

## PURIFICATION OF KARMIC OBSCURATIONS



ལས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིབ་པ་རྣམ་པར་དག་པ།

## **Purification of Karmic Obscurations**

*Karmāvaraṇavisuddhi*

འཕགས་པ་ལས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིབ་པ་རྣམ་པར་དག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ་འི་མདོ།

*'phags pa las kyi sgrib pa rnam par dag pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po 'i mdo*

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra  
'Purification of Karmic Obscurations'**

*Āryakarmāvaraṇavisuddhināmamahāyānasūtra*

Toh 218, Degé Kangyur, vol. 62 (mdo sde, tsha), folios 284a–297b

**Translated by the Garchen Buddhist Institute Translation Group**



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## **Summary**

The Buddha is residing at Mango Grove in Vaiśālī, when Mañjuśrī brings before him the monk Stainless Light, who had been seduced by a prostitute and feels strong remorse for having violated his vows. After the monk confesses his wrongdoing, the Buddha explains the lack of inherent nature of all phenomena and the luminous nature of mind, and the monk Stainless Light gives rise to the mind of enlightenment. As requested by Mañjuśrī, the Buddha explains the manner in which bodhisattvas purify obscurations by generating an altruistic mind and realizing the empty nature of all phenomena. He asks Mañjuśrī about his own attainment of patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising and recounts the tale of the monk Vīradatta, who, many eons in the past, had engaged in a sexual affair with a girl and even killed a jealous rival before feeling strong remorse. Despite these negative actions, once the empty, non-existent nature of all phenomena had been explained to him by the bodhisattva Liberator from Fear, he was able to generate bodhicitta and attain patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising. The Buddha explains that even a person who had enjoyed pleasures and murdered someone would be able to attain patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising through practicing this sūtra, which he calls “the Dharma mirror of all phenomena.”

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## Introduction

The setting for this sūtra is Āmrapālī's mango grove in Vaiśālī, where Buddha Śākya-muni taught and performed miracles. The Lord Buddha visited Vaiśālī several times; first, in the fifth year after his enlightenment, he spent the rainy season there, and later, he laid down various rules of the Vinaya at Vaiśālī, as well as giving various other discourses. On his last visit he announced his approaching parinirvāṇa. In addition, one hundred years after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, it was the site of the second Buddhist Council.

This sūtra relates the story of a monk who has been seduced by a prostitute and is deeply remorseful for his actions. Mañjuśrī takes him to seek the counsel of the Buddha. What is interesting is the way in which the Buddha deals with monastic discipline and the ethical impairment of the monk's vows, contrasting the view of emptiness, or the lack of intrinsic nature of phenomena, and morality. Here, the view of emptiness trumps the code of monastic discipline as explained in the Vinaya. From the point of view of the monk's vows, sleeping with a woman is a disaster; however, this moral discourse takes the point of view of emptiness. This is an example of how the codes of monastic discipline are sometimes subordinated to the ultimate view of emptiness. Although the Vinaya is practiced in all vehicles, including the Vajrayāna, it is given different priorities. For example, in the Mahāyāna, if a monk holds the bodhisattva vows, certain exceptions can be made to his monastic vows, such as the one that prohibits touching a woman, when he is employing skillful means. Here in this text, however (although it is a Mahāyāna sūtra), the emphasis is not on any such skillful means, but on the metaphysical view of emptiness.

The Degé edition of this sūtra was compared to the Tok Phodrang<sup>1</sup> and the Lhasa editions of the Tibetan canon; discrepancies and remarks are indicated in the endnotes. This text was translated solely on the basis of the Tibetan editions, as a Sanskrit original has not been found. When the names of individuals are generally known in Sanskrit, e.g. Mañjuśrī, they are presented here in Sanskrit. In the case of many other personal names, however, it is difficult to establish from the Tibetan translation an unquestionable rendering back into Sanskrit; these names are therefore translated into English instead.

The Sanskrit title of the work, as transcribed in the Degé and most other recensions of the Kangyur, is—shorn of its honorific elements—*Karmāvaraṇaviśuddhasūtra*, which could be translated as “purified of karmic obscurations.” However, the sūtra is mentioned in Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* with the title *Karmāvaraṇaviśuddhisūtra* (which is also the spelling given in the Narthang Kangyur), and we have followed

most modern cataloguers of the Kangyur in taking this spelling as the probable original version, rendering it as *Purification of Karmic Obscurations*.

According to the colophon, the sūtra was originally translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by the Indian paṇḍitas Jinamitra and Prajñāvarman, and by the principal editor-translator (*lo tsā ba*), the monk Yeshé Dé (*ye shes sde*), and others. Jinamitra was a Kaśmīri of around the late eighth to early ninth century who travelled to Samyé Monastery in Tibet during the reign of the Dharma king Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan*) to engage in translation; he and Yeshé Dé collaborated on the translation of many hundreds of works. The translation of this text is listed in the Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) catalogue, compiled in 824, and was thus most likely prepared in the early ninth century.

## THE TRANSLATION

### *The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra*

### *Purification of Karmic Obscurations*

[F.284a] Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus have I heard at one time. The Bhagavān was dwelling at Āmrāpālī's Grove in Vaiśālī, in the company of a great monastic assembly of about five hundred monks and thirty-two thousand great bodhisattva mahāsattvas such as the bodhisattva mahāsattvas Destroyer of Pride, Sublime Knowledge Displayed with Luminosity, Like a Lotus Flower,<sup>2</sup> King of Light Diffusion, Embodiment Always Appearing Like an Honorable Image, All Doubts Diminished, He whose Intelligence is Like an Ocean of Arrayed Jewels, Abode of Myriad Flowers, King of Utterly Clear Melody, Lamp of the Light King, Golden Light of the Glorious Essence, Mighty One, Subjugator of All Places, King of Openly Proclaiming Melody, Embodiment of Enchanting Splendor, the great bodhisattva mahāsattva Youthful Mañjuśrī, and others. In all he was accompanied by thirty-two-thousand great bodhisattva mahāsattvas.

At that time, the monk called Stainless Light came to the large city of Vaiśālī in order to beg for alms. [F.284b] As he made the rounds begging for alms, he arrived at a prostitute's home, not knowing whose it was. As soon as the monk entered her home, lustful intentions were aroused in the prostitute, who thought, "I will not let this monk go without sleeping with him. If I fail, I will die." As soon as the monk entered the house she shut the door and told him, "It would be wrong for you not to sleep with me. Unless you sleep with me, I will die."

Then the monk Stainless Light spoke to the prostitute, "Auntie! I must train in the great precepts prescribed by the Buddha. I dare not engage in sexual activity. Please let me go! I would rather die than engage in sexual activity."

At this the prostitute thought, "If I use a certain secret mantra and drug to seduce<sup>3</sup> this monk, he will surely engage in blissful acts with me; I shall definitely use that secret mantra and drug on this monk." But she said to him, "I, too, have no desire to destroy or impair the Buddha's prescribed precepts. Most graciously accept my alms." With these words she went inside, bewitched the food with magic spells and secret mantras, and poured it into the monk's begging bowl.

As soon as she had poured out his food, the monk suddenly gave rise to immoral thoughts. Fantasizing, he gave rise to enormous longing. When the prostitute noticed

the change in the monk's expression, she grabbed him with her right hand, led him to the bed, and they slept with each other.

After the monk had had his pleasure from dallying with the prostitute, he collected his alms, went to the main temple, and thought, "Oh, woe is me! I have just violated all that is contained in the Buddha's great teaching of moral conduct! [F.285a] As I have violated my moral conduct, I am no longer worthy to partake of faithful people's offerings. I shall fall into the great hell realms." He approached his monastic companions and said, "I have neglected my moral conduct. As I am no longer an ordained devotee, I shall fall into the great hell realms."

His monastic companions asked, "Why did you neglect your moral conduct?" So he recounted to them exactly how it had happened.

"Venerable Stainless Light," his monastic companions said, "the bodhisattva mahāsattva called Youthful Mañjuśrī is expert in expunging all wrong-doings. He is expert in dispelling all obscurations. He has attained patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising.<sup>4</sup> Even the Bhagavān speaks well of him, praising and extolling him. So, venerable one, please come. We shall go to meet Youthful Mañjuśrī. He will be able to dispel your distress."

Then, without eating his food, the monk Stainless Light, together with his monastic companions, left for the abode of Youthful Mañjuśrī. When they entered the presence of Youthful Mañjuśrī, they exchanged some joyful and delightful conversation, and then recounted to Youthful Mañjuśrī what had happened.

After these explanations, Youthful Mañjuśrī said to the monk Stainless Light, "Monk, eat some of this food. Once you have eaten, tell the Bhagavān about this and follow the Bhagavān's instructions." As soon as the monk Stainless Light had eaten, he and his monastic companions, together with Youthful Mañjuśrī, left for the abode of the Bhagavān.

Upon entering his presence, they touched their heads to the feet of the Bhagavān, and after circumambulating the Bhagavān three times, they sat down to one side of him. [F.285b] The monk Stainless Light was too ashamed to be able to speak to the Bhagavān, so Youthful Mañjuśrī rose from his seat, draped his outer robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, joined his palms before the Bhagavān, and relayed to the Bhagavān everything that had happened.

When he had been told what had happened, the Bhagavān asked the monk Stainless Light, "Monk, is it true that you did thus?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, yes, it is true."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, did you have a prior intention to engage in lustful conduct?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, no, I did not."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, if lustful thoughts did not arise, how did you come to engage in lustful conduct?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, my lustful mind arose later on."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, did you engage in your passionate act with that mind?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, no, I did not."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, when their minds are afflicted, sentient beings become

controlled by their afflictions; when their minds are purified, they become pure. Is this not the Dharma I taught?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, yes, it is."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, what do you think? In your sleep, when dreaming, did you ever engage in passionate acts?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, yes, I did."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, do you not know that it is your mind that engaged in passionate conduct?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, I do know that."<sup>5</sup>

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, do you think that there is a difference such that your dreaming mind and your waking mind are separate and distinct?"<sup>6</sup> [F.286a]

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, I do not see the slightest distinction between the dreaming mind and the waking mind."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, what do you think? Have I not taught that all phenomena are like dreams?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, yes, you have."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, what do you think? Are dreams true?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, no, they are not."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, what do you think? Are not the dreaming mind and the waking mind non-existent?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, they are indeed non-existent. Sugata, they are indeed non-existent."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, what do you think? Could something non-existent exist anywhere?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, no, it could not."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, what do you think? Could something non-existent arise?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, no, it could not."

The Bhagavān spoke, "Monk, what do you think? Could something non-arising arise or cease? Could it become controlled by afflictions, or cleansed?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, no, it could not."

The Bhagavān asked, "Monk, what do you think? Could non-arising phenomena go to the hell realms, or to the birthplace of an animal, or to the realm of the Lord of Death?"

Stainless Light replied, "Bhagavān, since things that are non-arising do not exist, it would be impossible for them to go to the lower realms."

The Bhagavān spoke, "Monk, while all phenomena are luminous in this way, childish ordinary beings construct unreal phenomena, construct erroneous qualities, and have constructed all phenomena, which are in fact insignificant and worthless. And thus they will go to hell, animal states of birth, and to the realm of the Lord of Death. [F.286b] Monk, furthermore, all phenomena are untrue; they have the characteristic that once created they do not remain.<sup>7</sup> Monk, all phenomena are compounded; childish ordinary beings have given rise to attachment, hatred, and delusion. Monk, all phenomena arise from distorted perceptions. Monk, all phenomena lack existence, their very essence is like a mirage. Monk, all phenomena lack a core, they are like space.

Monk, as all phenomena are devoid of reality, they are not real entities. Monk, as all phenomena are deep like space, they are deep. Monk, as all phenomena are unperceived, they are wide open. Monk, as all phenomena are utterly void, they are non-abiding. Monk, as all phenomena have no worth for anything at all, they are unreliable. Monk, as all phenomena are without worth whatsoever, they are baseless. Monk, as all phenomena are devoid of afflicted concepts, they are unfettered. Monk, as all phenomena are non-arising by nature, they are entirely free from pain. Monk, as all phenomena are void, they are unobscured. Monk, as all phenomena are free of hatred by nature,<sup>8</sup> there is no hatred. Monk, as all phenomena are luminous by nature, there is no delusion. Monk, as all phenomena are like hallucinations, there is no karmic maturation. Monk, as all phenomena appear mistakenly, they are like illusions. Monk, as all phenomena are constructed falsely, they are non-abiding. Monk, as childish ordinary beings project existence on to non-existent phenomena, they act completely blindly. Monk, as all phenomena are mutually contradictory conditions, they are non-arising. Monk, as all phenomena are without path, they are unattached. Monk, as all phenomena are not truly afflicted, they are free from afflictions. [F.287a] Monk, as all phenomena are as immaculate as space, they are stainless. Monk, as phenomena are nothing but void, they are nothing whatsoever. Monk, as all phenomena are inherently non-arising, they are tamed. Monk, as all phenomena are devoid of an earlier limit, a later limit, and a middle, they are untrue. Monk, as no phenomenon is the cause of another, phenomena are liberated. Monk, as all phenomena are like grass, wood, walls, and clods of dirt, they are material substance. Monk, as all phenomena are like space, they are essenceless. Monk, as no phenomenon is anything to be attached to, phenomena are equal. Monk, as all phenomena are like a body of space<sup>9</sup> and an empty hand, they cannot be grasped. Monk, as all phenomena have been the objects of thorough searches by those endowed with exalted wisdom, they are unobtained. Monk, as all phenomena are free of the three times, they are timeless. Monk, as all phenomena are nothing to be benightedly attached to, they are not to be engaged with. Monk, as all phenomena are devoid of obscurations, they are free of pain. Monk, as all phenomena are like nirvāṇa, they are blissful. Monk, as all phenomena are without fearsomeness, they are not to be feared. Monk, as all phenomena are unobserved on this side, there is no other side. Monk, as all phenomena are incalculable, they are beyond measure. Monk, as the signs of all phenomena are insignificant, they are signless. Monk, as all phenomena lack wishes, they are wishless. Monk, as all phenomena have the nature of false formations, they are without actual formation. [F.287b] Monk, as all phenomena are undisturbed by discursive thought, they are unelaborated. Monk, as all phenomena are free of abiding, they are non-abiding. Monk, as all phenomena are always clear, they are unsullied. Monk, as the arising of all phenomena is unperceived, as their arising is insignificant, as their arising is worthless, as their arising is empty, and as their arising is peaceful, they are final nirvāṇa. Monk, for these reasons, these phenomena are exactly as I have taught. Monk, dwelling within the essence of enlightenment, I have not perceived even the slightest phenomenon that arises, that perishes, that is afflicted, cleansed, obscured, fettered, regretful, or miserable. Why is that so? Monk, as all phenomena are at all times unafflicted, they are perfectly pure by nature.”

When the monk Stainless Light heard this of the nature of phenomena, he felt satis-

fied, and rejoiced. He was very happy, and felt joy and relief. Delighted to have no obscurations, he joined his palms before the Bhagavān, bowed, and spoke these verses to the Bhagavān:

“Ah! Ah! Buddha powerful,  
 refuge of the world including gods,  
 even though you needed no training,  
 your good qualities rise above all.  
 Homage to you, who sets free all pain!

“You grant refuge to the protectorless,  
 and give counsel to those without guide.  
 You dwell in the peaceful path of bliss.  
 Homage to you, Buddha powerful!

“You are the lamp for the blind of this world;  
 Granting sight to those who could not see,  
 you free those beings who had no freedom.  
 Homage to you, hero powerful!

“You are free from clinging and dislike, [F.288a]  
 and teach lustful ones suffering;  
 you have seen the lie of saṃsāra’s circle.  
 Homage to you, wisdom’s might supreme!

“Never attached because of discursive thoughts,  
 freeing with inconceivable wisdom  
 supreme in the three worlds, you are unstained and free of passions.  
 Homage to you, who are unstained and clean!

“I, too, shall enter awakening,  
 shall end helpless beings’ misery.  
 Having attained such wisdom  
 I shall not be tainted by the lesser paths.

“I shall suffer for inconceivable myriads of eons,  
 but shall not forsake the bodhi mind.  
 Like the moon within a field of stars  
 is how you appear, world’s guardian.

“Some with inferior minds,  
 though they travel on the vast extensive sea,  
 fail to collect many gems,  
 but only bring back worthless trinkets.

“Likewise, some, although they hear of the buddhas’ manifestations  
 and his strengths, awakened intent does not arise in them.

They turn away from awakening, and strive on the hearers' path.  
They will not pierce wisdom's vast expanse—

“just as someone with childish character,  
although he sees the king surrounded by his court,  
finds inspiration only in the ministers' skill  
and will not fully pierce the knowledge of the king.

“Likewise, there are those who,  
although they hear of great buddha attributes,  
and of his wisdom's magical display,  
decide upon the lower mind.  
They are lazy and their minds are weak.

“The non-attachment to the world of those of the inferior vehicle  
gives as much light as fireflies in the night.  
But those who work with the sun in all its splendor,  
will, when they obtain that illumination, be divest of darkness.

“The Buddha's voice reaches the highest realms.  
The Buddha's voice reaches the noble-born.  
The Buddha, supreme lamp for this world,  
illuminates all the world and the realms of the gods.

“Just as, when a lion is seen amongst foxes,  
some may take interest in fox talk[F.288b]  
and, ignoring the lion's display,  
find delight in fox affairs,

“so, too, when those who, among the hearers  
see the Supreme Lion of Man's display,  
but take delight in the lower vehicle,  
their powers will be one-sided indeed.

“May people who seek wisdom always expound  
on suffering, to help the worldly ones;<sup>10</sup>

may they seek the wisdom, true and sublime  
which is not the ground of common hearers.”

Hearing these verses of faith spoken by the monk Stainless Light, forty-two thousand sons of gods gave rise to the mind set on unsurpassed, perfectly complete enlightenment. Tossing mandāra blossoms toward the Bhagavān, Youthful Mañjuśrī, and the monk Stainless Light, they proclaimed, “Monk, very good, very good. To thus pursue the enlightenment of a buddha is to reciprocate the Tathāgata's kindness.”

At that moment the Bhagavān smiled. An attribute of bhagavān buddhas is that whenever they smile, light radiates from their mouths in myriad colors such as blue,

yellow, red, white, vermillion, crystalline, and silver. Diverse colors emerged, permeated infinite limitless world systems with light, and extended up to the brahmā worlds. Outshining even the light of the sun and moon, the light then returned, circled around the Bhagavān three times, and vanished into the crown of the Bhagavān's head.

Then the venerable Ānanda rose from his seat. Draping his Dharma robe over one shoulder, he placed his right knee on the ground, faced the Bhagavān, joined his palms, and asked him: [F.289a] “As the bhagavats, tathāgatas, arhats, perfectly enlightened buddhas do not smile without causes and conditions, what is the cause of your smile, and what are the conditions for it?”

The Bhagavān replied, “Ānanda, the monk Stainless Light has given rise to the mind set on enlightenment with noble intent. I therefore predict that the monk Stainless Light shall attain unsurpassed perfectly complete enlightenment. Ānanda, in the future, after ten eons have passed, the monk Stainless Light will make offerings to two hundred and twenty million buddhas and attain patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising, in the presence of the tathāgata, arhat, perfectly complete Buddha Maitreya. He will also make offerings to all the bhagavān buddhas of the Fortunate Eon. Thereafter, having fully matured, he will become the tathāgata He Who Proclaims the Lion's Roar of Conduct That is Renowned to be the Lotus of Good Qualities. Ānanda, the buddhafield of the tathāgata, arhat, perfectly enlightened one, He Who Proclaims the Lion's Roar of Conduct That is Renowned to be the Lotus of Good Qualities, will be made with seven precious attributes. There will be no hearers or solitary realizers, only bodhisattvas will gather there. Furthermore, in this buddhafield he will teach them the Dharma called ‘The Wheel of No Return.’ Also, those bodhisattvas will swiftly awaken truly and completely into unsurpassed, perfectly complete enlightenment. Thus their buddhafield will become utterly purified<sup>11</sup> by the excellence of exalted wisdom, and this world system will then be called ‘Endowed with Infinite Discourses.’”<sup>12</sup>

Then the Bhagavān said to the venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, it is like this. In the same way as all the darkness disappearing when the sun rises, Ānanda, so, likewise, whoever hears this Dharma discourse will attain full illumination, and will also attain non-obscurations with regard to all phenomena.”

At this, the venerable Ānanda asked the Bhagavān, [F.289b] “Bhagavān, how does one become obscured, and how non-obscured?”

But the Bhagavān told him, “Never mind, Ānanda! What use is it for you to ask questions on that point? Ānanda, if the tathāgata explained everything about obscuration and non-obscurations, the world and its gods would become confused.”

Youthful Mañjuśrī, however, made this plea to the Bhagavān: “Bhagavān, by hearing about obscuration and non-obscurations, the bodhisattvas of the final five hundred years will no longer give rise to desire for worldly affairs. Therefore, please do explain them!”

The Bhagavān said, “Mañjuśrī, as for ‘obscurations,’ attachment is an obscuration, hatred is an obscuration, ignorance is an obscuration, generosity is an obscuration, moral conduct is an obscuration, patience is an obscuration, diligence is an obscuration, meditation is an obscuration, transcendent awareness is an obscuration, perceiving the Buddha is an obscuration, perceiving the Dharma is an obscuration, perceiving

the Saṅgha is an obscuration, perceiving emptiness is an obscuration, perceiving signlessness is an obscuration, perceiving wishlessness is an obscuration, perceiving the actual absence of formations is an obscuration, perceiving non-arising is an obscuration, perceiving enlightenment is an obscuration. Mañjuśrī, in brief, whether they are viewed as totally afflicted or fully cleansed, you should regard them all as obscurations.”

Mañjuśrī asked, “Bhagavān, how is generosity an obscuration? How are moral conduct, patience, diligence, meditation, and transcendent awareness obscurations?”

The Bhagavān replied, “Mañjuśrī, in all phenomena there is indeed no obscuration. Nevertheless, conditioned by their thoughts, childish ordinary beings engage in obscured activity with regard to generosity, and they engage in obscured activity with regard to moral conduct, patience, diligence, meditation, and transcendent awareness. How is this so? [F.290a]

“Mañjuśrī, when childish ordinary beings practice generosity, they do it with disrespect toward miserly sentient beings. Due to their disrespect, those who practice giving get angry and give rise to the fault of resentment. The faults of anger and resentment plunge them into the hell realms.

“When childish ordinary beings observe moral conduct they speak ill of those neglecting moral conduct, disparaging and treating them contemptuously. When these disparaging remarks are repeated to others it causes disrespect in many ordinary beings, who will go to the lower realms due to their disrespect.

“When they practice patience, they declare, ‘We have patience, while those others bear harmful thoughts.’ Intoxicated with the arrogance of patience, they create all the suffering that results from fundamental heedlessness.

“When they exert themselves in diligence, they extol themselves and think, ‘Those other monks are lazy and lack diligence, yet they enjoy the offerings of the faithful. They are not worthy of even enjoying water from a water container.’ As they exert themselves in diligence, they praise themselves and disparage others. I say that they are childish beings.

“When they spend their time in the equilibrium of meditation, they give rise to attachment to the joyful bliss of meditation and think, ‘We spend our time in equipoise. Those other monks spend their time in mental distraction. They spend their time enjoying frivolous entertainments. As they enjoy frivolous entertainments, how will they ever become buddhas? They are far from the enlightenment of a buddha.’ Those who take attitudes like these, as long as they think such contemptuous thoughts, will cling tightly to saṃsāra for eons. Later, if they engage in enlightenment, even if they have great learning, they will imagine that, amongst all letterless phenomena,<sup>13</sup> the mind is existent.

“When they observe transcendent awareness they disdain others. I say that they have no knowledge, I say that they talk even though they do not know, [F.290b] I say that they are not sublime beings, I say that as they conceptualize, they are corrupted.

“If they enter the Mahāyāna, again they will think, ‘We are foremost in this world, we are the best in this world, we are supreme in this world.’ When they see followers of the Hearers’ Vehicle they give rise to disrespect, disparage them, denigrate them, and speak ill of them. Due to these evil thoughts and condemnations they will be re-

born in the lower realms.”

Then Youthful Mañjuśrī asked the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, are the bodhisattvas not praised because of the Buddha’s teachings?”

The Bhagavān replied, “Mañjuśrī, what do you think? Do the bodhisattvas not regard all sentient beings affectionately, do they not naturally give rise to altruism?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Bhagavān, yes, they do.”

The Bhagavān continued, “Mañjuśrī, what do you think? Would bodhisattvas forsake even a few sentient beings, whether of the Hearer’s Vehicle, the Solitary Realizers’ Vehicle, or the Mahāyāna?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Bhagavān, they would not. As bodhisattvas regard all sentient beings equally, bodhisattvas would not dismiss even a few sentient beings.”

The Bhagavān continued, “Mañjuśrī, it is like this. Just as a physician does not forsake even a few sentient beings, whether they are a king, a merchant, a householder, or a mendicant, but attends to all with equanimity and thinks of what he can do to free these sentient beings from their illnesses, Mañjuśrī, likewise, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas suffuse all sentient beings with compassion and attend to them with equanimity. [F.291a] They think, ‘How can I cause all these sentient beings to find definite release through the Buddha’s teachings?’

“Mañjuśrī, it is like this: just as when the lineage of medical cure remains unbroken, the physician is pleased and rejoices, likewise, Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas are pleased and rejoice when the lineage of the Buddha remains unbroken. Mañjuśrī, not all sentient beings are like physicians. Mañjuśrī, a physician who has the ability to heal is rare. Likewise, Mañjuśrī, not all sentient beings are like the Buddha; bodhicitta is rare. Not all sentient beings can bear to put on such armor for the purpose of enlightenment. Just as lazy people might think,

‘I shall be a physician,’ and yet do not seriously observe the practices of physicians, so, likewise, not all beings are able to give rise to the mind set on enlightenment. Laziness makes them fall ill. Mañjuśrī, naturally occurring bodhicitta is rare. Self-arising exalted wisdom is rare. A vast mind is rare. To seriously observe the teachings of the Buddha is rare.”

Then the Youthful Mañjuśrī asked the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, how can bodhisattvas become unobscured and purified with respect to all phenomena?”

At this question the Bhagavān replied to the Youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, bodhisattvas who see all phenomena as objects of desire will attain purification from karmic obscurations. Those who see all phenomena as objects of hatred will attain purification from karmic obscurations. Those who see all phenomena as objects of delusion will attain purification from karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, bodhisattvas who openly delight in the pleasures of the five senses without renouncing or abandoning them, [F.291b] and those who see the Buddha’s teachings as essentially desire will attain purification of karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, bodhisattvas who pursue enlightenment through the five obscurations, who do not pursue and attain enlightenment, and who do not have obscurations either, will attain purification of all karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, bodhisattvas who have purified the nine grounds of hostility will attain loving kindness. Those who genuinely discern the development of the

ground of their hostility to a particular person, yet do not apprehend a self, or others, or even loving kindness, being free of apprehending all phenomena in this way have supreme loving kindness. Thus, bodhisattvas endowed with patience will attain freedom from obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, a bodhisattva who sees downfalls as non-downfalls, who sees discipline as non-discipline, who sees affliction as purity, and who sees samsāric realms as the sphere of nirvāṇa, will attain purification of karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, a bodhisattva who sees the realm of desire as the sphere of nirvāṇa, who sees the realm of hatred as the sphere of nirvāṇa, and who sees the realm of delusion as the sphere of nirvāṇa, will attain purification from karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, a bodhisattva mahāsattva who truly sees all phenomena as the teachings of the Buddha will attain purification of karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, a bodhisattva who sees all phenomena as arising from the ground of space will attain purification of karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, a bodhisattva who does not distinguish between the phenomena of avarice and the phenomena of generosity, [F.292a] who does not distinguish between the phenomena of immoral conduct and the phenomena of moral conduct, who does not distinguish between the phenomena of malice and the phenomena of patience, who does not distinguish between the phenomena of laziness and the phenomena of diligence, who does not distinguish between the phenomena of distraction and the phenomena of meditation, and who does not distinguish between the phenomena of misconstrued wisdom and the phenomena of wisdom will attain purification from karmic obscurations.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, a bodhisattva who is convinced that all afflictions are the Buddhadharmas will attain purification of karmic obscurations.”

Then Youthful Mañjuśrī asked the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, how do the bodhisattvas integrate the teachings of the Buddha into all afflictions?”

The Bhagavān answered, “Mañjuśrī, what do you think? Does a phenomenon engage in afflicted acts with respect to another phenomenon?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Bhagavān, no, it does not.”

The Bhagavān asked, “Mañjuśrī, what do you think? Does a phenomenon engage in pure acts with respect to another phenomenon?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Bhagavān, no, it does not.”

The Bhagavān spoke, “Mañjuśrī, what do you think? How did you attain patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Bhagavān, it is with respect to all afflictions that I have attained patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising. Why? Bhagavān, since all afflictions arise from the ground of space, I neither seek, nor abandon, nor meditate on, nor manifest, any phenomenon. Bhagavān, childish ordinary beings are neither separate from the teachings of the Buddha, [F.292b] nor have they realized them; and so, Bhagavān, in order to abandon afflictions, I have abandoned these apprehensions of the Buddha’s teachings.”

Then the Bhagavān praised Youthful Mañjuśrī, “Very well done. Mañjuśrī, very well done.”

“Mañjuśrī, a long time in the past, incalculable, immeasurable, measureless, incon-

ceivable, unfathomable eons ago, in a world system called Most Fragrant, the tathāgata, arhat, perfectly complete buddha, endowed with perfect knowledge and virtue, sugata, knower of the world, unsurpassed guide who tames beings, teacher of gods and men, the buddha Bhagavān Stainless Light, the Essence of the Sun, appeared in the world. Mañjuśrī, this tathāgata, arhat, perfectly complete buddha Stainless Light, the Essence of the Sun, was able to live for nine thousand eons. The sentient beings of that world system took an interest in the lesser paths. Interest in the great paths decreased. After this tathāgata passed into parinirvāṇa, his sacred Dharma endured for a thousand years. His bodily relics proliferated in the same way that my bodily relics will proliferate.

“Mañjuśrī, at that time there appeared a monk called Vīradatta. He practiced all that is contained in the Buddha’s teaching of moral conduct. He was modest, inclined to the higher trainings, and learned. That monk was handsome and lovely to behold. He was of fine color and complexion. One morning he put on his lower garment, took his begging bowl and robes, and went to the large city of Vijaya in order to beg for alms. As he walked around the city begging for alms, he came to a merchant’s home. In that merchant’s home [F.293a] was the merchant’s daughter. Her body was shapely; she was beautiful, lovely to behold, and she had not yet been bestowed upon a husband.

“When the merchant’s daughter saw the monk Vīradatta, lustful intentions were aroused in her and she thought, ‘If I do not gain the monk Vīradatta as my husband, I will die.’ Being unable to talk about this to anyone and deeply distressed by her desire, she became ill. After the monk Vīradatta had made his rounds begging for alms, he went to the main temple. The girl’s father had died, too.

“The girl’s mother asked her, ‘Why have you fallen so ill?’ The girl did not respond and continued to fast.

“Then the girl’s friends of the same age who had experienced the same joys and pains asked her, ‘Why have you fallen so ill?’

“The girl replied, ‘When I saw a certain monk, I gave rise to longing desire. If I have sex with this monk, I will be cured from my illness, but if I do not have sex with him, I will die.’

“The other girls told her mother what she had said, whereupon her mother thought, ‘If she does not have sex with the monk Vīradatta there is nothing that can be done to keep this girl from dying.’ And then she thought, ‘I must have my daughter receive instruction from the monk Vīradatta. Then the monk Vīradatta will come to our home regularly.’

“Subsequently the monk Vīradatta returned to the city of Vijaya in order to beg for alms, and again he went to the merchant’s home in order to beg for alms. He went inside, and when he saw that the merchant’s daughter had become so weak he asked, ‘Why has this girl become so weak and ill?’

“The girl’s mother replied, ‘The girl wanted to listen to the Dharma but I prevented her. This is why she fell ill.’

“The monk Vīradatta therefore said to the girl’s mother, [F.293b] ‘Do not prevent this girl from listening to the Dharma.’

“The mother said, ‘If you, master, will impart instruction to her, I shall not prevent this girl from listening to the Dharma.’

“The monk Vīradatta said, ‘I shall impart instruction to this girl.’

“The girl’s mother said, ‘Master, please come to our home regularly.’

“‘I shall come,’ Vīradatta replied.

“When she heard the monk’s words, the girl’s improper thoughts became less overpowering than they had been, and she thought, ‘Now I shall by all means make him act according to my desire; I shall seduce him.’ She said to the monk, ‘Master, please do me the favor of coming to our home.’

“The monk Vīradatta wordlessly indicated his agreement, took his alms, and went to the main temple.

“Then the girl’s mother told her, ‘Daughter, from now on adorn yourself with jewels, anoint your body with sandalwood, dress yourself in colorful robes. You must make an effort to be sure that he falls under your power!’ Accordingly, the girl applied herself with effort.

“Thereafter, the monk Vīradatta visited her home repeatedly and they became friends. From seeing her all the time, he gave rise to lustful intentions toward the girl. Preoccupied by desire and being in her company, he became fettered by desire. He came together with the girl, and had full sexual intercourse with her. Becoming intimate with her,<sup>14</sup> and adoring her, he had intercourse with her again and again.

“The suitor who had previously asked for her hand heard that Vīradatta had been sleeping with the girl; thinking about how the monk Vīradatta had been with the girl again and again, he decided to seize him and kill him.

“When the monk Vīradatta heard that the girl’s suitor intended to kill him he thought, [F.294a] ‘I must send some poison with the girl to bring death to that merchant’s son.’ So the monk Vīradatta passed some poison to the girl and said to her, ‘If you love me, kill your suitor with this poison.’

“The girl took the poison from the monk, mixed it with food, and sent it with the maid, telling her, ‘Go and offer this to my suitor.’ The maid offered the food mixed with poison to the girl’s suitor; the merchant’s son ate the food mixed with poison, and he died.

“As soon as the monk Vīradatta learned that the merchant’s son had died, he felt deep distress, thinking, ‘I have committed a horrific deed. I have committed an inexpiable deed. I have indulged in pleasure, and moreover I have caused a man to die. What kind of creature am I? What will I become in a future life? I will fall into the hell realms.’ He felt great physical pain, and he thought, ‘It is certain that when I die I will go to the hell realms.’ Reflecting thus, he wondered, ‘Is there anyone who can liberate me from this misery?’ He wandered from temple to temple, and would collapse to the ground like a felled tree, weeping, ‘Oh no! Oh no! I have become a sentient being of the hell realms.’

“At that time, there was a temple called Snow Temple. The monk went to that temple and when he reached the entrance, he fell to the ground and wept, ‘Oh no! Oh no! I have become a sentient being of the hell realms.’

“The bodhisattva mahāsattva Liberator from Fear came into the temple, and when he saw the monk crumpled on the ground, he asked him, ‘Monk, why have you fallen to the ground?’

“The monk replied, ‘I have become a sentient being of the hell realms. I have com-

mitted a horrific deed. [F.294b] I have engaged in sexual intercourse, and also killed a person.’ The bodhisattva Liberator from Fear said to the monk Vīradatta, ‘Monk, do not be afraid. I shall bring an end to your fear.’

“When the monk Vīradatta heard these words of reassurance he was overjoyed and happy. The bodhisattva Liberator from Fear helped the monk Vīradatta up from the ground, took him by his right hand, and they went into a thick forest, where they remained.

“The bodhisattva mahāsattva Liberator from Fear then hovered in space at the height of a palm tree, and asked the monk, ‘Monk, do you trust me?’ The monk joined his palms and said these words, ‘I have met the Bhagavān. I have met the Sugata.’

“Then, at that time, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Liberator from Fear entered the samādhi called ‘the exalted wisdom mudrā of the tathāgatas, the entrance gate to the domain of all buddhas.’ The moment he entered that samādhi, golden forms of tathāgatas endowed with the thirty-two marks of a buddha emerged from his body. The forms of those tathāgatas pervaded the entire forest. Those tathāgatas spoke these verses that accord with<sup>15</sup> enlightened speech:

““All these phenomena are like reflections,  
just as the moon appears in water, yet is not there.  
Immature minds have become dim and afraid,  
thus creating toxic thoughts of lust and hate.  
All phenomena are like space, ever pure and clear,  
beyond suffering, non-dwelling, and peaceful.  
There is no one who feels or performs actions.  
All things are peace, unreal, and without essence.  
When examined from within, lust cannot be found,  
nor has anyone ever discovered hate.  
Immature ones believe that they are attached,  
yet there is no one who has ever been so.  
In dreams they believe in the forms that they see; [F.295a]  
With liking and disliking their minds grow dull.  
Wielding weapons and striving to kill,<sup>16</sup>  
when in fact the weapon and killer do not exist;  
in this way, immature ones engage in lust,  
combat, resistance, and also butchery.  
Their minds deluded, they are frightened and dull,  
with thoughts of ‘I must have this’ they grasp at joy.  
These worldly preoccupations are like dreams,  
such phenomena are worthless, void, of no essence;  
like a mirage and similar to a cloud,  
lust is without sign and delusion is peace.  
Phenomena resemble grass straws and walls.  
Mind can be found neither inside nor outside.  
Lust is no living creature, nor sentient person;  
hate is neither an individual nor a thing.

Causes and conditions form phenomena;  
 illusions<sup>17</sup> neither confuse nor act;  
 like a moon in a pool of water, they are unproduced.  
 The body, too, is not there; attachment to it is worthless.  
 It stems from illusion and is emptiness;  
 grasping at matter, immature ones dissect and construct.  
 Illusions are worthless, absent, empty;  
 there is no lust, hatred, and ignorance;  
 all phenomena are void of attributes.  
 With no root seen, they are at peace from the first;  
 without end, they are void and lack all essence.  
 Lust is clear light, ignorance is perfect peace.  
 When childish ones see reflected images,  
 they believe in their identity as truth;  
 Of no worth and ungraspable, things do not exist,  
 yet beings wrongly view what is without essence.  
 These phenomena, optical illusions:  
 lust, delusion, and hatred, all ungraspable,  
 like mirages, dreams, and the moon in a pool of water,  
 No-one should crave or hate them.  
 They are harmless and empty.  
 No perception of anything can be found;  
 none of these constructions exist.  
 Things are unobservable and perfectly at peace.  
 Delusion, lust, and hatred do not exist.  
 These illusions will never be real.  
 All phenomena, like illusions or dreams,  
 with no apparent origin, none exist.  
 Likewise, though it is seen in a pool,  
 the moon never enters any water.  
 Just so, though the infantile hate and lust,  
 their desire and hatred are never real. [F.295b]  
 Lust cannot be grasped and hate does not exist.  
 Ignorance is clear light, conditions are empty.  
 Beings are not perceived and there is no life.  
 All things are of no import, peaceful, and without essence.  
 There are no eyes, nor are there ears.  
 The nose cannot be found and nor can the tongue;  
 nothing material has any essence.  
 Intoxicated, childish ones are confused.  
 Space is boundless, limitless, endless,  
 inexhaustible, and unproduced.  
 So, too, are all phenomena:  
 they are like rain in the sky, pristine and crystal clear.  
 Manifold phenomena are all fabricated,

but none of those fabrications are ever real.  
 The infantile grasp at the *skandhas* like that, too;  
 but none of them, either, are ever real.  
 The wise do not think of real and unreal,  
 but see the true nature of all things as peace,  
 unarisen and ungraspable.  
 Nor have their own bodies ever existed.  
 All things are luminous, unfettered and free,  
 peaceful, non-abiding, beyond misery;  
 None of them can be seized.  
 When they know this, the wise will be free.’

“In order to hear the teaching of the bodhisattva Liberator from Fear, forty-two thousand sons of gods assembled in the forest, and upon hearing these verses of teachings, they attained patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising. The monk Vīradatta also became completely free of fetters, and seeing with a genuine mind of enlightenment the array of the tathāgata’s emanations, he fully recognized the nature of this teaching and attained patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising.

“Mañjuśrī, should you wonder whether at that time the bodhisattva Liberator from Fear was someone else, you will not find it so. Why? Because the bodhisattva Maitreya was the bodhisattva Liberator from Fear at that time. Mañjuśrī, should you wonder whether at that time the monk Vīradatta was someone else, you will not find it so. Why? Because the Tathāgata Jewel Moon Performing Enlightened Actions was the monk Vīradatta at that time. [F.296a].”

At this, Youthful Mañjuśrī asked the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, did the monk Vīradatta attain manifest complete enlightenment?”

The Bhagavān replied, “Mañjuśrī, he attained manifest complete enlightenment and became the Tathāgata Jewel Moon in the West, as many buddhafiels beyond this buddhafiels as there are sand grains in the River Ganges, in a world system called Eternal Light.

“Mañjuśrī, consider how someone who practiced this Dharma teaching<sup>18</sup> attained patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising despite having partaken of all that he desired and even having interrupted another’s life. How could that be? It was because he understood that everything in the three realms is untrue, and that all sentient beings are like optical illusions. Mañjuśrī, when one abides in the illusion-like mind there is no obscuration with respect to any phenomenon. Further, Mañjuśrī, childish ordinary beings fall into the hell realms, or into birth as an animal, or into the realm of the Lord of Death, due to their own discursive thoughts. Imagining non-existent phenomena, they experience infinite suffering.”

Youthful Mañjuśrī asked the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, what qualities will a bodhisattva who comprehends, upholds, perfectly masters, and honors this Dharma discourse, obtain in this very life?”

The Bhagavān replied, “Mañjuśrī, what do you think? How beneficial is it to the men of Jambudvīpa when the sun rises?”

Mañjuśrī answered, “Bhagavān, the benefit is inconceivable; there is boundless light. It allows people to engage in activities.”

The Bhagavān continued, “Mañjuśrī, likewise, through this Dharma discourse, [F.296b] all the bodhisattva’s afflictions will be dispelled and the boundless light of exalted wisdom will arise. He will then attain freedom from obscurations with regard to all phenomena. He will become free of misery, and all fetters will also vanish. He will also swiftly actualize unattached confidence. No māra or adversary will be able to overcome him. He will also teach the Dharma, and moreover he will teach the Dharma with limitless confidence.<sup>19</sup> Mañjuśrī, it is like this: just as when a fire takes hold, it burns away all grass and wood. Mañjuśrī, likewise, this Dharma discourse burns away all afflictions. Mañjuśrī, it is like this: just as the majestic snow mountain outshines all the black mountains, Mañjuśrī, likewise, a bodhisattva who is skilled in this Dharma discourse subjugates and outshines in virtue all opponents. Mañjuśrī, it is like this: just as the wheel-turning emperor outshines all regional kings, Mañjuśrī, likewise, a bodhisattva who abides by this Dharma discourse outshines those who are skilled in language and composition. Mañjuśrī, it is like this: just as a monk who holds to the rules of the Vinaya is skilled in controlling all downfalls, Mañjuśrī, likewise, a bodhisattva who is skilled in this Dharma discourse dispels the regret of all sentient beings of the ten directions. Mañjuśrī, it is like this: just as the rising sun makes all gloomy darkness disappear, Mañjuśrī, likewise, a bodhisattva who is skilled in this Dharma discourse dispels the afflictions of all sentient beings and thus causes the light of exalted wisdom to manifest. Mañjuśrī, this is because whoever trains in this Dharma discourse trains in the higher training of transcendent awareness.”

Then the evil Māra came to the Bhagavān and said to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, you are compassionate. [F.297a] You are the physician of all sentient beings and endowed with a loving heart. If that is so, Bhagavān, all the abodes of Māra are shaken, and I too am stricken with painful suffering. Bhagavān, please do not expound this Dharma discourse. Bhagavān, I will do anything so that this Dharma discourse is not practiced in Jambudvīpa. I will do anything so that no one comprehends, holds, and masters this Dharma discourse. I will do anything to make beings perceive this Dharma discourse as a wrong path. I will make them perceive the elaborate sūtras with corrupt views. I will employ all means to make various fetters arise so the monks abandon this Dharma discourse.”

At that moment, by the Buddha’s miraculous powers, Indra, the chief of gods, appeared before the Bhagavān. He prostrated with his head to the Bhagavān’s feet, cast mandāra flowers toward the Bhagavān, and said to him, “Bhagavān, if the evil Māra deliberately tries to make this Dharma discourse decline, Bhagavān, then I shall comprehend this Dharma discourse, I shall hold it, and perfectly master it. And after you, the Bhagavān, and the venerable Ānanda have passed into parinirvāṇa, I shall cause this Dharma discourse to be practiced in Jambudvīpa. I shall command the Four Great Kings and the host of yakṣas, together with their retinues, to guard, protect, and shield this teaching. I, too, shall guard, protect, and shield those who comprehend, hold, read, and perfectly master this Dharma discourse.”

Thereupon the Bhagavān said to the venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, comprehend this Dharma discourse, establish it, assemble it, perfectly master it, and teach it widely to

others. [F.297b] Because, Ānanda, it is the Dharma mirror of all phenomena.”<sup>20</sup>

Ānanda said, “Bhagavān, according to the Tathāgata’s command, I shall comprehend this Dharma discourse. Bhagavān, what is the name of this Dharma discourse? How shall it be retained?”

The Bhagavān answered, “Ānanda, for all these reasons, retain this Dharma discourse with the name ‘Purification of Karmic Obscurations.’ Also retain it with the name ‘Entering the Unobscured Exalted Wisdom.’”

When this Dharma discourse was expounded, the minds of sixty monks were liberated from all defilements, without remainder.<sup>21</sup> Eighty bodhisattvas attained patient forbearance in seeing all phenomena as non-arising. When the Bhagavān had spoken thus, the Youthful Mañjuśrī, the venerable Ānanda, the monks, and the worlds of gods, humans, demi-gods, and gandharvas rejoiced, and highly praised the Bhagavān’s words.

*This concludes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra known as Purification of Karmic Obscurations.*

*The sūtra was translated and edited by the Indian paṇḍitas Jinamitra and Prajñāvarman, and by the principal editor-translator, the monk Yeshé Dé, along with others.*

## Notes

- 1 Tok Phodrang (stog pho brang).
- 2 Both the Degé (F284.a.5) and Lhasa (F438.b.4) editions read *me tog dam pa lta bu*, but the Tok Phodrang edition, p. 431, ln. 1, reads *me tog padma lta bu*. The translation follows the latter reading.
- 3 The Degé edition (F284.b.4) reads *bdag gis gsang sngags dang / sman gang gis dge slong 'di 'dug nas* which would be translated as “by... this monk will stay.” While the Lhasa edition (F437.a.7) also uses *dug nas*, the Tok Phodrang edition (F216.b.3) reads *'gug nas* which translates as “seduce” and thus seems more fitting in this case.
- 4 On *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, see E. Lamotte, *Traité II* chapter XXV “La patience à l'endroit du Dharma,” p. 902 *et seq.* See *ibid.* p. 970, n. 2 (our translation): “...It is on the 8th level that the bodhisattva obtains the forbearance to accept and understand the non-arising of the elements, the certainty to become enlightened and the assurance that he will not fall back; he exchanges the body that he has had from birth, or the body of flesh, for the dharmakāya.” See also *ibid.* p. 903 n. 1. Cf. F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 27 s.v. *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*: “intellectual receptivity to the truth that states of existence have no origination.”
- 5 F285.b.6 of the Degé edition reads *khyod kyis mi shod dam*; this reading accords with the Lhasa edition, F441.a.6, and would translate as “Are you not now telling me that it is your mind that engaged in passionate conduct?” In response the monk negates it by saying, “No, it is not so.” However, the Tok Phodrang edition, F218.b.2, reads *khyod kyis mi shes sam* which would be rendered as “Do you not know that it is your mind that engaged in passionate conduct?” and in response the monk affirms it by saying, “Yes I do.” The translation follows this reading, which makes more sense in the context.
- 6 F285.b.7 of the Degé edition reads *gnyid ma log pa'i sems 'di la bye brag dang tha dad du bya ba zhig yod par mthong ngam*, which accords with the Lhasa edition, F441.b.1, and would translate as “Do you think the activities engaged in by your dreaming mind and your waking mind are separate and distinct?” However, the Tok Phodrang edition, F218.b.3, reads *gnyid ma log pa'i sems 'di la bye brag dang tha dad du dbye ba zhig yod par mthong ngam*. The context and grammar seem to favor this latter reading.
- 7 *rnam par bsgrubs nas nye par gnas pa'i mtshan nyid do*. The meaning is unclear but it would fit the context to assume that a negative particle is missing.
- 8 F286.b.5 of the Degé edition reads *chos thams cad ni rang bzhin gyis ldang ba med pa'i phyir*; this reading accords with the Lhasa edition, F442.b.6, and would translate as “as all phenomena are non-arising by nature.” However, the Tok Phodrang edition, F220.a.7, reads *chos thams cad ni rang bzhin gyis sdang ba med pa'i phyir*, “as all phenomena are free of hatred by nature,” and once again this reading seems to fit the context better.
- 9 *nam mkha'i lus*, i.e., “insubstantial.”
- 10 F288.b.2 of the Degé edition reads *'jig rten kun tu sdug bsngal mang 'grel ba*, which accords with the Lhasa edition, F445.b.1, and would translate as “explaining suffering at length in all the worlds.” However, in the Tok Phodrang edition, F222.a.6, reads *'jig rten don du sdug bsngal mang 'grel ba*, “explaining suffering for the sake of worldly ones;” the translation follows the latter reading.
- 11 F289.a.6 of the Degé edition reads *yongs su sbyang bar 'gyur ro*, as does the Tok Phodrang edition, F223.b.1. The Lhasa edition, F446.b.5, reads *yongs su spyad par 'gyur ro*, which would translate as “entirely consumed,” or “completely enjoy” or other equivalents. The translation follows the Degé edition.
- 12 F289.a.6 of the Degé edition reads *rnam grags mtha' yas ldan zhes bya bar*, which is an unusual combination and would translate as “Endowed with Infinite Full Renown.” Both the Tok Phodrang edition, F223.b.1, and the Lhasa edition, F446.b.7, instead read *rnam grangs mtha' yas ldan zhes bya bar*, “Endowed with Infinite Discourses,” which seems more fitting.

- 13 *yi ge med pa*, “letterless,” refers to the emptiness of all phenomena and their transcendence of all conventions; phenomena are nameless, inexpressible, and ineffable.
- 14 F293.b.6 of the Degé edition reads *de 'dres shing mngon par dga' nas*, which translates as “joining and truly adoring;” this accords with the Lhasa edition, F454.a.4. However, the Tok Phodrang edition, F230.a.5, reads *der 'dris shing mngon par dga' nas*, which translates as “becoming intimate and truly adoring,” which seems more fitting.
- 15 F294.b.5 of the Degé edition reads *'thun*; this seems to be a spelling mistake as both the Tok Phodrang edition, F231.b.5, and the Lhasa edition, F455.b.5, read *mtshun*, which translates as “accord with.”
- 16 F295.a.1 of the Degé edition reads *mtshon cha thogs shing gsad par gsol ba na*, which accords with the Lhasa edition F456.a.3, and could be translated as “wielding weapons and speaking of killing / requesting to kill.” However, the Tok Phodrang reading, F232.a.2, *mtshon cha thogs shing gsad par rtsol ba na*, seems more fitting.
- 17 F295.a.3 of the Degé edition reads *sgyu de la ni rmongs shing byed pa med*, which accords with the Lhasa edition F456.a.6. However, the Tok Phodrang edition, F232.a.5, reads *rgyu rkyen de la rmongs shing byed pa med*, which could be translated “causes and conditions neither confuse nor act.”
- 18 F296.a.3 of the Degé edition reads *chos 'di dag gi sgrub pa byed pa dag*, which accords with the Lhasa edition. In the Tok Phodrang edition, F233.b.5 reads *chos 'di dag gi sgrub pa med pa dag* which translates “those who are free of obscurations regarding these teachings.” Since it seems that the benefits of the practice of this sūtra are being explained, the Degé version has been preferred here.
- 19 Limitless confidence, free of all doubts because one has realized the ultimate truth, is a quality that only a fully enlightened buddha possesses. This passage thus implies that one will become a buddha.
- 20 This teaching is said to be a “Dharma mirror” because it clearly reflects the nature of all phenomena.
- 21 This is a loose translation of *len pa med par*. Of the two types of arhat, with and without remainder, the latter state is attained when all afflictive emotions have been purified. An arhat with remainder continues to assume the five skandhas, while the other type abandons the five skandhas altogether. The monks referred to here became arhats without remainder because “their minds were liberated from all defilements.”

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