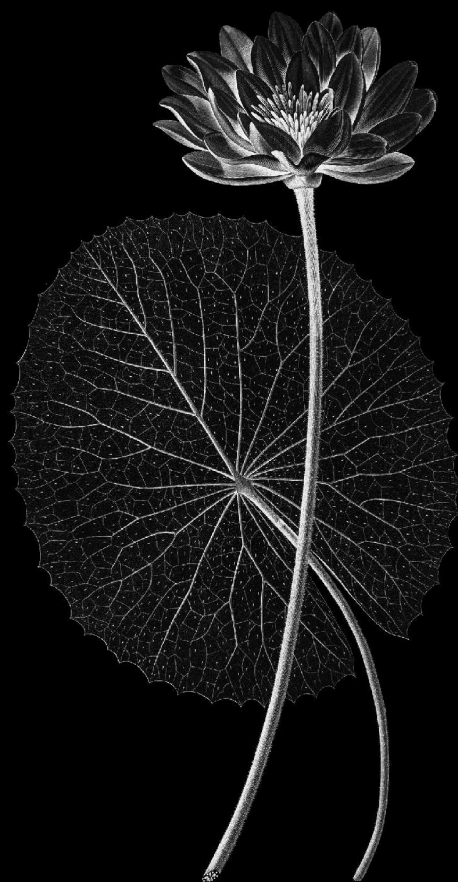


# THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA

THE WAY OF BUDDHA MINDFULNESS



*The  
Infinite Life Sutra*

*The Way of Buddha Mindfulness*

**First Edition, 2021**

**ISBN: 9798505178751**

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**an English translation of**

佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經 (會集本)

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## Foreword

In May 2020, I received a most welcome surprise. A talented translator of Classical Chinese texts, Mr John Walker, the author of this translation, contacted me via my blog and asked me to suggest a suitable Chinese Pure Land Buddhist text to translate. I immediately recommended the Mahayana, Infinite Life, Adornment, Purity, Impartiality and Enlightenment Sutra (佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經). This sutra is the flawless compilation of the five main extant versions of the Infinite Life Sutra. It was compiled and masterfully combined into one consolidated edition by the eminent sage, Upasaka Xia Lianju (夏蓮居), during the early to mid decades of the 20th century, without discarding or changing a single character. It is now the main Pure Land Scripture, available everywhere in Asia. Moreover, all Pure Land Associations recite it daily as part of their main practice.

This sutra has been praised by the Venerable Master Chin Kung as the most relevant sutra of our era, and will guide countless sentient beings to attain Pure Land rebirth and release from samsara. As it is the perfect antidote to the karmic weaknesses and dispositions of sentient beings of our world, it is a sutra and dharma gateway all must study.

However, a full translation of this text was impossible to find in the West. It was essentially unknown, until now. Three days ago, Mr Walker emailed me a fully completed English translation of this sutra, the first complete translation in history. No words can describe my happiness when I saw this completed work, and I could not have imagined a year ago that a full translation would become a reality so speedily. Eloquent, poetic, and concise, Mr Walker's work is a most wonderful translation. I consider it the greatest honour of my life to be able to write the foreword for this groundbreaking translation, and I hope that the birth of this translation will mark the beginning of a worldwide renaissance for Chinese Pure Land Buddhism.

Brian B. Chung  
purelandsutras.wordpress.com  
May 12 2021

One

*The Dharma Assembly of  
Great Nobles*



**Thus have I heard,**

**Once, when the Buddha lived upon Vulture Peak  
near the city of Rajagriha  
he held an assembly with many great bhiksus                      monks  
twelve thousand in total**

**All were great nobles  
already in possession of supernatural powers  
among those present  
presiding as elders, were,  
the Venerable Kaundinya  
the Venerable Sariputra  
the Venerable Maudgalyayana  
the Venerable Kasyapa  
and the Venerable Ananda**

**Alongside,  
Bodhisattva Samantabhadra  
Bodhisattva Manjusri  
Bodhisattva Maitreya  
and every other bodhisattva of the era  
they all came together on this day**



# Two

## *The Virtues of Samantabhadra*



Present too, among those presiding as elders  
were the Sixteen Upright Adepts, namely,  
Bodhisattva Worthy Protector  
Bodhisattva Deft Comprehension  
Bodhisattva Eloquent Wisdom  
Bodhisattva Unveiling Impermanence  
Bodhisattva Supernatural Splendour  
Bodhisattva Radiant Nobility  
Bodhisattva Jewelled Banner  
Bodhisattva Supreme Wisdom  
Bodhisattva Serene Root  
Bodhisattva Unshakable Wisdom  
Bodhisattva Devoted Wisdom  
Bodhisattva Fragrant Elephant  
Bodhisattva Treasure Blossom  
Bodhisattva Middle Way Abiding  
Bodhisattva Restrained Conduct  
and Bodhisattva Liberation

All abided by and emulated  
the virtues of the great Samantabhadra  
perfectly observing  
his incomparable vows of conduct      recorded in the Avatamsakasutra  
remaining firmly  
within the dharma of his virtues

They wandered freely in every direction  
using whatever means they could  
they penetrated the Buddha's dharma treasury  
and reached the other shore

They vowed to visit infinite realms  
and achieve perfect sambodhi      complete enlightenment  
they left behind Tusita Heaven      4th heaven of the Desire Realm  
and descended into the royal palace  
they abandoned status and home  
to practise asceticism and study the way  
they did these things for the sake of men





and fixed their mind unceasingly upon the path  
that goes behind this world

Yet they were at ease and in control  
of all wordly things  
they extended the hand of friendship  
to the great multitude of beings

They accepted and firmly grasped  
the Tathagata's profound dharma treasury      epithet for the Buddha,  
they preserved the seed of buddhahood      lit. Thus Come One  
endeavouring always to keep it alive

Within them arose great compassion  
they grieved for sentient beings  
they preached to them  
with eloquence and loving-kindness

They gave them the gift of the dharma eye  
they stopped them  
from going down evil paths      non-human rebirth, e.g. animal,  
they laid open the gates of virtue      ghost and hell denizen

They viewed others as no different from themselves  
they carried them on their backs  
and brought them to the other shore  
where they all acquired the Buddha's infinite virtues  
becoming wise and intelligent to an unimaginable degree

Thus were the many great bodhisattvas  
limitless and uncountable, they gathered on this day

Present too were five hundred bhiksunis      nuns  
seven thousand upasakas      lay disciple (male)  
five hundred upasikas      lay disciple (female)  
the divinities of the realm of desire  
the divinities of the realm of subtle form  
and the divinities of the Brahma worlds      the highest three heavens of  
the subtle form realm

# Three

## *The Origin of the Great Teaching*



**On this day,**

**The Blessed One was radiant                      epithet for the Buddha  
and awe-inspiring  
like molten gold  
like a bright mirror  
his inner radiance shone outwards  
in the form of a great ever-transforming light**

**The Venerable Ananda thought to himself,**

**Today the Blessed One's every faculty  
is purified and tranquil  
his countenance  
radiant and majestic  
reveals a land adorned with jewels  
such as never seen before**

**With joy and wonder, Ananda gazed upwards. He rose and bared  
his right shoulder. Kneeling tall with palms together, he addressed  
the Buddha,**

**Today the Blessed One entered a state of great tranquillity  
he dwells within a dharma wondrous and unique  
the state within which all buddhas dwell  
the way of the leader, a path without equal**

**Buddhas past, present and future  
are mindful of one another  
were you thinking of buddhas, past and future  
or present buddhas from other realms?**

**Why so gloriously majestic?  
Why so exquisitely radiant?  
I beg you, please explain**

**Thereupon, the Blessed One proclaimed to Ananda,**

**Wonderful! Wonderful!**

**It is thanks to your compassionate desire  
to aid all sentient beings  
that you are able to ask a question so profound**

**What you asked surpasses  
the offerings made to every arhat      one who has cast aside  
and pratyekabuddha in the world      all afflictions  
and the alms given for successive aeons  
to all beings  
from the heavenly and human  
down to the crawling, flying and wriggling  
by a hundred-thousand-fold  
...why is this so?**

**Because heavenly, human and living beings yet to come  
as a result of your question will attain salvation**

**Ananda,  
the Thus Come One  
has limitless compassion  
and sympathy for all living  
in the three realms      the desire, subtle form  
it is for this reason      & formless realms  
he appeared in our world**

**He illuminated and explained  
the teachings of the way  
the common folk, he strove to save  
bestowing upon them the gift of truth  
like the udumbara flower      blooms once every 3000 years  
rarely emerging, rarely encountered**

**Your question has enriched us  
Ananda, you should know  
the wisdom of the Tathagata's sambodhi  
cannot be measured, it is limitless**



**He can dwell within a single thought  
for infinite aeons  
nothing can be added to or subtracted from  
his body and its faculties  
...why is this so?**

**Because the concentration and wisdom  
of the Thus Come One  
are limitless and all-encompassing  
thus he possesses unsurpassed mastery  
of every dharma**

**Ananda, listen with care  
and keep what I say in mind  
for your sake I shall explain**

# Four

## *The Genesis of Dharmakara*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**An uncountable and inconceivable number of aeons ago  
there emerged a buddha  
named Lokeshvararaja Tathagata  
known as the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened  
the One Perfected in Wisdom and Conduct  
the Well-Gone One, the World-Knowing  
the Unsurpassed, the Subduer of Men  
Master of Heavenly and Human Beings  
Lord of the World**

**For forty-two aeons he preached in the world  
unceasingly he taught the dharma  
and preached the way  
to all heavenly and human beings**

**There was a ruler of a large country  
known as the World Abundance King  
when he heard the Buddha's dharma  
he felt great joy and saw the light**

**He set his mind upon the supreme and genuine way  
he abandoned his kingdom and throne  
he became an ascetic and took the name Dharmakara  
devoting himself to the bodhisattva path**

**His lofty genius and daring insight  
far surpassed the abilities of mortals  
as for faith, comprehension and sharpness of memory  
none were his match**

**Moreover, his conduct and aspirations were unrivalled  
so too was the power of his mindfulness and wisdom  
he was master of his own mind  
firm and unyielding  
he practised with such energy  
that none could surpass him**

**He approached the seat of the Buddha and prostrated. Kneeling tall with palms together, he praised the Buddha with these verses and set forth his expansive vows,**

**The exquisite appearance of the Thus Come One  
is elegant and dignified  
it finds no equal in any realm  
his infinite light beams in the ten directions  
obscuring the light of suns, moons, flames and pearls**

**With a single sound the Blessed One saves  
each and every type of living thing  
in a wondrous form he appears  
for everyone to see**

**I wish to obtain the pure sound of a buddha  
and broadcast the dharma across limitless realms  
making known the methods  
of discipline, concentration and energy  
and penetrate the profound and subtle dharma**

**With knowledge and wisdom as vast as the ocean  
and an inner mind purified, cleansed of all defilements  
I shall transcend the limitless gateways to evil destinies  
and swiftly reach the distant shore**

**Free from ignorance, greed and enmity  
with the power of samadhi  
afflictions are vanquished  
and all faults disappear**

**Like infinite past buddhas  
I shall serve as a great leader  
for the multitude of beings  
I shall liberate every being of every realm  
from the afflictions of birth, old age, sickness and death  
unceasingly cultivating generosity, discipline, patience  
vigour, concentration and wisdom: the six perfections**

**I shall help the unsaved crossover  
and help the saved become buddhas  
offerings as numerous  
as grains of sand in the Ganges  
are no match  
for steadfast and courageous  
pursuit of sambodhi**

**I vow to abide firmly in samadhi  
eternally shining a light upon all things  
conjuring a vast and purified field  
with adornments, extraordinary and unsurpassed**

**Every kind of being  
on samsara's every path                      the cycle of rebirth  
shall be swiftly reborn in my land  
peaceful and happy**

**I shall uplift the sentient  
with a heart of loving-kindness  
and rescue limitless numbers  
of suffering beings**

**The power of my practice is resolute and unwavering  
only the noble wisdom of buddhas can directly apprehend it  
even if my body suffers pain of every kind  
my mind's resolve shall forever remain unshaken**

# Five

*Utmost Focus and  
Determination*



**After reciting these verses, Dharmakara Bhiksu addressed the Buddha,**

**Now a follower of the bodhisattva path  
I have developed a sambodhi mind        a mind fixed on sambodhi  
and taken up the vow to become a buddha  
and lead all others to become buddhas too**

**I would like the Buddha to teach me the dharma  
I shall reverently uphold it  
and conduct myself according to it  
I shall uproot the cause  
that makes beings toil on samsara's wheel  
quickly shall I attain supreme and perfect sambodhi**

**Were I to become a buddha  
the light of my wisdom  
my land and my name  
would be known to all in the ten directions**

**I hope that all beings  
the heavenly and human  
the creeping, crawling and wriggling  
shall be reborn in my land  
becoming bodhisattvas**

**Can it be that these vows I have set forth  
surpass those that created countless buddha fields?**

**Thereupon Lokeshvararaja expounded the dharma for the sake of Dharmakara,**

**If one were to measure the ocean with a ladle  
it would take many aeons to reach the bottom  
those with minds fixed on pursuit of the way  
and inexhaustible determination  
shall reap its fruit, with no wish unfulfilled**

Consider the means by which you shall accomplish  
the adornment and purification of a buddha field  
this is something you already know  
and by yourself alone must it be done

Dharmakara addressed the Buddha,

You speak with vast profundity  
the meaning of which is far beyond  
my sphere of understanding  
I hope the Tathagata, the Worthy and All-Knowing  
can describe to me in detail  
the wondrous lands of infinite buddhas

If I hear this dharma and comprehend it  
and put what I have learned into practice  
I shall surely fulfil my vows

Lokesvararaja appreciated the lofty insight of this request and so  
was willing to elaborate.

He spoke of twenty-one hundred million buddha fields  
their virtues, their adornments, their purity  
their vastness and total perfection  
it was all that Dharmakara had hoped for

During the revelation of this dharma  
ten billion years had passed  
hearing the Buddha's words  
and seeing all that he revealed  
Dharmakara developed his unique and unparalleled vows

He examined the good and evil  
in beings heavenly and human  
and the positive and negative aspects  
of different kingdoms  
he fixed his mind upon and selected  
the elements he most desired



**thus were his great vows formed  
zealously sought after and reverently upheld**

**For five aeons he meditated upon their virtues  
and was thus was as familiar  
with the virtues and adornments  
of twenty-one hundred million buddha fields  
as intimately as he was one  
in such a manner he conjured a land surpassing all others**

**As soon as this was done, he returned to the seat of Tathagata  
Lokesvararaja. He prostrated at his feet. Thrice he encircled him,  
and then, standing before him with his palms together, he in-  
formed the Blessed One that his task of purifying and adorning a  
land was complete.**

**The Buddha proclaimed,**

**Excellent! Now is the time  
for you to proclaim your vows in full  
and bring joy to all sentient beings  
let the people hear this dharma  
and receive its great blessings  
so that they may be reborn in your land  
where they shall observe and practise  
thus bringing your incomparable vows to fruition**

# Six

*Setting Forth  
the Great Vows*



**Dharmakara addressed the Buddha,**

**I hope that the Blessed One  
of great benevolence  
may lend his ear**

**Were I to realise supreme bodhi  
and become a buddha  
my buddha field would be replete  
with an immeasurable and unimaginable array  
of virtues and adornments  
there would be no denizens of hell  
no hungry ghosts, no birds, no beasts  
no crawling, flying and wriggling creatures  
all beings, including those  
ensnared in Yama's realm  
within the three evil paths  
would be reborn in my land  
and be transformed by my dharma  
all would achieve perfect sambodhi  
never again descending into evil destinations  
if this vow is fulfilled, I have become a buddha  
if it remains unfulfilled  
I have not attained supreme sambodhi**

**Vows 1-2**

**lord of death**

**Were I to become a Buddha  
all beings in the realms in the ten directions  
reborn in my land  
would possess bodies of pure gold  
and the thirty-two marks of a great man  
a uniform appearance, upright and pure  
so long as there are differences in form and appearance  
and the concepts of beauty and ugliness still exist  
I have not attained sambodhi**

**Vows 3-5**

**i.e. of a buddha**

**Were I to become a buddha  
beings reborn in my land**

**Vows 6-8**

would be aware of the good and evil actions  
committed in their past lives over innumerable aeons  
every being would possess piercing vision  
and penetrating hearing  
knowing the past, present and future affairs  
of all in the ten directions  
if this vow is not fulfilled, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vow 9  
all beings reborn in my land  
would possess the ability to read the minds of others  
if they cannot read the minds of the sentient beings  
of one trillion buddha lands  
then I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vows 10-11  
all beings reborn in my land  
would have mastery of supernatural powers  
and every perfection see Six Perfections above  
if in the duration of a single thought  
they cannot travel far and wide  
throughout one trillion buddha fields  
making offerings to all buddhas  
then I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vow 12  
beings reborn in my land  
would abandon false distinctions  
and remain serene in every faculty  
if they are not guaranteed  
to achieve complete sambodhi  
and realise great nirvana the nirvana of a buddha  
then I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vows 13-14  
my infinite light would shine  
upon all in the ten directions  
and surpass the light of all buddhas  
a trillionfold times brighter than suns and moons  
if sentient beings were to see my light

and its rays were to touch their bodies  
each without exception  
would experience peace and happiness  
and develop a heart of loving-kindness  
with a desire to do good and be reborn in my land  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vows 15-16  
life would be everlasting  
my land would possess  
a countless number of sravakas  
and beings heavenly and human  
all with infinite lifespans

Were the sentient beings of the trichiliocosm a universe of one  
to all become pratyekabuddhas billion world systems  
yet within one hundred thousand aeons  
their number could be measured  
then I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vow 17  
yet infinite buddhas of infinite realms  
in the ten directions  
do not extol my name nor praise the qualities of my land  
then I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vow 18  
the sentient beings in the ten directions  
who hear my name  
would develop utmost sincerity and resolute faith  
their virtuous roots would be fixed wholly upon  
and directed toward the desire to be reborn in my land  
if even those who have practised buddha mindfulness  
as few as ten times  
were not reborn  
then I have not attained sambodhi

The 5 Great Misdeeds:

This does not apply to those 1-3. killing mother, father, arhat  
who commit the five great misdeeds 4. spilling a Buddha's blood

or slander the true dharma

5. creating disorder in the samgha\*

\*the Buddhist community

Were I to become a buddha

Vows 19-20

beings in the ten directions who hear my name  
would develop the aspiration to attain bodhi  
they would cultivate spiritual virtues  
and practise the six perfections  
resolute and unwavering  
they would unceasingly direct their virtuous roots  
toward the desire to be reborn in my land  
day and night they would fix their minds upon me  
when they reach the end of their lives I shall appear  
alongside an assembly of bodhisattvas to receive them  
within the span of a split second  
they shall be reborn in my land  
as never-retrogressing bodhisattvas  
if this vow is not fulfilled, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha

Vow 21

beings in the ten directions who hear my name  
would fasten their minds upon my land  
and develop the aspiration to attain bodhi  
resolute and unwavering  
they would plant virtuous roots  
and fix their minds upon  
and direct themselves toward  
the desire to be reborn in Sukhavati                      the Pure Land  
and all without exception would succeed              lit. Ultimate Bliss

If those who, in past lives, committed evil deeds  
hear my name and immediately repent  
and vow to do good in service of the way  
and uphold the teachings and the precepts  
and desire to be reborn in my land  
then, at the end of their lives  
they shall never again enter the three evil paths  
instead they shall be reborn in my land  
if this is not so, then I have not attained sambodhi

**Were I to become a buddha  
there would be no women in my land  
if, after hearing my name  
obtaining purity of faith  
and developing a bodhi mind  
women feel loathing and distress in the female form  
and desire to be reborn in my land  
when their end comes  
they shall be transformed immediately  
into male form and be reborn there**

**Vows 22-24**

**Every being in the ten directions  
who comes to my land  
shall be transformed and reborn  
within a lotus flower  
in a pond of seven jewels  
if this is not so  
then I have not attained sambodhi**

**see Chapter 14**

**Were I to become a buddha  
beings in the ten directions who hear my name  
would become joyous and resolute in faith  
they would show reverence and bow before me  
with purity of mind they would devote themselves  
to the way of the bodhisattva  
all heavenly and human beings would pay them homage  
after hearing my name and reaching the end of their lives  
they shall be reborn into a respectable household  
and possess flawless physical and mental faculties  
they shall unceasingly devote themselves to  
a distinctly pure form of practice  
if this is not so, then I have not attained sambodhi**

**Vows 25-27**

**Were I to become a buddha  
even the concept of non-good  
would not exist in my land  
all beings reborn there would be of one mind  
together united on the straight path  
eternally detached from anguish  
with minds becalmed**

**Vows 28-31**

they would experience joy  
like a bhiksu cleansed of all defilements i.e. an arhat

If discriminative thought still arises within them  
or attachment to bodily form  
then I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vows 32-34  
those reborn in my land  
would possess infinite roots of virtue  
all would attain bodies as hard as diamond  
and as strong as Narayana a powerful divinity  
moreover, a bright light would shine  
from the top of their crowns

All would achieve perfection  
in every form of wisdom  
and limitless eloquence  
all would be talented at explaining  
the esoteric and essential elements of every dharma  
all would preach the dharma and follow the way  
their words would ring like bells  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vows 35-36  
beings reborn in my land  
would ultimately be assured  
of attaining buddhahood in a single lifetime  
except for those  
who take on the Primal Vow unique to Dharmakara  
for the sake of all sentient beings  
and don the armour  
of the Universal Vows shared by all bodhisattvas  
to edify each and every being  
so that they develop faithful hearts  
and cultivate the path to bodhi  
and follow the way of Samantabhadra  
even if they are reborn in other worlds  
they shall remain detached from evil paths  
whether they enjoy preaching the dharma



hearing the dharma or developing psychic powers  
whatever they desire, they may practise at will  
assured of attaining perfection therein  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha  
food, clothing and every item of worship  
required by those reborn in my land  
would appear when so desired  
all buddhas in the ten directions  
would receive these offerings  
as soon as they so wished  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Vows 37-38

Were I to become a buddha  
all things in my land  
would be purified and adorned  
radiant and beautiful, of singular appearance  
the absolute pinnacle of elegance and refinement  
entirely without equal  
if beings, even though they possess the divine eye  
are still capable of distinguishing and enumerating  
the varieties of beauty and radiance in my land  
and describing in full their qualities  
then I have not attained sambodhi

Vow 39

Were I to become a buddha  
there would be an infinite variety  
of coloured trees in my land  
standing several hundred  
or thousand leagues tall  
and bodhimanda trees  
four million miles in height  
from which all bodhisattvas  
even those with inferior roots of virtue  
would gain perfect understanding

Vows 40-41

"place of enlightenment" trees

Those wishing to see the adornments  
of every purified buddha field  
would see them within the jewelled trees

like looking in a mirror and seeing their own face  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vow 42  
my buddha field would be  
vast, adorned and purified  
as bright and lustrous as a mirror  
illuminating the immeasurable, innumerable  
and indescribable buddha worlds in the ten directions  
seeing this, the hearts of beings shall be filled with wonder  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vow 43  
from the ground up to the void  
there would be palaces and pavilions  
ponds and streams, flowers and trees  
all things in my land would be infused  
with an immeasurably exquisite fragrance  
permeating all realms in the ten directions  
all beings who experience this fragrance  
shall devote themselves to way of the Buddha  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vows 44-45  
the great many bodhisattvas  
of the realms in the ten directions  
upon hearing my name would attain  
the purified and liberating samadhi  
of universal impartiality  
as well as every method of profound dharani  
remaining within samadhi  
until they reach the stage of buddhahood

Within samadhi they shall unceasingly make offerings  
to each and every innumerable buddha  
never losing concentration  
if this is not so, I have not attained sambodhi

Were I to become a buddha Vows 46-48  
the great many bodhisattvas of other realms

upon hearing my name  
would realise the dharma  
of detachment from rebirth  
and acquire dharanis  
they would be purified and joyful  
capable of abiding in equanimity  
they would devote themselves  
to the way of the bodhisattva  
and perfect their roots of virtue  
if, at once they do not attain  
the three forms of acceptance  
or are incapable of realising  
the state of non-retrogression  
then I have not attained sambodhi

see Chapter 15

# Seven

*Assured Achievement  
of Sambodhi*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**When Dharmakara Bhiksu had finished  
setting forth these vows  
he continued by reciting these verses:**

**I have set forth my world-surpassing vows  
assuring my ascent to the path supreme  
be these vows unfulfilled  
may I not achieve perfect sambodhi**

**As the Great Benefactor  
I shall relieve all deprivation and suffering  
so that all living beings  
may endure the long night without anguish  
giving birth to virtuous roots  
reaping the fruits of bodhi**

**If I achieve sambodhi  
I shall be known as Amitayus Infinite Life  
when beings hear my name  
they come to my land  
with golden bodies like the Buddha  
exquisite and perfect in every way**

**They too with hearts of great compassion  
shall bring blessings to every kind of being  
detached from desire, deep in right-mindfulness  
pure in wisdom and devoted to pure practice**

**I wish my wisdom were radiant  
shining upon every realm in the ten directions  
eradicating the murk  
of the three impurities desire, hatred, delusion  
with a light that ends all misery**

**For every being  
the suffering of the three paths are left behind**

**the darkness cast by its afflictions shall be no more  
the wisdom eye is opened  
a radiant body is acquired**

**I shall obstruct the evil paths  
and clear the path to the good  
I shall open the dharma treasury for all beings  
and share widely its precious blessings**

**With unimpeded wisdom like the Buddha  
always practising loving-kindness  
always acting as a teacher for the heavenly and human  
I shall be known as Lord of the Three Realms**

**I shall preach the dharma with a lion's roar  
and rescue beings far and wide.  
my prior vows shall be fulfilled  
so that all beings become buddhas**

**If these vows are brought to fruition  
their impact shall be felt by a great-thousandfold  
and every divine being of the void  
shall rain down exquisite and wondrous flowers**

**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**After Dharmakara Bhiksu recited these verses  
the entire earth shook with six earthquakes  
wondrous flowers rained down from the sky  
and scattered on the ground**

**Then, from the sky came voices  
singing words of praise  
announcing that he was certain  
to achieve supreme sambodhi**

# Eight

## *Accumulation of Spiritual Virtues*



Ananda, Dharmakara stood before Lokeshvararaja  
amid the great assembly of heavenly and human beings  
having set forth his extensive vows  
he dwelt in a state of true wisdom

With fierce courage and energy  
he fixed his mind upon  
the adornment of a wondrous land  
a land of immense vastness  
a transcendently and singularly wondrous land  
a land to be established for all eternity  
neither waning nor declining

For countless aeons he ingrained in himself the habit  
of virtuous practice  
never giving rise to notions  
sensuous, malicious or delusional  
never clinging to the dharmas  
of visible form, sound, odour, taste and physical sensation

Instead he took pleasure in practising  
mindfulness of past buddhas  
recalling how they cultivated their virtuous roots  
tranquil in conduct, detached from unreality  
taking refuge in the ultimate truth  
he planted many virtuous roots  
paying no mind to the many forms of suffering  
he scorned desire and mastered contentment

He fixed his mind on the pursuit of the pure white dharma  
for the benefit of all beings  
and with tireless aspiration and the strength of endurance  
he succeeded

Unceasingly patient toward sentient beings  
he showed them loving-kindness  
with a pleasing countenance and kind words



**he persuaded them and urged them forward**

**He honoured the Three Jewels 1. Buddha 2. dharma 3. samgha  
and served masters and elders  
with a heart free of falseness and flattery  
he adorned all practices, he was a perfect model  
viewing all dharma as ever-changing and impermanent  
he was eternally serene in samadhi**

**Skilled at safeguarding verbal karma  
never deriding others for their faults  
skilled at safeguarding physical karma  
never falling into dissipation  
skilled at safeguarding mental karma  
pure and free of all defilement**

**Bound not to town nor village  
loved ones or precious jewels  
unfailingly he practised the six perfections  
generosity, upright conduct, forbearance  
vigour, meditative concentration and wisdom  
to edify beings and establish them  
firmly upon the supreme and genuine way**

**As a consequence of the virtuous roots he cultivated  
wherever he was reborn there appeared a limitless treasury  
sometimes he became a householder  
family chief or noble of high birth  
sometimes he became a warrior  
emperor or Wheel-Turning King ruler of an entire universe  
a ruler of the six realms of desire  
or even a Brahma king see Brahma worlds above**

**He showed reverence to buddhas  
worshipping them unceasingly, eternally  
mere words cannot do justice to his virtues**

**His mouth and his body perpetually emanated  
a fragrance of immeasurable exquisiteness  
somewhat like sandalwood**

or the fragrance of the utpala flower  
permeating everywhere  
throughout infinite realms

blue lotus

Wherever he was born  
his appearance was elegant and dignified  
replete with the thirty-two marks  
and eighty minor marks  
from his hands emerged inexhaustible treasures  
ornamented items of worship  
everything that one may require  
the very best of things  
bringing aid and joy to sentient beings

of a buddha

This is why he was capable  
of causing countless beings to develop  
minds set upon complete and perfect sambodhi

Nine

*Complete Perfection*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**Dharmakara Bhiksu devoted himself  
to the way of the bodhisattva  
he accumulated virtues, countless and immeasurable  
he achieved mastery of every dharma  
beyond the scope of word and thought**

**Great vows set forth, accomplished to perfection  
were now established firmly in reality  
in the form a purified buddha land  
perfectly adorned  
of awe-inspiring power and vastness**

**After listening to the Buddha's words, Ananda asked the Blessed One,**

**When the bodhisattva Dharmakara achieved bodhi  
did he become a past buddha, a future buddha  
or a present buddha of an other world?**

**The Blessed One proclaimed,**

**This buddha, thus come, thus gone  
comes to no such place and goes from no such place  
neither born nor dying  
neither of the past, present nor future**

**To fulfil his vow of saving all beings  
Dharmakara emerged in the west  
trillions of buddha fields  
beyond Jambudvipa                      one of the 4 continents that  
in a world named Sukhavati                      surround Mt. Sumeru**

**After becoming a buddha  
he became known as Amitabha                      Infinite Light  
ten aeons have passed from then until now  
and there he remains still preaching the dharma  
surrounded and worshipped  
by countless bodhisattvas and sravakas**

Ten

*All Vow  
to Become Buddhas*



**As the Buddha spoke of Amitabha  
of the time when he sought his vows as a bodhisattva  
Prince Aja and five hundred householders listened with joy  
each holding a cluster of golden flowers  
they came together before him and paid him homage**

**They offered their flowers and sat to one side  
as they listened to his dharma  
they vowed in their hearts  
that if they were to become buddhas  
they wished to be like Amitabha**

**The Buddha perceived this and proclaimed,**

**In the future, the prince and his retinue  
shall all become buddhas  
in past lives they remained for countless aeons  
on the bodhisattva path  
making offerings to four billion buddhas  
at the time of Kasyapa Buddha they were my disciples  
and now today they pay me homage  
and we meet again once more**

**Hearing the Buddha's words, great joy was shared among all  
bhiksus.**

# Eleven

*A World Adorned  
and Purified*







**how could they exist?**

**Ananda replied,**

**Through the inconceivable power of karma**

**The Buddha explained to Ananda,**

**Inconceivable karma  
is this something you can fathom?  
your retribution body  
is inconceivable  
the karmic retribution of beings  
is inconceivable  
the virtuous roots of sentient beings  
are inconceivable  
the noble power of buddhas and buddha fields  
is inconceivable  
the beings of this land  
the beneficent power of their spiritual virtues  
dwells within the stage of action and retribution  
this, in addition to the supernatural power of buddhas  
is therefore likewise inconceivable**

**Ananda replied,**

**Action and retribution  
are inconceivable  
regarding this dharma I have no doubts  
but in order that future sentient beings  
tear asunder the web of doubt  
I have asked this question**

# Twelve

*A Light Shining  
Upon All Things*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**The majestic light of Amitabha  
is revered above all others  
throughout the ten directions  
no buddha's light compares**

**He illuminates all buddha fields in the west  
as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges  
those in the south, the west and the north  
in the four intercardinal directions  
all above and below  
he illuminates them too**

**Some buddhas have atop their crown  
a circular light that shines  
for several leagues  
others have a light that shines  
for hundreds, thousands and millions**

**The light of some buddhas shines upon  
one or two buddha fields  
the light of some buddhas shines upon  
hundreds and thousands of buddha fields  
but only the light of Amitabha can shine universally  
upon infinite, limitless, incalculable buddha fields**

**The distance of a buddha's light  
is determined by their vows  
and virtues acquired in prior lives  
from the time they sought the way  
up until the time they became buddhas**

**This is accomplished as a matter of course  
and cannot be estimated in advance  
the grace of Amitabha Buddha's light  
surpasses by a trillionfold  
the radiance of suns and moons**

his light is revered above all others  
among buddhas he is king

Thus he is known as  
the Buddha of Infinite Life  
the Buddha of Infinite Light  
the Buddha of Limitless Light  
the Buddha of Unimpeded Light  
the Buddha of Incomparable Light  
the Light of Wisdom  
the Eternal Light  
the Light of Purification  
the Light of Joy  
the Light of Emancipation  
the Light of Well-Being  
the Light That Surpasses Suns and Moons  
the Light That Cannot Be Fathomed

Shining upon every realm in the ten directions  
to encounter it is to have impurities cleansed  
and the good arise within  
supple in body and mind

If those afflicted with utmost suffering  
on the three paths  
encounter this light  
they shall attain tranquillity and liberation  
at the end of their lives

If beings hear of this light  
and its glorious blessings  
they shall exalt it night and day  
they shall fix their minds unceasingly upon it  
then, when they so wish, they shall obtain  
rebirth in this land

# Thirteen

*Infinite Lifespan,  
Infinite Followers*



**The Buddha told Ananda,**

**The lifespan of Amitayus is so long it cannot be measured  
surrounded by an assembly of countless sravakas  
he has penetrating supernatural wisdom  
and mastery of awe-inspiring powers  
he can hold every world in his hand**

**Among my followers, none can match  
the supernatural powers of Maudgalyayana  
in the span of a single day  
he can calculate all beings  
in the lunar mansions of a trichiliocosm**

**If all beings in the ten directions  
became pratyekabuddhas  
and were they to live for a trillion years  
and possess Maudgalyayana's powers  
and spend their whole lives  
exhausting all intellectual strength  
in calculating the number  
of those in Amitabha's assembly  
at the range of one hundred billion  
still they would not come close  
to even a single percent of the total**

**Imagine an ocean boundlessly deep and wide  
suppose one were to take a single hair  
and split it into hundreds of pieces  
fragmented as small as atoms  
if one were to take a single atom  
and soak up one drop of the ocean  
which do you think is largest  
the drop of water on this fragment or the ocean?**

**Ananda,  
the likes of Maudgalyayana**

**who know the total number  
are like a drop of water on a fragment of hair  
those who know it not are like the ocean's water  
the lifespan of the Buddha  
and his bodhisattvas and sravakas  
and his heavenly and human beings  
are all like this too  
unknowable through calculation and analogy**

# Fourteen

*Jewel Trees,  
Far and Wide Throughout the  
Land*





**In the land of the Thus Come One  
there are jewel trees of many kinds  
made of pure gold and pure silver  
beryl, quartz and amber  
fine jade and carnelian**

**Some are formed solely from one jewel  
without mixture whatsoever  
others are formed from two or three  
or as many as seven  
mixed and merged together**

**Their roots, branches and trunks  
are formed from a selection of the seven jewels  
and their flowers, fruits and leaves  
are formed from others**

**Some have roots of pure gold and trunks of silver  
beryl branches with tips of quartz  
amber leaves, fine jade flowers and carnelian fruits**

**Others have the seven jewels  
as roots, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits  
each type merged together as one**

**Each kind is divided into rows  
row by row positioned straightly  
trunk by trunk aligned perfectly  
branches and leaves facing perfectly  
flowers placed in perfect position  
luxuriant colours and dazzling radiance  
more than the eye can behold**

**From time to time a fresh breeze blows  
issuing forth the five musical tones      corresponding to the five  
subtle earth and autumnal tones      elements and seasons  
come naturally together in harmony      e.g. earth = late summer  
jewel trees like these are found  
far and wide throughout the land**

# Fifteen

*The Seat of Enlightenment*



At the seat of enlightenment  
there is a bodhi tree  
four million miles in height  
with a trunk five thousand leagues in circumference  
its branches and leaves stretch out in the four directions  
for two hundred thousand miles

Naturally formed from every type of precious stone  
its flowers and fruits are luxuriantly arrayed  
bright and dazzling, shining far and wide

Mani jewels of red, green, blue and white  
the most regal of gemstones  
they form a garland, linked together  
adorning the trunks of the jewel trees

Bells of gold and pearl  
hang between branches  
and wondrous and exquisite jewel nets  
are spread out, covering the treetops

Hundreds and thousands of colours  
reflect and beautify each other  
an infinite blazing light  
shines forth without limits

Every adornment appears when desired  
a gentle breeze drifting slowly  
touches the leaves and branches  
creating the infinitely wondrous dharma sound  
reaching each and every buddha land  
pure and all-encompassing  
mournful and resonant  
subtle and exquisite  
harmonious and refined  
a sound unequalled in the ten directions

If beings behold the bodhi tree and hear its sounds  
if they smell its fragrance and savour its fruits  
if they encounter its radiance  
and reflect upon its blessings  
they shall attain purity  
and clarity of the six faculties                   the five senses  
free from anguish and vexation                   & mental consciousness

Never regressing they shall reach  
the path of buddhahood  
after seeing this tree they shall acquire  
the three forms of acceptance  
the acceptance of the message  
the acceptance of compliance  
the acceptance of unborn dharma

The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,

In this buddha field  
the flowers, fruits and trees  
perform for beings a buddha's deeds

This is all thanks to Amitayus  
his awe-inspiring supernatural powers  
the power of his Primal Vow                   as fully described in  
the perfect nature of his vows                   48 parts above  
the clarity of his vows  
his devotion to these vows  
and his completion of these vows

# Sixteen

*Lecture Halls, Meditation  
Chambers and Observation  
Towers*



The lecture halls and meditation chambers of Amitayus  
and the railings of observation towers too  
are all naturally formed from the seven jewels  
above are nets of crystal mani jewels  
unrivalled in radiance and exquisiteness

The same is true of the palaces  
where a great many bodhisattvas reside  
inside stand bodhisattvas  
lecturing on and reciting the sutras  
while others take it in  
there are bodhisattvas too  
practising sitting and walking meditation  
reflecting on the way

In the air too are bodhisattvas  
lecturing on and reciting the sutras  
while others take it in  
in the air too are bodhisattvas  
practising sitting and walking meditation  
reflecting on the way

Some attain the rank of stream-enterer entering buddha path  
others become once-returners reborn once more before nirvana  
non-returners and arhats never reborn in the desire realm  
those yet to reach the stage  
of non-retrogression soon attain it  
all are mindful of the way  
they preach it and practise it  
all without exception are full of joy and gladness

# Seventeen

*The Blessings  
of Springs and Pools*



To the left and right of the lecture halls  
are criss-crossing springs and pools  
of equal length, breadth and depth  
some are ten or twenty leagues large  
others hundreds and thousands  
sedate and fragrant  
they are blessed with eight virtues

Eight virtues: sweet, cool  
soft, light, clear, odourless  
drinkable & harmless

On their shores are countless sandalwood fragrance trees  
and auspicious bilva trees with fruits and flowers  
eternally fragrant, of dazzling radiance  
tapering branches dense with luxuriant foliage  
overlap and hang over the water  
nothing in our world can compare to their fragrance  
a breeze permeates the air with a rich aroma  
following the course of the water it spreads its sweet smells

Seven jewels adorn the pools  
golden sands line their beds  
utpala, padma, kumuda and pundarika flowers  
an assortment of colours, in bloom and radiant  
are spread far and wide across the water's surface

If sentient beings, passing through or bathing in the water  
wish for it to reach their feet  
or their knees, waist, armpits or neck  
if they wish for it to submerge their entire body  
if they wish it to be cold or warm  
if they wish its flow be calm or quick  
the water adapts itself accordingly  
enlarging the spirit and relaxing the body  
so pure it is invisible  
with jewelled sand so radiant  
from no depth does it fail to shine

Imperceptible ripples sedately alter course and collide  
creating unimaginably exquisite sounds



sometimes one hears  
the sound of the three jewels  
the sound of the perfections i.e. the Six Perfections  
the sound of tranquillity and stillness  
the sound of non-birth and non-cessation  
the sound of the ten powers and fearlessness a Tathagata's  
sometimes one hears powers  
the sound of the absence of nature, being and self  
the sound of great loving-kindness  
compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity  
the sound of initiation and sweet dew sprinkled on the crown

After hearing such sounds their mind is purified  
free from discriminative notions  
with a mind upright and in equilibrium  
their virtuous roots flower  
having heard what they heard  
they are at one with the dharma  
hearing whatever they want to hear  
no longer hearing what they dislike

Never regressing, their mind is fixed  
upon perfect and complete sambodhi  
beings from the ten directions are reborn there  
within a lotus flower in a pond of seven jewels  
spontaneously transformed and born anew  
they acquire a body, pure and empty  
a body without limitations

The agonies and vexations  
the sufferings and hardships  
of the three paths  
are to them unheard of  
such ideas cannot be conceived  
let alone experienced  
instead they enjoy these sounds  
natural and pleasant  
this is why this land is known as Sukhavati Ultimate Bliss

# Eighteen

*World-Surpassing  
and Extraordinary*





**No being, heavenly or human can compete  
with the majesty of their powers  
nor their rank  
nor their mastery of supernatural transformations  
they are outmatched  
by a hundred, thousand, million-fold  
by an immeasurable degree**

**Ananda, you ought to know  
that Sukhavati, the land of Amitayus  
is adorned with inconceivable virtues**

Nineteen

*Complete Fulfilment*



**In the world of Sukhavati  
sentient beings already reborn  
as well as those to be reborn  
in the present life  
or in a future life  
all gain wondrous bodies  
elegant and dignified in appearance  
blessed with infinite merits and virtues  
wisdom and perfect comprehension  
mastery of supernatural powers  
they enjoy great variety  
and an abundance of all things  
palaces and clothing, garlands and fragrant flowers  
canopies and items for adornment  
all appear at will when required  
within the span of a single thought**

**When one desires food  
an alms-bowl and utensils formed of seven jewels  
spontaneously appear before them  
food and drinks of one hundred flavours  
spontaneously overflow in abundance  
but although there is food  
there is nothing to be eaten  
its form is seen  
its fragrance is smelled  
using their minds they consume it  
increasing the strength of the body  
without the unpleasantness of waste  
they are supple in mind and body  
without attachment to taste  
when finished eating, the illusion ceases  
when the time comes again, it reappears**

**Marvellous jewelled clothing  
enjoyed in abundance  
caps, sashes and gemstone necklaces**

**of infinite radiance  
in hundreds and thousands of exquisite colours  
perfect in every way  
appear spontaneously on their bodies**

**Their dwellings match their appearances  
above are canopies made from nets of jewels  
from which hang bells  
made of unique and wondrous precious stones  
criss-crossing, they adorn all far and wide**

**The brilliant radiance of these lights and colours  
are unrivalled in beauty and splendour  
the railings of observation towers  
the eaves of palaces, their wings and galleries  
are sometimes wide, sometimes narrow  
sometimes square, sometimes round  
sometimes they float in the air  
sometimes they rest on the ground  
purified and tranquil  
they inspire joy and wonder  
appearing before them  
in accordance with their wishes  
all of which are satisfied to perfection**

# Twenty

*Virtuous Wind,  
Raining Flowers*





In this buddha land  
whenever it is time to eat  
a virtuous breeze sedately arises  
brushing the nets and many jewel trees  
it produces wondrous voices  
which speak of suffering, emptiness, impermanence  
non-self and the perfections i.e. the Six Perfections  
and emanates ten thousand kinds  
of gentle, refined and virtuous fragrances  
causing impurities and predispositions  
in the listener to no longer arise

Touched by the breeze  
they are peaceful and contented  
like a bhiksu who has attained cessation  
of perception and sensation

As a breeze stirs the trees of seven jewels  
fallen flowers collect on the ground below  
so that the buddha land is suffused all over  
with a great variety of colour and light

They are arranged according to colour  
without disorder, soft and gentle  
immaculate and smooth like cotton

When a foot treads upon them  
it submerges to the depth of four toes  
when the foot is raised  
they return to their original state

When the time for eating is complete  
the flowers vanish of their own accord  
and when the whole earth is purified  
fresh flowers rain down once more  
at particular times of the day  
spreading all over, far and wide  
just as before without the slightest deviation  
six times every day

# Twenty-One

*Jewel Lotus  
and Buddha Light*



A great many jewel lotus flowers  
are spread across the land  
each possessing hundreds, thousands  
and millions of leaves and infinite colours

A blue flower's light is blue  
a white flower's light is white  
and same goes too for all other colours  
the darks, the yellows, the reds and purples

The dazzle of an infinite number of exquisite jewels  
and one hundred thousand mani jewels  
serve to enhance their uncommon beauty  
as luminous and radiant as the sun and moon

Some lotus flowers are as large as half a league  
others are as large as one, two or three  
or even as large as hundreds and thousands  
from within each flower emerges thirty-six trillion lights  
from within each light emerges thirty-six trillion buddhas  
with bodies of pure gold  
and every distinctive major and minor mark

Each and every buddha shines forth  
hundreds and thousands of lights  
filling everywhere in the ten directions  
with the teachings of the profound and subtle dharma

In this way these buddhas  
establish firmly upon the path  
an infinite number of beings

# Twenty-Two

*Assured Realisation  
of the Supreme Fruit*



**Ananda, in this buddha land  
there is no darkness of dusk  
nor the light of fire, suns and moons  
nor the sparkling of stars  
nor the phenomena of day and night**

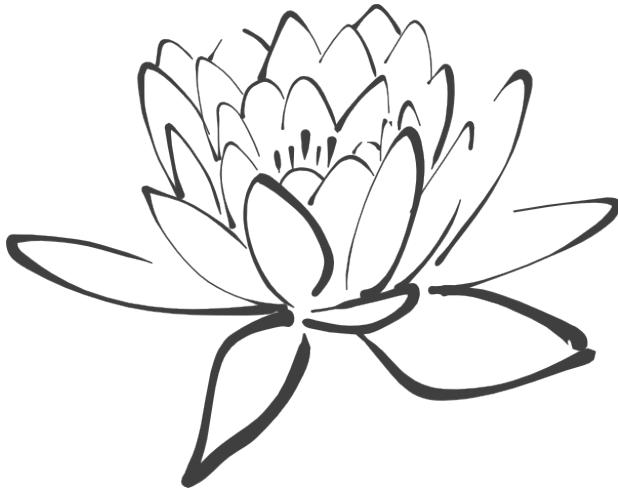
**There are no concepts like years and aeons  
no attachment to household  
no designation given to place  
nor discrimination between them  
instead there is only joy  
pure and unrivalled**

**If good sons and daughters  
those already reborn  
and those to be reborn in the future  
remain upon the straight path  
they are sure to attain  
perfect and complete sambodhi**

**Why is this so?  
because if one is on the wrong path  
or in a state of indecision  
they cannot know  
how this is accomplished**

# Twenty-Three

*Praised by Buddhas  
in the Ten Directions*



**Ananda, within the realms of the east  
as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges  
are buddhas as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges  
with long, broad tongues that emit infinite light  
and speak words that are truthful  
in praise of the inconceivable virtues of Amitayus**

**He is also praised by the buddhas  
within the worlds of the north, south and west  
as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges  
and the buddhas of the worlds  
in the four intercardinal directions  
as well as above and below  
as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges**

**Why is this so?  
because they hope that beings of other realms  
will hear the Buddha's name  
and become purified in mind**

**Recollecting, accepting and upholding his name  
they take refuge in it and worship him  
thus are they capable of developing a faith that is pure  
within the span of a single thought  
in which all virtuous roots are directed toward the desire  
to be reborn in this land  
in accordance with their wish  
they shall be born anew  
and thereafter reach the stage of non-retrogression  
and ultimately achieve perfect and complete sambodhi**

# Twenty-Four

*The Three Classes  
of Reborn Beings*





**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**Heavenly and human beings of the ten directions  
with minds fixed upon rebirth in this land  
belong to three distinct classes  
the superior class leave behind their homes  
and cast their desires aside  
they live ascetically and develop a mind set on bodhi  
directed toward and fixed upon Amitabha Buddha  
they cultivate virtues and vow to be reborn in his land**

**When such beings approach the end of their lives  
Amitabha Buddha appears before them  
alongside an assembly of nobles  
in a split-second they go with him  
to be reborn in his land  
thereupon they are transformed and born anew  
within a lotus flower formed of seven jewels  
acquiring wisdom, vigour and mastery  
of supernatural powers**

**It is for this reason, Ananda  
that beings who desire to see Amitabha  
in this present life  
must develop a supreme bodhi mind  
they must fix it upon Sukhavati  
they must accumulate virtuous roots  
they must maintain these roots  
and direct them forward  
by doing so they shall see the Buddha  
and be reborn in his land  
where they shall reach the stage of non-retrogression  
and ultimately achieve supreme bodhi**

**Although those of the intermediate class  
are incapable of living ascetically  
if they make great efforts in cultivating virtues**



**If beings abide in the Great Vehicle  
with minds purified and directed toward Amitayus  
then, even if they have practised buddha mindfulness  
as few as ten times  
desiring to be reborn in this land  
they shall hear the profound dharma  
and be liberated by faith  
and ultimately acquire purity of mind  
within the span of a single thought  
from which emerges a mind of single thought  
a mind solely mindful of the Buddha**

**At the end of their lives they shall see him  
as if it were a dream  
and be assured of rebirth in his land  
where they shall reach the stage of non-retrogression  
and achieve supreme bodhi**

# Twenty-Five

*The True Cause of Rebirth*



Ananda, if good sons and daughters after hearing this sutra  
grasp it firmly, recite it, transcribe it and make offerings  
day and night, unceasingly seeking rebirth in this land  
if they develop a bodhi mind  
if they uphold the rules and precepts  
if they stand firm without transgressing  
if they bring blessings to all beings  
devoting their virtuous roots to their peace and happiness  
mindful of Amitabha, the buddha of the west and his land  
then, at the end of their lives  
they shall acquire the form and characteristics of a buddha  
as well as many kinds of adornment  
they shall be reborn in a land of jewels  
where they shall immediately hear the dharma  
and remain forever at the stage of non-retrogression

Ananda, if there are beings  
who desire to be reborn in his land  
even though they are incapable  
of exerting great effort in meditation  
and upholding to the utmost the teachings and precepts  
then, they must be virtuous in conduct  
they must not kill living beings  
they must not steal  
they must not succumb to sensual desire  
they must not tell lies  
they must not engage in artful talk  
they must not engage in malicious talk  
they must not engage in double talk  
they must not covet  
they must not succumb to rage  
they must not engage in foolish behaviour

If they adhere to these rules both night and day  
while reflecting upon the many blessings  
and adornments of Sukhavati, the realm of Amitabha  
and resolve in their minds to take refuge in him

to prostrate themselves before him and worship him  
then, at the end of their lives  
they shall not feel startled or panicked  
their minds shall be free from turmoil  
they shall attain immediate rebirth in his land

If there are people burdened with many affairs  
incapable of leaving home and possessing not the time  
to uphold the precepts and achieve a purified single mind  
then, when time permits  
they must remain upright in body and mind  
they must cut themselves off from desire  
casting all worries aside  
they must develop a heart of loving-kindness  
and vigorous energy

They must not succumb to anger and envy  
they must not succumb to greed and miserliness  
they must not succumb to remorse halfway along the path  
they must not succumb to hesitation and doubt  
they must obey their parents  
they must possess utmost sincerity and wholehearted faith  
they must truly believe in the profound nature  
of the Buddha's words  
they must truly believe that good deeds accrue merits  
they must reverently and unfailingly uphold this dharma  
they must contemplate and reflect upon  
their desire for salvation  
day and night, unceasingly  
they must be mindful of their desire to be reborn  
in the purified land of Amitabha  
for ten days and nights, or even as little as one  
if so, at the end of their lives  
they shall be reborn in this land

Those among the reborn  
who follow the bodhisattva path  
shall reach the stage of non-retrogression  
and acquire golden bodies  
replete with the thirty-two marks of a buddha

**All shall become buddhas  
and serve in a buddha land of their choosing  
when this is accomplished depends on their efforts  
but, in tirelessly seeking the way  
all shall achieve it, thus fulfilling their wishes**

**Ananda,  
this is why the Buddha Tathagatas  
from immeasurable and innumerable  
inconceivable, incomparable and limitless realms  
join together to extol and acclaim  
the spiritual virtues of Amitayus**

# Twenty-Six

*Pay Homage, Make Offerings  
and Hear the Dharma*





Ananda, when the great many bodhisattvas  
of the realms in the ten directions  
wish to pay homage to Sukhavati, the land of Amitayus  
they bring mandarava flowers, victory banners  
and parasols bedecked with jewels  
to the Buddha's abode  
and there they show him reverence  
they make offerings  
and are instructed in the dharma  
thereafter they edify beings by proclaiming the way  
and extolling the blessings and adornments of his land

Thereupon the Blessed One recited these verses,

In the buddha fields of the east  
as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges  
bodhisattvas as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges  
come to pay homage to Amitayus  
alongside the bodhisattvas of the north, south and west  
and the four intercardinal directions

Reverently they offer precious and exquisite gifts  
euphorically they sing the praises of the Most Honoured One  
in elegant and harmonious tones  
he who attained supernatural wisdom  
and passed through the profound dharma gateway

When they hear the Buddha's sacred name  
they acquire with ease the great blessing  
with devotion they practise every form of worship  
without succumbing to weariness  
they contemplate his extraordinary land  
so exquisite it is impossible to imagine  
entirely adorned with spiritual virtues  
it is impossible for other lands to compare

Once they develop a mind supreme

and desire to instantly achieve bodhi  
a smile appears on the golden face  
of the Infinite Honoured One  
and from his mouth emerges a radiant light  
that illuminates every realm in the ten directions

The light returns and encircles the Buddha  
thrice rotating before entering his crown  
when bodhisattvas see this light  
they immediately realise the state of non-retrogression  
all present thus celebrate and rejoice together

The sacred words of the Buddha  
resound like a thunderbolt  
spoken in the all-encompassing  
and exquisite sounds of the eight tones

the Buddha's voice is  
resonant, penetrating, pure,  
gentle, mournful, clear,  
harmonious & elegant

Upright adepts who have come  
from the ten directions  
their desires, I know them all  
they are devoted to adorning the Pure Land  
and receiving the prophecy of buddhahood  
awakening to the knowledge  
that all dharmas are nothing  
but dreams, illusions and echoes  
by fulfilling every wondrous vow  
they are certain to form such a field

i.e. bodhisattvas

Knowing that this land is but a reflection  
their minds are unceasingly fixed upon the universal vows  
reaching the end of the supreme bodhisattva path  
they possess the roots of every spiritual virtue  
devoting themselves to the ultimate path of bodhi  
they receive the prophecy of buddhahood  
comprehending the intrinsic nature of every dharma  
the emptiness of all things and the truth of non-self  
devoting themselves to the purification of a buddha land  
they are certain to form such a field

**Hearing the dharma  
they are joyous in practice  
acquiring a state of utmost purity  
they are certain to receive from the Infinitely Respected One  
the prophecy of achieving complete sambodhi**

**Such a field is boundless and extraordinary  
this is the power of the Buddha's primal vow  
hearing his name they desire to be reborn  
and achieve with their own efforts  
the state of non-retrogression**

**The ultimate desire of bodhisattvas  
is that their own buddha field be no different  
ever mindful of the salvation of all beings  
they hope that all will develop a bodhi mind**

**Leaving behind their samsara bodies  
leading all to the other shore  
serving one hundred billion buddhas  
flying over and transforming every buddha field  
and then, with feelings of reverence and joy  
they depart, returning to the land  
of peace and sustenance**

# Twenty-Seven

*Singing in Praise of the  
Buddha's Virtues*



**The Buddha told Ananda,**

**Bodhisattvas in this land are blessed  
by the power and glory of the Buddha  
within the duration of a meal  
they can travel to and fro  
between infinite pure lands  
in the ten directions  
and make offerings to every buddha**

**Flowers, incense, banners  
every item of worship  
as soon a notion for them occurs  
instantly they appear  
within their palms  
exquisite and singular  
like nothing this world has known  
to be presented to every buddha  
and the multitude of bodhisattvas**

**Scattered petals in the air  
form and make a single flower  
downwards they fall in a perfect circle  
becoming a canopy  
of hundreds and thousands of radiant colours  
colour after colour, each unique in fragrance  
permeating far and wide**

**Small canopies stretching as far as ten leagues  
transform again and again  
until they cover the whole trichiliocosm  
in order of old to new  
they transform and disappear  
if no more offerings of scattered petals are made  
those offered last remain in place**

**In the void, heavenly sounds are made**

exquisite voices, they sing in praise  
of the virtues of the Buddha  
then in a flash  
they all return to his land  
to gather in the lecture hall of seven jewels  
where Amitayus lectures on the Great Teaching  
and expounds the wondrous dharma  
leaving all without exception  
in a state of joy  
with faith and understanding  
they find the way

Thereupon a fragrant breeze blows  
through the trees of seven jewels  
producing the five musical tones  
infinite numbers of exquisite flowers are blown  
and scatter in the four directions  
spontaneous offerings like these  
are made unceasingly

From each divinity is offered  
a hundred thousand kinds of flowers and incense  
and ten thousand types of musical performance  
in homage to buddhas  
and the great multitude of bodhisattvas and sravakas  
from first to last they come and go  
in high spirits and full of cheer

This is thanks to the power  
of the primal vow of Amitayus  
past offerings made to tathagatas  
and the continuous flow of virtuous roots      through unceasing  
free from imperfection      mindfulness  
in addition to skilful practice  
assimilation and attainment      of virtues/adornment of Sukhavati

# Twenty-Eight

*The Divine Light  
of the Great Ones*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**This buddha land's many bodhisattvas  
possess piercing vision and penetrating hearing  
in the eight directions, above and below  
of matters done, yet to come, and those just now unfolding  
of beings of all kinds, from the heavenly and human  
down to the crawling, flying and wriggling  
their thoughts both good and evil  
their words before they leave their mouths  
the moment they shall attain salvation  
the moment they shall find the way and be reborn  
all of it they know**

**Moreover, the light from the bodies  
of the sravakas of this buddha land  
shines as far as eight feet  
the light of bodhisattvas  
shines for hundreds of leagues  
among them, two reign supreme  
with majestic light that shines  
upon an entire trichiliocosm**

**Ananda asked the Buddha the names of these two bodhisattvas,  
and the Buddha answered,**

**One is Guanyin  
the other is Mahasthamaprapta  
they devote themselves within the world of men  
to the bodhisattva way  
reborn in this land  
they are often at the side of Amitabha Buddha  
they appear at will in any of the infinite abodes  
of the ten directions  
at present they reside in this realm  
bringing about great blessings and happiness  
worldly good sons and daughters  
if in peril or fright  
need only entrust themselves to Bodhisattva Guanyin  
and without exception they shall be saved**



# Twenty-Nine

*The Power of the Vow,  
Immense and Profound*



Ananda, bodhisattvas of this buddha land  
both present and future  
shall ultimately attain buddhahood in a single lifetime  
excepting those who take on the great vows  
and enter the realm of birth and death  
for the sake of saving the living  
using the lion's roar, donning the great armour  
adorning themselves with the virtues  
of the universal vows  
even when born into the world      5 corruptions: degeneration of  
of evil and the five corruptions      views, afflictions, beings,  
these wonders remain with them      their lifespans & the aeon itself  
until they reach buddhahood  
never experiencing the evil destinies  
no matter where born, remembering their past lives

Amitabha Buddha, wishing to save all beings  
living in the worlds of the ten directions  
leads them to rebirth in his land  
upon the path to nirvana  
as bodhisattvas, he leads them to buddhahood  
once buddhas they give others instruction  
and bring others salvation  
this process ever-ongoing  
is impossible to measure

The number of sravakas  
bodhisattvas and beings  
within the realms of the ten directions  
who are born into his buddha land  
upon the path to nirvana, becoming buddhas  
is impossible to measure

His buddha land is eternally in harmony  
with the one dharma, never changing  
...why is this so?

The great ocean governs the water  
all waters flow toward it and enter it  
how could it be that this ocean  
as a consequence  
expands or shrinks?

In the eight directions, above and below  
are countless buddha lands  
the land of Amitabha is immensely vast  
it is radiant and beautiful and full of joy  
it is supreme and without equal

This is a consequence of the time  
when as a bodhisattva  
he desired to seek the way  
and the virtues he accumulated  
he graciously bestowed  
upon all in the eight directions, above and below  
inexhaustible and limitless  
immense, profound and immeasurable  
impossible to express in words

# Thirty

*The Self-Cultivation  
of Bodhisattvas*



**Ananda, every bodhisattva in this buddha field  
their meditative concentration  
their knowledge and wisdom  
their supernatural powers  
and the power of their majesty  
are all without exception  
in a state of complete perfection**

**Possessing complete comprehension  
of the Buddha's esoteric teachings  
they have tamed every faculty  
they are flexible in body and mind  
thus they penetrate true wisdom  
with no more lingering bad habits  
they follow in the footsteps  
of the Buddha, taking the noble path  
with its seven branches of awakening**

**7 branches of awakening:**

- 1. mindfulness**
- 2. investigation of states**
- 3. energy**
- 4. bliss**
- 5. tranquillity**
- 6. concentration**
- 7. equanimity**

**They develop five eyes  
which illuminate the truth  
and penetrate beyond the profane  
the flesh eye examines  
the divine eye penetrates  
the dharma eye purifies  
the wisdom eye sees the truth  
the buddha eye does it all**

**Awakened to the nature of dharma  
eloquent and self-possessed  
without constraint or obstruction  
skilfully they reveal  
the limitless expedient means  
existing within the world**

**Sincere and truthful in speech  
they reach the very essence of things  
saving all beings by teaching the true dharma  
beyond form and conditioning  
beyond attachment and freedom**

beyond all conception  
detached from delusion  
they receive and enjoy without grasping  
they travel to buddha fields far and wide  
without feelings of partiality and loathing  
nor do they entertain the notion  
of desiring non-desire  
nor do they feel enmity and resentment  
due to notions of the self and the other  
...why is this so?

Because bodhisattvas have great compassion  
and loving-kindness for every being  
and the desire to bring them the benefits  
which come from casting aside every attachment  
and acquiring infinite virtues  
and unimpeded wisdom  
that comprehends the ultimate reality  
beneath all dharmas  
perceiving origination and extinction

Speaking with skilful expedience  
never revelling in profane talk  
they take joy in discoursing upon the truth  
knowing that every dharma is empty and still  
the mental and physical afflictions of the body  
these two lingering factors are entirely no more

Within the three realms, they practise with impartiality  
upon the one vehicle, until they reach the other shore  
tearing asunder the web of doubt  
realizing that there is nothing to be obtained

Through expedient wisdom, they grow in knowledge  
always, from the very start, abiding firmly  
within the use of supernatural power  
they attain the path of the one vehicle

It was never due to any other that they were awoken

# Thirty-One

*True Virtues*



Vast and deep is their wisdom  
like the ocean  
lofty and expansive is their bodhi  
like Mount Sumeru  
majestically radiant are their bodies  
surpassing the sun and moon  
immaculately white are their minds  
like the Himalayas  
enduring like the earth  
entirely level and even  
purifying like water  
washing away all dirt  
blazing like fire  
burning the fuel of affliction  
never clinging like the wind  
free from obstruction  
the dharma resounds like a thunderbolt  
awakening the unconscious  
raining down droplets of sweet dharma  
refreshing all beings  
their great loving-kindness  
as vast as the void  
like an unblemished lotus flower  
untainted by dirt  
like a banyan tree  
providing shelter for many  
like a diamond cutter  
severing all attachments to delusion  
like the Cakravada mountains  
a horde of demons and heretics cannot shake them

Upright in mind, skilful and resolute  
they discourse upon the dharma  
without weariness  
they seek the dharma  
without fatigue  
their morals are like the beryl stone  
clear and transparent, both inside and out  
their words make beings



submit themselves joyfully  
beating the dharma drum  
erecting the dharma banner  
revealing the sun of wisdom  
eradicating the darkness of delusion  
pure and gentle  
serene in concentration and perceptive  
as great leaders  
taming themselves and others  
helping all living beings  
cast aside every attachment  
that they may be eternally detached  
from the three impurities  
free to indulge in their supernatural powers

As a result of the power of his vows  
and the virtuous roots they developed  
they vanquish the troops of Mara  
they honour and serve every buddha  
a bright lamp for the world  
creating a field of merit, unsurpassed  
a truly extraordinary fortune, worthy of reverence  
majestic and joyous, bold and fearless  
their appearance, their marks and characteristics  
their virtues and their eloquence  
are perfectly adorned and without equal  
unceasingly they are praised by all buddhas  
possessing a bodhisattva's every perfection  
abiding eternally in samadhi  
neither arising nor ceasing  
travelling to dharma sanctuaries far and wide  
leaving those on the two vehicles far behind

i.e. sravakas &  
pratyekabuddhas

Just now, Ananda  
I have merely provided a sketch  
of the virtues of reborn bodhisattvas  
in this realm of Sukhavati  
if I were to speak of them extensively  
I would not get through them all  
even after hundreds and thousands of aeons

# Thirty-Two

*Limitless Longevity  
and Happiness*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya Bodhisattva and the heavenly  
and human beings present,**

**Inexpressible are the virtues and wisdom  
of the sravakas and bodhisattvas  
of the land of Amitayus  
his land is wondrous and peaceful  
pure and full of joy**

**Why then, do you not strive  
to do good and be naturally placed  
upon the path of mindfulness**

**Coming and going  
making offerings  
gaining insight from the sutras  
following the way  
delighting in persistent cultivation**

**Able, valiant, wise  
with minds that do not deviate  
determined, never slacking  
on the outside unhurried  
on the inside charging forward  
capacious as the void  
reaching its centre  
the outer and inner are in harmony  
and in order, as a matter of course  
when one is self-restrained and upright  
mind and body are immaculate**

**Without craving and greed  
one's vows remain unshaken  
without increase or decrease  
seeking the way  
in harmony with what is right  
never turning toward heresy**

acting in accordance with the sutras  
complying with instruction  
never daring to overstep the line  
all for the sake of the path esteemed  
devoid of other thoughts

Free from anxiety  
naturally effortless  
empty, creating nothing  
peaceful and contented

Free from desire  
undertaking virtuous vows  
wholeheartedly seeking their fulfilment  
full of pity and compassion  
fully in accord with ritual and duty  
embracing the external and internal  
going beyond and gaining release  
naturally safeguarding  
their true immaculate whiteness

With unsurpassed ambition  
pure concentration, peace and joy  
like the breaking of dawn  
the way is cleared  
illuminating the real within the real  
the very root of reality  
its true lights and appearances  
permeate one another  
producing magnificent transformations

As the seven jewels emerge in Uttarakuru 1 of the 4 continents  
from the void emerges myriad things that surround Mt. Sumeru  
the radiant, the sublime, the luminous  
excellent and extraordinary, without comparison  
revealing that which has neither highs nor lows  
penetrating that which has no limits

Each of you ought to strive  
with great effort to seek this

for you are certain to attain  
the transcendent dharma  
and rebirth in the buddha land of Amitabha  
a land of immeasurable purity  
escaping the five destinies, blocked from evil paths

The path supreme and limitless  
is easy to reach  
but there, there are none or few  
not because people are contrary to this land  
but because their nature drags them from it

Cast aside ambition  
and be like the void  
strive in seeking the way and its power  
obtain life of utmost longevity  
and happiness without limit  
why cling to worldly things  
fighting and fussing over that which is fleeting

# Thirty-Three

*Encouraging Words,  
Spurring Advancement*



The worldly contend among each other  
over matters of little urgency  
in this world of extreme wickedness  
and intense suffering  
they strain their bodies with hasty exertion  
in pursuit of what brings them profit

Regardless of status, wealth, age and gender  
everyone frets unceasingly  
piling up worries  
slaves to their own hearts

Those with land, fuss over land  
those without, fuss over that  
with or without, worries are the same  
having one thing, they desire something else  
yearning to be like others

Even if they possess little  
still they fret  
over its impermanence  
by floods and fires  
robbers and thieves  
enemies and creditors  
it could be burnt  
set adrift or seized  
wiped out, gone forever

The heart is hard, the mind is inflexible  
incapable of letting go  
yet when life ends  
all is left behind  
nothing leaves here  
for both rich or poor  
worries and agonies come in many forms

People of the world  
father and son, brother and brother

husband and wife, parents and relatives  
all should share in mutual love and respect  
instead of hating and envying one another

Those who have, should share  
with those who have nought  
without greed or attachment  
always gentle in word and bearing  
never untoward or contrary

A quarrelsome mind  
full of passion and fury  
grows fiercer as time passes  
until at last it turns to hatred  
thus in worldly matters  
injury leads to more injury  
even if it comes not instantly  
you must urgently consider  
putting a stop to this cycle

In the midst of craving and desire  
people are born alone and die alone  
a solitary entrance, a solitary exit  
your joys and sorrows  
are made for you alone  
no one can take your place  
the ever-evolving manifestations  
of good and evil actions  
follow you through rebirth  
if paths diverge  
there is no hope of meeting again  
so why not, while time is ripe  
strive to do good  
...what exactly are you waiting for?

The worldly cannot perceive good and evil  
omens ill or otherwise  
portending fortune or disaster  
each compete in deeds  
the body knows not what it does



the spirit is mired in darkness  
thus they embrace other teachings  
and delusions beget more delusions  
impermanence is at their root  
enveloped in darkness  
they are in denial  
with no faith in the dharma  
lacking foresight, chasing pleasure  
led astray by enmity  
coveting material wealth  
and beautiful things  
all their lives without rest  
...what a pity

Their ancestors were evil  
thus they fail to recognise  
the way and its power  
for none have told them  
for this they can hardly be blamed

The rebirth destinies  
the good and evil paths  
in this they have no faith  
they say no such thing exists  
but what they see of others  
they shall soon see for themselves  
fathers weeping over sons  
sons weeping over fathers  
brother and brother, husband and wife  
weep and shed tears for one another  
passing away and being reborn  
longing for one another  
bound by worry and attachment  
no time to attain release

With love and affection  
they remain stuck to desire  
incapable of deep contemplation  
they cannot even consider following the way  
yet in no time at all

**life comes to an end  
from this there is no escape**

**The way bewilders many  
the awakened are few  
they harbour a deadly poison  
and an evil aura enshrouds them  
in the deepest dark  
they commit deeds based on falsehood  
defying heaven and earth  
wilfully they commit the utmost evil  
until in an instant  
their life is snatched away  
from there they fall  
into the evil paths  
with no hope of escaping**

**You must consider casting evil aside  
and choosing what is good and practising it  
for the things you crave and desire  
the glorious, the beautiful  
cannot be preserved forever  
they all shall vanish  
in that you will find no pleasure**

**You must make the effort to be reborn  
in the land of peace and happiness  
where you can cultivate wisdom and insight  
virtues that cannot be rivalled  
do not fall pray to your desires  
do not betray the teachings and rules  
lest you fall behind the progress of others**

# Thirty-Four

*Seeing the Light*



**Maitreya addressed the Buddha,**

**The Buddha speaks of the teachings and precepts  
with such depth and brilliance  
we are all enveloped in his compassion and beneficence  
liberated from worry and pain**

**The Buddha is the Dharma King  
pre-eminent among nobles  
with a radiance that illuminates  
and penetrates limitless depths**

**The Buddha is master  
of every heavenly and human being  
and today we meet him  
and hear his teaching of infinite life  
every one of us is filled with joy  
our minds have seen the light**

**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,**

**Reverence shown to buddhas  
this is the greatest good  
truly you must practise buddha mindfulness  
and put an end to doubts  
uproot all cravings  
and block all sources of evil  
so you can wander freely  
through the three realms  
without entanglements  
opening and revealing the path that is true  
and saving those yet unsaved**

**You must understand that people in the ten directions  
have, for endless aeons  
gone back and forth  
between the five paths**

**5 paths of rebirth:  
heavenly, human, animal  
ghost & hell denizen**

**their anxiety and suffering never ending  
they suffer when born  
they suffer when old  
they suffer intensely in sickness  
they suffer intensely in death  
foul-smelling and defiled  
in this there is no happiness**

**Therefore you must resolve  
to cleanse your mind of impurity  
to speak and act with faith and devotion  
with the outer and inner in perfect harmony  
such people can save themselves and uplift others  
carrying them to the other shore  
with total focus upon their aspiration  
they accumulate virtuous roots  
although one strives lifelong  
it amounts to a mere instant  
compared with the hereafter in the land of Amitayus  
where one experiences joy and happiness without limits  
where the cause of rebirth and death is forever uprooted  
where suffering and vexation are never more  
where one lives for a great many million aeons  
free to do as one wishes**

**Therefore each of you must strive  
and be beyond all doubt  
for those who commit such an error  
are reborn on the borderlands  
within walls formed of the seven jewels  
in state of disconnection for five hundred years**

**Maitreya addressed the Buddha,**

**For our sake,  
the Buddha has shone light upon his teachings  
thus we must focus solely upon study and practice  
and do so with reverence  
in accordance with his doctrine  
never daring to doubt**

# Thirty-Five

*The Evils and Sufferings of an  
Impure World*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,**

**In this world, to be capable  
of rectifying your mind  
and doing no evil  
is truly the greatest virtue  
...why is this so?**

**In all worlds in the ten directions  
good is abundant, evil is scarce  
to open the way and edify is easy  
only in this world of five evils  
is suffering so intense**

see below

**I now serve here as buddha  
to instruct and edify all living beings  
to help them abandon the five evils  
to depart from the five agonies  
to detach from the five burnings  
to subdue and reform their thinking  
to make them embrace the five goods  
and acquire their merits and virtues**

see below

**What are these five?**

evils

**The first:**

**Every kind of being in the world  
wishes to commit many evils  
to do others harm  
the strong oppresses the weak  
and in turn is oppressed  
by those even stronger**

**They hurt, they injure  
they wound, they kill  
they devour one another**

they do not know how to be good  
in consequence they receive a punishment most dire

Thus they are deprived and lonely  
deaf, blind and mute  
stupid and hateful  
physically infirm and mentally deranged  
all because in past lives  
they had no faith  
in the way and its power  
thus they were unwilling to do good

Those who are distinguished  
the nobles, the wealthy and powerful  
the worthy, the wise, the elders  
the intelligent and the brave  
the gifted and the insightful  
are the way they are  
due to the loving-kindness  
and filial piety practised in past lives  
and the good they did  
and the virtues they acquired  
this reality unfolds in the world  
right before our eyes

When their lives end  
they enter the netherworld  
reborn once more, they receive a body  
changing form and switching paths  
as a consequence  
there exist denizens of hell  
birds and beasts  
crawling, flying and wriggling creatures  
like the wordly dharma of imprisonment  
there is intense suffering  
a punishment most dire

Spirit and heavenly essence  
follow in the direction of one's crimes  
when receiving a lifespan, short or long



they go along together  
and are reborn together  
where retribution leads to further retribution

Yet the misfortune caused by evil  
has not ended  
when their end comes  
they cannot leave  
to and fro they pass within these paths  
for aeon after aeon  
exit is impossible  
salvation is impossible  
...an unspeakable sadness  
between heaven and earth  
it is naturally this way  
even if retribution comes not instantly  
good and evil deeds will return to the doer

The second:

People of the world  
are contrary to the dharma and the precepts  
they are profligate and dissolute  
arrogant and reckless  
they indulge themselves  
in whatever takes their fancy  
occupying high rank but lacking wisdom  
possessing authority but lacking uprightness  
they entrap others with false allegations  
bringing woe to the good and loyal  
what they think and what they say  
are not the same  
they use every kind of trickery and falsehood

People noble and lowly  
both here and overseas  
cheat and deceive each other  
due to ill-will and ignorance  
they desire to enrich themselves  
always craving more

Gains and losses  
result in rage and animosity  
destroying families and causing death  
heedless of the consequences  
the rich are miserly, unwilling to give  
clinging to desire, weighed down by greed  
the heart is vexed, the body suffers  
thus they are until their end

In the hereafter nothing comes with them  
but good and evil deeds  
the weal and woe they have created  
follows them through rebirth  
to a joyful place  
or one of bitter suffering

Moreover, when they see  
one who does good  
they despise them  
they speak ill of them  
they do not think of emulating them  
and measuring up to them

Perpetually they think of taking  
what is not theirs  
wishing to take advantage of others  
to benefit themselves  
and when all is gone  
they do it again to someone else

The divinities take note of this  
and so, in the end  
they enter the evil destinies  
as a matter of course  
upon the three paths  
of infinite troubles  
to and fro they pass  
for aeon after aeon  
exit is impossible  
...an unspeakable sadness

**The third:**

**People of the world  
are reliant on each other  
in their short lives  
lacking goodness are those  
neither upright in body nor mind  
perpetually full of wickedness  
perpetually full of illicit thoughts  
anxiety and vexation**

**Their perverse frame of mind  
reveals itself visibly  
they squander their family's wealth  
they engage in illegal affairs  
averse to that which they ought seek**

**Moreover, some of them get together  
they start wars and fight each other  
they assault and they pillage  
they wound and they slaughter  
they intimidate and they take by force  
and what they have taken  
they give to wives and children  
they exhaust themselves in making merry**

**Thus the masses feel hatred for them  
resulting in misery and suffering  
such evil is apparent  
to both man and spirit**

**The divinities take note  
so naturally they enter the evil paths  
of infinite suffering and vexation  
to and fro they pass  
for aeon after aeon  
exit is impossible  
....an unspeakable sadness**

**The fourth:**

**People of the world  
never think of doing good  
they use double talk and malicious words  
they tell lies and use artful language  
they despise and envy the good  
they destroy the worthy and wise  
they disobey mother and father  
they pay no heed to elders and teachers  
there is no trust between friends  
seldom are they honest  
they glorify themselves  
and claim to possess the way  
they act like tyrants  
with no respect for others  
yet they want to be admired  
they feel no shame  
they can neither be taught nor tamed  
ever full of pride  
yet they rely upon past lives  
protected by the fortune  
and virtues there accrued  
they do evil in this life  
until their fortune runs dry  
and their life expires  
thereupon, they are surrounded  
confronted by their evil deeds**

**Moreover, in the book of names  
they are recorded by divinities  
they are drawn toward calamity  
with no way of escaping  
instead they must advance  
and enter the boiling cauldron  
where mind and body are dashed to pieces  
the most intense suffering  
of consciousness and form  
at this point, repentance has come too late**

**The fifth:**

**People of the world  
are wavering and hesitant  
indolent and apathetic  
they are unwilling to do good  
or discipline themselves  
and pursue a vocation**

**They turn their backs on and disobey  
the instruction of their parents  
treating them like enemies  
their parents would have been better off  
had they never been born  
they betray their kindness  
they fail in their duties  
in no way returning what they owe**

**Dissolute and self-indulgent  
drunkards and gluttons  
boorish and belligerent  
insensible to human feeling  
unprincipled and uncivilised  
no admonishment can help  
in making them see the light**

**They spare no thought  
for the material well-being  
of family and friends  
never do they consider  
the kindness of their parents  
never are they mindful  
of their duty to friends and teachers  
from their minds, mouths and bodies  
not the slightest good emerges**

**In the Buddha's teachings  
they have no faith  
in rebirth, in good and evil  
they have no faith**

they desire to harm the worthy  
to create disorder within the samgha  
witless and benighted  
they believe themselves wise  
they know not where they came from in birth  
nor where they are heading in death

They are unkind and intractable  
yet they yearn for longevity  
of the things they have been taught  
with great loving-kindness  
they are unwilling to believe

Of the things they have been told  
at painstaking effort  
to them it has no benefit  
their hearts are sealed  
their minds are closed to understanding  
at the time ordained, their end shall come  
feeling remorse and fright  
they did no good ahead of time  
and only now do they repent  
...what is the use in that?

Between heaven and earth  
are five distinct paths  
the recompense for good and evil  
borne together are fortune and misfortune  
to be confronted on one's own  
no one can do it for them

The good do good  
by way of joy  
they partake in joy  
by way of wisdom  
they partake in wisdom  
the evil do evil  
by causing suffering  
they partake in suffering  
in a benighted state

they experience darkness

Who comprehends this?  
only the Buddha comprehends  
few are those with faith  
few are those who practise  
his revealed words of instruction

Endlessly dying and being reborn  
never leaving the evil paths  
thus are the people of the world  
it is hard to get through them all

As a consequence the three paths exist  
as a matter of course  
where people experience  
infinite suffering and affliction  
where endlessly they pass to and fro  
for generation after generation  
for aeon after aeon  
with no hope of escaping  
release is impossible  
...an unspeakable sadness

Thus are the five evils, pains and burnings  
like a great fire scorching the body  
however, if one existing within them can  
focus their mind and control their thoughts 1st good  
discipline their body and practise right-mindfulness 2nd good  
make word and action correspond 3rd good  
act with total sincerity 4th good  
do only good and no evil 5th good  
then, they alone shall attain liberation  
and acquire the fortune and blessings therein  
attaining longevity upon the path to nirvana  
these are the five goods

# Thirty-Six

*Repeated Instruction  
and Exhortation*





**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,**

**I told you that the five evils, pains and burnings  
give birth to one another  
those who still dare to commit them  
shall experience the evil paths**

**For some it begins in this life  
with sickness and calamity  
in a state neither alive nor dead  
for all to see**

**For some, when the time comes  
they enter the three evil paths  
their faces ablaze  
with misery and cruelty**

**Together with their enemies  
they wound and kill each other  
the insignificant and imperceptible  
turn into difficulties of great severity**

**All because of greed and attachment  
to material wealth and alluring things  
an unwillingness to show generosity  
each only out to satisfy themselves  
not caring whether their actions  
are upright or crooked**

**Driven by foolish desire  
to enrich themselves  
they compete for profit, for wealth and rank  
for glory, splendour and momentary pleasure**

**Incapable of forbearance  
they do not devote themselves  
to doing good  
their power and prestige  
in no time at all**

turns to dust and vanishes

The way of heaven unfolds  
delivering justice as a matter of course  
alone they stand in trepidation  
of the place they shall soon enter  
thus has it been  
from antiquity to the present day  
such misery... truly lamentable

You have heard the Buddha's teaching  
now consider it with care  
each of you  
upright and observant  
lifelong, never slacking

Venerate the noble and good  
extend to all your loving-kindness  
seek to go beyond this world  
uproot the origins of samsara  
and every kind of evil  
leave the three paths behind  
the way of trouble, fear and pain

Of your good actions, what shall be first?

You must rectify mind and body  
ears, eyes, mouth and nose  
physically and mentally purified  
in harmony with what is good

You must not succumb  
to craving and desire  
commit no evil deeds  
be gentle in word and bearing  
single-minded in conduct  
vigilant in every action  
calm and composed  
for hurried action ends in regret  
and a lack of care undermines effort

# Thirty-Seven

*A Poor Man Given  
Precious Jewels*



**You must extensively cultivate  
virtuous roots  
you must not transgress  
the prohibitions of the way**

**To have patience and effort  
a heart of loving-kindness, singly focused  
purified by the precepts  
for one day and one night  
surpasses a hundred years of good deeds  
in the land of Amitayus  
...why is this so?**

**Because this buddha land possesses  
every accumulated virtue  
every good  
not a single iota of evil**

**To do good here  
for ten days and nights  
surpasses a thousand years of good deeds  
in other buddha lands  
...why is this so?**

**in our world**

**In other buddha lands  
people naturally possess blessings and virtues  
for them, there is no situation  
where evil can be committed  
only in this world  
of little good and abundant evil  
where bitterness is swallowed  
and poison eaten  
is there never a taste of tranquillity**

**I have pity for you all  
and so I take great pains  
in instructing through analogy**

and imparting the dharma  
for all to uphold and consider  
and reverently practise  
senior and junior  
male and female  
loved ones and friends  
imparting to each other  
the words of instruction  
cautious and restrained in bearing  
in harmony with what is right and true  
cheerful in their filial devotion  
when they transgress in their deeds  
they admit their own error  
they leave behind evil  
and head toward the good  
hearing admonishment at dawn  
they have rectified by dusk  
holding fast to the teachings and precepts  
like a poor man given precious jewels

Amend past errors  
and cultivate for the future  
cleanse your mind  
make a change in behaviour  
and nature yields in response  
all that is desired shall be obtained

Where the Buddha's words  
are put into effect  
in cities and villages  
none are not edified  
everything under heaven is in harmony  
the sun and moon are bright and clear  
wind and rain come at the right season  
disasters and plagues never arise  
countries flourish, the people are at peace  
weapons are obsolete  
virtue and fellow-feeling are exalted  
courtesy is practised by all  
the land is free of robbers and thieves

free of all injustice  
the strong oppress not the weak  
and each person gets their due

I have pity for you all  
surpassing the fondness  
parents have for their children  
in this world I serve as buddha  
curing evil with goodness  
uprooting the misery of rebirth and death  
leading all to acquire the five virtues      practice of the  
and ascend to the ease of the non-conditioned      5 Goods above

After my final nirvana  
the way of my teachings  
shall gradually vanish  
the people will be false  
they will be flatterers  
once again they will do evil  
the five burnings and pains  
in the future, will exacerbate

Therefore you must impart to one another  
the teachings and precepts  
live in accordance with the Buddha's dharma  
never transgressing it

Maitreya Bodhisattva, with palms together, addressed the Buddha,

Such are the evils and sufferings  
of the people of the world  
just so, just so

The Buddha has compassion for all  
and all shall he save

I have received the Buddha's repeated instruction  
this, I dare neither transgress nor disregard

# Thirty-Eight

*Homage to the Buddha's Light*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Ananda,**

**If you wish to see the land  
where the Buddha  
of Immeasurable, Pure and Impartial Sambodhi  
and his many bodhisattvas and arhats reside  
you must arise and face the west  
toward the place where the sun sets  
prostrate with reverence  
and acclaim aloud**

***Homage to Amitabha Buddha***

**Chinese: Namo Amitufo**

**Japanese: Namu Amida Butsu**

**Ananda immediately arose. As he faced the west with palms together, he prostrated and announced,**

**I wish to see Sukhavati  
the world of Amitabha Buddha  
I wish to pay homage and serve him  
and plant many virtuous roots**

**Between his prostrations, he suddenly witnessed Amitabha Buddha,**

**His large and broad countenance  
his elegant and dignified appearance  
like a mountain made of gold  
rising above every world**

**Moreover, he heard the Buddha Tathagatas of every world in the ten directions praise the myriad virtues of Amitabha Buddha. Their praise was unimpeded and uninterrupted. Thereupon, he addressed the Buddha,**

**This buddha's purified field...  
never has such a thing been seen  
I wish to enjoy a life in this land**



**The Blessed One proclaimed,**

**Those reborn have already drawn near                      in past lives  
to infinite buddhas  
and have already planted  
many virtuous roots**

**If you desire to be reborn in this land  
you must be of one mind  
you must take refuge in him  
and worship him**

**As this was spoken,**

**Within the palm of Amitabha  
shone forth infinite light  
upon every buddha land  
so at that moment  
all were clearly visible  
as if an arm's length away  
due to extraordinary radiance  
and supreme purity  
of Amitabha Buddha**

**Within this realm  
the Black Mountains                      Kalaparvata  
the Snow Mountains                      Himalayas  
the Diamond Mountains                      Vajraparvata  
the Iron Ring Mountains                      Cakravada (see above)  
all mountains large and small  
rivers, groves and the palaces of divinities  
of every realm were illuminated  
just as the rising sun illuminates the world**

**Even such places as the murky and dark  
chasms and creeks, the hidden and unseen  
all were revealed  
and all were of one colour                      i.e. gold**



without exception vanished  
released from all anxiety and vexation  
thereafter they were able  
to perform good deeds  
with hearts of loving-kindness  
experiencing joy and happiness

The sounds of instruments  
bells, chimes, zithers and harps  
unplayed, came naturally  
producing the five musical tones  
all heavenly and human beings of every buddha land  
scattered flowers in the void as offerings

Thereupon,  
as a consequence of the Buddha's awe-inspiring power  
the world of Sukhavati  
beyond millions of lands to the west  
appeared as if right before their eyes  
just as the pure divine eye  
perceives an object eight feet away  
thus too did they see this land  
and so too did all observe the world of men  
and Sakyamuni Tathagata  
surrounded by a multitude of bhiksus  
as he preached the dharma

# Thirty-Nine

*Maitreya Recounts*

*His Visions*



**Thereupon, the Buddha proclaimed to Ananda and Maitreya  
Bodhisattva,**

**You saw the world of Sukhavati  
its palaces and pavilions  
its springs, pools and many trees  
were they not perfectly exquisite  
purified and adorned?**

**Did you not see every divinity  
from the realm of desire  
up to the highest heaven of the realm of subtle form  
rain down a great many fragrant flowers  
upon buddha lands far and wide?**

**Ananda replied,**

**Indeed, I saw**

**The Buddha continued,**

**Did you not hear the great voice of Amitabha Buddha  
proclaim throughout every world, edifying all beings?**

**Ananda replied,**

**Indeed, I heard**

**The Buddha continued,**

**Did you not see the pure practitioners of this land  
who wander freely within the void  
their palaces accompanying them  
without obstruction, far and wide  
throughout the ten directions  
make offerings to every buddha?**

**And did you not witness  
their unceasing buddha mindfulness?**

**Again, did you all not see  
such transformations  
as multitude of birds  
dwelling in the void  
produce a great many sounds**

**Maitreya addressed the Buddha,**

**We saw them all  
exactly as the Buddha said**

**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,**

**Did you not see too  
that among the people of this land  
were the womb-born?**

**Maitreya addressed the Buddha,**

**Blessed One, I saw the people of Sukhavati  
who dwell within wombs  
just as the divinities of the Yama Heaven  
dwell within palaces**

**Moreover, I saw beings  
within lotus flowers  
sitting in the lotus position      cross-legged,  
spontaneously transformed      soles of feet facing upward**

**For what reason  
are people of this land  
womb-born and spontaneously reborn?**

# Forty

*The Borderland  
and the Citadel of Doubt*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,**

**There are sentient beings  
who cultivate spiritual virtues  
with a doubtful mind  
yet they desire  
to be reborn in this land**

**They cannot comprehend  
the Buddha's wisdom  
his inconceivable wisdom  
his indescribable wisdom  
his vast Great Vehicle wisdom  
his supreme, unequalled and unrivalled wisdom**

**In this wisdom they have doubts  
and little faith  
yet they believe  
in punishment and reward  
so they cultivate virtuous roots  
and wish to be reborn in this land**

**There are also sentient beings  
who accumulate virtuous roots  
and seek the Buddha's wisdom  
his universal wisdom  
his unequalled wisdom  
his inconceivable wisdom  
of awe-inspiring power and vastness**

**But regarding their own virtuous roots  
they cannot generate faith  
so regarding rebirth in the pure land  
their determination wavers  
for they have nothing to solely rely upon  
yet with the practice of unceasing buddha mindfulness  
formed as the root of their virtuous desire  
they can go on to attain rebirth**



Such people, although reborn in this land  
cannot approach the place of Amitayus  
they reach only so far as the borderland  
inside walls formed of the seven jewels

This is not the Buddha's doing  
but the consequence  
of their own conduct  
and their mind's orientation

There are also those  
who spontaneously acquire  
a body within a lotus flower  
in a pond of jewels  
the food and drink they enjoy  
can be compared with what is enjoyed  
in the Trayastrimsa heaven see Heaven of the Thirty-Three above

Within these walls  
they cannot leave  
their dwellings are rooted to the ground  
they cannot make them larger at will

For five hundred years  
they cannot see the Buddha  
or hear the dharma  
nor can they see the bodhisattvas, sravakas  
and nobles of the samgha

They are not illuminated in wisdom  
and their knowledge of the sutras is slim  
their hearts are closed to understanding  
and their minds experience no joy  
for this reason  
those who exist here are called the womb-born

If sentient beings with clear-seeing faith  
in the Buddha's wisdom  
his supreme wisdom

have eradicated all doubts  
have faith in their own virtuous roots  
and perform many virtuous deeds  
with mind focused and directed ahead  
they shall be spontaneously transformed and reborn  
within a flower formed of the seven jewels  
there they shall sit in the lotus position  
and in a mere instant, their bodies shall become radiant  
with wisdom and virtue  
like bodhisattvas, perfect and complete

Maitreya, you should know  
that transformative rebirth  
is the result of superior wisdom  
and that for five hundred years  
the womb-born  
do not see the three jewels  
do not know the ways of bodhisattvas  
and do not acquire the virtues of their practice  
thus they have no way of serving Amitayus Buddha

You should know that this is because  
in past lives they lacked wisdom  
and harboured doubts

# Forty-One

*No More Doubts,  
The Buddha is Seen*



Imagine the prison of a Wheel-Turning King  
formed of the seven jewels  
where rule-breaking emperors are locked inside  
with towers and elegantly adorned palaces  
jewelled canopies and beds made of gold  
ornate windows and benches adored exquisitely  
with rare and precious stones

They enjoy the same food and clothing  
as the Wheel-Turning King  
but golden manacles bind their feet  
...could these lesser kings be happy there?

Maitreya addressed the Buddha,

Blessed One, they cannot be!  
throughout the time they are imprisoned and constrained  
their minds are not at ease

In vain, they devise many skilful means  
seeking their escape  
they seek out their closest servants  
but alas, there is nothing they can do  
only when the Wheel-Turning King is happy  
can they be set free

The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,

There are sentient beings like this too  
sinking into doubt and remorse  
they seek the Buddha's wisdom  
his supremely vast and great wisdom  
but they have no faith in their own virtuous roots  
yet when they hear the Buddha's name  
faith grows in their heart  
they are reborn in this land  
within a lotus flower  
from which they do not emerge

To be a lotus-womb dweller  
is like being in a garden or palace  
...why is this so?

On the inside all is purified  
devoid of all impurity and evil  
yet they remain there for five hundred years  
they cannot see the three jewels  
they cannot make offerings to buddhas  
they cannot serve them  
they are detached from all extraordinary, virtuous roots  
for this reason they suffer and experience no happiness

If these beings recognise  
the root source of their misdeeds  
if they practise deep self-reflection  
and seek to depart from this place  
only then can they leave  
when retribution for past errors  
has come to an end

Thereupon, they go instantly  
to the place of Amitayus  
and hear the dharma  
gradually they see the light  
and feel great joy  
able to make universal offerings  
to innumerable buddhas  
and cultivate spiritual virtues

Maiteya, you should know  
that to have doubts about bodhisattvas  
is to cause great harm  
and forfeit a great blessing  
therefore, you must have clear-seeing faith  
in the supreme wisdom of buddhas



**thus they remain upon samsara's wheel  
in a state of unease**

**Behold the witless and benighted  
who do not plant virtuous roots  
using worldly knowledge and clever words  
their hearts are led further astray  
how can they possibly escape  
the great hardship of death and rebirth**

**Moreover, there are beings  
who plant virtuous roots  
and cultivate great fields of merit  
yet they cling to form and conceptual thinking  
sentimental attachments, deep-rooted, weigh them down  
they seek escape, but in the end, it is unattainable**

**If those with wisdom without form  
plant many virtuous roots  
purify body and mind  
abandon all conceptions  
seek birth in a purified field  
and hasten toward buddhahood  
they shall be reborn in this buddha land  
liberated for all eternity**

# Forty-Two

*The Rebirth  
of Bodhisattvas*







the buddha land of the Lion  
the buddha land of Transcending Impurity  
the buddha land of Highest Virtue  
the buddha land of the Benevolent King  
the buddha land of the Flower Canopy  
the non-retrogressing bodhisattvas who shall be reborn  
in some cases  
number from one to ten trillion  
in some cases  
number from one hundred to a thousand trillion  
and even as much as ten thousand trillion

The twelfth buddha land is named Supreme Flower  
it possesses a countless number of bodhisattvas  
who have reached the stage of non-retrogression

Wise and courageous  
they have already made offerings  
to innumerable buddhas  
with great effort  
they set forth intently  
upon the path of the one vehicle  
within the span of seven days  
they can acquire the firm and secure dharma  
cultivated by great beings  
for hundreds, thousands and millions of aeons  
all bodhisattvas of this type shall be reborn

The thirteenth buddha land is called No Fear  
possessing seventy-nine million great bodhisattvas  
and an immeasurable number  
of lesser bodhisattvas, bhiksus and so on  
all of them shall be reborn

Of the buddhas and bodhisattvas  
in the worlds of the ten directions  
who shall be reborn  
one could spend an entire aeon  
merely stating their names  
and not get through them all

# Forty-Three

*This is Not the Lesser Vehicle*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,**

**Behold these many great bodhisattvas  
skilled at acquiring blessings**

**If there are good sons and good daughters  
who, upon hearing the name of Amitabha Buddha  
develop a loving mind with a single thought  
take refuge in him, pay him homage  
and practise in accordance with what has been taught  
you should know that these people  
because they have acquired the great benefit  
shall obtain the virtues I have spoken of**

**In their hearts they do not feel inferior  
nor do they hold themselves in high regard**

**The virtuous roots they have acquired  
are fully grown and developed**

**You should know that these people  
are not of the lesser vehicle**

**Within my dharma  
they have earned the reputation  
of being my number one disciples**

**For this reason, I tell you  
that the universe's divinities, humans and demigods  
must joyfully practise  
with a heart of wonder  
within this dharma  
they must develop the aspiration  
to lead innumerable sentient beings  
to swiftly and securely attain  
the state of non-retrogression  
as well as the desire to see**

**this vast and adorned buddha field  
its extraordinary power of assimilation  
its perfected spiritual virtues  
they must exert great effort  
and heed this dharma gateway**                      i.e. method

**In order to seek this dharma  
they must not develop  
a submissive, yielding heart  
of falseness and flattery  
even if they were to pass through a great inferno  
they must not succumb to doubt and regret  
...why is this so?**

**These countless numbers of bodhisattvas  
who seek this subtle dharma gate  
they listen with respect  
they never transgress  
yet there are many bodhisattvas  
who wish to hear this dharma but cannot                      see Chapter 44  
for this reason, you must seek it**

# Forty-Four

*The Prophecy  
of Sambodhi*



If, in the coming world  
up to the moment the true dharma disappears  
there are beings who plant many virtuous roots  
and make offerings to countless buddhas  
it shall be a consequence  
of the awe-inspiring power of the Thus Come One  
that they can acquire a dharma method so vast

Adopting it and holding it fast  
obtaining extensive knowledge of all knowledge  
feeling great determination and joy toward this dharma  
preaching widely for others' sake  
always cheerful in conduct

Good sons and good daughters  
if they have already sought  
are presently seeking  
or in the future shall seek this dharma  
then they shall obtain its blessings

You must be unshakeable, free from doubts  
plant many virtuous roots  
always cultivating  
unobstructed by misgivings  
never setting foot within  
prisons formed of precious jewels

Maitreya, beings with great awe-inspiring powers  
are capable of practising  
this vast and unique gateway  
of the Buddha dharma  
yet because they have not heard it  
there are ten million bodhisattvas  
now turning back  
from complete and perfect sambodhi

Maitreya, beings with great awe-inspiring powers

are capable of practising  
the vast and diverse gateways  
of the Buddha dharma  
yet because they have not heard of this method  
there are ten million bodhisattvas  
now turning away  
from complete and perfect sambodhi

If there are sentient beings  
who in light of this teaching  
transcribe it and pay it homage  
hold it fast and recite it aloud  
if for but a moment  
they preach for others' sake  
encouraging them to listen  
that they may no longer give rise  
to anxiety and vexation  
and even begin to contemplate  
this land, day and night  
and the spiritual virtues of the Buddha  
upon the supreme path  
all the way to the end  
never regressing  
then, these people  
when they reach the end of their lives  
would be able  
even if the trichiliocosm were engulfed in flames  
to pass through it and be reborn in this land

They have already  
come face to face with past buddhas  
they have received the prophecy of sambodhi  
and the unanimous praise of every tathagata

Thus you must devote yourself  
to faith and acceptance  
hold fast and recite  
preach and practise



# Forty-Five

*A Teaching Imparted for a  
Special Reason*



Today, for the sake of the multitude of sentient beings  
I discoursed upon this dharma  
causing all to see Amitayus Buddha  
and all that his land possesses

That which must be done  
can be sought by everyone

After my extinction  
you must not succumb again to doubt

In the world yet to come  
the way shall vanish

With loving-kindness and compassion  
I specifically leave you this teaching  
for one hundred years

Sentient beings who encounter this teaching  
in accordance with their wishes  
may all attain salvation

The Thus Come One  
appearing in this world  
such a thing  
is rarely encountered  
and rarely seen

The way of all buddhas  
such a thing  
is difficult to acquire  
and difficult to hear

To meet a good friend  
to hear the dharma  
and be able to practise it  
these are difficult too

**For one who hears this teaching  
to have joyous faith in it  
and to hold fast to it  
is the most difficult of all difficulties  
nothing surpasses it**

**There are sentient beings  
who, when they hear the sound of the Buddha  
develop a purified heart of loving-kindness  
they become so overjoyed their hairs stand on end  
some even shed tears  
all because in past lives  
they followed the Buddha's path  
thus they are beyond the ordinary**

**Some hear the Buddha's name  
but in their hearts they are hesitant  
they have no faith in the Buddha's teachings  
they have come from evil paths  
not yet through with misfortune  
incurred in former lives  
they shall not be saved  
because they doubt  
because they have no faith  
because they have turned their backs**

# Forty-Six

*Devoted Practice,  
Firmly Grasped*



**The Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya,**

**The supreme dharma of every Buddha Tathagata  
possessing the ten powers and fearlessness  
without obstruction, without attachment  
is a dharma so profound  
the dharma of a bodhisattva's perfections  
such a thing is rarely encountered  
even those capable of preaching the dharma  
struggle to explain it**

see Chapter 4

**Deep and unshakeable faith is now rarely encountered**

**Today I have proclaimed the truth  
about this vast and subtle dharma gateway  
praised by every buddha  
I entrust you to serve as its protector  
to aid sentient beings through the long night  
never allowing them to sink into the five destinies  
where one encounters great peril and pain**

**You must zealously practise  
in accordance with my teachings  
loyal and obedient to the Buddha  
always mindful of the master's kindness**

**You must help this dharma long endure  
without disappearing  
you must uphold it, never harming it  
or letting it fall to ruin  
you must not falsify it, add to it or subtract from it  
by always being mindful  
acquire the shortcut of the path**

**Thus is my dharma and thus have I spoken  
the practice of tathagatas  
this you must follow  
cultivate merit and do good  
seek rebirth in the Pure Land**

# Forty-Seven

*With Merit and Wisdom,  
the Dharma Can Be Heard*



**Thereupon, the Buddha delivered these verses,**

**If no prior merit and wisdom has been cultivated  
then this true dharma cannot be heard  
if offerings have been made to tathagatas  
then joyous faith can be had in this dharma**

**With the evils of arrogance  
indolence and heterodox views  
faith in the Tathagata's subtle dharma  
is impossible**

**It is impossible for a blind man  
eternally in darkness  
to guide others upon the path**

**Only by developing a multitude of virtues  
side-by-side with the Buddha  
can one practise the world-saving way**

**After you have heard this teaching  
hold fast to it and transcribe it  
recite it and sing its praises  
demonstrate it through your conduct  
and make offerings to buddhas**

**Thus, with single-minded pursuit  
of a land that is pure  
and determination to attain rebirth in Sukhavati  
even if an inferno were to engulf the entire trichilocosm  
borne along by the Buddha's awe-inspiring power  
one can pass beyond it**

**Only buddhas can comprehend  
the Thus Come One's vast and deep ocean of wisdom  
were a sravaka to meditate upon it for a million aeons  
exhausting all their supernatural power in the process**

still they could not fathom it

Only buddhas can comprehend  
the spiritual virtues of the Thus Come One  
and only the Blessed One can explain it

A human body is hard to obtain  
and a buddha is rarely encountered  
to listen to the dharma and acquire faith and wisdom  
this is the most difficult of all difficulties

Such beings shall become buddhas  
in conduct they shall surpass Samantabhadra  
and set foot upon the other shore  
thus the erudite and intellectual ought have faith  
that what I teach here is true

Now that you have had the fortune to hear  
a dharma so subtle and wondrous  
you must always practise buddha mindfulness  
and thus give birth to joyfulness  
you must hold fast to it  
and rescue far and wide  
those drifting within the cycle  
of rebirth and death



# Forty-Eight

*Blessings Gained From Hearing  
the Dharma*



After the Blessed One proclaimed this dharma, twelve hundred trillion sentient beings, of the heavenly and human worlds, were cleansed of all dust and impurity, and acquired the purity of the dharma eye.

Two trillion beings were rewarded with non-returner status.

Six thousand eight hundred bhiksus were cleansed of all defilements, acquiring liberation of mind.

Four trillion bodhisattvas, upon the path to supreme bodhi, remained firmly in the state of non-retrogression, self-adorned with the virtues of the Universal Vows.

Two trillion five hundred billion sentient beings acquired non-retrogressing forbearance.

Four hundred thousand trillion sentient beings, for the very first time, set their minds on supreme bodhi. By planting many virtuous roots, and aspiring to be reborn in Sukhavati, where Amitabha Buddha can be seen, all were guaranteed rebirth in the land of the Thus Come One. Every one of them, no matter where they came from, shall in turn become buddhas and share the title of Wondrous Sound Tathagata.

Moreover, from each buddha field in the ten directions, there were eight hundred thousand trillion people guaranteed rebirth in the present or a future life, who saw Amitabha Buddha, who acquired the prophecy of sambodhi, who attained acceptance of the dharma and who ultimately achieved supreme bodhi.

This was all a result of Amitabha Buddha's prior vow, to help all sentient beings attain rebirth in the land of Sukhavati.

Thereupon, the entire trichiliocosm experienced six great tremors and a myriad of extraordinary and miraculous transformations. A great light shone upon all in the ten directions.

**Moreover, from every divinity in the void came exquisite melodies and sounds of rejoicing. This was heard, even by the divinities of the realm of subtle form. They praised this miraculous event.**

**A stream of countless wondrous flowers fell from the sky.**

**The Venerable Ananda, Maitreya Bodhisattva, as well as every bodhisattva, sravaka and the eight legions of devas and nagas—everyone in attendance heard the Buddha's dharma and experienced tremendous joy. They faithfully accepted it and reverently upheld it.**

**END**