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**The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable
Radiance**

Acintyaprabhāsanirdeśa

འཕགས་པ་བྱེད་སྐྱོད་བ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྱབ་པས་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

*'phags pa khye'u snang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pas bstan pa zhes bya ba'i chos kyi rnam
grangs*

The Noble Account of Dharma “The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable
Radiance”

Āryācintyaprabhāsanirdeśanāmadharmaparyāya



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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 This sūtra is a story in which the spiritual realization of the child Inconceivable Radiance is revealed through a dialogue with the Buddha Śākyamuni. The Buddha furthermore recounts events from the child's past lives to illustrate how actions committed in one life will determine one's future circumstances. The teaching concludes with the Buddha prophesying how the child Inconceivable Radiance will eventually fully awaken in the future.

ac.

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ac.1 This sūtra was translated by members of the Blazing Wisdom Translation group, Tulku Sherdor and Virginia Blum, under the guidance of Khenpo Sonam Tobgyal and with help from Meghan Howard regarding Sanskrit terms.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable Radiance presents the remarkable account of an abandoned child who is discovered calmly sitting alone in a derelict dwelling in the town of Śrāvastī, licked and nuzzled by wild animals while the townsfolk gawk. The Buddha Śākyamuni, who is in residence nearby, sends Ānanda to investigate, although he knows that the child is an incarnation of a great bodhisattva whose remaining karmic obscurations are now on the verge of exhaustion. The Buddha's action triggers a chain of events that completes this purification and launches the bodhisattva to the next great stage of his spiritual path. This is therefore a story of the bodhisattva's spiritual journey that spans countless eons.

i.2

This sūtra also serves as a framework for various types of Dharma instruction. When he first meets the child, the Buddha's blessings, coupled with the child's own merit and wisdom gathered in previous lifetimes, spur a polemical dialogue in metered verse in which the child challenges the Buddha to reconcile his realization of emptiness with his compassionate teaching activity. The child adopts a nihilistic viewpoint as a rhetorical strategy for eliciting an explanation from the Buddha of the relation between ultimate and relative truth. The Buddha responds that it is the buddhas' realization of how things truly are, which produces spontaneous and nonconceptual compassionate activity for others because the buddhas respond to the suffering of sentient beings' confused misapprehension of how things truly are. A buddha knows that appearances are not real, while sentient beings do not. A sentient being's perception of appearances is compared to clouds in the sky and characterized as imaginary imputation, since the luminous, profound stillness that is mind's true nature is not realized. This exchange is therefore a pithy elucidation of the core principles of the Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings: the view of emptiness suffused with compassion that inspires one to produce boundless teaching activity that in turn instills that same view in others.

- i.3 Shortly after this exchange Śakra appears, drawn by lights that radiate from the child's body throughout the universe, and offers the child a set of divine clothes to cover his naked body. A sermon from the child follows, in which he explains to Śakra all the fine qualities that adorn bodhisattvas such that no further superficial covering of their physical forms is required. With this show of miracles and moving sermon, the child is proclaimed by all present to be an advanced bodhisattva who is inconceivably radiant, and he is so named with great rejoicing.
- i.4 The next episode in this account takes place in the home of the child's mother, where the Buddha has escorted him. At first the child's mother is ashamed to face the Buddha, but the child respectfully urges his mother to make offerings to the Buddha and generate the resolve for awakening before him, and she proceeds to do so. This act on both their parts completely purifies the residual negative karma they shared.
- i.5 King Prasenajit of the state of Kośala, one of the Buddha's principal sponsors, then comes to visit him at his monastic compound outside of town, having heard of the child's miraculous feats. Upon first seeing the child, the king wonders what kinds of deeds he must have performed in the past to have such a perfect physical form. Inconceivable Radiance, through the power of the Buddha and his own past roots of virtue, knows clairvoyantly what King Prasenajit has realized about him, which prompts him to teach the king about how pure actions result in a pure physical form. The king then asks the Buddha to explain how the child, with obvious great virtues and merit, could end up in the unfortunate situation of being abandoned by his unwed mother. The Buddha responds by telling the story of a previous life, long ago, when this bodhisattva (then named Earth) insulted and cursed his mentor in retaliation for being chastised for weakness in his practice, and how the very words of this curse continued to ripen for Earth in lifetime after lifetime, until this very life. Throughout his many lifetimes of being orphaned, abandoned, and eaten by wild predators, the bodhisattva Earth nonetheless never renounced the awakening mind, until finally his positive merit led him to the auspicious circumstances that unfold, with the Buddha's guidance, in this account.
- i.6 In response, the king demonstrates his understanding to the Buddha by offering his own homily about how one should serve a spiritual master and lead a virtuous life, and the benefits that will ensue. The Buddha confirms that the king has spoken truthfully, meaning that the king has spoken Dharma with his blessing.
- i.7 Finally, prompted by the child Inconceivable Radiance, the Buddha presents his own teaching on five sets of four *dharma*s (here meaning spiritual qualities, practices, or realizations) that bodhisattvas must possess

in order to awaken to buddhahood by virtue of gaining acceptance of even the most profound Dharmas. In other words, bodhisattvas should practice the ability to face the profound truth of emptiness without fear, the third and most difficult component of the transcendent virtue of acceptance within the schema of six or ten transcendent virtues.

i.8 At the conclusion of this teaching, Ānanda kneels down, joins his palms together, and, singing a hymn of praise to the Buddha, requests an explanation of this auspicious encounter with the child Inconceivable Radiance. The Buddha then prophesies the child's eventual full awakening as the buddha bhagavān Inconceivable Radiance at the end of a future dark age in which no other buddha has ever appeared. The Buddha's final counsel is that no higher virtue exists than retaining, applying, realizing, and sharing with others this noble account of Dharma of the child Inconceivable Radiance.

i.9 The Tibetan canonical version of the sūtra, translated by the Indian paṇḍita Surendrabodhi and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé (*ye shes sde*), has come down to us in two generally homologous recensions, one titled *'phags pa khye'u snang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pas bstan pa zhes bya ba'i chos kyī rnam grangs*, and the other *'phags pa snang ba bsam gyi mi khyab pa bstan pa zhes bya ba'i chos kyī rnam grangs*.¹ Though this translation is not listed in the imperial period Tibetan catalogs, Surendrabodhi and Yeshé Dé were frequent collaborators on translations recorded therein, so we can reasonably date their translation to the early ninth century.² The English translation presented here is based on a comparison of several versions of the canonical Tibetan translation representing both the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) and Thempangma (*them spangs ma*) recension groups, with the Degé version taken as the primary witness. Substantial variation between the versions was minimal, and such instances have been noted below.

i.10

There is also a unique version of the sūtra preserved among the cache of manuscripts discovered at Dunhuang. Bearing the title *The Scripture of Inconceivable Radiance* (*snang ba bsam du med pa zhes bya'i chos kyi gzhung*), the manuscript contains a different translation than is found in the Kangyur, one that appears to be based on a different recension of the sūtra. Unfortunately, the final folios of the manuscript are missing and with them the colophon that would provide more precise information on the manuscript's textual and translation history. We can, with some confidence, date the manuscript, if not the translation it contains, to a period between the mid-eighth and mid-ninth centuries, the time when Dunhuang was under Tibetan control.³ The translation was certainly completed prior to the eleventh century, when the manuscript depositories at Dunhuang were sealed.⁴ Because it is an entirely different translation from the canonical version taken as the basis here, only the most significant variations have been noted.

i.11 There is no extant version of this text available in Sanskrit, but the sūtra was translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva in the early decades of the fifth century.⁵ The Chinese translation was consulted to clarify difficult points in this translation. There are no known Indian or Tibetan commentaries on this sūtra, and the text seems not to have been frequently cited by either Indian or Tibetan masters, so little is known about the circulation and popularity of the text in South Asia and Tibet. Western scholarship has similarly taken little notice of this sūtra, and there are no previous English translations available.

The Noble Account of Dharma

**The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable
Radiance**

1.

The Translation

[F.275.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavān was residing in Śrāvastī, in the Jeta Grove of Anāthapiṇḍada's park, together with a great saṅgha of one thousand two hundred and fifty bhikṣus and a full five hundred additional bodhisattvas.

1.3 While the Bhagavān was residing in the town of Śrāvastī, its king and his senior ministers, the brahmins, householders, and people from the greater township, along with their families, paid respect, offered reverence and veneration, and presented offerings to the Bhagavān so that he received much fine food, drink, and other items to be eaten and sipped.

1.4 He was a blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha, one with perfect knowledge and conduct, a blissful one, a knower of the world, a charioteer who tamed beings, an unexcelled being, and a teacher of gods and humans. The Blessed Buddha was renowned for his outstanding caste, outstanding clan, outstanding patrilineage, outstanding discipline, outstanding absorption, outstanding insight, outstanding liberation, and outstanding wisdom vision of liberation.⁶ The Bhagavān's fame and renown was thus widespread throughout the world.

1.5 The Blissful One, the knower of the world, the charioteer who tames beings, the unexcelled being, the teacher of gods and humans, the blessed Buddha, was also teaching the Dharma. That is, he was genuinely and fully teaching the sanctified conduct: what is virtuous at first, in the interim, and in the end, what has excellent meaning and excellent words, and what is unadulterated, perfect, [F.275.b] pure, and cleansed.

1.6 He was also in possession of the five eyes, namely the eye of flesh, the divine eye, the eye of Dharma, the eye of insight, and the eye of a buddha. The Bhagavān had soundly defeated non-Buddhist schools such as the

carakas, the parivrājakas, and the followers of the Nirgrantha Jñātiputra. Gods and humans wholly adopted the Bhagavān's teachings and so they spread everywhere.

1.7 Early one morning, the Bhagavān dressed in his Dharma robes and skirt and took up his alms bowl. The assembly of bhikṣus, the saṅgha of bhikṣus, along with the bodhisattva mahāsattvas, surrounded him and accompanied him. He was beautiful to behold from the front, the right, and the left; his strides were beautiful. Wearing the Dharma robes—the outer robe, the upper robe, and the inner robe—and the strainer and the alms bowl, he was beautiful. His complexion was golden, and he radiated an aura of light a full arm span around him. It was like a mass of fire amidst the darkness of night, like the full moon on the fifteenth lunar day, and like the shining of the sun. He possessed the thirty-two signs of a superior being.

1.8 They went to receive alms in the town of Śrāvastī, and at the very moment that the Bhagavān set his foot down at the threshold of the gate, reaching the town, some magnificent, amazing, miraculous feats took place. I shall recount the incredible, great miracles that occurred when the holy being, the Guide, arrived, so listen with a most faithful heart.

1.9 Those who were blind were able to see. Those who were deaf were able to hear. The naked found clothing. Those with mental illness regained their faculties. All the townsfolk joined their palms in reverence, offering homage to the Blissful One. The pleasant sounds of great gongs, earthen drums, and steel drums were audible, although none were struck. Ducks, geese, herons, peacocks, parrots, and cuckoos voiced their [F.276.a] delightful songs. Those who had lost their fortunes recovered them. Vessels made of gold and silver rang out, although none were struck.

1.10 The earth itself rumbled and shook six times, and no beings were left without refuge, as their minds were filled with sincere trust. Wherever strode the feet of the most eloquent and holy Buddha, there appeared immaculate lotuses in elegant arrangements.

1.11 Those beings born in the animal realm who saw him found happiness and would be reborn in the higher realms. Those women who were pregnant gave birth, without the slightest discomfort, to fine-featured, attractive babies. No beings harmed one another out of attachment, aversion, or indifference. They spoke to one another in the most non-aggressive manner, the way a father or mother would speak to an only child.

1.12 The sides of the road became beautifully decorated. All the gods dwelling in the heavens above copiously tossed flower petals. There were no beings left who underwent suffering. Beings who had been ill became free from illness and so felt happy.

1.13

As the Blissful One passed by,⁷ each person wondered, “Is the Tathāgata looking at me alone?” They each thought, “I shall make my own offering of alms and so reap the exact result of offering alms to the guide of humans.” It was not at all easy to fathom what occurred just from him passing by.⁸

1.14 Then, the Bhagavān went out to receive alms, making his rounds through the town of Śrāvastī. The Bhagavān reached a place near the center of town where a fine-figured, lovely, and attractive child had been left all alone inside a deserted dwelling. The child was sitting there sucking on his right thumb. A number of dogs, or jackals, had gathered inside the empty house [F.276.b] and were approaching the child and licking him. However, due to his past virtues, these animals caused no harm to the young child. Some of the townsfolk were also going in and out of the deserted building.

1.15 Seeing the townsfolk coming and going, the Bhagavān knowingly directed Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, go and see what is inside that deserted house, the one all those townsfolk are entering and leaving.” As he had been commanded by the Bhagavān, Venerable Ānanda went to the deserted house, and upon arriving saw a fine-figured child, beautiful and lovely to behold, sitting there sucking on his right thumb and staring openly at the crowd of people around him.

1.16 After seeing this, Venerable Ānanda returned to the Bhagavān and reported, “Bhagavān, inside that deserted house is an abandoned child whose body is well formed, beautiful, and attractive, like a precious jewel. He sits there gazing with wide eyes at all the people gathered around him.”

1.17 The Bhagavān thought, “Aha! This child, through his outstanding training in previous lives, has the ability to understand the meaning of my teachings, and so is most fortunate!”⁹ Out of affection for that child, and in order to lead the common folk to virtue,¹⁰ he went to the deserted dwelling.

1.18 When the Bhagavān reached the dwelling, he entered and took a seat to the side of the child and then addressed the following verse to him:

“Frequented by snakes and yakṣas,
This charnel ground is most frightening.
How could a child not be frightened here?
And yet, here you are now, all alone!”¹¹

1.19 Through the power of the Buddha and as a result of his own prior roots of virtue, the child then responded to the Bhagavān with these verses:

“Mighty Sage, who should feel fear
Toward phenomena¹² that have no self-identity?
Omniscient One, supreme speaker, [F.277.a]
Whatever the action through which I came to be here,

- 1.20 “There is no self nor something done by a self.
For the self does not belong to anything at all;
I see no self belonging to someone,
Nor do I see someone belonging to a self.”
- 1.21 The Bhagavān replied:

“Evil actions performed in the past
Have ripened in this way.
Abandoned in this deserted house,
Surely you are experiencing feelings of suffering.”
- 1.22 The child asked:¹³

“Gautama, do you still perceive
That there is a deserted house?
Didn’t you fully understand perception
While on the seat of awakening?”
- 1.23 The Bhagavān answered:

“I fully understand perception,
And I myself have no perceptions.
Rather, it is out of love for you
That I have come to this deserted house.”
- 1.24 The child asked:

“When, no matter how hard you look,
Sentient beings are never to be found,
Where does compassion arise?
Toward whom is your love directed?”
- 1.25 The Bhagavān answered:

“These beings do not know emptiness,
The peace of no self-identity;
And so, out of love for those very beings,
I engage in meritorious action.”¹⁴
- 1.26 The child asked:

“Although he has fathomed the empty and tranquil,¹⁵
And realized tranquil emptiness,
Could it be that the Tathāgata
Still has not rid himself of error?”

- 1.27 The Bhagavān answered:
“Having realized the peace of emptiness,
The Guide delivers this Dharma teaching
In order to mature beings.
That is the compassion of the buddhas.”
- 1.28 The child asked:
“Tathāgata, yet again,
You have not rejected your error.
If there is no perception of beings,
Where could compassion possibly arise?”
- 1.29 The Bhagavān answered:
“Having embraced well the awakening mind,
Superior people don their armor
And naturally bestow blessings
Upon nonexistent beings.”
- 1.30 The child said:
“Since nowhere is an entity observed,
All armor, in fact, is unreal. [F.277.b]
For phenomena that have no substance,
There is no armor to be found.”
- 1.31 The Bhagavān answered:
“Although phenomena have no substance,
This Dharma taught to living creatures
Is the vibrant display of compassion
Of the lord protectors of the world.”
- 1.32 The child asked:
“As for Dharma, if words do not exist,
Where else could instructions be?
Might you be misleading worldly beings?
Or are you teaching Dharma that is not Dharma?”¹⁶
- 1.33 The Bhagavān answered:¹⁷
“I do not deceive the world.
Nor do I profess what is not Dharma.

What I do is remove the mental disturbances
Of mistaken beings.”

1.34 The child asked:

“As a root of mental disturbances does not exist,
They have no location,
Neither inside nor outside.
So how can mental disturbances be purified?”

1.35 The Bhagavān answered:

“Things that arise from error
Are born entirely of imputation;
And so, to rid them of all concepts,
I teach the Dharma to living beings.”

1.36 The child said:

“No matter how many imputations you seek,
Mind is by nature luminosity
In which mental disturbance does not occur
And which never becomes disturbed.”

1.37 The Bhagavān answered:

“It is just as you say—
Mind is ever luminous, and yet
Provisional, proximal disturbances
Disturb the minds of ordinary beings.”

1.38 The child asked:

“If mental disturbances are not there to see
And are not present from their own side,
How can they be provisional?
That is the question; please explain this to me.”

1.39 The Bhagavān answered:

“Consider how clouds appear in the sky,
But are not as they appear.
The arising of mental disturbances is like that;
They too appear, yet are not that way.”

1.40 The child said:

“Any phenomenon unmistaken in nature
Simply remains that way; that is how it is.
No mistaken nature can be seen
In a phenomenon whose nature is unmistaken.”

1.41 The Bhagavān answered:

“It is those with childish perception [F.278.a]
Who falsely conceive such things to be,
And tathāgatas who appear in order
To bring their minds to realization.”

1.42 The child asked:

“Considering they are not born,
Which perfect buddhas could appear?
The appearance of a buddha makes no sense
Where phenomena themselves have no birth.”

1.43 The Bhagavān answered:

“The appearance of a buddha
Is explained as birthless birth,
A conventional designation
That ultimately does not exist.”

1.44 The child said:

“You still have two perceptions,
One conventional and one ultimate,
Which contradicts the path of one vehicle
That you profess, Gautama.”

1.45 The Bhagavān answered:

“I do not transgress the path;
I remain without contradiction and, moreover,
Bring discordant beings into harmony.
That is how you should understand it, child.”

1.46 The child asked:

“If those beings are not perceived,
Then to whom, Gautama, are you bringing harmony?
When you look at the past of phenomena—
To whom has affliction arisen?”

1.47 The Bhagavān answered:

“Having comprehended the past, the future,
And likewise what transpires right now,
Having realized sacred awakening,
I teach the Dharma to living creatures.”

1.48 The child said:

“You proclaim yourself the perfect Buddha,
And proclaim your own understanding;
Promoting yourself in this manner,
Your pride must be truly exceptional!”

1.49 The Bhagavān answered:

“I do not laud myself,
Nor do I belittle others.
I clearly reveal how things truly are,
And so am called the Tathāgata.”

1.50 The child said:

“If how things truly are is inexpressible
And without a true nature,
Then don’t speak contrary to your own understanding,
Using terminology for what has no words, no language.”

1.51 The Bhagavān answered:

“Although all those phenomena are contrary,
They still arise from the natural state of things.
Because I have realized how things truly are,
I possess neither faults nor qualities.”¹⁸

1.52 The child said: [F.278.b]

“Through the power¹⁹ of the Tathāgata,
My confidence has grown,
And so I ask forgiveness of the perfect Buddha
For all these answers I have requested.”

1.53 Then, the Bhagavān drew his right hand, golden in color, from his Dharma robe and reached out toward the child, who took hold of the finger of the Bhagavān’s hand and stood up. The Bhagavān carried the child out of the empty house and set him down on the road.

- 1.54 The people gathered there thought, “This child was disturbed in just this way, and yet he was able to engage in such a debate regarding the qualities of the great being. The blessed buddhas truly are remarkable!” And as it was indeed remarkable, they offered sincere homage to the Bhagavān.
- 1.55 The Bhagavān then spoke the following words to the child: “Child, since your obscuration of karma has been exhausted, remember your previous roots of virtue and make them known to this great crowd of people. Show them a great miraculous feat!”
- 1.56 The child then floated up from the ground to the height of about seven persons, and from his body streamed light, which spread until it illuminated all of Śrāvastī, and the world of Jambudvīpa in its entirety.
- 1.57 The light drew the rapt attention of Śakra, Brahmā, the guardians of the world, and many hundreds of thousands of other gods, all of whom in that second, in that very moment, in that instant, went to where the Bhagavān was and bowed their heads to his feet in homage.
- 1.58 They tossed divine flowers to the Bhagavān and proclaimed: “O Bhagavān! This bodhisattva is inconceivably radiant such that he illuminates this buddhafiield with light, and so he serves the welfare of innumerable beings!”
- 1.59 That is how that child came to be named Inconceivable Radiance. The Bhagavān also said, [F.279.a] “Let this child be called Inconceivable Radiance,” and so he rejoiced in that name for the child.
- 1.60 The child Inconceivable Radiance then descended from the sky and came to rest on the ground. Through the power of the Buddha and his own prior roots of virtue, what transpired next happened like this: by the time he took a seat, the child’s body had grown to that of an eight-year-old child.
- 1.61 Then, the lord of gods Śakra presented the child with a bolt of heavenly fabric, saying, “Dear child, out of loving concern for me, wear this length of fabric. Don’t remain naked!”
- 1.62 The child Inconceivable Radiance then spoke these words to Śakra, the lord of gods: “Kauśika, it is not by wearing lovely clothes that bodhisattvas are made beautiful, but rather their beauty comes from bearing the ornaments of Dharma. Kauśika, it may be obvious, but nonetheless, let me tell you what the ornamental clothing of the bodhisattva mahāsattvas is.²⁰
- 1.63 “The ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas is the awakening mind, for it adorns the seat of awakening. The ornaments of modesty and propriety are the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for they support all beings.
- 1.64 “Observing their commitments is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it perfects their insight. Their intent is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it eliminates deceit and guile.
- 1.65

- “Application is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it perfects all virtuous qualities. Superior intention is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it sets them apart from all others.
- 1.66 “Absence of pride is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it perfects their wisdom. Their pursuit of Dharma and longing for Dharma are the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for these perfect their insight. [F.279.b]
- 1.67 “Their lack of parsimony as preceptors is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it perfects their dispassionate wisdom. Their utter disregard for all wealth is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it perfects their excellent marks and signs.
- 1.68 “Pure discipline is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for it brings their aspirations to completion. Acceptance and gentleness²¹ are the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for they become words that resound and roar like the voice of Brahmā.
- 1.69 “Stable resolve and fortitude²² are the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for these fulfill all their goals. Their attainment of concentrations, liberations, absorptions, and equilibria are the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for these perfect the wisdom of highly advanced cognition.²³
- 1.70 “The insight of knowing how to parse words carefully²⁴ is the ornamental clothing of the bodhisattvas, for it eliminates latent tendencies, beliefs, and manifest afflictions. Great compassion is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for they never become discouraged in saṃsāra.
- 1.71 “Bearing no animosity toward any being is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, for they never lose interest in the welfare of self and other. Teaching Dharma without material interest²⁵ is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, because insight liberates both self and other.
- 1.72 “Accomplishment of Dharma²⁶ is the ornamental clothing of bodhisattvas, since it removes all mental disturbances. Kauśika, in this way you must see how bodhisattvas who possess ornaments of Dharma like these are never naked.”
- 1.73 The lord of gods Śakra was greatly pleased with the child and trusted in him,²⁷ and so, addressing the Bhagavān, he asked, “Out of loving consideration for me, would the Bhagavān please tell him to accept this length of fabric?”
- 1.74 The Bhagavān then spoke [F.280.a] to the child Inconceivable Radiance, saying, “Child, take this length of fabric and put it on.”
- 1.75 The child Inconceivable Radiance then went over to the Bhagavān, knelt with his right knee on the ground, pressed his palms together in salutation toward him, and then, in his presence, accepted the length of fabric and put

it on.

1.76 The Bhagavān then went to receive alms in the town of Śrāvastī. The men and women, boys and girls, merchants and brahmins, householders, and the king and his major officials were amazed and assembled there to look upon the child Inconceivable Radiance, to look upon the Bhagavān, and to show them honor and homage. The Bhagavān accepted the offering of alms from each in turn and then went to the home of the mother of the child Inconceivable Radiance. When he arrived there, however, he said nothing and simply remained off to one side. Embarrassed, the mother of the child Inconceivable Radiance did not come out to the entrance to greet the Bhagavān.

1.77 The child Inconceivable Radiance went inside his home and then spoke the following verses to his mother:

“It was due to my own past misdeeds
That I entered your womb,
Not because of any fault of yours, mother;
That being so, don’t feel ashamed!

1.78 “Since you created me with love,
I am the one indebted to you.
Don’t be embarrassed or shy away.
Come before the Tathāgata!

1.79 “My entry into your womb
Was an endowment you received well.
Come share with the Great Guide as well
The virtuous deeds of your body!”

1.80 The child Inconceivable Radiance then spoke to the lord of gods Śakra, saying, “Kauśika, give me some heavenly mandāra flowers, divine incense, and godly raiment. I shall give them to this mother who gave birth to me. [F.280.b] By presenting them as a gift to the Bhagavān, she will generate the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening.”

1.81 And so the lord of gods Śakra gave the child heavenly mandāra flowers, divine incense, and godly raiment. The child Inconceivable Radiance then spoke the following verses to his mother:

1.82 “Mother, take these heavenly mandāra flowers,
So lovely to behold and enjoyable,
Along with this incense and clothing,
And offer them to this great man, the Buddha.

- 1.83 “Gifts made in this world to one’s parents, such as food and drink,
Money and clothes, are not offerings at all
Compared with what connects them to Dharma;
Therefore, make an offering of these items!
- 1.84 “Make an offering to this holiest of humans,
And firmly aspire to supreme awakening.
Time and again, I have been at your side;
For so very long have I encouraged you!
- 1.85 “Without feeling unworthy or ashamed,
But with a renewed sense of joy and delight,
Proceed to where the genuine Victor awaits,
And offer homage at the feet of this supreme being!
- 1.86 “Handing flowers over to the Lord,
Along with incense and clothing,
Generate the roots of virtue from that Victor,
And generate too the resolve for supreme awakening!
- 1.87 “Having set your resolve for supreme awakening,
Then, as is said, ‘the Lord of the World assures full maturation
To those who, with faith, pay respect to a Victor.’
Go petition this genuine Victor!”²⁸
- 1.88 The woman then went over to the Bhagavān and offered homage by
prostrating to his feet, made offerings to him, and put her request to him
fully and respectfully, just as she had been instructed.
- 1.89 After she had made this request, the Bhagavān told her, “Through this
accomplishment of roots of virtue you shall not go to the lower realms or an
unfortunate state. Having pleased millions upon millions of buddhas, you
shall yourself become a buddha, the holiest of persons.” [F.281.a]
- 1.90 When he had finished receiving alms in the town of Śrāvastī, the
Bhagavān, accompanied by the child Inconceivable Radiance and other lay
people, left the town and returned to the Jeta Grove in Anāthapiṇḍada’s
park. The Bhagavān then took his meal, arose from his inner absorption, and
readied himself to make the Dharma heard.
- 1.91 The king of the state of Kośala, Prasenajit, accompanied by his four military
regiments, came to see the Bhagavān in Anāthapiṇḍada’s park. As he and
his men arrived, they offered homage by prostrating to the Bhagavān’s feet
and then sat off to one side.
- 1.92

Once they were seated at his side, the king of the state of Kośala, Prasenajit, said to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, where is the child Inconceivable Radiance, who possesses such wondrous and amazing qualities?”

1.93 The Bhagavān then pointed out the child Inconceivable Radiance, and King Prasenajit could see at first sight that the child’s physical body was fully developed, with a complexion superior to that of the gods, and that he was graced with fearlessness, disciplined conduct, absorption, and insight. The king therefore thought to himself, “Imagine what kinds of deeds he must have performed and accumulated in the past to have a pure body like that!”

1.94 The child Inconceivable Radiance, due to the power of the Buddha and because of his own past roots of virtue, knew in his mind what King Prasenajit had thought. So he said:

1.95 “Those who consistently possess a loving and pure mind,
Are not fractious, but gentle and thoughtful,
As well as well-mannered, honest, and chaste—
It is they who become pure in body.

1.96 “Those who abandon and abstain from wrong actions,
Who never devalue but increase virtue,
Who entirely reject malice and hostility— [F.281.b]
It is they who become pure in body.

1.97 “Those who continually and respectfully make offerings
To the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha²⁹
And don’t feel aggression toward or threaten others—
It is they who become pure in body.

1.98 “Those who are not jealous,
Miserly, or otherwise prideful toward others
And say nothing when others’ faults arise—
It is they who become pure in body.

1.99 “Those who never look to blame,
Reproach, or rebuke others
Or look for a chance to exploit them—
It is they who become pure in body.”

1.100 King Prasenajit then said to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, since this child Inconceivable Radiance clearly possesses such great qualities, what sort of obscuration of karma caused him to be born from the womb of a woman without a husband and later abandoned in that empty dwelling?”

- 1.101 The Bhagavān answered him, “Great king, once, in the distant past, ninety-one eons ago, the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha, the one with perfect knowledge and conduct, the blissful one, the knower of the world, the charioteer who tames beings, the unexcelled, the teacher of gods and humans, the blessed buddha known as Vipāśyin appeared in the world.
- 1.102 “Great king, in those days, at that time, there were two bodhisattvas, Divine Excellence and Earth, who attended the sublime discourses of the blessed buddha Vipāśyin. In particular, the bodhisattva known as Divine Excellence was one who would no longer regress; he had few pursuits and few activities, enjoyed solitude, and was filled with loving kindness due to his powers of concentration and advanced cognition.
- 1.103 “As for the bodhisattva known as Earth, he was not very well versed in the Dharma [F.282.a] and so served as the attendant of Divine Excellence. He frequently went into neighboring villages, towns, townships, and palaces and there would busy himself with many tasks and activities. Thus, the bodhisattva Divine Excellence would reprimand him, saying, ‘Why are you busying yourself with so many tasks and activities instead of putting your effort into practice and renunciation?’
- 1.104 “Over and over again Divine Excellence exhorted him, making Earth irritated and agitated, turning him unpleasant and then abusive, until he became both physically and mentally malicious. He voiced his vile thoughts in the coarsest language, saying, ‘You bastard, you son of a whore, your father was a cuckold. Since you don’t even have a proper father and mother, it is ridiculous to think that you could have insight or disciplined conduct.’
- 1.105 “With the worst intentions he spoke these crude words, and without confession, contrition, or rejection, he held his grudge, continuing to harbor ill will toward the bodhisattva Divine Excellence, and he had not the slightest affection for him.
- 1.106 “The bodhisattva Divine Excellence, moreover, thought that Earth was no longer a fitting vessel and withdrew from him,³⁰ spurring Earth to think even worse of the bodhisattva Divine Excellence and to speak to him in the most uncomplimentary, caustic, unvenerable, and unmeasured terms.
- 1.107 “Because of the karma Earth accumulated and gathered in this way, his body was ruined, and in the wake of his death, he was reborn to a woman who gave birth to him out of wedlock. Because he had maintained the awakening mind, however, his actions did not cause him to take rebirth as a being in hell.
- 1.108 “As soon as he was born, the woman abandoned him along a major thoroughfare, where he was eaten by dogs, jackals, and wolves. Great king, in a similar fashion, over the course of ninety eons, he suffered like this, in

- the same miserable way; he died and was reborn and once reborn was abandoned. The common folk would say, ‘That bastard, that child of a whore—let the dogs, jackals, and wolves eat him!’
- 1.109 “Great king, if you are uncertain, if you entertain doubt as to whether the one known as the bodhisattva Earth in those days, at that time, may have been someone else, [F.282.b] you need not wonder any longer. If you ask, ‘Why is that?’ Well, it is because this child Inconceivable Radiance was the one known in those days, at that time, as the bodhisattva Earth.
- 1.110 “Great king, his obscuration of karma has now been exhausted. His impure mind has been purified. He has pleased the Tathāgata. Cutting off rebirth in all the lower realms, this child Inconceivable Radiance has pleased sixty-four million buddhas, has honored them, venerated them, and revered them, and has conducted himself with sanctity before them. He has been diligent in the dedicated pursuit of Dharma as well.
- 1.111 “Great king, through his past roots of virtue, he has achieved this illustrious state. Great king, in this way, black deeds and white deeds are never squandered. Great king, since that is the case, the wise are circumspect about their physical, verbal, and mental acts, abstaining from evil even at the cost of their lives.”
- 1.112 The king of the state of Kośala, Prasenajit, then asked the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, the bodhisattva who was called Divine Excellence—did he ever attain unsurpassed and perfect awakening? Or is he still, even now, engaging in the conduct of a bodhisattva?”
- 1.113 The Bhagavān answered him, “Great king, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Divine Excellence conducts himself with sanctity in the buddha realm of the tathāgata Akṣobhya, where he is known as the bodhisattva mahāsattva Śrīsambhava.”
- 1.114 The king of Kośala, Prasenajit, then said to the Bhagavān: “Bhagavān, a noble son or daughter is supposed to act respectfully, to serve spiritual masters, to attend them, and to venerate them. One may ask, ‘What is the value of doing so?’
- 1.115 “Bhagavān, if one attends, serves, and venerates a spiritual master, one acquires virtuous qualities. [F.283.a] Through acquiring virtuous qualities, one’s frame of mind becomes virtuous. When one’s frame of mind is virtuous, one trains in virtue.³¹
- 1.116 “Through training in virtue, one performs virtuous deeds. Through virtuous deeds, one will have a virtuous existence. Due to a virtuous existence, one enjoys virtuous companions. In virtuous company, sinful acts are not performed. One will not engage in sinful acts.³²
- 1.117

- “By abstaining from sinful acts and engaging in virtue, one will not be tormented, and others will not be tormented. Through affording protection to oneself and others, the path to awakening will be completed.
- 1.118 “By staying on the path to awakening, one will have the ability and opportunity to effectively serve the welfare of beings who have embarked on inferior paths.”
- 1.119 The Bhagavān remarked, “Great king, well said! Well said! You have spoken well! Great king, by serving one’s spiritual master, one will perfect all the qualities that characterize a bodhisattva mahāsattva.”
- 1.120 The child Inconceivable Radiance then said to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, what are the various qualities a bodhisattva should possess in order to swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and to gain acceptance of even the most profound Dharmas?”
- 1.121 The Bhagavān responded, “Child, a bodhisattva who possesses four qualities will swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and gain acceptance of even the most profound Dharmas. What are these four?
- 1.122 “They are comprehension of interdependence; rejection of eternalism and nihilism; the understanding that there are no beings, no living creatures,³³ and no persons; and an interest in and experience of emptiness.
- 1.123 “A bodhisattva who possesses these four qualities will swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood [F.283.b] and gain acceptance of even the most profound Dharmas.
- 1.124 “Child, in addition, a bodhisattva who possesses four other qualities will swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. What are these four?
- 1.125 “Leaving the past behind, not projecting into the future, knowing how to extinguish what arises right now, and knowing the sameness of the three times—those are the four.
- 1.126 “There is yet another set of four. What are the four? Physical isolation, mental isolation, isolation from phenomena, and isolation from action—those are the four.
- 1.127 “There are another four. What are they? Seeing the Buddha as reality itself and not as a form; seeing the Dharma as detachment from desire and not as terms and definitions; seeing the saṅgha as noncomposite and not as an assemblage; and purification of the eyes of insight—those are the four.³⁴
- 1.128 “There are four more. What are they? They are perfecting the six transcendent virtues by not relinquishing the modes of attraction; expertise in insight and skillful means; precise discernment that there are no beings; and great compassion.
- 1.129

“Child, a bodhisattva who possesses these four qualities will swiftly awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood and gain acceptance of even the most profound Dharmas.”

- 1.130 As the Bhagavān gave this teaching presenting the fourfold attainments, the child Inconceivable Radiance gained acceptance of the fact that phenomena do not arise and was so joyous, so overjoyed, that he himself actually floated up into the sky to the height of seven palm trees. At that point, the Bhagavān smiled.
- 1.131 As is the nature of things when blessed buddhas smile, lights of various colors radiated from the mouth of the Bhagavān. The lights appeared in many different colors, such as blue, yellow, red, white, violet, and silver. Those multicolored lights illuminated the [F.284.a] infinite and boundless worlds of the universe, manifesting even as far as Brahmā’s domain and making the very sun and moon seem lackluster. The lights then reversed course and vanished into the crown of the Bhagavān’s head.
- 1.132 Venerable Ānanda then rose from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. Joining his palms, he bowed toward the Bhagavān. In the rhythm of verse, he requested an explanation of the meaning of this from the Bhagavān:
- 1.133 “Your figure is lovely and worthy to behold,
Gracefully adorned with marks and signs most fine,
And shining beautifully within a circle of lights.³⁵
Please explain your smile to me!
- 1.134 “You are engaged in exemplary conduct with superior discipline,
And with the light of wisdom gathered from absorption and insight,³⁶
And the strength of the essence of liberation, you see perfectly.
Please explain your smile to me!
- 1.135 “With the strength of the power of acceptance³⁷
And diligence eminently superior and unwavering,
You are pleasing to the eye and behold the four truths.
Please explain your smile to me!
- 1.136 “You have a vajra body, hard, stable, and indestructible,
As mighty as Nārāyaṇa—even greater than Nārāyaṇa.³⁸
Your voice is gentle, the sweet voice of Brahmā.
Please explain your smile to me!
- 1.137 “Brahmā and likewise the other gods who have gathered
Behold you with reverence, yet even though the Tathāgata is seated
They cannot see the summit of your crown.

Please explain your smile to me!

- 1.138 “You turn the sacred wheel of Dharma.
The message of impermanence deeply moves
Gods, asuras, nāgas, and yakṣas alike.
Please explain your smile to me!³⁹”
- 1.139 “You have discovered⁴⁰ radiance and removed all darkness,
You abide in equanimity with eyes that take in all,
Possess superior qualities, and display essential qualities.⁴¹
Please explain your smile to me!” [F.284.b]
- 1.140 With those words he made his request. The Bhagavān then answered the venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, do you see the child Inconceivable Radiance hovering in the space above, at the height of seven palm trees?”
Ānanda replied, “Yes, Bhagavān, I do see him.”
- 1.141 The Bhagavān said, “Ānanda, this bodhisattva mahāsattva Inconceivable Radiance, after one hundred incalculable eons, in the eon called Universal Illumination, in the realm known as Fully Cleansed,⁴² ⁴³ will make his appearance in the world as the thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha, the one with knowledge and good conduct, the blissful one, the knower of the world, the charioteer who tames beings, the unexcelled, the teacher of gods and humans known precisely as the blessed buddha Inconceivable Radiance.
- 1.142 “Ānanda, that realm Fully Cleansed will become utterly pure in the following way: as a comparison, it will be like what is enjoyed and experienced by the Paranirmitavaśavartin gods. That tathāgata will remain there for twenty intermediate eons. He will have a saṅgha of eighty thousand listeners. There will be a bodhisattva saṅgha of thirty-two thousand.
- 1.143 “Ānanda, you may wonder why that realm will be called Fully Cleansed and the eon Universal Illumination. Ānanda, over the course of hundreds and thousands of prior intermediate eons, no tathāgata ever appears in that buddhfield. It is there that Inconceivable Radiance, the Tathāgata, will appear; it is there where the Śuddhāvāsa gods say, ‘This eon lacks universal illumination. It lacks universal illumination, so may a tathāgata appear!’ His appearance is due to their giving voice to this purposeful interjection.”
- 1.144 When this statement of prophecy about the bodhisattva Inconceivable Radiance was spoken, [F.285.a] and this account of Dharma was taught, thirty-two thousand beings, gods and humans alike, generated the mind set on unsurpassed and perfect awakening. Sixty bodhisattvas developed acceptance of the fact that phenomena do not arise. Five hundred listeners completely freed their minds from defilement, without any further grasping.

- 1.145 The Bhagavān then said to venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, you must retain my sacred Dharma. For the benefit of present bodhisattvas, and for those yet to come, you must retain this account of Dharma.”
- 1.146 Ānanda replied, “Bhagavān, when I retain this account of Dharma, what is the name of this account of Dharma? How shall it be remembered?”
- The Bhagavān said, “Retain it as *The Cleansing of the Obscurations of Karma* and *The Buddha’s Pageantry* and *The Teaching by Inconceivable Radiance*.”
- 1.147 “Ānanda, some people may spend their entire lives respecting, revering, venerating, and worshiping all the tathāgatas, offering them ground floral incense strewn as high as Mount Meru, as well as fragrances, powders, balms, robes, parasols, victory banners, and pennants, and also many other varieties of divine and human offerings. Compared to them, a noble son or daughter who retains and reads this account of Dharma taught by Inconceivable Radiance, who fully comprehends it and makes it widely and perfectly known to others, and who likewise assiduously applies it—such a person generates a vastly greater collection of merit.
- 1.148 “Ānanda, since that is the case, those who wish to honor the Tathāgata with the offering of Dharma and those who wish to create the great radiance of insight should retain this account of Dharma, read it, accomplish it with diligence, and make it widely and perfectly known to others.”
- 1.149 When the Bhagavān had spoken these words, the venerable Ānanda, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Inconceivable Radiance, the king of Kośala, Prasenajit, along with his entourage, the lord of gods Śakra, the master of the Sahā world system Brahmā, and the four guardians of the world, along with everyone else in attendance as well as the gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas of this world, rejoiced and greatly extolled what the Bhagavān had said.
- 1.150 *This completes the noble account of Dharma, [F.285.b] “The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable Radiance.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 The Indian preceptor Surendrabodhi and the chief translator-editor Bandé Yeshé Dé translated, corrected, and finalized this text.⁴⁴

n.

NOTES

- n.1 The difference between these two titles is the presence or absence of the word “child” (*khye’u*). The first title, *’phags pa khye’u snang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pas bstan pa zhes bya ba’i chos kyi rnam grangs*, is preserved in the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) group Kangyur recensions, while the alternate title is generally found among the Thempangma (*them spangs ma*) recensions of the Kangyur. Mixed recensions show even distribution of the two titles between them.
- n.2 Halkias (2006), 60–63.
- n.3 Van Schaik and Dalton (2006), 63.
- n.4 Mayer and Cantwell (2008), 1.
- n.5 Lewis Lancaster, “K 381,” *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalog*, http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0381.html#note-k0381-1 (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0381.html#note-k0381-1).
- n.6 The Dunhuang MS (folio 1.b) reads “clear vision” (*rnam par gzigs pa*) instead of “wisdom vision of liberation” (*rnam par grol ba’i ye shes gzigs pa*).
- n.7 “As the Blissful One passed by” is omitted in the Dunhuang MS.
- n.8 In the Dunhuang MS (folios 3.b–4.a) this passage reads, “Everyone thought, ‘The Tathāgata is looking at me.’ Each of them thought, ‘I will offer alms and then will meet with the true result of giving alms.’ In short, nothing could compare in the slightest with the protector of human beings” (*sems de re re yang / de bzhin gshegs pa ni bdag la gzigs so zhes sems/ so so nas bdag gi bsod snyoms phul te/ bsod snyoms kyi ’bras bu dang yang dag nyid phrad par bya’o snyam du sems te/ mdor na myi’i mgon po dang phyogs tsam du bsgrun du rung ba myed do*).

- n.9 The Dunhuang MS (folio 5.a) reads, “This child, who has reached the culmination of all activity, is able to understand the meaning of my teachings” (*khye’u de yang bya ba thams cad rdzogs pa legs par smra ba’i don shes par nus pa zhig ste*).
- n.10 The Dunhuang MS (folio 5.a) reads, “and in order to delight beings.” (*gro ba mang po’i dga’ bskyed pa’i phyir*).
- n.11 The Dunhuang MS (folio 5.a) omits this verse and the following two verses of the child’s response. The first verse the Buddha speaks is the one beginning “Evil actions performed in the past” below.
- n.12 This reading follows the variant *chos* as attested in the Choné, Lhasa, Lithang, Kangxi, Narthang, and Yongle versions of the Tibetan translation, instead of *tshogs* as attested in the Degé version.
- n.13 In the Dunhuang MS (folio 5.b), the child’s first response begins here with the line “Through the power of the Buddha,” here given at 1.19.
- n.14 The Dunhuang MS (folio 5.b) reads, “I engage in alms rounds” (*bsod snyoms spyad pa spyod pa yin*).
- n.15 The Dunhuang MS (folio 5.b) reads, “Although he has fathomed the peace of cessation” (*gogs par zhi ba rab mkhyen te*).
- n.16 In the Dunhuang MS (folio 6.a), the last two lines of this verse read, “One who teaches Dharma that is not Dharma / Is called a fool; are you a fraud?” (*chos myin chos su bka’ stsal pa/ byis ba zhes te bslu lags sam*).
- n.17 In what appears to be a case of scribal error, the Dunhuang MS (folios 6.a–6.b) repeats the preceding two verses before continuing with the sequence below.
- n.18 In the Dunhuang MS (folio 8.b) this verse reads, “All contrary actions / Arise from the natural state of things; / One who understands the way things are / Has neither faults nor qualities” (*log pa’i las rnam thams cad ni/ de bzhin nyid las ’byung ba yin/ de bzhin nyid de rtog pa ni/ yon tan myed cing nyes pa myed*).
- n.19 This reading follows the variant *mthus yis* as attested in the Choné, Lhasa, Lithang, Kangxi, and Narthang versions of the Tibetan translation, instead of *mthu yin* as attested in the Degé version.
- n.20 The Dunhuang MS (folio 10.a) reads, “Kauśika, you must also wear the ornamental clothes that bodhisattva mahāsattvas wear” (*ke’u shi ka yang*

byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po rnams kyi gos rgyan gang yin pa de dag gyon cig).

n.21 The Dunhuang MS (folio 11.a) reads, “delighting in acceptance” (*bzod pa (em. bsod pa) la dga' ba*).

n.22 The Dunhuang MS (folio 11.a) reads, “being firm in their commitments” (*dam tshig la brtan pa*).

n.23 The Dunhuang MS (folio 11.a) reads, “for these bring highly-advanced cognition and concentration to perfection” (*mngon par shes pa chen po (em. shen po) dang bsam gtan yongs su rdzogs pas bya ba'i phyir*).

n.24 The Dunhuang MS (folios 11.a–11.b) reads, “insight, the wisdom of liberation” (*shes rab rnam par thar pa'i ye shes*).

n.25 “Without material interest” is absent in the Dunhuang MS (folio 11.b).

n.26 The Dunhuang MS (folio 11.b) reads, “earnest engagement in the Dharma” (*chos kyi nan tan*).

n.27 The Dunhuang MS (folio 11.b) reads, “was greatly pleased with the child and felt affection for him” (*khye'u de la shin tu dga' zhing sdug pa skyes nas*).

n.28 The Choné, Kangxi, Lithang, Narthang, and Yongle versions include an additional line here: “chapter and verse” (*le'u dang tshigs su bcad pa*). This makes little contextual sense, and so appears to be the remnant of an incomplete scribal emendation.

n.29 In the Dunhuang MS (folio 15.a), this line of verse reads “In the supreme Saṅgha and the Buddha” (*mang po'i mchog dang sangs rgyas la*).

n.30 Folio 17 of the Dunhuang MS appears to have been lost, thus the Tibetan text from this point to “The king of the state of Kośala” below is missing in that translation.

n.31 The Dunhuang MS (folio 18.b) reads “hear” (*thos*) in place of “acquire” (*thob*) as attested in the other versions consulted. Thus this passage reads, “Bhagavān, if one attends and serves a spiritual master, one hears the virtuous Dharma. Through hearing the virtuous Dharma, one's contemplations become virtuous. Once one's contemplations are virtuous, one trains in virtue” (*bcom ldan 'das dge ba'i bshes gnyen dang bsten bsdebs te bsnyen bkur bgyis na/ dge ba'i chos thos so/ dge ba'i chos thos pas bsam pa dge bar 'gyur ro/ bsam pa dge bar gyur pas dge bar sbyor bar 'gyur ro*).

- n.32 The preceding two lines are absent in the Dunhuang MS (folio 18.b).
- n.33 The Dunhuang MS (folio 19.a) reads, “no companions” (*grogs myed pa*).
- n.34 The Dunhuang MS (folios 19.b–20.a) reads, “To see the Buddha not as a form, but as the Dharma; to see the Dharma not as one’s own, but as the freedom from desire; to see the Saṅgha not as a multitude, but as noncomposite; and purification of the eyes of insight” (*gzugs las ni ma yin chos la sangs rgyas su blta ba dang / bdag las ni ma yin gyi/’dod chags dang bral ba chos su blta ba dang / mang ba las ni ma yin gyi/’dus ma byas pa las dge ’dun du blta ba dang / shes rab kyi spyan shin tu rnam par dag pa dang ’di yin no*).
- n.35 The Choné, Lhasa, Lithang, Kangxi, Narthang, and Yongle versions of the Tibetan translation read the honorific verb “to do/make” (*mdzad pa*), instead of “beautiful” (*mdzes pa*) found in the Degé version. The Dunhuang MS (folio 20.b) adds that the circle of light extends “an arm span” (*’dom gang*) around the Buddha.
- n.36 The Dunhuang MS (folio 21.a) reads, “The light of wisdom gathered by your intellect, your insight” (*shes rab blo’i bsags pa’i ye shes ’od*).
- n.37 The Dunhuang MS (folio 21.a) reads, “Possessing the power of acceptance as well as the ten powers” (*bzad (em. m zad) pa’i stobs dang stobs bcu pa can mnga’ ba*).
- n.38 The Dunhuang MS (folio 21.a) reads, “Your power is greater than the power of the best of humans” (*myi mchog mthu bo che’i mthu mnga’ ba*).
- n.39 In the Dunhuang MS (folio 21.b), this verse reads, “You turned the wheel of Dharma, performed miracles, / And spread the message of impermanence / To gods, humans, nāgas, and yakṣas. / Please explain your smile to me!” (*chos kyi ’khor los btsud cing rdzu ’phrul dang / myi rtag sgra’i lha dang mi rnam dang / de bzhin klu dang gnod sbyin sgrags mdzad pa/’dzum pa mdzad pa de ni bdag la gsungs*).
- n.40 This reading follows the Lhasa version of the translation in reading *brnyes* (“to discover”), instead *mnyes* (“to be pleased”) as preserved in the Degé and other consulted versions.
- n.41 The Dunhuang MS (folio 21.b) reads, “And you are supremely heroic and endowed with the best qualities” (*dpa’ bo mnga’ mchog yon tan rab mnga’ ba*).
- n.42 This reading follows the Choné, Dunhuang, Lhasa, Lithang, Kangxi, Narthang, and Yongle versions of the Tibetan translation in reading *rnam par*

sbyong ba in place of *rnam par spyod pa*. This variant is repeated in all instances of “Fully Cleansed” that follow in this passage.

n.43 Because the final folios of the Dunhuang MS are lost, its record of the text ends here.

n.44 In the Thempangma recensions of the Tibetan translation, the name of the Indian paṇḍita is omitted. The colophon reads *zhu chen gyi lo tsa+tsha ba ban de ye she sde la sogs pas bsgyur zhing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o* (“The chief translator-editor Bandé Yeshé Dé and others translated, corrected, and finalized this text”).

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Absorption

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་འཛིན།

samādhi

g.2 Acceptance

bzod pa

བཟོད་པ།

kṣānti

The third of the six transcendent perfections. As such it can be classified into three modes: the capacity to tolerate abuse from sentient beings, to tolerate the hardships of the path to buddhahood, and to tolerate the profound nature of reality.

g.3 Account of Dharma

chos kyi rnam grangs

ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

dharmaparyāya

A religious discourse.

g.4 Akṣobhya

mi 'khrugs pa

མི་འཁྲུགས་པ།

Akṣobhya

The buddha in the eastern realm, Abhirati. Akṣobhya, who in the higher tantras is the head of one of the five buddha families, the vajra family in the east, was well known early in the Mahāyāna tradition.

g.5 Alms bowl

lhung bzed

ལུང་བཟེད།

pātra

g.6 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

Ānanda

Personal attendant and cousin of the Buddha. One of the ten close *śrāvaka* disciples.

g.7 Anāthapiṇḍada's Park

mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

Anāthapiṇḍadārama

The park on the outskirts of Śrāvastī that was purchased by the great patron of the Buddha, Anāthapiṇḍada, for the saṅgha's use during the rainy season.

g.8 Armor

go cha

གོ་ཇ།

kavaca

g.9 Asura

lha min

ལྷ་མིན།

asura

A class of semidivine beings who are engaged in a mythic war with the gods (*deva*) for possession of the nectar of immortality. In Buddhist cosmology, they inhabit the realm neighboring that of the gods, from which they observe the gods with intense jealousy.

g.10 Belief

lta bar smra ba

ལྷ་བར་སྐྱབ།

dṛṣṭi

The second stage in the development and expression of afflictions (Skt. *kleśa*, Tib. *nyon mongs*), preceded by “latent tendency” (Skt. *anuśaya*, Tib. *bag la nyal ba*) and followed by “manifest affliction” (Skt. *paryutthāna*, Tib. *kun nas ldang ba*).

g.11 **Bhagavān**

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān

An epithet that is often used to refer to a buddha. The literal translation from the Tibetan is “endowed (*ldan*) conqueror (*bcom*) who has gone beyond (*'das*).”

g.12 **Bhikṣu**

dge slong

དགེ་སློང་།

bhikṣu

A fully-ordained monk.

g.13 **Blissful one**

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

Epithet of a buddha, meaning “one who has reached bliss.”

g.14 **Brahmā**

tshangs pa

ཚེངས་པ།

Brahmā

g.15 **Brahmin**

bram ze

བྲམ་ཟེ།

brāhmaṇa

A person belonging to the highest caste among the four social castes of India.

g.16 **Caraka**

spyod pa ba

སྟོད་པ་བ།

caraka

In Buddhist usage, a general term for non-Buddhist religious mendicants, paired with *parivrājaka* in stock lists of followers of heretical movements..

g.17 Charnel ground

dur khrod

དུར་ཁྲོད།

śmaśāna

A cremation ground, or place for discarded corpses.

g.18 Divine Excellence

lha bzang

ལྷ་བཟང།

—

A bodhisattva who appears in *The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable Radiance*.

g.19 Earth

sa

ས།

—

A bodhisattva who appears in *The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable Radiance*.

g.20 Five eyes

spyan lnga

སྟོན་ལྔ།

pañcacakṣus

The five kinds of eyes possessed by a tathāgata. Namely, the eye of flesh, the divine eye, the eye of Dharma, the eye of insight, and the eye of a buddha.

g.21 Followers of the Nirgrantha Jñātiputra

gcer bu pa gnyen gyi bu

གཅེར་བུ་པ་གཉེན་གྱི་བུ།

nirgrantha jñātiputra

A group of ascetics common in the Buddha's time, widely believed to refer to the early Jain community.

g.22 Fully Cleansed

rnam par sbyong ba

རྣམ་པར་སྐྱོང་བ།

—

A realm that will appear in the eon Universal Illumination, one hundred incalculable eons from now.

g.23 Gandharva

dri za

དྷི་ཟ།

gandharva

A class of semidivine beings renowned as celestial musicians.

g.24 Gautama

go ta ma

གོ་ཏ་མ།

Gautama

The Buddha's given name, Gautama Siddhartha.

g.25 Genuine

rang byung

རང་བྱུང་།

svayambhū

An epithet frequently applied to buddhas to denote their quality of being self-manifest, i.e., not born through causes and conditions.

g.26 Guardians of the world

'jig rten skyong ba

འཇིག་རྟེན་སྐྱོང་བ།

lokapāla

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

g.27 How things truly are

de bzhin nyid

དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད།

tathāta

- g.28 **Imputation**
yongs su brtags pa
 ཡོངས་སུ་བརྟགས་པ།
parikalpita · parīkṣā
 The function by which mind generates an image and then falsely conceives of it as being a separate and real object.
- g.29 **Inconceivable Radiance**
snang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa
 སྐྱང་བ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་ལྷན་པ།
Acintyaprabhāsa
 A bodhisattva in, and principle protagonist of, *The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable Radiance*. This is also the name he will have as a buddha in the future, as prophesied by the Buddha.
- g.30 **Inner absorption**
nang du yang dag 'jog pa
 རང་དུ་ཡང་དག་འཛོལ་པ།
pratisaṃlayana
 This term can mean both physical seclusion and a meditative state of withdrawal.
- g.31 **Inner robe**
na bza'
 རྩ་བཟའ།
antarvāsa
 The undergarment covering the lower body. One of the three Dharma robes (*tricīvara, chos gos gsum*).
- g.32 **Insight**
shes rab
 །ཤེས་རབ།
prajñā
- g.33 **Interdependence**
rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba
 རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བ།
pratītyasamutpāda

The principle that relative phenomena arise as a result of causes and conditions.

g.34 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུ་རི་གླིང་།

Jambudvīpa

The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology, which can mean the world of humans or, more specifically, the Indian subcontinent. A gigantic, miraculous rose apple (*jambu*) tree at the source of the great Indian rivers is said to give the continent its name.

g.35 Jeta Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་གྱི་ཚལ།

Jetavana

A grove formerly owned by Prince Jeta in Śrāvastī, the capital of the kingdom of Kośala. It was bought by Anāthapiṇḍada and offered to the Buddha as a rainy season retreat. It is the setting for many sūtras.

g.36 Kauśika

kau shi ka

ཀོ་ཤི་ཀ།

Kauśika

An epithet of Indra.

g.37 Kośala

ko sa la

ཀོ་ས་ལ།

Kośala

An ancient Indian kingdom located somewhere in present day Uttar Pradesh.

g.38 Lack of parsimony as preceptors

slob dpon gyi dpe mkhyud med pa

སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་དཔེ་མཚུངས་མེད་པ།

anācāryamuṣṭi

Literally “not being a tight-fisted teacher,” this term denotes a teacher who freely gives appropriate teachings to their disciples.

g.39 Latent tendency

bag la nyal ba

བག་ལ་ཉལ་བ།

anuśaya

The first stage in the development and expression of afflictions (Skt. *kleśa*, Tib. *nyon mongs*), followed by “belief” (Skt. *dṛṣṭi*, Tib. *lta ba smra ba*) and “manifest affliction” (Skt. *paryutthāna*, Tib. *kun nas ldang ba*).

g.40 Listener

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

Based on the verb “to hear,” the Sanskrit term *śrāvaka* is used in reference to followers of the non-Mahāyāna traditions of Buddhism, in contrast to the bodhisattvas who follow the Mahāyāna path.

g.41 Luminosity

'od gsal

འོད་གསལ།

prabhāsvara

g.42 Mahāsattva

sems dpa' chen po

སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāsattva

“Great being”; a frequent epithet of bodhisattvas.

g.43 Mandārava flowers

me tog man dA ra ba

མེ་ཏོག་མན་རྒྱ་བ།

mandārava

Erythrina indica, native to India and commonly known as the coral tree. The flowers have scarlet red petals.

g.44 Manifest affliction

kun nas ldang ba

ཀུན་ནས་ལྷང་བ།

paryutthāna

The third stage in the development and expression of afflictions (Skt. *kleśa*, Tib. *nyon mongs*), preceded by “latent tendency” (Skt. *anuśaya*, Tib. *bag la nyal ba*) and “belief” (Skt. *dr̥ṣṭi*, Tib. *lta ba smra ba*).

g.45 Mental disturbance

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

Afflictive emotions. There are the 84,000 variations of mental disturbances for which the 84,000 categories of the Buddha’s teachings serve as the antidote. These mental disturbances can be subsumed into the three or five poisons of attachment, aversion, and ignorance plus arrogance and jealousy.

g.46 Merit

bsod nams

བསོད་ནམས།

punya

An accumulation of positive karma that ripens into a positive result.

g.47 Mighty Sage

thub pa'i dbang phyug

ཐུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག

muniśvara

An epithet of the Buddha.

g.48 Modes of attraction

bsdud ba'i dngos po

བསྐྱུ་བའི་དངོས་པོ།

saṃgrahavastu

The four modes for attracting people to the Dharma: giving (*dāna*); pleasant speech (*priyavaditā*); accomplishment of the aims (of others) by teaching Dharma (*arthacaryā*); and consistency of behavior with the teaching (*samānārthatā*).

g.49 Mount Meru

ri rab

རི་རབ།

Meru

The geographical center of this realm according to Buddhist cosmology.

g.50 Nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

A class of semidivine beings that inhabit bodies of water and act as guardians of treasure.

g.51 Nārāyaṇa

sred med bu

སྲེད་མེད་བུ།

Nārāyaṇa

Epithet of Viṣṇu.

g.52 Nihilism

chad lta

ཚད་ལྷ།

ucchedadṛṣṭi

The belief that nothing exists. One of two extremes of incorrect views.

g.53 Non-Buddhist schools

mu stegs can

མུ་སྟེགས་ཅན།

tīrthika

The non-Buddhist spiritual traditions of ancient India, which according to the Buddhist view are generally said to fall into one of two categories of erroneous views: the view of eternalism or the view of nihilism.

g.54 Obscuration of karma

las kyī sgrib pa

ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱོབ་པ།

karmāvaraṇa

An obscuration consisting of negative actions committed in the past that prevents progress on the path to awakening in the present.

- g.55 **Omniscient One**
thams cad mkhyen pa
 ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ།
sarvajña
 An epithet of the Buddha.
- g.56 **One who would no longer regress**
phyir mi ldog pa
 ཕྱིར་མི་ལྷོག་པ།
avaiṅartika
 The stage on a bodhisattva's path when there is no longer any chance of regressing to a preceding stage or state.
- g.57 **Outer robe**
snam sbyar
 སྐྱམ་སྦྱར།
saṅghāṭī
 The outer robe put over the other garments. One of the three Dharma robes (*chos gos gsum, tricīvara*).
- g.58 **Paranirmitavaśavartin gods**
gzhan 'phrul dbang byed kyi lha
 གཞན་འཕྲུལ་དབང་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ལྷ།
Paranirmitavaśavartin
 Gods of the sixth and highest-level god realm within the desire realm.
- g.59 **Parivrājaka**
kun tu rgyu
 ཀུན་ཏུ་རྒྱ།
parivrājaka
 An umbrella term for the class of wandering religious ascetics of diverse religious persuasions that were common at the time of the Buddha.
- g.60 **Perception**
'du shes
 འདུ་ཤེས།
sañjñā

The third of the five aggregates that comprise a living being (form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness).

g.61 Prasenajit

gsal rgyal

གསལ་རྒྱལ།

Prasenajit

The king of Kośala.

g.62 Receive alms

bsod snyoms

བསོད་སྟོབས།

piṇḍapāta

To receive food that is offered in a bowl to mendicants in order to accumulate merit. The Tibetan term can be literally understood as “merit equalizing.”

g.63 Sahā

mi mjed

མི་མཇེད།

Sahā

This universe of ours, or the trichiliocosm (but sometimes referring to just this world system of four continents). It means “endurance,” as beings there have to endure suffering.

g.64 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

Śakra

Epithet of Indra.

g.65 Sanctified conduct

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚཱངས་པར་སྟོད་པ།

brahmacarya

In Buddhism, a term denoting a religious life grounded in renunciation and chastity. In the brahmanical traditions, this refers specifically to the stage in one’s youth dedicated to focused study of religious scripture and practice.

g.66 Saṅgha

dge 'dun

དགེ་འདུན།

saṅgha

Though often specifically reserved for the monastic community, this term can be applied to any of the four Buddhist communities—monks, nuns, laymen, and lay women—as well as the community of bodhisattvas.

g.67 Seat of awakening

byang chub kyi snying po

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སྡིང་པོ།

bodhimanda

The place where the Buddha Śākyamuni achieved awakening and where countless other buddhas are said to have achieved awakening. This is understood to be located under the Bodhi tree in present-day Bodhgaya, India.

g.68 Six transcendent virtues

phar phyin drug

ཕར་ཕྱིན་བླུག།

ṣaṭpāramitā

The six qualities that are to be perfected on the Mahāyāna path: generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and insight.

g.69 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

མཉམ་ཡོད།

Śrāvastī

Capital city of the Kośala state, ruled by one of the Buddha's royal patrons, King Prasenajit. One of the six largest cities in India during the time of the Buddha.

g.70 Śrīsambhava

dpal 'byung

དཔལ་འབྱུང།

Śrīsambhava

A bodhisattva, formerly the bodhisattva Divine Excellence, who is mentioned in *The Teaching by the Child Inconceivable Radiance*.

g.71 Strainer

tshags

ཚགས།

parisrāvāṇa

Part of the tradition monastic attire. Bamboo strainers were always carried in order to avoid killing insects when taking water.

g.72 Śuddhāvāsa gods

gnas gtsang ma'i ris kyi lha

གནས་གཙང་མའི་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ།

Śuddhāvāsakāyika

The gods who live in Śuddhāvāsa heavens, the five “pure abodes” that form the highest realms that constitute the realm of subtle form (*rūpadhātu*) and which comprise the fourth of the meditative concentrations (*dhyāna*).

g.73 Tathāgata

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

Epithet of a buddha, meaning “one who has arrived at, or understood, how things truly are.”

g.74 Thirty-two signs of a superior being

mtshan sum cu rtsa gnyis

མཚན་སུམ་རུ་རྩ་གཉིས།

dvātriṃśamahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa

The thirty-two major signs of a buddha that manifest as specific physical attributes to indicate the perfection of the awakened state of buddhahood.

g.75 Universal Illumination

kun tu snang byed

ཀུན་ཏུ་སྒྲུབ་བྱེད།

—

The name of a future eon, one hundred incalculable eons from now.

g.76 Upper robe

bsil zan

བསིལ་བཟ།

uttarāsaṅga

The garment covering the upper body. One of the three Dharma robes (*chos gos gsum, tricīvara*).

g.77 Vibrant display

rol pa

རོལ་པ།

līlā

g.78 Vipasyin

rnam par gzigs

རྣམ་པར་གཟིགས།

Vipasyin

One of the seven buddhas preceding the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.79 Wisdom

ye shes

ཡེ་ཤེས།

jñāna

g.80 Worthy

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat

One who has attained liberation from the suffering of saṃsāra and abides within the final peace of nirvāṇa. The final attainment according to the śrāvaka path of liberation. Also used as an epithet of the Buddha.

g.81 Yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

A class of semidivine beings who inhabit forests and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians to villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons.