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Ordination, Part 1

[779a] Fascicle 31 of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya

Translated by Tripiṭaka Master Buddhayaśas of Kaśmīra, Zhu Fonian, and others during the Yao Qin dynasty

Ordination Skandhaka, Part 1

Thus have I heard, thus has it been told to me. In the ancient past, the very first king to appear in the world was named Mahāpuruṣa, and he was chosen by the people. This king had a son who became King Kalyāṇa. King Kalyāṇa had a son named Roci. King Roci had a son named Upoṣadha. King Upoṣadha had a son named Māndhātṛ. King Māndhātṛ had a son named Cāru. King Cāru had a son named Upacāru. King Upacāru had a son named Muci. King Muci had a son named Mucilinda. King Mucilinda had a son called Baihirṣi. King Baihirṣi had a son called Śakada. King Śakada had a son named Ruci. King Ruci had a son named Suruci. King Suruci had a son called Prāṇa. King Prāṇa had a son named Mahāprāṇa. King Mahāprāṇa had a son named Kuśa. King Kuśa had a son named Mahākuśa. King Mahākuśa had a son named Sudarśana. King Sudarśana had a son named Mahāsudarśana. King Mahāsudarśana had a son named Aśoka. King Aśoka had a son named Dīpa. King Dīpa had a son named Līna.

King Līna had a son named Meru. King Meru had a son named Maru. King Maru had a son called Vīryabala. King Vīryabala had a son named Dhṛtaratha. King Dhṛtaratha had a son named Daśaratha. King Daśaratha had a son named Śataratha. King Śataratha had a son named Dhṛtadhanu. King Dhṛtadhanu had a son named Daśadhanu. King Daśadhanu had a son named Śatadhanu. King Śatadhanu had a son named Śākyaśiṃha. King Śākyaśiṃha had a son named *Ciñca.

After King Ciñca there were ten Wheel-turning Universal Monarch clans in succession. The first clan was called *Kanuja; the second *Taruvīdi, the third Aśvin, the fourth Gandhāra, the fifth Kaliṅga, the sixth Campi, the seventh Kaurava, the eighth Pañcāla, the ninth Miśri and the tenth Ikṣvāku. [779b]

In the Kanuja clan there were five kings in succession. The Taruvīdi clan had five kings in succession, the Aśvin seven kings, the Gandhāra eight kings, the Kaliṅga nine kings, the Campi fourteen kings, the Kaurava thirty-one kings, the Pañcāla thirty-two kings, the Miśri eighty-four thousand kings and the Ikṣvāku one hundred kings in succession.

In the Ikṣvāku clan, there was a king named Mahāśujāta. King Mahāśujāta had a son called Ikṣvāku. King Ikṣvāku had a son named *Urada. Urada had a son named *Gaura. Gaura had a son named Nirpura. Nirpura had a son named Siṃhahanu. Siṃhahanu had a son named Śuddhodana. Śuddhodana had a son called Bodhisattva [Gautama], and Bodhisattva had a son named Rāhula.

In the northern borderlands, near the Himālayas, a son was born in the Śākya clan to a noble family in which both parents were of pure lineage. The child was fully endowed with all hallmarks, and after his birth, brahmin fortune-tellers gathered to divine his fate based on his appearance.

They predicted, “Your Majesty, this child is endowed with the thirty-two hallmarks of a great man. Having these hallmarks means that he must follow one of two courses, there is no other way. He will either go forth from the householder’s life or, as a kṣatriya, be anointed as a Chakravartin, the Wheel-turning Universal Monarch. In the latter case, he will conquer all to rule the four continents. He will be known as a righteous king, powerful because he rules for the sake of sentient beings. He will be possessed of all seven treasures: 1. the wheel; 2. the elephant; 3. the horse; 4. the pearl; 5. the queen; 6. the financial minister; 7. the commander of

the military. He will have a thousand sons who are heroic and strong, able to defeat all enemies. He will rule and enculturate every region in his kingdom with the power of his dharmic righteousness rather than with military force and punitive measures. He will carry out his royal duties without fear, acting from mastery rather than weakness.

“Should he go forth from the life of a householder into homelessness, he will become an Arhat,¹ Fully Enlightened, Perfected in wisdom and deeds, Well-gone, Knower of worlds, Unsurpassed, Leader of persons to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, World-honored One. Of all gods and humans, māras, brahmās,² recluses and brahmins, he alone will attain enlightenment, and he will enjoy that attainment. He will teach people the Dharma, which is good in the beginning, middle and end, perfect in word and meaning, inspiring people to undertake pure conduct.”

At this time, Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha, was concerned about neighboring countries and sent military patrols to various regions. He heard from those patrols that in the northern borderlands near the Himalayas, a son was born to parents of pure lineage belonging to a noble family in the Śākya clan. The child was endowed with the thirty-two hallmarks of a great man, and fortune-tellers had made the prediction described above. [779c]

A member of the patrol approached the king and said, “May it be known to Your Majesty

¹ Throughout the *Sifen lü*, the translators uses various terms to translate the term Arhat: *wusuo zhuo* 無所著, *wusuo zhuo ying gong* 無所著應供, *chushi ying gong* 出世應供, *zhizhen* 至真, and *wushang zheng zhen* 無上正真. According to Jan Nattier, the first term may be based on an etymology which interprets “arhat” as *a-rāga*, without greed. The expression *wusuo zhuo ying gong* 無所著應供 is a “double translation,” in which two possible meanings of the Indic term are rendered with two corresponding Chinese terms: without greed and worthy of offerings. The terms *zhizhen* 至真 and *wushang zheng zhen* 無上正真 do not have any direct semantic links with the term Arhat; rather they are to be understood in relation to the Taoist term *zhen ren* 真人 (true person; person who has realized the truth) which is found in the *Zhuangzi*. These two terms “correlate the highest ideal of human perfection in one culture with the corresponding ideal in another.” The superlative terms *zhizhen* and *wushang zheng zhen* indicate that the Arhat is intended to be superior to the Taoist “true person.” See Nattier, “Ten Epithets of the Buddha in the Translations of Zhi Qian,” in the *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* (Tokyo: Soka University, 2003), pp. 213, 218, and 245.

² The term “māras” refers to the various types of māra, including the god Māra, who rules the desire realm, and is chief of the parinirmitavaśavartin gods residing in the sixth heaven of the desire realm. The term “brahmās” refers to the first three heavens of the form realm and their gods, as well as the god Brahmā. In remarks on a similar passage, the *Da zhidu lun* (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 243b19–21) states that the term “māra(s)” refers to the desire realm, and “brahmā(s)” refers to the form realm.

that in the northern borderlands near the Himālayas a son has been born to parents of pure lineage belonging to a noble family in the Śākya clan. The child is endowed with the thirty-two hallmarks of a great man,” and related the above account. He continued, “I recommend that Your Majesty find an expedient way to eliminate him. Otherwise he may bring harm to Your Majesty in the future, resulting in loss of territory and ruin of the kingdom.”

The king replied, “There is no need to eliminate him. If he does not go forth, he will be anointed as a kṣatriya Wheel-turning Universal Monarch, a Chakravartin. Possessing the seven treasures, he will rule the four continents with ease, acting without weakness. In this case, I shall render service to him as a loyal subject.

“Should he go forth to pursue the path, he will become an Arhat, Fully enlightened. He will teach people the Dharma, which is good in the beginning, middle, and end. In this case, I shall become his disciple.”

As time passed, the Bodhisattva grew up and his faculties matured. Once, while he was in a quiet and secluded place, he observed, “I see that this world is full of suffering; there is birth, aging, illness and death. Dying here, one is reborn there. Because of this body,³ the limit of suffering is never reached. How does this mass of suffering come to an end?”

As a young man, the Bodhisattva had deep blue hair and distinguished features. As he reached the prime of his life, he took no delight in sensual pleasures. His parents wept in dismay because they did not want him to go forth to pursue the path. Adamant in his defiance, the Bodhisattva shaved his beard and hair, put on a robe, and went forth from the life of a householder to one of homelessness.

Then the Bodhisattva set off on a journey for the city of Rājagṛha. After crossing the border into Magadha, he spent the night. The next morning, after putting on his robe and picking up his bowl, he entered Rājagṛha for alms. Dignified in appearance, he walked serenely, with calmness in every movement. He proceeded directly ahead, with his eyes cast forward, and did not look left or right. Wearing his robe and holding his bowl, he entered Rājagṛha for alms.

At that time the king of Magadha was on top of a high building, surrounded by his officials.

³ “This body” could be interpreted as either this physical body, or the mass (Skt. *kāya*, mass, body) of suffering mentioned in the next sentence.

In the distance he saw the Bodhisattva entering the city for alms, walking serenely with calmness in every movement, proceeding directly ahead with his eyes cast forward, not looking left or right. Then the king praised the Bodhisattva in verse to his officials:

“Behold his appearance
And his most holy conduct.
With all the right hallmarks and good qualities,
He is certainly not an ordinary man.

“Looking attentively without distraction,
He proceeds looking at the ground ahead.”
Thereupon the king sent messengers
To discover the bhikṣu’s destination. [780a]

The messengers sent by the king
Followed the bhikṣu
Wherever he went
And wherever he stayed.

The bhikṣu went house to house, begging for food,
With faculties tranquil and focused.
His bowl filled quickly
And his mind was peaceful.

After his begging rounds,
The holy one went back out of the city
To Mount Pāṇḍava,
Where he stayed.

Having learned of the Buddha’s abode,
One of the messengers stayed nearby,
While the other hastened back
To report this to the king.

“Your Majesty,” he said,

“The bhikṣu is residing at Mount Pāṇḍava.

Whether lying or sitting he is like a lion

Or a tiger living in the mountains.”

After hearing the messenger’s account,

The king readied his elephant chariot.

Accompanied by the many who wished to join him,

He set off to visit the Bodhisattva.

When the king arrived, he paid his respects

And sat at one side.⁴

After mutual courtesies,

The king remarked,

“I see that you are young and strong,

And your practices are pure.

You are the one who should ride this great chariot

And be served by these ministers.

“Your dignified features show

That you must be kṣatriya by birth.

Now that we are here together,

Please tell me where you are from.”

He replied, “There is a kingdom ruled by a great king

To the north, in the Himālayas.

My father’s clan is Āditya,⁵

And I was born in the land of the Śākya.

“I was wealthy, and proficient in the arts and skills,

⁴ Sitting at one side “implies respect accorded to a superior,” Horner, *The Book of the Discipline*, (Suttacentral 2014), p. 443.

⁵ Āditya, one of Śākyamuni’s clan affiliations, also means the sun Jones, *Mahāvastu* vol. 2, p. 190.

With parents of pure lineage.

I relinquished that life to pursue the path.

I do not delight in the five desires.

“I see desire as a source of affliction,

And freedom from affliction as eternal peace.

The quest for the extinction of desire

Is what brings me delight.”

Then the king said to the prince, “You may stay here, and I will give you half of my kingdom.”

The Bodhisattva replied, “I decline your offer.”

The king further proposed, “I will give you everything in my kingdom, including the crown from my head. You will have the throne to rule the kingdom, and I will serve as your minister.”

The Bodhisattva replied, “I relinquished the throne of the Wheel-turning Universal Monarch and left the householder’s life to pursue the path of liberation. [780b] Why would I have greed for the throne of a frontier kingdom and become involved in worldly affairs? Your Majesty, how could one become attached to the water in a cow’s hoofprint after seeing the waters of the vast ocean? Likewise, why would I wish to succeed the throne of a tiny kingdom after forsaking that of the Wheel-turning Universal Monarch? That is unreasonable.”

The king then said, “When you attain unsurpassed enlightenment, please come to Rājagṛha to see me first.” The Bodhisattva agreed to do so. The king got up, bowed at the feet of the Bodhisattva, did three circumambulations, and left.

Ārāḍa Kālāma was renowned by many people as their foremost teacher. He taught his disciples the samādhi of nothingness.⁶ When the Bodhisattva visited Ārāḍa Kālāma, he asked, “What method do you teach your disciples that leads them to realization?”

He replied, “Gautama, I teach them the samādhi of nothingness, which leads them to

⁶ The samādhi of nothingness is the third of the four non-material samādhis, normally rendered as *wu suoyou chu* 無所有處 (Skt. *ākiñcanya-āyatana*). In both the present text and the *Dīrgha Āgama*, the translators consistently refer to it as the samādhi of “non-application,” *buyong chu ding* 不用處定, an unconventional rendering.

realization.”

Then the Bodhisattva thought, “Ārāḍa Kālāma does not have faith, but I have faith; Ārāḍa Kālāma does not strive, but I strive; Ārāḍa Kālāma does not have intelligence, but I have intelligence.⁷ Ārāḍa Kālāma has achieved realizations using his method. Much more should I be able to realize wisdom using his method of meditation. I shall work hard to realize Ārāḍa Kālāma’s teaching.”

Thereupon the Bodhisattva applied himself, and in a short time came to a realization of that teaching. Then he visited Ārāḍa Kālāma and asked, “Is it true that you have only realized the samādhi of nothingness, which you teach to your disciples?”

Ārāḍa Kālāma replied, “I genuinely possess this realization, and there is nothing beyond it.”

The Bodhisattva said, “I have also attained the samādhi of nothingness, but I do not teach it to others.”

Ārāḍa Kālāma said, “Gautama, do you genuinely possess the samādhi of nothingness, which you don’t teach to others? I, too, have realized the samādhi of nothingness, which I teach to others. Gautama, you know what I know, and I know what you know. You are like me, and I am like you. Gautama, let us manage my saṅgha together.” At this time Ārāḍa Kālāma was pleased and full of admiration. He wished to honor the Bodhisattva by making him a partner equal to himself.

At this time the Bodhisattva thought, “The samādhi of nothingness is not an extinguishing; it does not eliminate desire; it is not complete extinction; it is not peaceful; it does not lead to complete enlightenment; it is not worthy of recluses; it is not the way to attain the eternal tranquility of nirvāṇa.” Being dissatisfied with this method, he left Ārāḍa Kālāma to seek a superior dharma.

Udraka Rāmaputra was renowned by many, many people as their foremost teacher. After his own master died, he trained the disciples of his master, teaching the samādhi of neither-

⁷ In the parallel passage in Pali, this sentence is “Not only Ārāḍa Kālāma has faith, I also have faith (etc.)” Analayo, following Bareau, remarks that this sentence in the *Sifen lü* is probably a mistranslation of the indic original, *Comparative Study of the Majjhima*, note 169, page 177.

perception-nor-non-perception. [780c] When the Bodhisattva visited Udraka Rāmaputra, he asked, “What method did your master teach his disciples?”

Udraka Rāmaputra replied, “My master taught his disciples the samādhi of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.”

Then the Bodhisattva thought, “Rāma did not have faith, but I have faith; Rāma did not strive, but I strive; Rāma did not have intelligence, but I have intelligence. Even then, Rāma mastered this method and taught it to others. Much more should I be able to have the same realization if I work hard.”

Thereupon the Bodhisattva applied himself, and in a short time came to a realization of Rāma’s teaching. Then he visited Udraka Rāmaputra and asked, “Is it true that you have attained the samādhi of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, beyond which there is nothing else?”

Udraka Rāmaputra replied, “I genuinely possess this realization, and there is nothing beyond it.”

The Bodhisattva said, “I have also realized the samādhi of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.”

Udraka Rāmaputra then asked the Bodhisattva, “Do you truly possess this samādhi? My master Rāma has also realized the samādhi of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. You know what my master knows. Rāma knows what you know. You are like Rāma and Rāma is like you. Gautama, let us manage my saṅgha together.” Udraka Rāmaputra was so pleased that he honored the Bodhisattva with a request to lead his saṅgha, treating him as his own teacher.

At this time the Bodhisattva thought, “As I see the samādhi of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, it is not an extinguishing; it is not without desire; it is not peaceful; it is not complete extinction; it is not worthy of recluses; it is not the way to the eternal tranquility of nirvāṇa.” Being dissatisfied with this method, he left Udraka Rāmaputra to seek a superior dharma. The dharma that he sought is the dharma of unsurpassed peace.

From Magadha the Bodhisattva travelled south toward Gayāśīrṣa.⁸ He arrived at The

⁸ Literally, “elephant-head mountain,” which would be Gajāśīrṣa in Sanskrit. However, *Gayā* is confirmed by other passages in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya where the mountain’s name is rendered phonetically as

General's Village near Uruvilvā.⁹ He found a place that was open, flat, and pleasant. The grasses were soft and curved to the right. The place for bathing had fresh, cool water and the forest was lush. Looking around, he saw that the nearby villages were well-populated. Then he thought, "As a man of my clan, I have been looking for a place for ending afflictions. This place is good. This is the place where I shall bring an end to my afflictions. I shall sit at this place and end my afflictions."

Then the five men who were following the Bodhisattva thought, "When the Bodhisattva achieves the way he will teach it to us."

There were four women in Uruvilvā, named Balā, Upabalā, Sundara, and Jinpoqieluo. All four were very attached to the Bodhisattva. They thought, "Should the Bodhisattva go forth to cultivate the path, we will become his disciples. If he remains a householder, then we will marry him." [781a]

For six years the Bodhisattva practiced austerities at Uruvilvā. Nonetheless, he was unable to attain the supreme dharma possessed of the highest wisdom. Then the Bodhisattva remembered, "Long ago, when I was sitting under a jambu tree by a field belonging to my father the king, I eliminated the desire for sensual pleasure, as well as all other evil and unwholesome states; with applied thought, reflection,¹⁰ joy, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind, I attained mastery of the first dhyāna."¹¹ The Bodhisattva then wondered, "Might this path bring an end to the origins of suffering?" It occurred to him, "This path will bring an end

"qieye" 伽耶山. In the Pāli tradition this is Gayāsīsa. According to the *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, p. 753, "The Commentaries say that the hill was so called because it was composed of a flat stone and was shaped like an elephant's head (*gaja-sīsa-sadisa-piṭṭhipāsāno*). There was room on the rock for one thousand monks. The hill . . . is now called Brahmayoni."

⁹ In the Pāli tradition this is Senānīnigrama; in the *Mahāvastu* it is called the village of Senāpati. Both *senānī* and *senāpati* mean general.

¹⁰ In contemporary Vipassana practice, applied thought (*vitarka*) is interpreted as the initial application of attention, a meditative technique that directs (and redirects) the mind to the object of meditation. Reflection (*vicāra*) is interpreted as the sustained application of attention, a meditative technique that maintains focus on the object of meditation.

¹¹ Here, "youxi" 遊戲 is probably a rendering for the Sanskrit *vikrīḍita*, literally sport, and figuratively mastery. According to the *Da zhidu lun*, *vikrīḍita* does not involve attachment when it is in the context of samādhi, CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 110c9–10: 心生諸三昧，欣樂出入自在，名之為「戲」，非結愛戲也。

to the origins of suffering.” Thereupon, on the basis of this insight, the Bodhisattva undertook cultivation with great effort. Through this path he put an end to the origins of suffering.

Then the Bodhisattva wondered, “Is it possible to attain happiness through desire or unwholesome states?” It occurred to him, “It is not possible to attain happiness through desire or unwholesome states.” He then wondered, “Is it possible to attain happiness by cultivating desirelessness and abandoning unwholesome states?” It occurred to him, “Whether or not that is possible, I will not obtain happiness through mortification of my body. I shall take some rice porridge to restore my strength.”

Then the Bodhisattva took some rice porridge to regain his strength. Later, the five ascetics saw him eating and left in disgust. They said to one another, “The recluse Gautama has become confused and has lost his way. How can this be the true path?”

Now with his strength restored, the Bodhisattva approached the banks of the Nairāñjanā River. He entered the water, bathed, and returned to the shore. He then walked toward some bodhi trees. Not far from those trees, a person named Svastika was cutting grass. The Bodhisattva approached him and asked, “I am in need of some grass, do you have any to spare?” Svastika replied, “Sure, no one will mind,” and handed some to the Bodhisattva.

Taking the grass, the Bodhisattva went to an auspicious tree.¹² He arranged the grass at the foot of the tree, where he sat down. His body was upright and his mind was properly concentrated, maintaining awareness of his thoughts. Having removed desire for sensual pleasures as well as other evil and unwholesome states, the Bodhisattva, with applied thought, reflection, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind, gained mastery of the first dhyāna. This was the Bodhisattva’s first attainment of a higher wholesome state. How was this attained? Through his unflinching concentration and awareness.

Then the Bodhisattva eliminated applied thought and reflection, gaining inward faith, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind, now without applied thought or reflection. He gained mastery of the second dhyāna, which was the Bodhisattva’s second attainment of a higher wholesome state. How was this attained? Through his unflinching concentration and awareness.

¹² “Auspicious” (*jixiang* 吉祥) is likely a rendering of *aśvattha*, which is also one of the names for the Bodhi Tree.

Then the Bodhisattva eliminated joy, feeling happiness in the body known by those possessing holy wisdom as the happiness of equanimity. [781b] He gained mastery of the third dhyāna, which was the Bodhisattva's third attainment of a higher wholesome state. How was this attained? Through his unflagging concentration and awareness.

The Bodhisattva then relinquished pleasure and pain, having already removed joy and sorrow. With the absence of pleasure and pain, his equanimity brought about purification. He gained mastery of the fourth dhyāna, which was the Bodhisattva's fourth attainment of a higher wholesome state. How was this attained? Through his unflagging concentration and awareness.

While the Bodhisattva's mind was concentrated in this way, and rid of afflictions, purified, flawless, malleable, and on firm ground, he realized the knowledge of prior lifetimes. He came to know his previous lives: one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births; ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births; one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred-thousand births; countless hundreds of births, countless thousands of births, countless hundreds of thousands of births; an eon of world-creation,¹³ an eon of world-dissolution, countless eons of world-creation, countless eons of world-dissolution, up to countless eons of both world-creation and world-dissolution. He came to know, "I was born in such and such a place, with such a first name and such a family name; such were the foods that I ate; such was my lifespan, in such a way was my lifespan limited, such was my length of time in the world; such were my experiences of pain and pleasure. Having died in that place I was reborn there; and again; having died there, I was reborn here, with such and such an appearance." Such was the knowledge of his countless previous lives.

This is the first true knowledge (*vidyā*), which the Bodhisattva attained during the first watch of the night. Knowledge arises after ignorance is exhausted; there is light after the darkness ends. Such is the knowledge of prior lifetimes. How was this attained? Through his unflagging effort.

While the Bodhisattva's mind was concentrated, purified, flawless, without afflictions, rid of defilements, malleable, and on firm ground, he gained knowledge of the birth and death of

¹³ Eon is a translation of the Sanskrit term *kalpa*, the period of time between the creation and recreation of the universe.

beings. With his purified divine eye, he saw beings coming into life and dying; he saw their pleasing and detestable forms; their rebirth in good and bad destinations; their nobility and baseness. Whatever their actions, he saw the karmic results. After reflecting upon this, he realized, “These beings have engaged in unwholesome physical, verbal and mental conduct. They have held wrong views, denigrated noble ones, and experienced karmic retribution due to their wrong views. With the breakup of their bodies, their lives have come to an end, and they have been reborn in hell, among hungry ghosts or animals.” He further saw, “Other beings have engaged in wholesome physical, verbal and mental conduct. They held right views, did not denigrate noble ones and experienced karmic reward due to their right views. With the breakup of their bodies, their lives have come to an end, and they have been reborn in a heavenly realm or among humans.” With the purified divine eye, he saw the birth and death of beings in accordance with the karma they created.

This is the second true knowledge, which the Bodhisattva attained during the second watch of the night. Knowledge arises after ignorance is exhausted; there is light after the darkness ends. Such is the knowledge of the divine eye which sees [the karmic retribution of] beings. How was this attained? Through his unflagging effort. [781c]

While the Bodhisattva’s mind was thus concentrated, purified, without afflictions, flawless, malleable, and on firm ground, he gained the wisdom of the extinction of taints, which had become evident to him. While his mind was in this state, the Bodhisattva understood, as they are, the truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the path leading to the end of suffering. Thus were the noble truths established. The Bodhisattva understood, as they are, taints, the cause of taints, the extinction of taints, and the path leading to the end of taints. As he understood this and saw this, his mind was liberated from the taint of sensual desires, the taint of existence and the taint of ignorance. Thus liberated, he gained knowledge of liberation: “Destroyed is birth, pure conduct has been established, what has to be done has been done, there is no more basis for rebirth.”

This is the third true knowledge, which the Bodhisattva attained during the last watch of the night. Knowledge arises after ignorance is exhausted; there is light after the darkness ends. Such is the wisdom of the extinction of taints. Why? In realizing this wisdom, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Fully-enlightened One gained liberation from all obstructions.

At this time and in this place, the World-honored One had ended all taints and eliminated all afflictions. Then he sat in the full lotus position at the foot of the Bodhi Tree. He did not move for seven days, as he experienced the bliss of liberation.

When seven days had passed, the World-honored One emerged from his meditative concentration. During those seven days he had taken no food. Not far from the Bodhi Tree, five hundred carts loaded with treasures were passing by. These carts belonged to two merchant brothers named Trapuṣa and Upāli.

At this time, the tree spirit, who had sincere faith in the Buddha, knew these two merchants from a previous occasion and hoped to effect their salvation. The tree spirit went over to the two merchants and said, “Did you know, during the past seven days Śākyamuni Buddha, the Tathāgata, the Fully-enlightened One, has become endowed with all dharmas, but during this time he has eaten nothing? If you make an offering of honey and porridge to the Tathāgata, you will obtain benefits, security, and happiness during the long night.”¹⁴

When the two brothers heard what the tree spirit said, they were delighted. They began walking toward the sacred tree bringing honey and porridge. As they approached, they saw the Tathāgata’s remarkable appearance. His faculties were tranquil in concentration, utterly serene. He was like an elephant that had been tamed and was no longer fierce; he was like clear, still water without defilement. Seeing him, they became delighted. Now before the Tathāgata, they bowed at his feet and stood at one side. The two brothers spoke to the World-honored One, “We offer honey and porridge, may you accept them out of compassion.” Then the World-honored One thought, “These two men are offering me honey and porridge. With what vessel shall I receive them?” He further thought, “Buddhas, World-honored Ones do not receive food with their hands. What did the Buddhas, Tathāgatas, Arhats, Fully-enlightened Ones of the past use to receive food?” [782a]

At this time, the four heavenly kings, who were standing beside the Buddha, knew what he was thinking. Each went in one of the four directions, brought back a stone bowl, and offered it to the World-honored One, saying, “May you use this bowl to receive the porridge and honey

¹⁴ Here “long night” (Ch. *changye* 長夜; Skt. *dīrḡarātra*) is used in a figurative sense, meaning a long time, especially without hope or enlightenment.

from the merchants.” The World-honored One compassionately accepted the bowls offered by the four heavenly kings, and transformed them into one, which he used to receive porridge and honey from the merchants. Having received the porridge and honey from the merchants, he gave a blessing in verse to encourage them:

“For whatever purpose an offering is made,
That benefit will be gained for sure;
When an offering is made for the sake of happiness,
Happiness will be gained in the future.”

The Buddha said, “Merchants, may you take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.” They accepted the Buddha’s instruction, saying, “I take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.” The two merchant brothers, who took the two refuges, were the earliest of the Buddha’s lay followers (*upāsakas*).

Then the two merchants said to the Buddha, “We shall soon return to our hometown. After returning, how are we to make merit, and to what shall we pay homage and make offerings?” Seeing their sincerity, the World-honored One gave them some of his hairs and pieces of his fingernails and said, “You may take these back with you, and make merit by paying homage and making offerings before them.”

Having received the Buddha’s hair and fingernails, the two merchants found themselves unable to make offerings with sincerity. They thought, “Hair and fingernails are regarded by people as worthless objects to be abandoned; why did the World-honored One give them to us and have us make offerings before them?”

At this time the World-honored One was aware of their thoughts, and said, “Do not have even a hair’s breadth of disdain for the Tathāgata’s hair and fingernails; do not say, ‘Why does the Tathāgata have us make offerings before things that people regard as worthless?’ Merchants, know that veneration of the Tathāgata’s hair and fingernails is performed throughout this world and the heavens by gods and humans. The merit received by those mārās, brahmās, recluses, and brahmins who venerate the Tathāgata’s hair and fingernails is incalculable.”

The merchants asked the Buddha, “What is the basis for venerating these hairs and

fingernails?”

The Buddha replied, “In the remote past, there was a king named Jitaśatru who ruled over Jambudvīpa.¹⁵ At that time, Jambudvīpa had a large population and grain was harvested in abundance. It was a land of extreme happiness. There were eighty-four thousand walled cities, five hundred and fifty million villages, and sixty thousand regions.

“The royal city where King Jitaśatru lived and reigned was called Padmāvātī. [782b] It measured twelve yojanas from east to west and seven yojanas from north to south.¹⁶ The land was fertile, so grain was plentiful and inexpensive. The well-populated land enjoyed happiness. There were luxuriant gardens and forests, a secure city moat, cool bathing pools with all the necessary facilities, and well-arranged streets.

“Merchants, know that King Jitaśatru had a brahmin minister named Dīśampatī. The king had known the minister since childhood and they were close friends. Later, the king bestowed half of his kingdom to the minister, who then built a walled city twelve yojanas in width and seven yojanas in length in his share of the kingdom. In that city grain was abundant and inexpensive. The population was large and the people enjoyed happiness. There were luxuriant gardens and forests, a secure city moat, cool bathing pools with all the necessary facilities, and well-arranged streets. This city, called Dīpavatī, excelled Padmāvātī.

“Merchants, know that the king of Dīpavatī had no heir. For this reason, he prayed at the altars to the gods of the springs and streams, mountains and flatlands, rivers and bathing pools; to Pūrṇabhadra, Maṇibhadra, the sun god, the moon god, Śakra, Brahmā, Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Maheśvara, the garden spirits, the forest spirits, the city spirits, the crossroads spirits, and the god of Hārītī city.¹⁷ He prayed for a son at the altars of these gods and auspicious spirits.

¹⁵ Jambudvīpa refers to India, literally a continent abounding in jambu trees.

¹⁶ In fifth century Pāli literature, a yojana was approximately 7–8 miles (Horner, 527). This is roughly consistent with Yijing’s observation that the distance from Nalanda to Rājagṛha was 5 krośas, or 1.25 yojanas. Online maps calculate this to be 14.1km, which works out to 7 miles (11.2km) per yojana. Xuanzang remarks that the classic definition of yojana is the distance an army can travel in a day. Both Yijing and Xuanzang state that definitions of distances changed over time. See Yijing, trans., *Genbenshuoyiqiyoubu baiyi jiemo* 根本說一切有部百一羯磨, CBETA, T24, no. 1453, p. 467c12–17 and Xuanzang, *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記, CBETA, T51, no. 2087, p. 875c5–14.

¹⁷ Pūrṇabhadra and Maṇibhadra are the first two of thirteen yakṣas mentioned in ancient texts: “Yakkhas are regarded as protectors of villages and are worshipped by men of all castes and creeds believing that the deity

“Later, the king’s principal wife, the queen, became pregnant. Women possess three types of knowledge that are always accurate: first, they know that they have become pregnant; second, they know who the father is; third, they know that man’s affection for her. The queen reported to the king, ‘Your Majesty, I am pregnant.’ The king replied, ‘That is wonderful,’ and ordered that she be supplied with the best food, clothing and beddings, and given everything that she needed in double measure.

“After ten months, the queen gave birth to a son whose dignified appearance was incomparable, rarely seen in the world. As soon as he was born, he took seven steps without assistance and said, ‘In heaven and the world, I am foremost and most revered, and I will save all beings from the suffering of birth, aging, illness and death.’ He was Dīpaṅkara Bodhisattva.

“Merchants, know that the king summoned those brahmins who were skilled in fortune-telling, saying, ‘Know that my queen has given birth to a son with dignified features rarely seen in the world. After his birth, he took seven steps without assistance and said, “In heaven and the world, I am foremost and most revered, and I will save all beings from the suffering of birth, aging, illness and death.” [782c] As you are skilled in reading fortunes, divine this child’s destiny.’

“The fortune tellers then said to the king, ‘May Your Majesty show us the child so that we may read his destiny.’ Thereupon the king himself returned to the palace and brought his son for the reading. Having read the child’s fate, the fortune-tellers reported this to the king: ‘Your Majesty’s son is endowed with great power, great merit, and every blessing and aspiration. Should he remain a householder, as a kṣatriya, he will become a Cakravartin, the wheel-turning universal emperor, ruler of the four continents, endowed with the seven treasures. He will have a thousand sons, heroic and fierce, who are able to repel all enemies. He will rule and enculturate people with righteousness, and therefore not need to use weapons and punishments.’

““If he goes forth, he will become the Tathāgata, an Arhat, Fully Enlightened, Perfected in wisdom and deeds, Well-gone, Knower of worlds, Unsurpassed, Leader of persons to be tamed,

protects each village from epidemics of diseases.” See Jagdishchandra Jain, *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canon and Commentaries* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984), p. 324ff. Maheśvara is a name of Śiva, and also a name of Viṣṇu.

Teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, World-honored One. Of all gods and humans, Māra and other māras, Brahmā, and recluses and brahmins, he alone will attain enlightenment, and he will enjoy that attainment. He will teach the Dharma, which is good in the beginning, middle, and end, perfect in word and meaning, inclining others to pure conduct.’

“Merchants, know that the king bestowed gifts on those brahmins and then dispatched four nurses to care for Bodhisattva Dīpaṅkara. The first was a limb-and-joint nurse; the second was a bathing nurse; the third a wet nurse; and the fourth an entertaining nurse. The limb-and-joint nurse held him, massaged his limbs and joints in order for them to be straight and healthy. The bathing nurse bathed him and did the laundry. The wet nurse breast-fed him whenever necessary. The entertaining nurse arranged for young playmates to come, with whom he rode elephants, horses, carriages and royal chariots. She provided precious items, musical instruments, and turning mechanical contrivances for Bodhisattva Dīpaṅkara’s entertainment. Wherever he went, she followed him holding a sunshade made of peacock feathers.

“Merchants, know that when the Bodhisattva Dīpaṅkara was eight or nine, the king had him learn every skill: writing, arithmetic, painting, comedic arts, singing, dancing, playing drums and string instruments, elephant-riding, horse-riding, chariot-riding, archery, charioteering and wrestling. Thus was he trained in every skill.

“Merchants, know that when Dīpaṅkara reached fifteen or sixteen, the king built winter, summer, and spring palaces for him, equipped with twenty thousand palace maids for his entertainment. He created gardens which contained pools and measured twenty yojanas in length and width. The gardens were filled with every kind of flowering tree, fruit tree and fragrant tree available in Jambudvīpa. Rare and exotic trees were also planted in the gardens.

“Merchants, know that a celestial being of Śuddhāvāsa Heaven (pure abode) came daily to protect Dīpaṅkara. He thought, ‘The Bodhisattva has been at home for a long time, now it would be good for me to arouse disenchantment in him. [783a] Once disenchantment has been aroused, he will soon go forth, shave his hair and beard, put on the kaṣāya and cultivate the supreme path.’

“Right after the Bodhisattva entered the rear garden, the celestial being went there and magically created four people: an elderly person, an ill person, a dead person, and a recluse who had left the householder’s life. When the Bodhisattva saw these four people, he was filled

with sorrow and became disenchanted with the suffering of the world. Viewing the world this way, he saw nothing worthy of attachment.

“Merchants, know that on the very day of his disenchantment, the Bodhisattva went forth from the householder’s life, and on that same day he attained unsurpassed enlightenment. Merchants, know that Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata, who was an Arhat, Fully Enlightened, contemplated everything, but did not see any beings that could be liberated, for whom he could turn the peerless dharma wheel.

“Then Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata went to a place not far from the city of Dīpavatī where he magically created a great city. It was vast and tall, splendidly decorated with hanging banners, flags, and murals with images of birds and beasts throughout. The city was surrounded by marvelous clear pools, gardens, and fruit trees. It was superior to the city of Dīpavatī. The people he created were also superior in appearance to the people in Dīpavatī. Then he had the people of this country interact with and become friends with the people of Dīpavatī.

“Merchants, know that when Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata saw that the faculties of the people of Dīpavatī were mature, he made the magically created city suddenly burn up in flames. When the people of Dīpavatī saw this, they were filled with sorrow and began having thoughts of disenchantment. Over the course of seven days, Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata converted sixty-six nayutas of people and five hundred and fifty million śrāvakas.

“Merchants, know that Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata had become renowned throughout the ten directions, his name known to all. Of him they said, ‘Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata is an Arhat, Fully Enlightened, Perfected in wisdom and deed, Well-gone, Knower of worlds, Unsurpassed, Leader of persons to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, and World-honored One. Of all gods and humans, Māra and other māras, brahmās, recluses and brahmins he alone will attain enlightenment, and he will enjoy that attainment. He teaches people the Dharma, which is good in the beginning, middle, and end, perfect in word and meaning, and leads people to practice pure conduct.’

“Merchants, know that the light of Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata’s body normally shines for one hundred yojanas. The light of Buddhas and World-honored Ones shines limitlessly, and their reflected light shines for seven feet (*chi*).

“Merchants, know that King Jitaśatru then learned that the crown prince had been born in

the palace of King Dīśampatī, that he possessed the hallmarks of virtue and power, that he would attain unsurpassed complete enlightenment on the very day of his renunciation, that he would be widely renowned, known to all as Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata, an Arhat, Fully Enlightened, (*up to*) leading people to pure conduct.¹⁸ [783b] Thereupon King Jitaśatru sent an envoy to King Dīśampatī saying, ‘I have learned of the birth of your crown prince, who has the hallmarks of virtue and power, who attained enlightenment on the very day of his renunciation, (*up to*) who leads people to pure conduct, and is renowned in the ten directions. Send him here, for I wish to see him. If you do not, I shall visit him personally.’

“When King Dīśampatī heard the envoy’s message, he became anxious. He gathered his ministers and asked them, ‘I want your opinion. How should I respond? What measures would be agreeable to him?’ The ministers replied, ‘Let us consult with Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata. We will follow whatever instructions the Buddha provides.’

“Then King Dīśampatī and his ministers went to visit Dīpaṅkara Buddha. They bowed at his feet and told him what happened. The World-honored One said to the king, ‘Do not worry, Your Majesty. I shall visit King Jitaśatru.’

“Merchants, know that for seven days, King Dīśampatī made offerings to Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata and the Bhikṣu Saṅgha of robes, food, beverages, bedding and medicine, so that the Bhikṣu Saṅgha lacked for nothing.

“Merchants, know that after those seven days, Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata and the bhikṣus set out on their journey. They stopped at Nāga King Lake on Mount Harita. Merchants, know that Palace of the Nāga King is five hundred yojanas in width and length. While Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata and the bhikṣus were staying there, Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata begin emitting a great light, illuminating the trichiliocosm so that day and night were indistinguishable. (When the utpala, padma, kumuda, and puṇḍarīka lotus flowers are closed and the birds and beasts are silent, we know it is night; when lotus flowers have opened and the birds and beasts are making sounds, then we know it is day.) This state, in which day and night were indistinguishable, went on for twelve years.

¹⁸ This ellipsis, indicated by “(*up to*),” found here and in other passages reflects an ellipsis found in the Chinese text rendered by “*naizhi*” 乃至. No Chinese text has been omitted.

King Jitaśatru gathered his ministers and said to them, ‘I remember that in the past there used to be both day and night. Now there is neither. Why? (When the flowers are open and the bird are singing, we know it is day; when the flowers are closed and the birds are silent, we know it is night.) Is my kingdom unjust? Have I been neglectful? Have you committed a fault? Please tell me honestly.’

“The ministers responded, ‘The king is not in error, the kingdom is not unjust, nor are we at fault. Rather, Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata, who is staying at Palace of the Nāga King on Mount Harita, is emitting a great light illuminating the trichiliocosm. It is because of his awe-inspiring powers that day and night have become indistinguishable. [783c] (This is how we tell between day and night: when the flowers are closed and the birds are silent, we know it is night; when the flowers are open and the birds are singing, we know it is day.) The king is without error, the kingdom is not unjust, and we are not at fault. This is due to the awe-inspiring powers of Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata and so there is no need to fear.’

“The king asked the ministers next to him, ‘How far is it to the Palace of the Nāga King at Mount Harita?’ They replied, ‘Not far, only thirty *li*.’¹⁹ The king ordered them to prepare the royal carriage, for he wished to pay respect to Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata. Having received the king’s orders, they prepared the royal carriage. When it was ready, they said to the king, ‘The procession is ready and will depart at your command.’

“Merchants, know that the king set off in his chariot with his ministers at his side, heading for the Palace of the Nāga King at Mount Harita. When the carriages could travel no further, they dismounted and proceeded on foot until they arrived at the Palace of the Nāga King.

“Merchants, know that when the king saw Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata’s dignified appearance and concentrated faculties from afar, he became joyful and went directly to where the Buddha was sitting. He bowed at the Buddha’s feet and sat to one side. The World-honored One began teaching the profound Dharma to the king, and the king became pleased. Having heard the Buddha’s wondrous explanation of the Dharma and becoming pleased, the king said to the

¹⁹ Thirty *li* was probably a yojana or less. Xuanzang remarks “In the earlier translations, a yojana was forty *li*; now in India it is thirty *li*.” See his *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記, CBETA, T51, no. 2087, p. 875c5–6: “舊傳一踰繕那四十里矣；印度國俗乃三十里。” See also note 16 on p. 23 above.

Buddha, ‘This is a good time, Tathāgata, for you to come to Padmāvātī.’ Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata silently assented to the king’s invitation. Then King Jitaśatru, knowing that the Buddha had assented, got up, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and departed.

“Back in his kingdom, the king decreed to his people, ‘Dig a road from here, Padmāvātī, to Mount Harita, and make it as deep as your knees. Tamp the earth to make it firm, and then sprinkle fragrant water on the ground. Plant various types of flowers along the left and right sides of the road. Build fences along both sides and light oil lamps on the fences. Make an incense burner with the four treasures: gold, silver, beryl and crystal.’ Having received the king’s orders, the people set about carrying them out.

“Then the king gathered his ministers and told them, ‘Clean and decorate Padmāvātī. Remove all filth, stones, and squalor. Cover the ground with fine mud. Hang silk flags, put up decorated canopies, and burn the finest types of incense. Put down carpets and scatter the finest flowers upon them.’ The ministers received his orders and decorated the city accordingly.

“King Jitaśatru then told his ministers, ‘Inform the people in my kingdom that no one may sell incense or flowers. If the sellers persist, then ensure that there are no buyers. If the sellers or buyers still persist, punish them severely. [784a] Why is this? Because I wish to make offerings to Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Fully-enlightened One.’

“At this time there was a great brahmin minister in Padmāvātī named Yajñadatta. He was very wealthy, possessing pearls, amber, mother-of-pearl, agates, crystals, gold, silver, and beryl. He had more rare and unusual treasures than could be counted. For the past twelve years he had been the sponsor of a sacrifice (*yajña*), and this time he was offering many treasures to the wisest of the sacrifice’s participants: a gold bowl filled with silver nuggets, a silver bowl filled with gold nuggets, a golden water-pot, a canopy of the highest quality, sandals, two fine blankets, a staff with rows of gems, and his fair daughter Saurāpatī.

“At that time, the most senior brahmin among the participants was one of the king’s ministers. He was unsightly in twelve ways: he had a hunchback, a protruding spine, goiter, a sallow complexion, yellow hair, blue-green eyes, teeth that were sawlike and black, crooked hands and crooked feet, pointy hips, and he was short.

“Merchants, know that the brahmin Yajñadatta thought, ‘The most senior brahmin is unsightly in twelve ways, and further he is one of the king’s ministers. How can I give my

treasures and my daughter to such a person?’ It then occurred to him, ‘I shall postpone the sacrifice. If there is another brahmin who is handsome and wise, I will give my daughter and treasures to him instead.’

“Merchants, know that south of the Himalayas there lived a sage named Ratna. He took no delight in sensual pleasures, but enjoyed quiet places, and his mind had no attachments. He cultivated meditative concentration and obtained five supernormal powers. He taught this to five hundred brahmin disciples, who memorized and recited his instructions. At this time the sage’s best student was named Megha. His parents belonged to a lineage that was pure for seven generations. Megha also had five hundred disciples.

“Merchants, know that the disciple Megha approached Ratna the sage and said, ‘I have mastered my studies. What else is there to learn?’ Thereupon the sage Ratna composed a scripture unknown to any other brahmin. Having composed it, he told his disciple, ‘Learn to recite this. No other recluse or brahmin has this book. If you learn to recite it, you will become foremost among brahmins.’

“Merchants, know that when Ratna’s disciple had learned to recite this book proficiently, he approached the sage Ratna and said, ‘I have learned this book. What else can I learn?’ His master replied, ‘Since you have learned to recite this, then as a disciple you should repay the kindness of your master.’ He then asked, ‘How can I repay your kindness?’ [784b] His master replied, ‘I need five hundred gold coins.’

“After hearing his master’s words, Megha led his five hundred disciples on a journey south of the Himalayas. They travelled from kingdom to kingdom, village to village, and eventually arrived in Padmāvātī. There he heard that the brahmin Yajñadatta, who had been sponsoring sacrifices to the gods for twelve years, would give the wisest participant a gold bowl filled with silver nuggets, a silver bowl filled with gold nuggets, a gold water-pot, a fine canopy, fine blankets, a staff lined with the seven gems, and his fair daughter Saurāpatī. Megha thought, ‘If I join the sacrifice, I may be able to earn five hundred gold coins.’

“Merchants, know that when Megha joined the sacrifice, there shone a great and awe-inspiring light. At this time the brahmin Yajñadatta thought, ‘When this person joined the sacrifice, a great and awe-inspiring light began to shine. I must depose the leading brahmin and replace him with Megha Māṇava.’ Then he said to the sacrifice’s participants, ‘If Megha

Māṇava wins the first seat, you must join me in unanimous vocal acclaim, and honor him reverently with music and dancers, the scattering of flowers, and the burning of incense.’ They agreed to follow Yajñadatta’s instructions.

“At this time Megha Māṇava joined them. Beginning with the most junior of them, he asked, ‘Which scriptures can you recite? How many have you memorized?’ In accordance with the number of scriptures he could recite, he replied, ‘I can recite this many.’ He could not compare with Māṇava, who could recite hundreds, thousands, billions of times more scriptures. He then asked the second, the third, then up to the hundredth, and even the thousandth, ‘Which scriptures do you know, how many can you recite?’ In accordance with the number of scriptures they could recite, they replied, ‘We can recite this many.’ They could not compare with Māṇava, who could recite hundreds, thousands, billions of times more than them. Then he asked the leading brahmin, ‘Which scriptures do you know? How many can you recite?’ In accordance with the number of scriptures he could recite, he replied, ‘I can recite this many.’ Megha Māṇava surpassed even him.

“Then Megha Māṇava said, ‘I know and can recite more than you.’ He went on to tell the leading brahmin, ‘You may step down. I have unseated you.’ The leading brahmin said, ‘Please do not take my seat. I will give you twice the amount of offerings, gold, and treasures that I receive in this seat.’ Megha replied, ‘Even if you give me all of the seven treasures in Jambudvīpa, I would not accept them. Your only choice is to give up the seat. Why? I am entitled to this seat because I have this dharma.’

“Merchants, know that when Megha Māṇava took the seat of honor, there were earthquakes of six different types, everyone exclaimed ‘excellent’ in unison, and they made offerings with dance, music, flowers, and incense. [784c] Merchants, know that Yajñadatta became joyous beyond measure. He brought a gold bowl filled with silver nuggets, a silver bowl filled with gold nuggets, a golden canopy, a staff decorated with the seven gems, gold and silver water-pots, the fine blankets, and his fair daughter to Megha Māṇava. Then he said, ‘May you accept these valuable gifts and my fine daughter.’ Megha replied, ‘I have no need for them.’ He asked, ‘What do you need?’ Megha replied, ‘I need five hundred gold coins.’ Thereupon Yajñadatta gave him five hundred gold coins.

“Merchants, know that after Megha Māṇava received the five hundred gold coins, he got up

from his seat and left. Saurāpatī followed after him. Megha Māṇava turned and said to her, ‘Why are you following me?’ She replied, ‘My parents sent me to become your wife.’ Megha Māṇava said, ‘I am cultivating pure conduct and do not need you. Only someone having desire would need you.’

“Then Saurāpatī returned to her father’s gardens. There was a clear pool in the gardens, and seven lotus flowers in the pool. Five flowers grew from one stem and were wonderful in fragrance and color. Two more grew from another stem and were also wonderful in fragrance and color. She looked at them and thought, ‘These flowers are so beautiful. I shall pick them and give them to Megha Māṇava, who will be pleased.’ She picked the flowers, put them in a vase with water, and left the gardens to find Megha Māṇava.

“At this time Megha Māṇava had returned to the kingdom of Padmāvātī. He saw that the people of the kingdom had swept the streets; the best soil was used to fill in uneven places; the ground was covered with flowers and sprinkled with fragrant water; silk banners were hung; there were canopies and fine carpets. Having seen this he asked a passerby, ‘I see that the city has been decorated nicely. Is it for an annual festival? Or an astrologically auspicious date?’ The passerby replied, ‘All of these decorations and preparations have been carried out because Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata is coming to our city.’ Megha Māṇava thought to himself, ‘It would be good to use my five hundred coins to buy the best flower garlands and incense, hire the best musicians and dancers, and buy the best banners and canopies to use as offerings to Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata. I’ll try to find money for my master later.’

“He tried to buy these things in Padmāvātī but couldn’t. [785a] Why was that? Because King Jitaśatru had prohibited their sale.

“Then Yajñadatta’s daughter Saurāpatī saw Megha Māṇava approaching and asked him, ‘Young man, why are you in such a hurry? Is there something you need?’ He replied, ‘I need fine flowers.’ She asked, ‘Māṇava, what do you need flowers for?’ He said, ‘I will use them to plant unsurpassed roots for attaining buddhahood.’

“Yajñadatta’s daughter said, ‘These flowers have withered and their color has faded, so they cannot be replanted. How can they be used to plant unsurpassed roots for attaining buddhahood?’ Māṇava replied, ‘This field is good and fertile. Although the flowers have withered and faded, and although their seeds might be scorched, they will grow if planted.’

“Yajñadatta’s daughter said, ‘Please take these flowers and use them to plant unsurpassed roots for attaining buddhahood.’ Māṇava replied, ‘I will take them only if you accept my payment.’ She said, ‘Māṇava, why are my goods so dear to you? My father, Yajñadatta, has many valuable things. Māṇava, before you buy my flowers, will you vow to me that you will forever be my husband in every lifetime?’

“Māṇava said, ‘As a practitioner on the bodhisattva path, I hold nothing dear. If someone were to beg of me, I would be willing to give away everything, including those of my own flesh and blood, except my parents. I am, however, afraid that there would be obstacles to our staying together.’ Yajñadatta’s daughter said to him, ‘Wherever you are born, you are bound to enjoy awe-inspiring powers. I too have awe-inspiring powers; if you want to give me away, that is fine.’

“Māṇava then bought the stem of five lotus flowers for five hundred gold coins. Saurāpatī gave the remaining stem of two flowers to him, saying, ‘These are my flowers. I am entrusting them to you, to offer to Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata. Why? Because I wish to be with you in every lifetime.’

“Merchants, know that Megha Māṇava, overwhelmed with joy from receiving the flowers, hurried to the city’s eastern gate. When he arrived, uncountable billions of people had already gathered, holding flowers and incense. Silk banners, flags and sunshades had been hung, there was music and dancing as the crowd waited to welcome Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata.

“Megha Māṇava tried to go to the front to scatter his flowers, but was unable to proceed. He turned back and asked King Jitaśatru, ‘Why has Your Majesty renovated the city? Was it for an annual festival or an astrologically auspicious day that Your Majesty has beautified the land to such an extent?’ The king replied, ‘The renovations were done because Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata is coming to the city.’

“Māṇava asked the king, ‘How does one know the thirty-two hallmarks of a Tathāgata?’ [785b] The king replied, ‘One knows about them from what is recorded in the brahmin books of prophecy.’ Māṇava said to the king, ‘Indeed, I have already memorized those books, so I have clear knowledge of the hallmarks.’ The king said, ‘Since you are able to recognize them, go ahead to honor [the one with] the thirty-two hallmarks, then I shall follow later.’

“Merchants, know that when Māṇava heard the king’s remarks, he became overwhelmed

with joy and went toward the eastern gate. When the people gathered there saw him approach they happily cleared the way for him. Why? Because they were following the king's orders.

“Merchants, know that when Māṇava saw the Tathāgata, he was overjoyed, and scattered the seven flowers into the air above the Tathāgata. Using his awe-inspiring powers, the Buddha immediately conjured a canopy of flowers in the air that was twelve yojanas wide, with the stems up and the leaves hanging down. Its fragrance permeated the entire kingdom, and it was such a pleasant sight that one would never tire of it. The canopy followed the Buddha wherever he went.

“Then people of the city, men and women, covered the ground, even using new clothes they were wearing. Māṇava removed one of two deerskin garments from his back and spread it on the ground. But then some local people snatched it away. Māṇava thought to himself that Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata's kindness did not reach him. Thereupon Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata, who read his thoughts, magically transformed the ground into mud which no one could cover with their clothes.

“Merchants, know that Māṇava thought to himself, ‘Ignorant and unknowing, the people of this city have not covered the ground that should be covered.’ He then spread the deerskin garment onto the mud, but it did not cover the mud entirely.

“Merchants, know that Māṇava had not untied his topknot for five hundred years. He asked the Tathāgata, ‘Will the World-honored One pass the mud by treading on my hair?’ The Tathāgata replied, ‘I shall,’ whereupon Māṇava untied his topknot and spread his hair on the mud, vowing to himself, ‘If the Tathāgata does not bestow upon me the prediction of my future enlightenment, I will dry up and die right here, never to get up again.’

“Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata knew that Māṇava's sincerity was genuine, that he had planted roots of wholesomeness in the past and possessed every virtue. He passed with his left foot treading on Māṇava's hair, and said, ‘Get up, Māṇava. In the future, incalculable aeons from now, you will be known as Śākyamuni Tathāgata, an Arhat, Fully enlightened, Perfected in wisdom and deeds, Well-gone, Knower of worlds, Unsurpassed, Leader of persons to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, World-honored One.’ Having heard this prediction, he jumped into the air to the height of seven palm (*tāla*) trees, but his hair remained on the ground.

“Merchants, know that Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata, who was an Arhat, Fully Enlightened, looked

to the right in the manner of a great elephant king, and said to the bhikṣus, ‘Do not tread on Māṇava’s hair. [785c] It is the hair of a bodhisattva, on which no śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha may tread.’ Then, billions of people made offerings of incense and flowers before his hair.

“Merchants, know that when King Jitaśatru’s minister, who was unsightly in twelve ways, learned that Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata had bestowed the prediction upon Māṇava, he approached the king and said, ‘I can support Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata and the Bhikṣu Saṅgha with offerings of robes, blankets, food, beverages, bedding, tonics and medicines for twenty thousand years.’ The king replied to the brahmin, ‘How pleasing your idea is! This is the right time to do so.’

“Thereupon the brahmin, having decided to support Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata and the Bhikṣu Saṅgha with offerings of robes, food, beverages, beds, bedding, tonics, and medicines for twenty thousand years, made this vow: ‘I hereby vow to support Dīpaṅkara Tathāgata and the Bhikṣu Saṅgha with offerings of robes, food, beverages, beds, bedding, tonics, and medicines for twenty thousand years. However, Māṇava has taken my seat, usurped the offerings due to me, and ruined my reputation. On account of this incident, and by my own merits, I shall humiliate this man in every future lifetime until he realizes the path; never shall we be apart!’

“Merchants, know that the brahmin Yajñadatta of that time is none other than Daṇḍapāni of the Śākya clan today, do not think otherwise. Saurāpatī of that time is none other than the Śākya lady Gautamī of today. King Jitaśatru’s minister, the brahmin who was unsightly in twelve ways is none other than Devadatta of today, do not think otherwise. The sage Ratna of that time is none other than Maitreya Bodhisattva of today, do not think otherwise. Megha Māṇava of that time is none other than myself, do not think otherwise.”

“Merchants, while I was still learning on the bodhisattva path, those who made offerings before my hair and fingernails were sure to attain the unsurpassed path. Viewing the world with my Buddha-eye, I see that after death, every one of them has entered the realm of remainderless nirvāṇa. All the more now—as I have become free from greed, hatred and delusion—when you give the highest offerings and make the greatest merit, you will receive the highest karmic rewards.” Then the two merchants, who were brothers, rose from their seats and left the way they came.

The World-honored One ate the porridge and honey offered by the merchants, and sat at the foot of the tree in the full lotus position, where he remained motionless for seven days,

coursing in the samādhi of liberation with great bliss. After seven days he emerged from this samādhi. [786a]

The porridge and honey taken by the Buddha gave him wind. The land of Jambudvīpa is named after its jambu trees. Harītakī trees grow close to jambu trees. The harītakī tree spirit, who had deep faith in the Buddha, picked some harītakī fruits to offer to the World-honored One. He bowed at the Buddha's feet, stood to one side, and said, "World-honored One, the porridge and honey have given you wind. May you accept these fruits, which can be taken as food or as medicine to relieve wind."²⁰ The World-honored One accepted them out of compassion and said, "May you take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma." The tree spirit assented and thereupon took refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma. The harītakī tree spirit was the first of many spirits to take refuge.

Having taken the harītakī fruit, the World-honored One sat at the foot of the Bodhi Tree in the full lotus position. For seven days he meditated, remaining motionless. He coursed in the samādhi of liberation with great bliss. Seven days later he emerged from samādhi. When it was time for alms, he put on his robe, picked up his bowl and entered the village of Uruvilvā for alms. He eventually arrived at a brahmin house in that village, and stood silently in the courtyard. Seeing the World-honored One standing in silence, the brahmin was gladdened and immediately went out to offer food. The World-honored One accepted the almsfood out of compassion and said, "May you take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma." He replied, "Yes, World-honored One, I take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma."

Having taken the food offered by the brahmin, the World-honored One went to a kṣīrikā tree and sat at the foot of it in the full lotus position. For seven days he meditated, remaining motionless. He coursed in the samādhi of liberation with great bliss. Seven days later the World-honored One emerged from samādhi. When it was time for alms, he put on his robe, picked up his bowl and entered the village of Uruvilvā for alms. He eventually arrived at the home of a local brahmin, and stood silently in the courtyard.

Then the brahmin's wife Sujātā, who was also the general's daughter,²¹ saw the Tathāgata

²⁰ Today, harītakī is still prescribed for digestive disorders.

²¹ The general is the person after whom The General's Village is named, see p. 13 above.

standing silently in the courtyard. Seeing him, she became delighted and immediately went out to offer the World-honored One some food. The World-honored One accepted the almsfood out of compassion. Having eaten, he said, “May you take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.” She replied, “Yes, I take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.” The wife of the Uruvilvā brahmin, Sujātā, who was also the general’s daughter, was the first of many female lay disciples (*upāsikā*) to take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.

Having eaten, the World-honored One returned to the foot of the kṣīrikā tree. He sat in the full lotus position and meditated without moving for seven days. He coursed in the samādhi of liberation with great bliss. [786b]

Seven days later, when it was time for alms, the World-honored One put on his robe and picked up his bowl, and entered the village of Uruvilvā for alms. He eventually arrived at a brahmin house in that village, and stood silently in the courtyard. When the brahmin men and women of Uruvilvā saw the Tathāgata, they were gladdened and went out to offer food to him. He accepted their almsfood out of compassion. Having finished the meal, he said, “May you take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.” They replied, “Yes, we take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.”

After this meal, the World-honored One went to the palace of Mucilinda the nāga king, which is near the Mucilinda tree by Mucilinda lake. There he sat in the full lotus position without moving and meditated for seven days. He coursed in the samādhi of liberation with great bliss.

During those seven days it rained heavily and was very cold. The Mucilinda nāga king emerged from his palace, coiled his body around the Buddha, provided shade with his head, and said to the Buddha, “May you neither be cold nor hot, may you be shielded from the wind and sun, and not bothered by mosquitoes or gadflies.”

After the seven days had passed, the rain stopped and the weather cleared. Seeing that the rain had stopped and the weather had cleared, the nāga king uncoiled himself from the Buddha and transformed himself into a young brahmin. He knelt down before the Tathāgata, joined his palms, and bowed at the Tathāgata’s feet.

At this time, at the end of seven days, the World-honored One emerged from samādhi, and spoke the following verses of praise:

Joyful is it to become free from desire;

Joyful is it to observe dharmas.

Joyful is the absence of worldly anger:

One does not harm sentient beings.

Joyful is the absence of worldly desires:

One transcends the Desire Realm.

Most joyful of all

Is to conquer conceit of self.

At this time, the nāga king Mucilinda approached the Buddha and said, “I did not mean to disturb the Tathāgata when I coiled myself around the Tathāgata and shaded him with my head. I did this because I was afraid the Tathāgata would be bothered by heat, cold, wind, sun, mosquitoes and gadflies; this was why I coiled myself around the Buddha and shaded him with my head.” Then the Buddha said to the nāga king, “May you take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.” The nāga king replied, “Yes, I take refuge in the Buddha and the Dharma.” The nāga king was the first of many animals to take the twofold refuge.

The World-honored One, having stayed under the tree of the nāga king Mucilinda, departed for the ajapālanigrodha tree.²² When he arrived, he spread his sitting cloth and sat in the full lotus position. He thought, “I have attained this dharma, which is profound, hard to understand, hard to see, forever tranquil, peaceful, wondrous, unsurpassed, comprehensible to the wise, inaccessible to the deluded. [786c] Beings have different views, different capacities for toleration, different desires and different livelihoods. As a result of their different views, beings take pleasure in their attachments.²³ Because they take pleasure in attachments, the dharma of dependent origination becomes too profound for them to understand. There is something else that is too profound for them to understand: nirvāṇa, which is the cessation of desires and craving. Because this is also hard to see, if I were to teach this dharma, others would not

²² This is the Goatherd’s Banyan tree.

²³ “Attachments” is a translation of the Chinese term *chaoku* 櫟窟 (nests and dwellings), which in turn renders the indic term *ālaya*. In early Buddhism this term means a settling place, with the figurative meaning of clinging, attachments, or desires.

comprehend it, and my effort would be in vain.”

Then the World-honored One spoke the following two verses, which had never been heard, learned, or spoken previously:

It was with great difficulty that I realized the path.

If I were to teach it to beings delighting in attachments,

Their greed, hatred, and delusion

Would prevent them from entering this dharma.

Going against the currents of saṃsāra,

It is profoundly subtle and hard to understand.

It is not seen by those attached to desire,

Shrouded are they by delusion.