be reborn in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya are to be considered pure sentient beings. All of them are to be considered irreversible. All of them are to be considered reliant on a single support and reliant on the thus-gone ones.

4.20 “Śāradvatīputra, how are bodhisattva mahāsattvas reliant on a single support? Śāradvatīputra, any bodhisattva mahāsattva who relies on the thus-gone ones is referred to as reliant on a single support. Furthermore, reliant on a single support is a designation for those who have completely passed beyond reliance on the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha levels. As such, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to be reliant on a single support, reliant on the thus-gone ones, should take birth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas whom I have prophesied as irreversible will take rebirth in the presence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

4.21 “Śāradvatīputra, I do not abandon those bodhisattva mahāsattvas that I send into the presence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. When a crown-anointed king of kṣatriya caste who is powerful, mighty and vigorous, seeks the kingdom, wealth, and land of a rival king, he challenges him to combat. When the rival king

hears that this king seeks his kingdom, wealth, and land, and has come to challenge him, he thinks, 'if I could transport all our valuables, and my court of queens, and my sons and daughters and those too young to fight, to somewhere safe where there is a powerful king difficult to conquer, then they can live happily there, whereas here, they will surely suffer.' And so, accordingly, he conceals them by dispatching them to another city. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, I do not abandon the bodhisattva mahāsattvas whom I dispatch into the presence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, all the concealed valuables, queens, sons, daughters, and people too young to fight concealed by the crown-anointed king of kṣatriya caste are to be seen as all the noble sons and noble daughters on the bodhisattva vehicle. Śāradvatīputra, the city in which all the valuables, queens, sons, daughters and people too young to fight are concealed is to be seen as the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, the king who comes to engage in combat is to be seen as the māras who create obstacles and try to harm noble sons and noble daughters on the bodhisattva vehicle. Śāradvatīputra, the powerful king who is difficult to conquer is to be seen as the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya who is unconquerable by Māra and all the māra deities.

4.22 "By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. Terrified of a creditor and his debt-collectors, a person may flee to a city beyond the borders which the creditor and his men cannot reach. Why? Because the route to that place is cut off and this prevents the creditor or his men going there. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, the route for Māra Pāpīyān and the māra deities to reach bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have taken rebirth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya has been cut off. Śāradvatīputra, in our world system of the great trichiliocosm, Māra Pāpīyān and the māra deities live near the people in our world system of the great trichiliocosm who are on the bodhisattva vehicle and the śrāvaka vehicle. They engage with them to create obstacles for them and harm them. However, in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-

gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, there is no Māra nor any māra deities living in proximity in order to engage in such wicked activities.

4.23 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have been, are currently, or will be reborn in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, never experience any fear whatsoever. Why? Because when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he fully dedicated his roots of virtue in this way, 'In the buddhafield in which I will have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, may there be no Māra or māra deities living in close proximity to create obstacles.'

4.24 "By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. Worthy ones who have exhausted their contaminations experience bliss and fearlessness. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, all bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have been, are currently, or will be reborn in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya, experience bliss and fearlessness. It should be understood that they are fully guarded, protected, and concealed. Why? Because when the charioteer, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he generated roots of virtue such that in the buddhafield in which he will have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, there is no Māra nor māra deities engaging in evil and harmful actions.

4.25 "By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. When someone concocts a poisonous medicine and consumes it, it loses its toxicity and is well-digested, even giving nourishment. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya as a bodhisattva was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he fully dedicated his roots of virtue in such a way that that no Māra or māra deities would engage in māra activities and live in close proximity in order to do harm, and, as a result, Śāradvatīputra, his buddhafield is endowed with all such qualities."

4.26 Then the venerable Śāradvatīputra thought to himself, ‘By the power of the awakened, may we too also behold that buddhafield, and the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and behold his saṅgha of śrāvakas, and the immeasurable and countless assembly of bodhisattvas.’

4.27 Knowing what the venerable Śāradvatīputra was thinking, at that moment, the Blessed One performed a miracle. By the performance of that miracle and by the power of the awakened, the venerable Śāradvatīputra, while remaining seated on the same seat, beheld that buddhafield and beheld the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya together with his saṅgha of śrāvakas and the assembled hosts of bodhisattvas.

4.28 The Blessed One then asked the venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, did you see that buddhafield? Did you see the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, along with his saṅgha of śrāvakas, and the immeasurable and countless assembly of bodhisattvas?”

“Yes, Honorable Blessed One, I saw them. I saw the well-gone one.”

4.29 The Blessed One continued, “Śāradvatīputra, did you see those gods and humans attending to their needs, enjoying resources, indulging in particular pleasures and games, or engaging in different activities?”

4.30 “No, honorable Blessed One,” replied the venerable Śāradvatīputra, “I did not see those gods and humans seeing to their needs, enjoying resources, indulging in particular games and pleasures, or engaging in different activities. Why? Because, Honorable Blessed One, all the necessities and resources in that buddhafield are the divine substance itself, and in all ten directions, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is visible—luminous, glorious, and radiant like a golden pillar, adorned with the thirty-two excellent marks and eighty minor marks of a great being, teaching the Dharma in the midst of his saṅgha of śrāvakas.

4.31 “By analogy, honorable Blessed One, it is like when someone sets out into the great ocean, and whether they look toward the east, look toward the south, look toward the west, or look toward the north, they see no sign of trees or mountains. Similarly, having entered the midst of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s saṅgha of śrāvakas, there is no end to those śrāvakas in sight—not in the east, nor in the south, west, or north. Honorable Blessed One, each of them listens to the Dharma without any wavering or physical movement, like they have entered meditative equipoise. Here in our world, Honorable Blessed One, the bodies of even meditators who are worthy ones are not completely still when they enter meditative equipoise, but there śrāvakas are physically motionless as they listen to the Dharma. Honorable Blessed One, they listen to the Dharma without any wavering or physical movement at all, like they have entered meditative equipoise.

4.32 “Honorable Blessed One, in order to be reborn in that buddhafield, a noble son or a noble daughter should make gifts of the seven precious materials that fill this world system of the great trichiliocosm. If by giving such gifts they are reborn in that buddhafield, then, Honorable Blessed One, the gifts were well given and their rebirth will be well-taken. Such bodhisattva mahāsattvas are well-settled in that buddhafield. Why? Because they will have attained the true quality of irreversibility.”

4.33 “Indeed, Śāradvatīputra,” said the Blessed One, “It is so. It is just as you have said. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like when an envoy of a strict authoritarian king goes to visit villages, cities, towns, or any other lands bearing a letter with the seal of the king. While travelling, no one—whether tariff collectors, tax collectors, boatmen, villagers, city people, travelers, king’s men, those on the road, guests, or any other people—will hinder his travel in any way or cause him any harm. There will be no obstacles on the path as he travels here and there. Why? Because he bears the seal of the king, so it is understood that he should encounter no obstacles on his journey. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, it should be understood that any bodhisattva mahāsattva who, after dying and

transmigrating from this world or dying and transmigrating from any other world, has been, is currently, or will be reborn in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, is irreversible from unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until they fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will travel from one buddhafield to another, always delighting the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas, and always seeking in every way the awakening of Buddhahood. They will never be separated from the blessed buddhas, nor from the bodhisattvas and śrāvakas of the buddhas, and they will quickly fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood."

4.34 The venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, stream-enterers in our world who abide in the fruit of stream-entry are like bodhisattva mahāsattvas in that buddhafield. How so? In that, just as stream-enterers here who abide in the fruit of stream-entry have severed the continuum of descending into lower rebirths, so too, Honorable Blessed One, have bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have been, currently are, or will be reborn in that buddhafield. They are seen to have severed the continuum of descending into lower rebirths. They are seen to have severed the continuum to all the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha levels, and until they fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will travel from one buddhafield to another, and they will never be separated from the blessed buddhas, nor from the bodhisattvas and śrāvakas of the buddhas."

4.35 "Indeed, Śāradvatīputra" the Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "It is so. It is just as you have said. Śāradvatīputra, all bodhisattva mahāsattvas who, after dying and transmigrating from this world or dying and transmigrating from any other world, have been, currently are, or will be reborn in that buddhafield, are seen to have severed the continuum of descending to lower realms, and are seen to have severed the continuum to all śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha levels. Until they fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will travel from one buddhafield to another, they will seek in every way the awakening of buddhahood, they will always de-

light the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas, and they will never be separated from blessed buddhas, nor from the bodhisattvas and śrāvakas of the buddhas.

4.36 “By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. Stream-enterers do not have the qualities that lead to lower rebirth and are sure to proceed towards perfect awakening. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, all bodhisattva mahāsattvas who, after dying and transmigrating from this world or dying and transmigrating from any other world, have been, currently are, or will be reborn in that buddhafield, are sure to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Until they fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will travel from one buddhafield to another, they will always delight the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas, they will seek in every way the awakening of buddhahood, and they will never be separated from the blessed buddhas, nor from the bodhisattvas and śrāvakas of the buddhas.”

4.37 The venerable Śāradvatīputra then said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, once-returners here who abide in the fruit of being a once-returner are like bodhisattva mahāsattvas born in that buddhafield. Honorable Blessed One, since non-returners here who abide in the fruit of being a non-returner are like bodhisattva mahāsattvas born in that buddhafield, Honorable Blessed One, worthy ones here who abide in the fruit of becoming a worthy one are also like bodhisattva mahāsattvas born in that buddhafield.”

4.38 “Do not say so, Śāradvatīputra,” the Blessed One replied to venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, do not say that. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because it is those bodhisattva mahāsattvas here whose unsurpassed and perfect awakening has been prophesied and who are comparable to bodhisattva mahāsattvas born in that buddhafield. It is those bodhisattva mahāsattvas here who have reached acceptance of the unborn nature of phenomena who are comparable to bodhisattva mahāsattvas born in that buddhafield.

4.39 “Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, it is those bodhisattva mahāsattvas here who are seated at the seat of awakening who are comparable to bodhisattva

mahāsattvas born in that buddhafield. Why? Because Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas who take rebirth in that buddhafield are to be understood as those who rely on the thus-gone ones. They are to be understood as those who cannot be corralled by Māra or the māra deities. They are to be understood as those who have severed the link to the levels of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Until they fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will travel from one buddhafield to another, and they will always delight the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas."

4.40 Then the venerable Ānanda thought to himself, 'I will test to see what kind of confident eloquence the elder Subhūti has concerning this,' he thought, and the venerable Ānanda said to the venerable Subhūti, "Elder Subhūti, would that we could behold the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya along with his saṅgha of śrāvakas, and his assembly of bodhisattvas, and the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya."

4.41 The venerable Subhūti replied to the venerable Ānanda, "Venerable Ānanda, would you like to behold the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, along with his saṅgha of śrāvakas, his assembly of bodhisattvas, and his buddhafield?"

4.42 "Yes indeed, Elder Subhūti," replied the venerable Ānanda, "We would surely like to behold that."

4.43 "Look up at the sky," said the venerable Subhūti to the venerable Ānanda.

4.44 The venerable Ānanda then looked up at the sky, and having looked, he said to the venerable Subhūti, "Elder Subhūti, when I look at the sky, I see that the entire sky above is empty."

4.45 "Venerable Ānanda," the venerable Subhūti said to the venerable Ānanda, "Just as you behold the emptiness of the entire sky above, so too should you behold

the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, along with his saṅgha of śrāvakas and his assembly of bodhisattvas, and his buddhafield."

4.46 The venerable Śāradvatīputra then spoke to the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, the Blessed One has said that those bodhisattva mahāsattvas here who have received prophecies are comparable to those bodhisattva mahāsattvas reborn there. Honorable Blessed One, how are they comparable, in what ways are they the same?"

4.47 "Śāradvatīputra," the Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "they are comparable through the sameness of dharmadhātu."

4.48 *This is the fourth chapter from The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya.*

Chapter 5

5.1 Then the venerable Śāradvatīputra thought to himself, ‘The Honorable Blessed One has spoken of the acclaimed qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past; he has spoken of the excellent array of qualities of his buddhafield; he has spoken of the excellent array of his saṅgha of śrāvakas; and he has spoken of the excellent array of his assembly of bodhisattvas. However, the honorable Blessed One has yet to speak about the great parinirvāṇa of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Would that the honorable Blessed One would now explain well the manner in which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will pass away in great parinirvāṇa and the signs that will occur at that time.’

5.2 Knowing what the venerable Śāradvatīputra was thinking, the Blessed One said to him, “Śāradvatīputra, on the day that the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya passes completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, in order to demonstrate the Dharma to beings in the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, the Thus-Gone One will issue forth numerous physical emanations of himself, and each of those emanated bodies of the Thus-Gone One will likewise teach the Dharma to sentient beings, so that infinitely more sentient beings will be tamed by his Dharma than had already been tamed before. Among those beings, some will be tamed according to the śrāvaka vehicle, some according to the pratyekabuddha vehicle, and some will be tamed according to the Unsurpassed Vehicle of the Ten Powers.

5.3 “Śāradvatīputra, at the time of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s great parinirvāṇa, he will prophesy that the bodhisattva mahāsattva known as Gandhahastin will reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening. He will declare, ‘Seven days after the disappearance of my sublime Dharma, you, sublime being, will fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood here in this world system of Abhirati. You will become a thus-gone, worthy, perfect

buddha, endowed with perfect wisdom and conduct, well-gone, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed subduer of beings, a teacher of gods and men, a blessed buddha known as Golden Lotus.' Śāradvatīputra, the excellent array of qualities of the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Golden Lotus will be just like the excellent array of qualities of the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, the excellent array of the saṅgha of śrāvakas and the excellent array of the assembly of bodhisattvas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Golden Lotus will be just like the excellent array of the saṅgha of śrāvakas and the excellent array of the assembly of the bodhisattvas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, without any addition or omission.

5.4 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, at the moment of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya's great parinirvāṇa, the great earth will quake in the six ways. It will quake, tremble and shake. It will forcefully quake, tremble and shake. It will forcefully quake, tremble and shake throughout that world system of the great trichiliocosm, resounding through the six heavens of the desire realm right up to the Highest Heaven. On hearing that sound, the gods of the desire and form realms will think, 'The blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is now passing away in parinirvāṇa,' and as they become aware of it, their light-heartedness in their respective celestial palaces will fade, and despondent thoughts will arise, with words such as these: 'Alas, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, embodiment of vision and wisdom, our witness, our proof, and our light, will very soon vanish from the world.'

5.5 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, at the moment of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya's great parinirvāṇa, all the bejeweled trees, the wishful-filling trees, the grasses, bushes, medicinal shrubs, and forest canopies throughout that buddhafield will bow low in the direction of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya's great parinirvāṇa.

5.6 “Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, through the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s former aspirations for the sake of bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the future, there will be one hundred and eight foundations for entry into the Dharma: ‘Friends, after my passing, any bodhisattva mahāsattva reborn in this buddhafield who attains perfect mastery of these one hundred and eight gateways of the Dharma will attain perfect mastery of all phenomena and will comprehend everything.’ As such, Śāradvatīputra, just as the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya takes complete care of bodhisattva mahāsattvas while he currently resides in his buddhafield, he will continue to take complete care of them even after his parinirvāṇa, so that these bodhisattva mahāsattvas will comprehend all phenomena, and, until they too fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, they will travel from one buddhafield to another, they will gaze upon the thus-gone ones, and they will be irreversible [on the path to awakening]. Śāradvatīputra, every bodhisattva mahāsattva who, after dying and transmigrating from this world or dying and transmigrating from any other world, has been, is currently, or will be reborn in that buddhafield, will, like that blessed one, pass completely beyond suffering and attain mastery over all phenomena.

5.7 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, by the power of the awakened, at the moment of his great parinirvāṇa, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya will become visible even to sentient beings who live in other world systems.

5.8 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya passes completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, in order to pay respect to his body, gods and humans alike will make divine and human offerings, scattering flowers, fragrant smoke, incense, flower garlands, ointments, powders, garments, parasols, banners, flags, and precious ornaments over his body, such that the divine and human flowers, fragrant smoke, incense, flower garlands, ointments, powders, garments, parasols, ban-

ners, flags, and ornaments scattered there will pile up all around creating a heap the height and circumference of a league.

5.9 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya passes completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, all the gods, humans, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas in that world system of the great trichiliocosm will bow and pay homage with the palms of their hands joined in the direction of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s great parinirvāṇa.

5.10 “Furthermore Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya passes completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, gods and humans alike will be pierced by profound sorrow for seven days and seven nights. Crying ‘Alas, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya has passed from sorrow too soon,’ they will strike their chests in anguish. Gods and humans alike will spurn their pleasures and amusements and will abstain from sensory gratification. As those gods and humans come to understand what has happened, they will say to one another, ‘Alas, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, the embodiment of vision and wisdom, our witness, our proof, and our light, has vanished from the world too soon.’

5.11 “Śāradvatīputra, it should be understood that every bodhisattva mahāsattva who, after dying and transmigrating from this world or from any other world, has been, is currently, or will be reborn in that buddhafield, will be prophesied to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Śāradvatīputra, the number of such bodhisattvas cannot be reached by counting up to one hundred. Instead, Śāradvatīputra, they are to be counted in their hundreds, in their thousands, or in their hundreds of thousands. Śāradvatīputra, just as these bodhisattva mahāsattvas are to be quantified in hundreds, thousands or even in hundreds of thousands, so too, Śāradvatīputra, should one regard any attempt to quantify the thus-gone ones, or quantify the buddhas, or quantify the omniscient ones.

Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who, after dying and transmigrating from this world or from any other world, have been, are currently, or will be reborn in that buddhafield, are to be quantified in the same way. It is so. The number of thus-gone ones, of buddhas, of omniscient ones are to be quantified in the same way. Śāradvatīputra, it should be known that aside from those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who are already irreversible, any bodhisattvas who do not hear this dharma discourse that proclaims the various qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya, are under the influence of Māra.

5.12 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya passes completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, his physical body will be burnt up by his own inner fire element. His bodily relics will be golden in color. When the bodily relics are divided and split, they will clearly radiate *svastikas* and *nandyāvartas*. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how when a great tree of the type known as *timiśa*[21] is cut and split, *svastikas* and *nandyāvartas* appear. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, after the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya has passed completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, and the bodily relics are split, *svastikas* and *nandyāvartas* will appear, and various [other] miraculous and magical occurrences will manifest.

5.13 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, from the divided bodily relics of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya who has passed completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, *svastikas* and *nandyāvartas* will appear. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how when a *mulaso* gemstone[22] is split, *svastikas* and *nandyāvartas* appear. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, from the incisions made from splitting the bodily relics of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya after he has passed completely beyond suffering in the great parinirvāṇa, *svastikas* and *nandyāvartas* appear. So as to worship his bodily relics, sentient beings in that world system of the great trichiliocosm will house them in stūpas made from the seven precious materials with which

all the world systems of the great trichiliocosm are adorned. By analogy, just as stars pervade the sky, so too will stūpas made from the seven precious materials and golden lotuses with billions of petals forever adorn that buddhafield.

5.14 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya approach the time of death, die and transmigrate, such signs will also occur prior to their deaths. Bodhisattva mahāsattvas will behold the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha of the buddhafield in which they are to be reborn, and having seen them, they will not forget them at the time of their death. After they die, gods and humans will make efforts to honor their bodily remains, and gods and humans will make an abundance of offerings to their bodily remains.

5.15 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, eventually the bodily remains of those bodhisattva mahāsattvas will disperse in the sky, becoming ever more subtle and then disappearing without a trace. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like how when wet hay is placed in a fire—for some time smoke emerges, but eventually this ascends into the sky, scatters in the air, and disappears without a trace. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, the bodily remains of bodhisattva mahāsattvas who die and transmigrate from that buddhafield eventually disperse in the sky, becoming ever more subtle and then disappearing without a trace.

5.16 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have approached the time of death, actually die and transmigrate from that buddhafield, signs will manifest in every world system of the ten directions. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen taking rebirth among the gods of the Heaven of Joy. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen dwelling among the gods of the Heaven of Joy. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen dying and transmigrating from the Heaven of Joy. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen entering the mother’s womb. In some world systems, bod-

hisattva mahāsattvas will be seen being born from the mother's womb. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen taking seven steps. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen laughing with the snorting brays of a horse. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen engaged in youthful play. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen dwelling in the company of royal consorts. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen going forth from home to homelessness. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen demonstrating the practice of austerities. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen proceeding to the seat of awakening. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen contemplating at the seat of awakening. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen circumambulating the seat of awakening with devotion and respect. In some world systems bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen preparing to sit at the seat of awakening. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen sitting at the seat of awakening. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen subduing Māra Pāpīyān. In some world systems, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will be seen to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, and attaining the wisdom of omniscience.

5.17 "In some world systems, blessed buddhas will be seen turning the wheel of Dharma. In some world systems, blessed buddhas will be seen giving prophecies to bodhisattva mahāsattvas. In some world systems, blessed buddhas will be seen passing completely beyond sorrow into the expanse of nirvāṇa, without any residual aggregates. Śāradvatīputra, when those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have approached the time of death, actually die, and transmigrate from that buddhafield, signs such as these will occur.

5.18 "Śāradvatīputra, the lifespan of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will be a million great eons. Śāradvatīputra, even after the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya has passed completely beyond

sorrow in the great parinirvāṇa, the sublime Dharma taught by that well-gone one will remain for [a further] million great eons."

5.19 Thus he spoke. Then the venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, how is the duration of a million great eons—the period for which the sublime Dharma of the well-gone one will endure—to be calculated?"

5.20 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Śāradvatīputra, twenty intermediary eons make up a single eon and ten eons constitute a great eon. In this way, Śāradvatīputra, one may calculate the million great eons for which the sublime Dharma taught by the well-gone one will endure.

5.21 "Śāradvatīputra, when the sublime Dharma disappears, a great radiance will envelop all the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, the great earth will shake, and a great sound will ring out.

5.22 "Śāradvatīputra, the disappearance of the sublime Dharma of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will not be caused by Māra and the māra deities, nor will the disappearance of his sublime Dharma be caused by the śrāvakas of the blessed ones. Rather, Śāradvatīputra, the yearning to hear the sublime Dharma will decline among humans. With diminished yearning, they will not go before dharmabhāṇaka monks who recite the Dharma. Since they do not go before them, they will not hear the sublime Dharma. Since they do not hear the sublime Dharma, they will not practice. Since they do not practice, they will not attain higher qualities. And the monks who recite the Dharma, being aware of the decreased interest among people, will not give Dharma teachings. In this way, Śāradvatīputra, his sublime Dharma will gradually disappear."

5.23 *This is the fifth chapter from The Array of the Thus-Gone One Akṣobhya.*

Chapter 6

6.1 Then the venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, through what kinds of roots of virtue, through what causes and conditions, do bodhisattva mahāsattvas come to be reborn in that buddhafield?”

6.2 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattva mahāsattvas, who have generated the intention and the aspiration to practice, succeed in practicing bodhisattva conduct as it was practiced by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya in the past, they will be reborn in the buddhafield world system known as Abhirati, in the presence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, this is both [sufficient] cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.3 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas should say ‘By the roots of virtue I possess, may I be in the company of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’ and should dedicate their perfection of generosity to [the attainment of] unsurpassed and perfect awakening. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both [sufficient] cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.4 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas should say, ‘By the roots of virtue I possess, may I be in the company of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’ and should dedicate their perfection of morality to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.5 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas should say, ‘By the roots of virtue I possess, may I be in the company of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’ and should dedicate their perfection of patience to

unsurpassed and perfect awakening. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.6 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas should say, ‘By the roots of virtue I possess, may I be in the company of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’ and should dedicate their perfection of perseverance to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.7 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas should say, ‘By the roots of virtue I possess, may I be in the company of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’ and should dedicate their perfection of concentration to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.8 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas should say, ‘By the roots of virtue I possess, may I be in the company of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’ and should dedicate their perfection of wisdom to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.9 “Also, they should recollect all the Dharma taught by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy truly perfect buddha Akṣobhya. They should recollect the entirety of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s immeasurable, countless, inexpressible, utterly inexpressible saṅgha of śrāvakas, and they should recollect the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s incalculable bodhisattvas, and think, ‘Like them, may I too, having fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, be a teacher of the Dharma. May I recollect that the saṅgha of śrāvakas and assembly of bodhisattvas in that buddhafield for fully awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood are immeasurable, countless, inexpressible, and utterly inex-

pressible.' Śāradvatīputra, a noble child with the threefold aspect should endeavor to train as follows: They should dedicate the roots of virtue of having the threefold aspect for the sake of all sentient beings, saying, 'May I, with this root of virtue of having the threefold aspect, make common cause with all sentient beings, and having made common cause with all sentient beings, dedicate them to unsurpassed and perfect awakening.' Śāradvatīputra, since when bodhisattva mahāsattvas fully dedicate them in this way, the threefold aspect does not deteriorate during the interim state. Through the roots of virtue of having the threefold aspect, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and will be reborn in that buddhafield, so it goes without saying that through the roots of virtue of having all the six perfections, they will be reborn in the presence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.10 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to be reborn in that buddhafield, having witnessed how the light of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya illuminated the entire world system of the great trichiliocosm and everything within it, should generate the intention to recollect this, as follows: 'May I too illuminate the buddhafield in which I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, with my own light.' This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.11 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to be reborn in that buddhafield should generate the following intention: 'When I practice bodhisattva conduct, having witnessed that the saṅgha of śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya is immeasurable, countless, inexpressible, and utterly inexpressible, may I persevere so that in the buddhafield in which I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, there will likewise be a saṅgha of śrāvakas that is immeasurable, countless, inexpress-

ible, and utterly inexpressible.' This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.12 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to be reborn in that buddhafield should generate the following intention: 'When I practice bodhisattva conduct, having witnessed that the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is endowed with the best of all aspects, may I persevere so that the buddhafield in which I fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood will likewise be endowed with the best of all aspects.' This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.13 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, when noble sons or noble daughters, having heard the names of the immeasurable and countless bodhisattva mahāsattvas in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya who are themselves regarded as thus-gone ones, buddhas, and omniscient ones, such as Gandhahastin and Gajagandhahastin, generate aspirational prayers towards them, then they will be reborn in that buddhafield. Therefore, it goes without saying that by dedicating the roots of virtue of possessing all the perfections towards the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, they too will, surely and infallibly, be reborn in that buddhafield. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.14 "Śāradvatīputra, the roots of virtue for attaining unsurpassed and perfect awakening cannot be measured. Śāradvatīputra, even if beings were to gather them up and fill containers as vast as the sky, they would never be able to exhaust them. Śāradvatīputra, the roots of virtue for attaining unsurpassed and perfect awakening cannot be measured with any kind of container, for their container, Śāradvatīputra, is omniscience itself.

6.15 "Śāradvatīputra, from the root of virtue of possessing the threefold aspect, the lineage of the Three Jewels will be attained. Śāradvatīputra, every bodhisattva

mahāsattva who has this threefold aspect and fully dedicates its root of virtue is to be regarded as having the quality of nonregression. Śāradvatīputra, a bodhisattva mahāsattva who has the threefold aspect and fully dedicates its root of virtue will subdue Māra Pāpīyān and the māra deities and will take rebirth in the buddhafield of their choice.

6.16 "Also, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to be reborn in that buddhafield should recollect the blessed buddhas dwelling in the immeasurable and countless world systems of the eastern direction. They should recollect all the Dharma taught by those blessed buddhas. They should recollect the Saṅgha of śrāvakas and the assembly of bodhisattvas who accompany those blessed buddhas. They should fully dedicate the roots of virtue of possessing this threefold aspect toward where the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is. This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both sufficient cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.17 "In the same way, they should recollect all the blessed buddhas dwelling in all buddhafields of the southern, western, and northern directions, and likewise those above and below, and indeed in all ten directions. They should recollect all the Dharma taught by those blessed buddhas. They should recollect the Saṅgha of śrāvakas and the assembly of bodhisattvas who accompany those blessed buddhas. Therefore, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas should rejoice at the roots of virtue accumulated this threefold aspect and, rejoicing in them, should fully dedicate them to where the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is. Having fully dedicated them to that, they will, surely and infallibly, be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.18 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, in all the many buddhafields—many hundreds of buddhafields, many thousands of buddhafields, many hundreds of thousands of buddhafields, countless trillions of buddhafields—there are none with an array of qualities as beautiful as this.

6.19 “Therefore, Śāradvatīputra, a bodhisattva mahāsattva should generate this thought, ‘By my roots of virtue, I see the beautiful array of qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya’s present buddhafield. Having witnessed such an array of buddhafield qualities, may I uphold such an array of buddhafield qualities and, having upheld it, may I, guided by the prophecy of the charioteer, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, correctly show many hundreds of bodhisattvas, many thousands of bodhisattvas, many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas, and countless trillions of bodhisattvas the way to unsurpassed and perfect awakening. May I encourage them, may I praise them, and may I delight in them.’ This too, Śāradvatīputra, is both cause and condition for bodhisattva mahāsattvas to be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.20 “So, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish with a strong resolve to be reborn in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya should generate thoughts with superior intention like this, and with the thought that if they do not act in accordance [with their resolutions], then they will have deceived the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, if bodhisattvas generate such thoughts with superior intention, they will take birth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, any noble son or noble daughter who generates motivation with superior intention like this will be reborn in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Such is my prophecy.”

6.21 “Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he made this great aspiration: ‘O,’ he prayed, ‘When those sentient beings who wish to be reborn in the buddhafield in which I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, approach the time of death, may I appear before them surrounded by my saṅgha of śrāvakas and attended by my assembly of bodhisattvas. When they see me, may they be filled with joy, may their recollection

not diminish so they reach the time of death without mental distraction, and may they be reborn in my buddhafield.'

6.22 "As a result of this, Śāradvatīputra, when a noble son or noble daughter hears the name of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and having learnt it and reflected upon it, creates a thousand images of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya seated on an arrangement of lotuses atop an elephant throne, then, when the time of their death arrives, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will appear before them, surrounded by his saṅgha of śrāvakas and attended by his assembly of bodhisattvas, and they will behold the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya seated in front of them. When they see him, they will be filled with joy, they will not forget him, they will meet their time of death without mental distraction, and having met the time of death in this way, they will be reborn in the world system of Abhirati, the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. When any noble son or noble daughter who creates the quality of generosity in this way reaches the time of death, they will behold the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, having seen him, all their misdeeds will be purified, and they will be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.23 "Śāradvatīputra, when the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he made the following aspiration: 'O," he prayed, "When sentient beings who wish to be reborn in the buddhafield in which I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, approach the time of death, may I appear before them accompanied and surrounded by my saṅgha of śrāvakas and attended to by my assembly of bodhisattvas. When they see me, may they be filled with faith, may they meet the time of death without forgetting and without mental distraction, and may they be reborn in my buddhafield.'

6.24 "By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. [Imagine] a city that has no parks or gardens, that is without amusements like waterfalls and lakes, streams and

ponds, that has no horses or elephants, and in which there is only sand, grit, stones, debris, and thickets of thorny plants. [And imagine,] Śāradvatīputra, that in that city lives a mighty and formidable king. But since his city is devoid of these civic qualities, it is not beautiful. Even though, Śāradvatīputra, the king is powerful and formidable, if his city lacks these essential qualities of a city, it is not beautiful. Well, Śāradvatīputra, just like the mighty and formidable king of that city, so too, Śāradvatīputra, is the Thus-Gone One, the King of Dharma formidable in this world system of the great trichiliocosm. However, Śāradvatīputra, since this buddhafield of mine lacks arrays of qualities like those found in the buddhafield of Akṣobhya, it is not beautiful. Śāradvatīputra, if this buddhafield of mine had an array of buddhfield qualities like that, then this present buddhafield of mine would be as beautiful as the beautiful buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. So, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to purify their array of buddhafield qualities, should purify buddhafield qualities with the same firm resolve as the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya did when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past.

6.25 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, having fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood here, the combined number of sentient beings that I have established in the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of being a once-returner, the fruit of being a non-returner, the state of being a worthy one, and the awakening of a pratyekabuddha, as well as all the sentient beings tamed by my śrāvakas, Śāradvatīputra, the total number does not even come close to a hundredth part, nor a thousandth, nor a hundred thousandth, nor a billionth, nor a ten billionth, nor a hundred billionth, nor a trillionth, nor a quintillionth—no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or illustration can even come close—of the saṅgha of śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Why? Because they are immeasurable and countless even by one who is liberated.

6.26 “Śāradvatīputra, aside from my śrāvakas, if one combined with them the number of śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Maitreya who will appear in the future, along with the sentient beings who are to be tamed by those śrāvakas, the total number of such śrāvakas will still not even come close to a hundredth part, nor a thousandth, nor a hundred thousandth, nor a billionth, nor a ten billionth, nor a hundred billionth, nor a trillionth, nor a quintillionth—no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or illustration can even come close—of the saṅgha of śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Why? Because Śāradvatīputra, no one is able to quantify the number of sentient beings that the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya tames each time he teaches the Dharma.

6.27 “Śāradvatīputra, aside from my śrāvakas and the śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Maitreya, if one combined with them the number of śrāvakas, Śāradvatīputra, of all the future buddhas of the Fortunate Eon, along with all the śrāvakas tamed by those śrāvakas, still their total number will not even come close to one hundredth part, nor a thousandth, nor a hundred thousandth, nor a billionth, nor a ten billionth, nor a hundred billionth, nor a trillionth, nor a quintillionth—no number, fraction, enumeration, analogy, or illustration can even come close—of the saṅgha of śrāvakas of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Why? Because Śāradvatīputra, the number of sentient beings tamed by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya each time he teaches the Dharma cannot be quantified, even by one who is liberated.”

6.28 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, according to my understanding of the meaning of what the Blessed One has said, that buddhafield, Honorable Blessed One, is not to be regarded as a field of ordinary beings but as a field of worthy ones. Why? Because Honorable Blessed One, there are so many worthy ones there whose contaminants have been exhausted.”

6.29 “Indeed Śāradvatīputra,” replied the Blessed One, “It is so, Śāradvatīputra, it is just as you have said. There are indeed many worthy ones who have exhausted their contaminants there. Śāradvatīputra, the number and extent of star formations in this world system of the great trichiliocosm may be measured, but the number of sentient beings that achieve the state of a worthy one every time the Thus-Gone One teaches the Dharma in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya cannot be measured. It should be understood, Śāradvatīputra, that at every large gathering there, countless beings realize the state of a worthy one. Śāradvatīputra, the number and extent of star formations in this world system of the great trichiliocosm may be measured, but the number and extent of those large gatherings in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya cannot be measured.

6.30 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, when gods and humans have generated those roots of virtue, they will become free of any kind of toil or hindrance. Śāradvatīputra, noble sons and noble daughters born in that world system of the great trichiliocosm will be free from any kind of toil or hindrance, both day and night.

6.31 “Śāradvatīputra, all those who listen to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities, and having heard it, have faith in it, retain it, uphold it, read it out loud, thoroughly comprehend it and teach it widely and correctly to others, are those who have seen and have heard the bodhisattva conduct practiced in the past by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Why? Because they are ones who experience great devotion as soon as they hear this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities.

6.32 “Śāradvatīputra, blessed buddhas in all the buddhafields of the ten directions have taught, are teaching, and will teach this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Śāradvatīputra, noble sons and noble daughters in those buddhafields will also

retain, uphold, read out loud, thoroughly comprehend this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities, and will teach it widely and correctly to others.

6.33 "Śāradvatīputra, apart from bodhisattva mahāsattvas in those buddhafields who are already irreversible on the path to fully awakening to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, the majority of noble sons and noble daughters, whether those on the bodhisattva vehicle or on the śrāvaka vehicle, are those who, by the power of their aspirations, have taken, are taking, or will take rebirth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

6.34 "In this way, Śāradvatīputra, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, while remaining in the world system of Abhirati, brings benefit to people on the bodhisattva vehicle and people on the śrāvaka vehicle in every buddhafield. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. [Imagine] a wheel-turning monarch who possesses the seven treasures and, with the seven treasures, achieves dominion over the four continents. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, with this Dharma discourse that proclaims his qualities, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya achieves dominion not just over those in his own buddhafield but over noble sons and noble daughters on the bodhisattva vehicle in every buddhafield of the ten directions. Śāradvatīputra, any noble son or noble daughter who listens to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and upon hearing it, retains it, upholds it, reads it aloud, thoroughly comprehends it, teaches it widely and correctly to others, and recites aspiration prayers to be reborn in that buddhafield, will always, until the moment of their death, be in the care of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because Māra Pāpīyān will find no opportunity to hurt them and beings under the influence of Māra will be unable to turn back their prayers of aspiration. Śāradvatīputra, it should be known that noble sons and noble daughters in the care of the Thus-Gone One will have no fear of being

turned back from taking rebirth in that buddhafield and reaching unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

6.35 “Furthermore, those noble sons and noble daughters will be impervious to the attempts of those who strive to do them physical harm or create other kinds of hindrance to their life—hindrances to life such as fire, water, poison, or weapons. Nor will they be stricken physically by them in other ways—through contact with hands, or earth, or sticks, and so on.[23] It should be known that they will be without any kind of fear towards humans and nonhumans, and it should be known that they will be fully protected, guarded, and concealed. When they reach the time of death, they will be reborn in the world system known as Abhirati, the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

6.36 “By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it like this. Just as the orb of the sun, though distant, casts its light on humans throughout Jambudvīpa, so too, Śāradvatīputra, does the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, though residing afar, cast his light of wisdom on noble sons and noble daughters on the bodhisattva vehicle who dwell in other world systems. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. Just as monks who possess the divine eye can see the color and good and bad features of forms, even from a great distance, so too, Śāradvatīputra, can the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, truly perfect buddha Akṣobhya, though residing afar, see the color, shape, and form of bodhisattva mahāsattvas dwelling in other world systems.

6.37 “By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. Just as monks who have attained mastery over their minds and possess supernatural powers can accurately discern the mental states of even those humans and nonhumans who live far away, so too, Śāradvatīputra, can the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, though residing afar, correctly discern the mental states of bodhisattva mahāsattvas dwelling in other world systems.

6.38 “By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. Just as monks who possess supernatural powers can hear sounds even at a great distance, so too, Śāradvatīputra, can the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya hear the voices of bodhisattva mahāsattvas, even those that dwell in far distant world systems, as they pray, ‘May we too be reborn in the buddhafield of Abhirati.’ Śāradvatīputra, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya also knows the names and the family lineages of each of those noble sons and noble daughters.

6.39 “Śāradvatīputra, those who retain, uphold, read aloud, comprehend, and correctly and widely teach this Dharma discourse that proclaims these qualities to others, will be seen by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. They will be known by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. And until the moment of death will be in the care of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.”

6.40 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Honorable Blessed One, the degree to which the blessed buddhas take care of bodhisattva mahāsattvas is truly marvelous, Blessed One.”

6.41 “Indeed Śāradvatīputra,” replied the Blessed One, “It is so. It is just as you have said. The blessed buddhas really take care of bodhisattva mahāsattvas. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because it is by supporting and sustaining bodhisattva mahāsattvas that they support and sustain all sentient beings.

6.42 “By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. An anointed king of kṣatriya caste stores rice, pulses, and grains—barley, wheat, sesame, beans, peas, lentils and various other grains—in perhaps one, or two, or three, or four, or five, or ten, or twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty, or a hundred, or a thousand, or a hundred thousand, or any number of granaries. He stores them away like this with the thought that ‘If we are struck by famine or poverty, these will serve as bountiful harvests.’ Why? Because, in the event of a famine, these provisions will bring sustenance to sentient beings. In the same way, Śāradvatīputra, when

thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddhas have passed away, it is their bodhisattva mahāsattvas who will then fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and, having fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, will impart and explain the sublime Dharma to all those beings that are starved of the Dharma, becoming for them a bountiful harvest of sublime Dharma and a bountiful harvest for the saṅgha too. By taking account in that way, Śāradvatīputra, the blessed buddhas support and sustain their bodhisattva mahāsattvas.

6.43 "Śāradvatīputra, any bodhisattva mahāsattvas who listen to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and having heard it, retain it, uphold it, read it aloud, thoroughly comprehend it, and teach it widely and correctly to others, will thereby cause countless further living creatures to retain and engage with this Dharma discourse—many hundreds of living beings, many thousands of living beings, many hundreds of thousands of living beings, countless trillions of living beings—who, once established in it, will pray for rebirth in that buddhafield. And all of them will indeed be reborn in that buddhafield.

6.44 "Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, any bodhisattva mahāsattva who listens to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, having heard it, retains it, upholds it, reads it aloud, thoroughly comprehends it, and teaches it widely and correctly to others, thereby causing countless further living beings—many hundreds of living beings, many thousands of living beings, many hundreds of thousands of living beings, countless trillions of living beings—to retain, engage with, and be established in this Dharma discourse, such bodhisattva mahāsattvas, even those who have not prayed for rebirth in that buddhafield, should be recognized as irreversible. They should be recognized as having been prophesied to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening. And they, each in their own respective buddhafields, will fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood.

6.45 “Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, any bodhisattva mahāsattva who listens to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, having heard it, retains it, upholds it, reads it aloud, thoroughly comprehends it, and teaches it widely and correctly to others so that they too uphold it, read it out loud, and comprehend it, causing countless living beings—many hundreds of living beings, many thousands of living beings, many hundreds of thousands of living beings, countless trillions of living beings—to retain, engage with, and be established in this Dharma discourse, such bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have taught others widely and correctly in this way, will, as more and more sentient beings generate roots of virtue, draw ever nearer to unsurpassed and perfect awakening.

6.46 “So, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to swiftly fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood should retain, uphold, read aloud, and thoroughly comprehend this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities, and having retained, upheld, read aloud and thoroughly comprehended it, they should explain it and teach it correctly to many beings—many hundreds of beings, many thousands of beings, many hundreds of thousands of beings, countless trillions of beings. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because every time a bodhisattva mahāsattva teaches this Dharma discourse, they will surely accumulate karma that brings great wisdom and, through the accumulation of such karma that brings great wisdom, they will exhaust their contaminants in this very body.

6.47 “Śāradvatīputra, noble sons or noble daughters on the śrāvaka vehicle who wish to swiftly fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood should listen to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and, having heard it, they should retain it, uphold it, read it aloud, thoroughly comprehend it, and teach it widely and correctly to others—to many hundreds of beings, many thousands of beings, many hundreds of thousands of beings, countless trillions of beings—so

that they too will enter and engage with this Dharma discourse and, being established in it, will directly realize the state of a worthy one in this very body. Śāradvatīputra, even if they do not directly realize the state of a worthy one in this very body, perfect buddhahood will not be beyond the second.[24]

6.48 "Therefore, Śāradvatīputra, noble sons or noble daughters on the śrāvaka vehicle who wish to directly realize the state of a worthy one in that very body, should listen to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, truly perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Having heard it, they should retain it, uphold it, read it aloud, thoroughly comprehend it, and teach it widely and correctly to others, thereby causing countless further beings—many hundreds of beings, many thousands of beings, many hundreds of thousands of beings, countless trillions of beings—to correctly retain, enter into, and be established in this Dharma discourse. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because noble sons or noble daughters who uphold this sublime Dharma will directly realize the state of a worthy one in that very body.

6.49 "Śāradvatīputra, noble sons or noble daughters who occasionally teach this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities to others will also directly realize the state of a worthy one in this very body, and their perfect buddhahood will not be beyond the second.[25] Śāradvatīputra, noble sons or noble daughters on the śrāvaka vehicle who retain, uphold, read aloud, and thoroughly comprehend this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, will, as they teach it widely and correctly to others, accumulate karma that brings great wisdom and, by accumulating karma which brings great wisdom, will directly realize the state of a worthy one in that very body. Śāradvatīputra, even if they do not directly realize the state of a worthy one in that very body, their perfect buddhahood will not be beyond the second.

6.50 "Śāradvatīputra, when noble sons and noble daughters on the śrāvaka vehicle see the importance of this, they will have deep reverence for this Dharma dis-

course and will apply it in their practice. Therefore, Śāradvatīputra, noble sons or daughters on the śrāvaka vehicle should retain, uphold, read aloud, and thoroughly comprehend this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and should teach it widely and correctly to others.

6.51 "Śāradvatīputra, noble sons or noble daughters on the bodhisattva vehicle who listen to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, having heard it, retain it, uphold it, read it aloud, thoroughly comprehend it, and teach it widely and correctly to others, thereby causing many further beings—many hundreds of beings, many thousands of beings, many hundreds of thousands of beings, countless trillions of beings—to correctly retain and enter into the Dharma discourse, and being thus established, to likewise seek to bring it into their practice and accomplish it with diligence, study, and faith, Śāradvatīputra, such noble sons or noble daughters on the śrāvaka vehicle are reaching the end of their worldly existence, with only one more birth or two more births left. It should be understood that perfect buddhahood will not be beyond the second.

6.52 "Śāradvatīputra, sentient beings with little merit are unable to hear this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Even if, Śāradvatīputra, a noble son or noble daughter who, upon hearing it, by the power of the awakened, was to promptly retain it, uphold it, read it aloud, thoroughly comprehend it, and teach it widely and correctly to others, and Śāradvatīputra, if that noble son or noble daughter, for the sake of those sentient beings, was to say 'O, may these sentient beings hear this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya,' and, with acts of generosity, was to give away this whole Jambudvīpa filled with gold and riches, then still, Śāradvatīputra, sentient beings with little merit would be unable to hear this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. How so? Śāradvatīputra, noble sons and

noble daughters who correctly discern all its qualities and have faith in this Dharma discourse will be brought to its buddhafield of utter purity. However, Śāradvatīputra, this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will not remain in the hands of those whose understanding is faulty. Rather, Śāradvatīputra, this Dharma discourse will remain in the hands of the learned, of those who have profound wisdom. Śāradvatīputra, the noble sons and noble daughters in whose hands, or within whose beings, this Dharma discourse remains, are those that see the Thus-Gone One.[26]

6.53 "By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. If a priceless jewel was to be extracted from the great ocean, in whose care do you think the precious jewel would come to be? What do you think, Śāradvatīputra?"

6.54 "Honorable Blessed One, the jewel will come to be in the hands of the king, or his sons, or his ministers," he replied.

6.55 "Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will come to be in the hands of bodhisattvas. Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who listen to this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, having heard it, retain it, uphold it, read it aloud and, thoroughly comprehending it, teach it widely and correctly to others, and practice the yoga of the ultimate in unsurpassed and perfect awakening, will become irreversible."

6.56 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, "That being the case, Honorable Blessed One, noble sons and noble daughters who seek to reach the level of irreversibility should retain, uphold, and read aloud this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, thoroughly comprehending it, should teach it widely and correctly to others. Why? Because, Honorable Blessed One,

when bodhisattva mahāsattvas engage with this Dharma discourse in that way, they will attain the reality of irreversibility."

6.57 "Indeed, Śāradvatīputra," the Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "It is so. It is just as you have said. Noble sons or noble daughters who wish to reach the level of irreversibility should retain, uphold, and read aloud this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, thoroughly comprehending it, should teach it widely and correctly to others. By analogy, Śāradvatīputra, it is like this. Just as the seven treasures of a wheel-turning monarch arise as a result of the ripening of past karma, so too, Śāradvatīputra, is my act of widely and correctly teaching this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities to the fourfold community. This teaching being widely and correctly taught is due to the aspiration to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood made in the past by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and all bodhisattva mahāsattvas who come to listen and hear this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities, do so due to distinctive excellences of the aspirations made by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya when he was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, and due to the ripening of their own roots of virtue.

6.58 "Śāradvatīputra, every one of the nine hundred and ninety-six blessed buddhas who will appear in this Fortunate Eon will, just as I do now, teach this widely and correctly to the fourfold community. Without exception, they will teach this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya widely and correctly to the fourfold community as I do now. Therefore, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to swiftly fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, should retain, uphold, and read aloud this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and, thoroughly comprehending it, should teach it widely and correctly to others.

6.59 “Śāradvatīputra, if a person on the bodhisattva vehicle who has gone forth and renounced their home finds no opportunity to listen to, retain, uphold, read aloud, fully comprehend, and correctly and widely teach this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and if, Śāradvatīputra, someone were to say to that person on the bodhisattva vehicle who had gone forth and renounced their home, ‘Noble son, if you were to live in a household with a retinue of wives and indulge in sensual pleasures, then I would give you this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya,’ and if, Śāradvatīputra, that person on the bodhisattva vehicle who had gone forth and renounced their home, out of respect for this Dharma discourse, took this opportunity to listen to it, retain it, uphold it, read it aloud, fully comprehend it, and teach it widely and correctly to others, returned to the householder life with the retinue of wives, while nevertheless retaining and fully comprehending this Dharma discourse, and later once again going forth—then that person who went forth and renounced their home and then returned to the householder life and retinue of wives has my approval and does not incur any moral downfall. Why? Śāradvatīputra, because after that person on the bodhisattva vehicle has passed away, this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will not have disappeared.

6.60 “Śāradvatīputra, if this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, is being practiced in a far distant town or city, then bodhisattva mahāsattvas should travel there and, having gone there, should retain, uphold, and read aloud this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and, having fully comprehended it, should teach it widely and correctly to others.

6.61 “Suppose, Śāradvatīputra, there is a noble son or noble daughter who has generated the resolve to retain, uphold, read aloud, comprehend, and widely and

correctly teach this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. And suppose, Śāradvatīputra, that there is another noble son or noble daughter who is unable to recite for him this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, but who has in their care a book that contains it. Then, in such circumstances, he should endeavor to borrow that book and, returning home, should have it copied. If the book will not be loaned, then he should copy it out by hand there and then.

6.62 "If the noble son or noble daughter were to tell him, Śāradvatīputra, 'Noble son, I will give you this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya only if you dare to transcribe it[27] without partaking of any food,' then he should indeed copy it out while observing a fast. If told he must copy it out while walking, then he should copy it while walking. If told to copy it while standing, then he should copy it while standing. If told to copy it while sitting, he should copy it while sitting.

6.63 "Śāradvatīputra, if a bodhisattva mahāsattva travels to a town or city for the sake of finding this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, but when he reaches there does not find it, then he should continue travelling to other kingdoms and other lands until he reaches one in which he may hear this Dharma discourse. There, he must listen, he must retain, he must read out loud, he must thoroughly comprehend, and he must teach this Dharma discourse proclaiming the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya widely and correctly to others.

6.64 "Likewise, Śāradvatīputra, if, despite travelling to a place in which this Dharma discourse may be heard, he is still unable to find it, he should generate resolve with the thought 'Why, when I heard the name of the Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, did I experience no fear about being turned back on the path to un-

surpassed and perfect awakening?' And, 'whoever is currently teaching the name of that Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, wants to bring me benefit, well-being, meaning, and success.'

6.65 "Śāradvatīputra, the very fact that I am now teaching this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is due to the power of the aspirations made in the past by the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya himself. It is by the power of the awakened and through the ripening of their own roots of virtue that noble sons and noble daughters here have heard it, and others will come to hear it."

6.66 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, after the Thus-Gone One has passed away, by whose power will this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya continue to be heard?"

6.67 The Blessed One replied, "Śāradvatīputra, after I pass away, this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya will continue to be heard by the power of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya himself. The recitation of this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, will delight the Four Great Kings, as well as Śakra, lord of the gods. The ripening of the karma of those bodhisattva mahāsattvas who come to listen to it will also delight the Four Great Kings and Śakra, lord of the gods."

6.68 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, this Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya is indeed endowed with great qualities."

6.69 “Indeed Śāradvatīputra,” the Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, “It is so! It is just as you have said. This Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya truly possesses great qualities. Śāradvatīputra, when a noble son or a noble daughter experiences any fear or anxiety, simply by uttering the name of the *blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya*, they will be free of their fear or anxiety.

6.70 “Śāradvatīputra, in the event of a destructive storm of hailstones like bladed wheels descend, a noble son or noble daughter may avert them by invoking the name of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. When the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, he liberated many nāgas from suffering—many hundreds of nāgas, many thousands of nāgas, many hundreds and thousands of nāgas, countless trillions of nāgas—through his truth and his words of truth. When he liberated them, he sincerely dedicated the roots of virtue as follows: ‘By these roots of virtue, after I have fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, whenever enraged nāgas unleash destructive hailstones like spinning wheels upon some or other world system, instilling dread and terror in sentient beings, may those sentient beings invoke my name and, thereby, by my power, may those destructive hailstones like bladed wheels be completely pacified.’ Therefore, by saying ‘By the truth and the true words of that sincere dedication, may this storm of destructive wheel-like hailstones be pacified,’ the storm of destructive wheel-like hailstones sent by the nāgas will be completely pacified. With the exception, Śāradvatīputra, for those whose past karma is reaching fruition.

6.71 “Also, Śāradvatīputra, when noble sons or daughters encounter fear, terror, epidemics, or harm, then they should recollect the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, and say, ‘By the truth and the words of truth with which the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya made pledges while practicing bodhisattva conduct in the past, may every word of those

pledges, every word he uttered, be completely fulfilled. By the transcendent perfection of the truth and the words of truth of those pledges, and every word he uttered, may all these fears, terrors, epidemics, and harms be dispelled.' By saying this, their fears, terrors, epidemics, and harms will be dispelled. With the exception, Śāradvatīputra, for those whose past karma is reaching fruition."

6.72 Thus he spoke, and the venerable Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, "Honorable Blessed One, bodhisattva mahāsattvas fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood alone, not in pairs.[28] Therefore, Honorable Blessed One, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who seek to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, should fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood in the way that the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya fully awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood."

6.73 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Śāradvatīputra, "Indeed Śāradvatīputra, it is so. It is just as you have said. Bodhisattva mahāsattvas who wish to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, should pursue awakening in the way that the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya pursued it.

6.74 "Śāradvatīputra, very few bodhisattva mahāsattvas succeed in purifying and maintaining buddhafields in the way that the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya purified and maintained his buddhafield. Śāradvatīputra, when such bodhisattva mahāsattvas fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood, although the buddhahood of all such blessed buddhas is the same—their omniscience is the same, their hues are the same, their signs are the same, their lineages are alike, they alike have buddhafields and gatherings of the saṅgha of śrāvakas, and the liberation of those śrāvakas is the same—nevertheless, the full array of qualities of the buddhafields of each blessed buddha is different. Their distinct lion thrones and distinct lotus arrangements are unique."

6.75 Thereupon, the gods of the desire realm and the brahmā deities bowed with their palms joined towards the eastern direction, where the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya abides. They prostrated and repeated three times, “The blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Śākyamuni has expounded here the Dharma discourse that proclaims the qualities of Akṣobhya, a blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha in another world system. We pay homage to that blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. We pay homage to that blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. We pay homage.”

6.76 The gods of the desire realm and the brahmā deities then gently tossed, threw, and scattered a variety of divine flowers, such as māndārava flowers and larger māndārava flowers, as well as various kinds of divine incense upon the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Śākyamuni. By the power of his awakening, as soon as they were thrown, those flowers and fragrant substances immediately transformed into a giant parasol of flowers that hovered in the sky above the Blessed One. Furthermore, as offerings to the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, the gods of the desire realm and the brahmā deities also tossed flowers in the direction of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

6.77 Then Śakra, lord of the gods, thought to himself, “I should entreat the thus-gone, worthy, truly perfect [Śākyamuni] Buddha so that, by the power of his awakening, the fourfold community, as well as these gods of the desire realm and these brahmā deities, may themselves directly behold the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.”

6.78 Knowing with complete understanding what Śakra, lord of the gods, was thinking, the Blessed One by means of his supernatural powers ascended into the sky and remained seated there hovering cross legged in space. Then, by the power of his awakening, the fourfold community also rose into the sky and remained there hovering in space. At that moment, the Blessed One performed a

miracle feat, whereby, by means of that miraculous feat, that fourfold community, along with those gods of the desire realm and Śakra, lord of the gods, and the brahmā deities, all beheld the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya seated in his buddhafield surrounded by his saṅgha of śrāvakas and his assembly of bodhisattvas. On seeing this, all of them placed their right knees on the ground in space and, bowing with the palms of their hands joined toward where the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya was, they paid devoted homage to the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya.

6.79 When the fourfold community saw the human inhabitants in that buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya, they pondered to themselves, thinking, "Could these beings with divine hues, features, and forms be particular gods from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three who have gone there in order to see, pay homage to, venerate, and serve the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and listen to his Dharma, or not?" Śakra, lord of the gods, thought "They must be gods. They have taken on human clothes and human features and have seated themselves here in his presence in order to listen to the sublime Dharma of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy perfect buddha Akṣobhya. Why must they be? Because never have I ever seen or heard of humans with such beauty, magnificence, and remarkable good fortune!"

6.80 Then the Blessed One withdrew the miraculous display manifested through his supernatural powers. Observing that the fourfold community and those gods of the desire realm and those gods of the form realm were now unsettled by doubt and uncertainty, the Blessed One turned to address Śakra, lord of the gods: "Kauśika, humans born in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya have all the means and resources of gods." Śakra, lord of the gods, then thought to himself, "To be a human who beholds a buddha and has all the means and resources of a god is desirable indeed! After dying and transmigrating from other world systems and buddhafields, it would

indeed be desirable to be born in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya."

6.81 Then the venerable Śāradvatīputra said to Śakra, lord of the gods, "Kauśika, you have seen the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Śākyamuni, and you have also seen the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya. If you have already obtained such excellent boons in this body, what need is there to even consider, Kauśika, what is to be gained by taking birth in that buddhafield?" Śakra, lord of the gods, then thought to himself, "If those that directly hear this Dharma discourse proclaiming the qualities obtain an excellent boon, then what need is there to even consider taking birth in that buddhafield?"

6.82 The Blessed One then addressed Śakra, lord of the gods, "Kauśika, those on the bodhisattva vehicle who take birth in that buddhafield obtain the supreme boon. How so? Because, Kauśika, they abide in irreversibility. Kauśika, any creatures who generate the resolve to take birth in that buddhafield, as soon as they generate that resolve, will be nurtured and supported like irreversible bodhisattva mahāsattvas."

6.83 When the Blessed One taught this Dharma discourse, the minds of some five thousand monks were liberated from all contaminants without further appropriation. Eight thousand monks of bodhisattva vehicle made aspiration prayers to take birth in that buddhafield. Five thousand nuns of the bodhisattva vehicle also made aspiration prayers to take birth in that buddhafield. A hundred thousand male lay practitioners of the bodhisattva vehicle also made aspiration prayers to take birth in that buddhafield. Ten thousand female lay practitioners of the bodhisattva vehicle also made aspiration prayers to take birth in that buddhafield. Many thousands of gods of the desire realm also made aspiration prayers to take birth in that buddhafield. All of them received prophecies that they would take birth in the buddhafield of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha Akṣobhya and would fully awaken to unsur-

passed and perfect buddhahood. Other beings, besides these, who likewise make the aspiration to take birth in that buddhafield, will also be prophesied to fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and, having been so prophesied, will take birth in that buddhafield.

6.84 Furthermore, when the Blessed One taught this Dharma discourse, by the power and blessings of this Dharma discourse, the entire world system of the great trichiliocosm quaked in six ways—it quaked, trembled, shook, shuddered, rumbled, and roared; it forcefully quaked, trembled, shook, shuddered, rumbled, and roared; it forcefully quaked, trembled, shook, shuddered, rumbled, and roared everywhere; and the world system was engulfed by a splendid radiance.

6.85 Thus the Blessed One spoke, and that entire assembly, including the venerable Śāradvatīputra, the venerable Ānanda, the Four Great Kings, Śakra, lord of the gods, Brahmā, the ruler of the Sahā world, and a multitude of monks, along with the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced with utmost delight and praised what the Blessed One had said.

6.86 *This concludes "The Array of Akṣobhya," the sixth of the one hundred thousand sections of the Dharma discourse The Noble Great Heap of Jewels.*

Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi together with the chief editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

Abbreviations

C Choné Kangyur

D Degé Kangyur

H Lhasa Kangyur

J Lithang Kangyur

K Kangxi Peking Kangyur

N Narthang

S Stok Palace Kangyur

Y Yongle Peking Kangyur

Notes

1. On this Kharoṣṭhī language version of the Akṣobhyavyūha sūtra, six hundred lines of which are found in the Bajaur Collection of scrolls found in the late 1990s by Nazim Khan at Mian Kaly in the Bajaur District of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly Northwest Frontier) Province of Pakistan, see Gul 2024. See also Strauch 2010, p. 26.

2. See Nattier 2000, also Dantinne 1983.

3. Of the forty-nine texts of the Ratnakūṭa collection, only five are extant in Sanskrit. See, Pedersen 1989, pp. 60–61.

4. "The Dharma-Door Praising Akṣobhya's Merits" in Chang 1983, pp. 315–38.

5. Dantinne, 1983.

6. Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 20. Phangthangma 2003, p. 8 (11).

7. For a full bibliography including over forty publications in Japanese related to this text, see the Open Philology website: https://bibliography.openphilology.eu/bibliography/sutra/6/.

8. Following S, Y, N, and H, *gnod sems kyi sems mi bskyed*. D reads *gnod sems can kyi sems mi bskyed*.

9. That is to say, doubt regarding his bodhisattva resolutions.

10. The implication here is noncelibacy. Tib. *mi tshangs par spyod pa*.

11. Up to here is an iteration of the (twelve or) thirteen ascetic practices (Skt. *dhūtaguṇa*) which are enumerated in many other sources (see glossary). Here they are followed by further practices.

12. Tib. *lag pa bsgyur zhing*. This likely refers to the act of teaching while crossing one's arms over the chest, which can be seen as disrespectful towards the sacred Dharma.

13. Tib. *dge sbyong dang bram ze*. This translates the much-debated Sanskrit *dvanda* compound term *śramaṇabrāhmaṇa*. In this context it likely refers to forest-dwelling renunciants in other non-Buddhist philosophical and spiritual traditions. While the term *brāhmaṇa* is often taken as referring simply to a caste identity ("Brahmin"), it was also used as an aspirational category. For a book length analysis of the complex valences in how the term *śramaṇabrāhmaṇa* was used in early Buddhism, see McGovern 2019.

14. Following the Yongle edition which reads *lags na*. The Degé and Stok editions read *las na*, which appears to be a scribal error.

15. In Mahāyāna tradition, it is said that bodhisattvas take their final rebirth in the Heaven of Joy as bodhisattvas on the tenth *bhūmi*, and it is from there that they reach complete, final or perfect awakening.

16. Tib. *nam mkha' la gnas so*. The example that follows makes it evident that by "remaining in space" within the womb it is meant that while they are there they do not touch the walls of the womb and therefore remain untainted by it.

17. Following Y, K, N, H *lan 'ga'*. D reads *lan dga'*.

18. Following Y, K: *mi stong par 'gyur*. D, S read *mi stongs par*.

19. The terms for these numbers are tentative. The Tibetan (with the tentative Sanskrit terms they translate), is as follows: *rtsis kyis khyad phyin* [*bhṛśa*, *vāḍha*] *ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/ gtams* [*kaṅkara*] *ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/ dkrigs* [*bimbara*] *ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/ mchog yas* [*pravara*] *ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/ ka ran da ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/ zil gnon ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/ ther 'bum* [*ayuta*] *ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/ zhal du med pa ni 'di snyed cig go zhe 'am/*

20. This sentence is absent from the Yongle Kangyur (Y).

21. Tib. *shing ljon chen po ti mi sa zhes bya ba*. A tree known as *timiśa* or *tiniśa* appears a few times in Vālmīki's Rāmāyana, and it is mentioned there that monkeys eat its fruit.

22. Tib. *rdo mu la so*. The stone has not been identified but is presumed to be a gemstone.

23. Translation tentative. Tib. *lag pa'i reg pa dang/ bong ba dang/ dbyig pa la sogs pa*. The abridged translation of the parallel section from the Chinese reads: "free from harm by water, fire, knives, cudgels, ferocious beasts and poisonous insects." Chang 1984, p. 334.

24. Tib. *yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas gnyis pa las 'da' bar ni mi 'gyur ro*. The syntax is clumsy here, but as becomes clear, the *gnyis pa* ("second") here and *passim* does not refer to a second Buddha, but refers to the aforementioned "body" or "lifetime." This is also the interpretation found in the abridged translation from Chinese which reads "…[at most] two lifetimes." Chang 1984, p. 335.

25. See previous note.

26. Context suggests this refers to the thus-gone one Akṣobhya.

27. Following K, J: *'bri phod na*. D, S read *'dri phod na*.

28. For a discussion of the doctrine of the early Mahāyāna, whereby there cannot be more than one fully awakened buddha present in any given world system at the same time, see Nattier 2000, p. 89 ff.

Bibliography

Tibetan

'phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa mi 'khrugs pa'i bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo (*Āryākṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūhasūtra*). Toh 50, Degé Kangyur vol. 40 (dkon brtsegs, kha), folios 1.b–70.a.

'phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa mi 'khrugs pa'i bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. 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 Tripiṭaka 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. 40, pp. 3–187.

'phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa mi 'khrugs pa'i bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Stok Palace Kangyur vol. 36 (dkon brtsegs, kha), folios. 1.a–102.b.

Phangthangma (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*). Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003.

Chinese

A ju fo guo jing 阿閦佛國經 (*Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūhasūtra*), Taishō 313 (CBETA)

Budong rulai hui 不動如來會 (*Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūhasūtra*), Taishō 310(6) (CBETA)

Other Languages

Chang, Garma C. C. *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sutras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa Sutra*. Annotated edition. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983.

Dantinne, Jean. *La Splendeur de l'Inébraniable (Akṣobhyavyūha)*. Tome 1, Chapitres I–III: *Les Auditeurs (Śrāvaka)*. Louvain-la-Neuve, Institut Orientaliste, 1983.

Gul, Jan. "Akṣobhyavyūha an Early Mahāyāna Sūtra in Kharoṣṭhī (Manuscript) from Gandhāra: A Palaeographic Study." *Ancient Pakistan* XXXV (2024): 49–76.

Kwan, Tai-wo. *A Study of the Teaching Regarding the Pure Land of Akṣobhya Buddha in Early Mahāyāna*. PhD Diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 1985.

McGovern, Nathan. *The Snake and the Mongoose: The Emergence of Identity in Early Indian Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Nattier, Jan. "The Realm of Akṣobhya: A Missing Piece in the History of Pure Land Buddhism." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000): 71–102.

Pedersen, K. Priscilla. "Notes on the Ratnakūṭa Collection." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 2 (June 30, 1980): 60–66.

Sakaki, Ryōzaburō, ed. *Honyaku myōgi taishū* (*Mahāvyutpatti*). 2 vols. 1916. Reprint, Tokyo: Kokusho Kanakōkai, 1987.

Strauch, Ingo. “More Missing Pieces of Early Pure Land Buddhism: New Evidence for Akṣobhya and Abhirati in an Early Mahayana Sutra from Gandhāra.” *Eastern Buddhist* 41.1 (2010): 23–66.

Williams, Paul. *Buddhism: The Origins and Nature of Mahāyāna Buddhism; Some Mahāyāna Religious Topics, Volume 3*. Taylor & Francis, 2004.

For further related works, including Japanese scholarship, see Open Philology website: https://bibliography.openphilology.eu/bibliography/sutra/6/

Glossary

Abhirati

mngon par dga’ ba

མངོན་པར་དགའ་བ།

abhirati

Literally “Joyful” or “Higher Joy”, the name of the eastern buddhafield of Akṣobhya. The buddhafield is described as being one thousand buddhafields away from our own world in the eastern direction.

absence of self

bdag med pa

བདག་མེད་པ།

anātman

The absence of an intrinsic self-nature in persons and in all phenomena.

Akṣobhya

mi ’khrugs pa

མི་འཁྲུགས་པ།

akṣobhya

Literally “unperturbed” or “immovable.” The buddha of the eastern buddhafield of Abhirati. As detailed in this sūtra, the name was given to a monk when he made his bodhisattva resolutions and was retained when he attained full awakening. The name refers to Akṣobhya’s firmness of resolve in his commitments as a bodhisattva and his ability to remain unperturbed in his interactions with sentient beings.

Ānanda

kun dga’ bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

ānanda

Use standard definition.

armor

go cha

གོ་ཆ།

kavaca

Armor or protective clothing was made of closely interwoven strands of material, strapped around the body. In the Mahāyāna sūtras, armor is used symbolically to refer to power of the resolve of the mind of awakening and its attendant practices of the six perfections, which give complete protection from all afflictions.

ascetic

dge sbyong

དགེ་སྦྱོང་།

śramaṇa

Use standard definition.

ascetic practices

sbyangs pa'i yon tan

སྦྱངས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན།

dhūtaguṇa

Ascetic practices that may be adopted by renunciants. The list varies slightly according to different sources. The *Mahāvyutpatti* list, which is very close but not identical to how they are presented here, is as follows: (1) wearing rags (pāṃśukūlika, phyag dar khrod pa), (2) (in the form of only) three religious robes (traicīvarika, chos gos gsum), (3) (coarse in texture as) garments of felt (nāma[n]tika, 'phyings pa pa), (4) eating by alms (paiṇḍapātika, bsod snyoms pa), (5) having a single mat to sit on (aikāsanika, stan gcig pa), (6) not eating after noon (khalupaścādbhaktika, zas phyis mi len pa), (7) living alone in the

forest (āraṇyaka, dgon pa pa), (8) living at the base of a tree (vṛkṣamūlika, shing drungs pa), (9) living in the open (not under a roof) (ābhyavakāśika, bla gab med pa), (10) frequenting charnel grounds (śmāśānika, dur khrod pa), (11) sleeping sitting up (in meditative posture) (naiṣadika, cog bu pa), and (12) accepting whatever seating position is offered (yāthāsaṃstarika, gzhi ji bzhin pa). *Mahāvyutpatti*, (Sakaki 1916 nos. 1127–39).

aśoka tree

shing mya ngan tshang

ཤིང་མྱ་ངན་ཚང་།

aśoka

A broad shade-giving tree (Saraca indica) with orange-scarlet flowers that is used to decorate temples.

autumn month of Kārttika

ston zla tha chungs

སྟོན་ཟླ་ཐ་ཆུང་ས།

kārttika

The lunar month that typically falls in October-November, which in general Indian tradition was considered the most powerful time to perform good actions.

Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

Use standard definition.

blessed buddha

sangs rgyas bcom ldan ’das

སངས་རྒྱས་བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

buddhabhagavān

A common epithet of buddhas.

Blessed One

bcom ldan ’das

བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

bhagavat

Use standard definition.

bodhi tree

byang chub kyi shing

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ཤིང་།

bodhivṛkṣa

The name of the tree under which the Buddha Śākyamuni attained awakening. The same term is used to describe the trees under which other thus-gone ones, both in this realm and others, attain awakening.

bodhisattva

byang chub sems dpa’

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ།

bodhisattva

Use standard definition.

bodhisattva mahāsattva

byang chub sems dpa’ sems dpa’ chen po

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ།

bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ

Use standard definition.

bodhisattva vehicle

byang chub sems dpa’i theg pa

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་ཐེག་པ།

bodhisattvayāna

The way or “vehicle” (yāna) of bodhisattvas, a synonym for the Mahāyāna or “Great Vehicle.”

bodily relics

sku gdung

སྐུ་གདུང་།

dhātu, śarīra

The physical remains or personal objects of a previous thus-gone one, worthy one, or other realized being that are venerated for their perpetual potency. They are often enshrined in stūpas and other public monuments so as to bring benefit to the Buddhist community at large. It can also, as here, refer to the relics retrieved from the ashes after the body is cremated.

Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā

Use standard definition.

brahmā deities

tshangs ris kyi lha

ཚངས་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ།

brahmakāyikadeva

Gods in the brahmā heavens of the form realm.

Brahmā lord of the Sahā world

mi mjed kyi bdag po tshangs pa

མི་མཇེད་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ་ཚངས་པ།

brahmā sahāmpatiḥ

Brahmā Sahāmpati is the main epithet of Brahmā, the presiding deity of our present world, the Sahā world, or the “world of endurance.”

brahmin

bram ze

བྲམ་ཟེ།

brāhmaṇa

Use standard definition.

branches of the path

lam yan lag brgyad

ལམ་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭāṅgamārga

The eightfold Buddhist path as presented in the Śrāvakayāna, namely: right view, right intention, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right recollection, and right samādhi.

buddha realm

sangs rgyas kyi yul

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ།

buddhaviṣaya

Here refers to a world that has been transformed and blessed by the presence of a buddha. Similar to “buddhafield.”

buddhafield

sangs rgyas kyi zhing

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་།

buddhakṣetra

A buddhafield refers the field of activity, or particular world system, in which a specific buddha resides, in which beings may follow the path to awakening. There are innumerable such pure lands or buddhafields in Mahāyāna Buddhist cosmology.

bull

khyu mchog

ཁྱུ་མཆོག

vṛṣabha

An epithet of buddhas. A bull is fearless and is the leader of a herd. The term more broadly can refer to the chief, lord, or best among any group.

celibacy

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚངས་པར་སྤྱོད་པ།

brahmacarya

Lit. “brahmā conduct,” it refers to a life of pure conduct characterized by celibacy.

concentration

bsam gtan

བསམ་གཏན།

dhyāna

Use standard definition.

Dharma

chos

ཆོས།

dharma

Use standard definition.

dharmabhāṇaka monk

chos smra ba'i dge slong

ཆོས་སྨྲ་བའི་དགེ་སློང་།

dharmabhāṇakabhikṣu

Literally "monks who recite the Dharma." In early Buddhism, particularly before the teachings were written down and were transmitted orally, dharmabhāṇakas were a key factor in the preservation and evolution of the Buddhist scriptures. Various groups of dharmabhāṇaka monks would specialize in memorizing and reciting the different sections of the Buddhist teachings.

dharmadhātu

chos kyi dbyings

ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

dharmadhātu

The ultimate nature of phenomena, sometimes equated with emptiness. The term is interpreted variously—given the many connotations of both dharma and dhātu—as the realm, element, or nature, of all phenomena, thus being synonymous with reality or truth or other terms designating the ultimate. In Tibetan, instances of the Sanskrit dharmadhātu with this range of meanings is rendered as chos kyi dbyings (literally "expanse of phenomena"), which is distinguished from instances of the same Sanskrit term with its rather different meaning—related to mental perception in the context of the twelve sense sources and eighteen elements (rendered chos kyi khams).

dharmakāya

chos kyi sku

ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྐུ།

dharmakāya

Literally "body of Dharma." A term that refers to the eternal, imperceptible awakening of a buddha. It is distinguished from rūpakāya, which refers to the perceptible forms of a buddha.

Dīpaṅkara

mar me mdzad

མར་མེ་མཛད།

dīpaṅkara

The previous buddha who prophesied the awakening of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

distinctive excellences of the aspirations

smon lam gyi khyad par

སྨོན་ལམ་གྱི་ཁྱད་པར།

praṇidhānaviśeṣa

The term used in this text for the particular qualities, or excellences, of the aspirations or prayers made by the bodhisattva Akṣobhya, which in turn lead to the particular qualities of his buddhafield after his full awakening. See discussion in Nattier 2000, p. 98.

eight liberations

rnam par thar pa brgyad

རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭavimokṣa

Use standard definition.

eighty minor marks

dpe byad bzang po brgyad bcu

དཔེ་བྱད་བཟང་པོ་བརྒྱད་བཅུ།

aśītyanuvyañjana

A set of eighty bodily characteristics and insignia borne by both buddhas and kings of the entire world (cakravartins). They are considered “minor” in terms of being secondary to the thirty-two characteristics of a great being.

eloquence

spobs pa

སྤོབས་པ།

pratibhāna

The inspiration and courage to teach the Dharma.

emptiness

stong pa nyid

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

śūnyatā

Use standard definition. One of the three gateways of liberation.

endowed with perfect wisdom and conduct

rig pa dang zhabs su ldan pa

རིག་པ་དང་ཞབས་སུ་ལྡན་པ།

vidyācaraṇasaṃpanna

A common epithet of buddhas. According to some explanations, “wisdom” refers to awakening, and “conduct” to the three trainings (bslab pa gsum) by means of which that awakening is reached; according to others, “wisdom” refers to right view, and “conduct” to the other seven elements of the eightfold path.

eon

bskal pa

བསྐལ་པ།

kalpa

Use standard definition.

excessive pride

lhag pa’i nga rgyal

ལྷག་པའི་ང་རྒྱལ།

adhimāna

One of six or seven types of pride, it is the pride of overestimating one's own accomplishments.

factors of awakening

byang chub yan lag

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཡན་ལག

bodhyaṅga

Refers to the seven factors or branches of awakening. They are respectively the factor of awakening of right mindfulness, right investigation of truth, right effort, right joy, right mental pliancy, right single-pointed concentration and right equanimity.

faculties

dbang po

དབང་པོ།

indriya

Here refers to the five faculties, namely faith, perseverance, recollection or mindfulness, meditative absorption, and insight. These are included among the thirty-seven factors of awakening.

female lay practitioner

dge bsnyen ma

དགེ་བསྙེན་མ།

upāsikā

An unordained female practitioner who observes the five vows not to kill, lie, steal, be intoxicated, or commit sexual misconduct.

five acts with immediate retribution

mtshams med lnga po

མཚམས་མེད་ལྔ་པོ།

pañcānantarya

Acts for which one will be reborn in hell immediately after death, without any intervening stages. The five are killing a worthy one (arhat), killing one's own father, killing one's own mother, causing a schism in the monastic community, and maliciously drawing blood from a thus-gone one.

Fortunate Eon

bskal pa bzang po

བསྐལ་པ་བཟང་པོ།

bhadrakalpa

Name of the present eon of time, during which one thousand buddhas appear in succession, Śākyamuni being the fourth and Maitreya the fifth.

four bases of supernatural power

rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi

རྫུ་འཕྲུལ་གྱི་རྐང་པ་བཞི།

caturṛddhipāda

Four types of absorption related to intention, diligence, attention, and analysis as they manifest on the greater path of accumulation.

four continents

gling bzhi

གླིང་བཞི།

caturdvīpa

Use standard definition.

four downfalls

ltung ba bzhi po

ལྟུང་བ་བཞི་པོ།

See "root downfalls."

Four Great Kings

rgyal po chen po bzhi

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི།

caturmahārāja, catvāro mahārājāḥ

Use standard definition.

fourfold community

’khor bzhi

འཁོར་བཞི།

catuḥparṣad

The four communities are: male monastics, female monastics, male lay devotees, and female lay devotees.

fourfold mastery

so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi

སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ་བཞི།

catuḥpratisaṃvid

Clear discernment of, and mastery in, the four aspects, namely Dharma, meaning, language, and confident eloquence.

Gajagandhahastin

bal glang spos kyi glang po che

བལ་གླང་སྤོས་ཀྱི་གླང་པོ་ཆེ།

gajagandhahastin

The name of a bodhisattva mahāsattva in Abhirati, the buddhafield of the thus-gone one Akṣobhya.

Gandhahastin

spos kyi glang po che

སྤོས་ཀྱི་གླང་པོ་ཆེ།

gandhahastin

The name of a bodhisattva mahāsattva in Abhirati, the buddhafield of the thus-gone one Akṣobhya.

gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

Use standard definition.

go forth

rab tu byung ba

རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་བ།

pra√vraj

Use standard definition.

god

lha

ལྷ།

deva

Use standard definition.

gods of the desire realm

’dod pa na spyod pa’i lha, ’dod pa na spyod pa’i lha’i ris

འདོད་པ་ན་སྤྱོད་པའི་ལྷ།, འདོད་པ་ན་སྤྱོད་པའི་ལྷའི་རིས།

kāmāvacaradeva

Gods in the six heavens of the desire realm, namely the Heaven of the Four Great Kings, the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, the Heaven Without Strife, the Heaven of Joy, the Heaven of Delighting in Emanations, and the Heaven of Making Use of Others' Emanations.

gods of the form realm

gzugs na spyod pa'i lha

གཟུགས་ན་སྤྱོད་པའི་ལྷ།

rūpāvacaradeva

Gods in the heavens of the form realm. There are said to be seventeen heavens of the form realm, structured according to the four concentrations of the form realm (rūpāvacaradhyāna), the highest five of which are are brahmā realms collectively called "pure abodes" (śuddhāvāsa). The form realm is located above the desire realm (kāmadhātu) and below the formless realm (ārūpya-dhātu).

gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum gyi lha

སུམ་ཅུ་རྩ་གསུམ་གྱི་ལྷ།

trayastriṃśadeva, trāyastriṃśadeva

The gods of the desire realm (kāmadhātu) whose presiding deity is usually considered to be Śakra, also known as Indra.

Golden Lotus

gser gyi pad ma

གསེར་གྱི་པད་མ།

The name by which the bodhisattva Gandhahastin will be known when he becomes a fully awakened buddha in Abhirati.

great being

skyes bu chen po

སྐྱེས་བུ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāpuruṣa

One endowed with the thirty-two excellent marks and the eighty minor marks.

great elephant

glang po chen po

གླང་པོ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahānāga

A worthy one who has defeated the enemy of saṃsāra and the host of māras is likened to a great elephant that helps a king defeat their enemies on a battlefield.

great eon

bskal pa chen po

བསྐལ་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākalpa

Definitions regarding the duration of one “great eon” vary. According to this text, ten intermediary eons (antarakalpa) equal one eon (kalpa) and ten eons correspond to one great eon (mahākalpa).

Great Eyes

spyan chen po

སྤྱན་ཆེན་པོ།

The name of the Thus-gone One in the buddhafield Abhirati before whom the monk Akṣobhya makes his resolutions and receives the prediction of his future awakening.

Heaven of Joy

dga’ ldan

དགའ་ལྡན།

tuṣita

Use standard definition.

Heaven of Mastery Over Others’ Emanations

gzhan ’phrul dbang byed kyi ris

གཞན་འཕྲུལ་དབང་བྱེད་ཀྱི་རིས།

paranirmitavaśavartin

The highest of the six heavens of the desire realm, so named because its inhabitants have power over others' emanations. The obstructing māras, as a class of deities, are said to occupy this heaven.

Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་བཅུ་རྩ་གསུམ།

trayastriṃśa, trāyastriṃśa

Use standard definition.

heedfulness

bag yod pa

བག་ཡོད་པ།

apramāda

Maintaining awareness of the true nature of phenomena, even when engaged in mundane tasks. Heedfulness is one of the main aspects of mindfulness as broadly construed, indicating guarding the mind against negative thoughts and emotions while fostering positive or virtuous states of mind.

Highest Heaven

'og min

འོག་མིན།

akaniṣṭha

Use standard definition.

interim state

bar ma do

བར་མ་དོ།

antarābhāva

The intermediate state between death and rebirth. It may also refer to the interim state until the attainment of complete buddhahood.

irreversible

phyir mi ldog pa

ཕྱིར་མི་ལྡོག་པ།

avaivartika, avinivarta, avinivartanīya

A bodhisattva who has reached the stage of being irreversible will never turn back, or be turned back, from inevitable progress toward the full awakening of a buddha.

Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུའི་གླིང་།

jambudvīpa

Use standard definition.

Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

རྗི་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

jinamitra

Use standard definition.

kācalindika cloth

ka tsa lin di ka

ཀ་ཙ་ལིན་དི་ཀ

kācalindika, kācilindika

Use standard definition.

karma

las

ལས།

karman

Use standard definition.

Kauśika

kau shi ka

ཀཽ་ཤི་ཀ

kauśika

Use standard definition.

kinnara

mi ma yin pa

མི་མ་ཡིན་པ།

kinnara

Use standard definition.

kṣatriya caste

rgyal rigs

རྒྱལ་རིགས།

kṣatriya

Use standard definition.

kumuda

ku mu da

ཀུ་མུ་ད།

kumuda

A night-blossoming water lily, which can be red, pink, or white

league

dpag tshad

དཔག་ཚད།

yojana

Use standard definition.

level of no more training

mi slob pa'i sa

མི་སློབ་པའི་ས།

The stage on the bodhisattva path at which one is beyond training.

level of training

slob pa'i sa

སློབ་པའི་ས།

śaikṣabhūmi

The stage on the bodhisattva path at which one engages in training.

lords of yakṣas

gnod sbyin bdag po

གནོད་སྦྱིན་བདག་པོ།

yakṣādhipati

Martial leaders of yakṣa beings, the most prominent of whom is the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, himself a lord of yakṣas, who became one of the "eight close sons of the Buddha."

lower realms

ngan song

ངན་སོང་།

durgati

A collective name for the realms of animals, hungry ghosts, and denizens of the hells.

mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྟོ་འཕྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Use standard definition.

Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya

Use standard definition.

male lay practitioner

dge bsnyen

དགེ་བསྙེན།

upāsaka

An unordained male practitioner who observes the five vows not to kill, lie, steal, be intoxicated, or commit sexual misconduct.

māndārava flowers

me tog man dA ra ba

མེ་ཏོག་མན་དྷ་ར་བ།

māndārava

The flowers of the flame tree, or Indian coral tree, Erythrina indica, one of the five trees of paradise, which has brilliant scarlet flowers.

Māra

bdud

བདུད།

māra

Use standard definition.

māra deities

bdud kyi ris kyi lha

བདུད་ཀྱི་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ།

mārakāyika

Use standard definition.

Māra Pāpīyān

bdud sdig can

བདུད་སྡིག་ཅན།

māraḥ pāpīyān

The Sanskrit pāpīyān and the Tibetan sdig can (literally “wicked,” “sinful,” or “Evil”) is the main epithet of the great demon Māra, the embodiment of obstruction, who tries to thwart the path to awakening. It is also an epithet used for all māra deities or “sinful māras.” They are portrayed as the primary adversaries and tempters of people who vow to take up the religious life, and they are held responsible for perpetuating the illusions that keep beings bound to the world and worldly attachments. In many sources, including this sūtra, Māra and his kind are depicted as the deities residing in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations. Elsewhere, Māra is also sometimes known as the “lord of love” (Skt. kāmadeva, Tib. dga’ rab dbang phyug).

meditative equipoise

snyoms ’jug

སྙོམས་འཇུག

samāpatti

Use standard definition.

mind set on omniscience

thams cad mkhyen pa'i sems

ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པའི་སེམས།

sarvajñacitta

A synonym for the mind set on awakening (bodhicitta). The intention to pursue the omniscience of complete awakening for all beings.

nāga

klu

ཀླུ།

nāga

Use standard definition.

nandyāvarta

gyung drung 'khyil pa

གྱུང་དྲུང་འཁྱིལ་པ།

nandyāvarta

An auspicious design resembling a svastika with an elaborate pattern around its border. In the *Mahāvyutpatti*, nandyāvarta is translated into the Tibetan as g.yung drung; however, later on, the same Tibetan is used to translate svastika, which is translated by the Tibetan bkra shis ldan in the *Mahāvyutpatti*. Sometimes the distinction is made with the extended term g.yung drung 'kyil ba, a "rotating svastika / g.yung drung," since the border pattern of the nandyāvarta gives the impression that the svastika in the center is rotating. It is one of the eighty auspicious signs of the buddhas.

nirvāṇa

mya ngan las 'das pa, myang 'das

མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ།, མྱང་འདས།

nirvāṇa

Use standard definition.

noble daughter

rigs kyi bu mo

རིགས་ཀྱི་བུ་མོ།

kuladuhitṛ

See “noble son.”

noble son

rigs kyi bu

རིགས་ཀྱི་བུ།

kulaputra

While in classical Sanskrit usage this usually denoted Brahmins (i.e. those born in the Brahmin caste to seven-generation Brahmin parents), the Buddha redefined noble birth as determined by an individual’s own conduct and integrity. Anyone who entered the Buddha’s community or saṅgha was henceforth referred to as a “noble son” or “noble daughter.”

non-returner

phyir mi ’ong ba

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བ།

anāgāmin

Use standard definition.

objects of veneration

mchod rten

མཆོད་རྟེན།

caitya, stūpa

Physical remains or other testimonies to the existence of a buddha in our world are worshipped as objects of veneration. Typically, but not always, the term refers to the dome shaped reliquaries known as stūpas.

once-returner

lan cig phyir ’ong ba

ལན་ཅིག་ཕྱིར་འོང་བ།

sakṛdāgāmin

Use standard definition.

padma

pad ma

པད་མ།

kamala, padma

The red lotus, the sacred flower.

parinirvāṇa

yongs su mya ngan las ’das pa

ཡོངས་སུ་མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ།

mahāparinirvāṇa, parinirvāṇa

Use standard definition.

path of the ten virtues

dge ba bcu’i las kyi lam

དགེ་བ་བཅུའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ལམ།

daśakuśalakarmapatha

The ten virtuous actions are refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, gossip, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

perfection of concentration

bsam gtan gyi pha rol tu phyin pa

བསམ་གཏན་གྱི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

dhyānapāramitā

The fifth of the six perfections, the core trainings of a bodhisattva.

perfection of generosity

sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa

སྦྱིན་པའི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

dānapāramitā

The first of the six perfections, the core trainings of a bodhisattva.

perfection of morality

tshul khrims kyi pha rol tu phyin pa

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

śīlapāramitā

The second of the six perfections, the core trainings of a bodhisattva.

perfection of patience

bzod pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa

བཟོད་པའི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

kṣāntipāramitā

The third of the six perfections, the core trainings of a bodhisattva.

perfection of perseverance

brtson 'grus kyi pha rol tu phyin pa

བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཀྱི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

vīryapāramitā

The fourth of the six perfections, the core trainings of a bodhisattva.

perfection of wisdom

shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa

ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

prajñāpāramitā

The sixth of the six perfections, the core trainings of a bodhisattva.

perfections

pha rol tu phyin pa

ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

pāramitā

Refers to the six perfections that constitute the main practices for bodhisattvas. They are the perfections of generosity, moral conduct, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom.

power of the awakened

sangs rgyas kyi mthu

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་མཐུ།

buddhānubhāva

Literally “By the power of the Buddha/ the Awakened One” or “by the power of the buddhas,” this phrase refers to the power exerted over people and events when in the presence of a buddha, a fully awakened being.

powers

stobs

སྟོབས།

bala

Identical to the “five faculties” in terms of the categories (namely faith, perseverance, recollection or mindfulness, meditative absorption, and insight) but differing in that they have become “powerful” and cannot be set off course

by adverse factors. They are perfected during the last two of the four aspects of ascertainment on the path of preparation (prayogamārga/sbyor lam).

pratyekabuddha

rang sangs rgyas

རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

pratyekabuddha

Use standard definition.

pratyekabuddha vehicle

rang sangs rgyas kyi theg pa

རང་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཐེག་པ།

pratyekabuddhayāna

The way or vehicle of pratyekabuddhas, who have reached awakening without contact with the Buddha Dharma. Particularly characterized by understanding the phases of dependent origination.

precious queen

bud med rin po che

བུད་མེད་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

strīratna

One of the seven treasures of a wheel-turning monarch (cakravartin).

Ratnaketu

rin po che'i tog

རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་དཔྱག

ratnaketu

A name of a bodhisattva mahāsattva referred to by the Buddha in this text, perhaps alluding to the bodhisattva who became the buddha of the southern direction, who bears the same name in, for example, the *Sūtra of Golden Light* (Toh 555, 556, 557).

ratnakūṭa

dkon mchog brtsegs pa

དཀོན་མཆོག་བརྩེགས་པ།

ratnakūṭa

A collection of texts comprising a section of the Kangyur as well as of the Chinese Buddhist canon. See Heap of Jewels.

root downfalls

rtsa ba'i ltung ba

རྩ་བའི་ལྟུང་བ།

mūlāpatti

The four root downfalls are sexual intercourse, theft, murder, and claiming greater realization than one has. They are the most severe of the five types of transgressions a monastic can incur and result in expulsion from the monastic community.

root of virtue

dge ba'i rtsa ba

དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ།

kuśalamūla

According to many Mahāyāna sūtras, roots of virtue are acquired by generating the mind of awakening, and by being in the presence of a buddha. They are broadly synonymous with "merit," are dedicated to the benefit of beings, and will ripen in the future. More broadly, they may be understood as good actions that are conducive to happiness.

Sahā world

mi mjed

མི་མཇེད།

sahāloka

Use standard definition.

Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

śakra

Use standard definition.

samādhi

ting nge ’dzin

ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

samādhi

Often translated as “meditative absorption,” the ability of the mind to concentrate single-pointedly on a specific object for a length of time. It is one of the three trainings (triśikṣā, bslab pa gsum) and closely related or synonymous with “concentration” (dhyāna, bsam gtan). In the Mahāyāna sūtras many different such meditative states are named.

saṅgha

dge ’dun

དགེ་འདུན།

saṃgha

Use standard definition.

Śāradvatīputra

sha ra dwa ti’i bu

ཤཱ་ར་དྭ་ཏཱི་བུ།

Śāradvatīputra

Use standard definition.+ One of the main interlocutors in this sūtra.

seat of awakening

byang chub kyi snying po, byang chub snying po

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སྙིང་པོ།, བྱང་ཆུབ་སྙིང་པོ།

bodhimaṇḍa

Use standard definition.

seven treasures

rin po che sna bdun

རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྣ་བདུན།

saptaratna

The seven treasures of a wheel-turning monarch (cakravartin) which ensure his authority are typically listed as: the precious wheel, the precious elephant, the precious horse, the precious jewel, the precious queen, the precious steward or general, and the precious minister.

signlessness

mtshan ma med pa

མཚན་མ་མེད་པ།

animitta

The ultimate absence of marks and signs from all phenomena; one of the three gateways of liberation.

śrāvaka

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

Use standard definition.

śrāvaka vehicle

nyan thos theg pa

ཉན་ཐོས་ཐེག་པ།

śrāvakayāna

The way or “vehicle” (yāna) of śrāvakas, the disciples or “hearers.” According to Mahāyāna sources such as the present text, this is one of the two constituent parts (along with the pratyekabuddha vehicle) of the Hīnayāna or “Lesser Vehicle.”

storied mansion

khang pa brtsegs pa

ཁང་པ་བརྩེགས་པ།

kūṭāgāra

A grand building with an upper story and often a high ornamental roof. Kūṭāgāra literally means “upper chamber” and is synonymous with kūṭāgāraśālā, “hall with an upper chamber or chambers.”

stream-enterer

rgyun du zhugs pa, rgyun zhugs

རྒྱུན་དུ་ཞུགས་པ།, རྒྱུན་ཞུགས།

śrotaāpanna, śrotāpanna

Use standard definition.

superknowledge

mngon par shes pa

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ།

abhijñā, abhijñāna

The superknowledges are listed as either five or six. The first five are the divine eye (clairvoyance), divine ear, performance of miraculous power, recollection of past lives, and knowing others’ thoughts. A sixth, knowing that all outflows have been eliminated, is often added. The first five are attained through concentration (dhyāna) and are sometimes described as worldly, as they can be attained to some extent by non-Buddhist yogins, while the sixth is supramundane and attained only by realization.

supernatural power

rdzu ’phrul

རྫུ་འཕྲུལ།

ṛddhi

Use standard definition.

Surendrabodhi

su ran dra bo d+hi

སུ་རན་ད་བོ་ཇི།

surendrabodhi

Use standard definition.

svastika

bkra shis

བཀྲ་ཤིས།

svastika

Representing eternity, it is one of the eighty auspicious signs. In later Tibetan translations, svastika is translated into Tibetan as g.yung drung. However, in earlier translations, bkra shis or bkra shis ldan is used, while g.yung drung is used to translate nandyāvarta.

the second concentration

bsam gtan gnyis pa

བསམ་གཏན་གཉིས་པ།

dvitīyadhyāna

The second of the “four concentrations,” which are progressive levels of concentration (dhyāna, bsam gtan) that culminate in pure one-pointedness of mind which is the basis of insight. Namely, (1) by means of thought and analysis, detaching from all sense objects, leading to an experience of joy; (2) entering single pointedness that is devoid of thought or analysis, leading to the

experience of joy not reliant on thought or analysis; (3) resting happily in an equanimity that is without attachment to joy; and (4) resting in complete equanimity which is devoid of both happiness and suffering.

thirty-two excellent marks

sum cu rtsa gnyis mtshan

སུམ་ཅུ་རྩ་གཉིས་མཚན།

dvātriṃśallakṣaṇa

These are the thirty-two major physical of marks of a great being (Skt. mahāpuruṣa, Tib. skye bu chen po), characteristic of both buddhas and universal monarchs. They are found listed, for example in The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines (Toh 11), 2.16 and 29.24, and The Play in Full (Toh 95), 7.99 and -26.145–73.

thoroughbred

cang shes pa

ཅང་ཤེས་པ།

ājāneya

A worthy one who is free from fear at death, akin to a thoroughbred horse that is free from fear in battle.

three lower realms

ngan song gsum

ངན་སོང་གསུམ།

tridurgati

See “lower realms.”

three manners

spyod lam gsum

སྤྱོད་ལམ་གསུམ།

traya īryāpathāḥ

Refers to maintaining the three postures of standing, sitting, or walking, ie never lying down.

threefold aspect

gsum gyi rnam pa

གསུམ་གྱི་རྣམ་པ།

The term used in this text apparently to denote the threefold mindfulness (or recollection) of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

Thus-gone One

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

Use standard definition.

transgression

ltung ba

ལྟུང་བ།

āpatti

Actions of body, speech, and mind that cause one to “fall from” the path to awakening and, in the worst cases, to fall to the lower realms of existence. Also rendered here as “downfall.”

trichiliocosm

stong gsum gyi stong chen po’i ’jig rten gyi khams

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

Use standard definition.

Unsurpassable Dharma King

chos kyi rgyal po bla na med pa

ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་བླ་ན་མེད་པ།

anuttaro dharmarājaḥ

An alternative name of Akṣobhya in the buddhafield Abhirati, where there are no other kings.

unsurpassed and perfect awakening

bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub

བླ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ།

anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi, anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhiḥ

The complete and final awakening of buddhahood, so called to distinguish it from the realization of the state of a worthy one.

Unsurpassed Vehicle of the Ten Powers

stobs bcu'i theg pa bla na med pa

སྟོབས་བཅུའི་ཐེག་པ་བླ་ན་མེད་པ།

A synonym for the Mahāyāna, "the Great Vehicle" or the way of bodhisattvas. The ten powers refers to the ten powers of a thus-gone one. They 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 sentient beings; (4) knowing the various elements; (5) knowing the supreme and lesser faculties of sentient beings; (6) knowing the paths that lead to all destinations of rebirth; (7) knowing the concentrations, liberations, absorptions, equilibriums, afflictions, purifications, and abidings; (8) knowing previous lives; (9) knowing the death and rebirth of sentient beings; and (10) knowing the cessation of the defilements.

utpala

ud pa la

ཨུད་པ་ལ།

utpala

The blue lotus or blue water lily.

Uttarakuru

byang gi sgra mi snyan

བྱང་གི་སྒྲ་མི་སྙན།

uttarakuru

Use standard definition.

vajra-wielding

lag na rdo rje

ལག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajrapāṇi

An epithet of yakṣa lords who wield the adamantine vajra as a weapon. This is the epithet by which the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, the yakṣa lord who became a close disciple of the Buddha, is known.

Vulture Peak Mountain

bya rgod phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྒོད་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

gṛdhrakūṭaparvata

Use standard definition.

water with the eight qualities

yan lag brgyad dang ldan pa'i chu

ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་དང་ལྡན་པའི་ཆུ།

aṣṭāṅgajala

Water that has the eight qualities of being sweet, cool, pleasant, light, clear, pure, not harmful to the throat, and beneficial for the stomach.

Well-Gone One

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

Use standard definition.

wheel-turning monarch

'khor los sgyur pa'i rgyal po

འཁོར་ལོས་སྒྱུར་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

cakravartin

Use standard definition.

white lotus

pad ma dkar po

པད་མ་དཀར་པོ།

puṇḍarīka

The white variant of the red lotus. The sacred flower.

wishlessness

smon med pa

སྨོན་མེད་པ།

apraṇihita

The absence of worldly goals or ambitions, with awareness of the true nature of all phenomena. One of the three gateways of liberation.

worthy one

dgra bcom pa

དགྲ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat

Use standard definition.

yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གཉོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

Use standard definition.

Yama realm

gshin rje'i 'jig rten

གཤིན་རྗེའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

yamaloka

Use standard definition.