

Dear readers of this amazing sutra, which exists in the world as an actual manifestation of the buddhas' compassion for us,

The first half is a translation from the Tibetan; the second half is a translation from the Sanskrit. May this bring you the blessings of all the holy texts in both languages!

The indented parts appear as verses in the original Sanskrit and Tibetan. Although the verses have not been made beautiful in the English translations as they are in the original, please read them with the understanding that these are all four-line verses, which the sutra refers to many times.

May the kindness of the Buddha, as embodied within this wondrous sutra, fill the hearts of all beings and turn them all to virtue. Just as this Sanghata-sutra has existed for many centuries until now in the world only to benefit, may the Buddhadharma remain for eons more, to bring comfort and aid to all.

Please note that this translation is an incomplete work-in-progress that has been released due to repeated requests for a translation for English speakers to recite. The final version is scheduled for completion by the end of 2005. Please check www.sanghatasutra.net to download that translation.

Visit www.sanghatasutra.net to learn more about this sutra, read about others' experiences with this text, join a discussion forum about the *Sanghata*, and for a guide to reciting and to reading this text.

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The Noble Mahayana Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya

In the language of India:

Ārya Saṅghāṭa-sūtra dharmma-paryāya

In the language of Tibet:

འཕགས་པ་རྒྱུད་གི་མདོའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

phag pa zung gi do'i chö kyi nam drang

Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus I have heard at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in Rajagriha, on Vulture's Peak, together with a great assembly of 32,000 monks, including the venerable Ajñanakaundinya, the venerable Maha Maudgalyayana, the venerable Shariputra, the venerable Mahakashyapa, the venerable Rahula, the venerable Bakkula, the venerable Bhadrakapa, the venerable Bhadrashri, the venerable Chandanashri, the venerable Jangula, the venerable Subhuti, the venerable Revata, the venerable Nandasena, the venerable Ananda, and so forth; and together with 62,000 bodhisattvas, including the bodhisattva, the great being Maitreya, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura, the bodhisattva, the great being Kumarashri, the bodhisattva, the great being Kumaravasin, the bodhisattva, the great being Kumarabhadra, the bodhisattva, the great being Anuna, the bodhisattva, the great being Manjushri, the bodhisattva, the great being Samantabhadra, the bodhisattva, the great being Sudarshana, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, the bodhisattva, the great being Vajrasena, and so forth; and together with 12,000 sons of gods, including the divine son Arjuna, the divine son Bhadra, the divine son Subhadra, the divine son Dharmaruci, the divine son Chandanagarbha, the divine son Chandanavasin, the divine son Chandana, and so forth; and together with 8,000 daughters of gods, including the divine daughter Mrdamgini, the divine daughter Prasadavati, the divine daughter Mahatmasamprayukta, the divine daughter Glorious Eye, the divine daughter Prajapativasini, the divine daughter Balini, the divine daughter Glorious Wealth, the

divine daughter Subahuyukta, and so forth; and together with 8,000 naga kings, including the naga king Apalala, the naga king Elapatra, the naga king Timimgila, the naga king Kumbhasara, the naga king Kumbhashirsha, the naga king Causing Virtue, the naga king Sunanda, the naga king Sushakha, the naga king Gavashirsha, and so forth.

All of them proceeded to the place where Rajagriha was, where Vulture's Peak was, and where the Blessed One was. Having reached there, they prostrated with their heads at the feet of the Blessed One, circumambulated the Blessed One three times, and then they all sat down in front of the Blessed One. The Blessed One assented to their presence by remaining silent. Then the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura arose. Placing his upper robe over one shoulder, setting his right knee on the ground, and placing his palms together in the direction of the Blessed One, he bowed respectfully and addressed the Blessed One as follows: "Blessed One, a million gods, a million children of gods, many millions of bodhisattvas have gathered. Blessed One, many millions of shravakas have gathered, and naga kings too have gathered, and are seated for the purpose of listening to the Dharma. That being so, may the Tathagata, the Arhat, the fully enlightened Buddha please explain that sort of introductory teaching by which, as soon as they hear it, old sentient beings immediately purify all their karmic obstacles and by which young sentient beings make great effort at virtuous Dharma and thereby attain superiority, and their virtuous actions do not degenerate, do not at all degenerate, and will not degenerate."

He said this, and the Blessed One spoke thus to the bodhisattva, the great being, Sarvashura: "Sarvashura, that you thought to ask the Tathagata about this topic is good, very good. Therefore, Sarvashura, listen attentively and keep in mind, and I will tell you."

Having said to the Blessed One, "It will be as you say," the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura listened in front of the Blessed One.

The Blessed One spoke thus to him: "Sarvashura, there is a dharma-paryaya called Sanghata that is active on this planet earth. If anybody hears this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, their five uninterrupted karmas will be purified, and they will never turn away from the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. Sarvashura, if you think about this and wonder why it is so, and you think that that those who hear this Sanghata-sutra will produce as much a mass of merit as is accumulated by one tathagata, you should not see it like that."

Sarvashura says: "Well, then, how should it be seen?"

The Blessed One speaks: "Sarvashura, they will produce as much a mass of merit as is accumulated by the number of bodhisattvas, great beings, equal to the mass of merit accumulated by as many tathagatas, arhats, fully enlightened buddhas as the number of grains of sands in the Ganges River. Sarvashura, those who hear this Sanghata dharma-paryaya will never turn back. They will see the Tathagata. They will never be separated from seeing the Tathagata. They will be completely enlightened in the unsurpassed, perfectly completed awakening. The virtuous Dharmas that all of them will achieve will not be overcome by the evil Maras. Sarvashura, all those who hear this Sanghata dharma-paryaya will understand birth and cessation."

Then, at that moment, all those bodhisattvas arose, placed their upper robe over one shoulder, set the right knee on the ground, and asked of the Blessed One: "Blessed One, how much is the mass of merit of one tathagata?"

The Blessed One spoke as follows: "Sons of the lineage, listen to the measure of the mass of merit of one buddha. It is as follows: To make an analogy, as many drops of water as there are in the great ocean, and particles of dust on the planet, and grains of sand in the Ganges River, that is equal to the mass of merit of a bodhisattva abiding on the tenth level. The mass of merit of a buddha is much greater than that. As for those sentient beings who hear this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, the mass of merit they will produce is much greater even than that. It is not possible to realize the limit of that mass of merit by counting. Sarvashura, at that time, at that moment, those who are greatly inspired upon hearing these words will produce an immeasurable mass of merit."

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said this to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, who are those sentient beings who thirst tremendously for the Dharma?"

After he said this, the Blessed One spoke as follows to the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura: “Sarvashura, those sentient beings who thirst tremendously are two. What are those two? Sarvashura, they are as follows: One has an equal mind toward all sentient beings. The second, Sarvashura, having heard the Dharma, shows it perfectly to all sentient beings equally.”

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: “Blessed One, who having heard the Dharma shows it perfectly to all sentient beings equally?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, one who has heard the Dharma dedicates him- or herself to awakening. Whenever one has dedicated him- or herself to awakening, for the sake of sentient beings one thirsts for Dharma. Sarvashura, the second is anyone who enters into the Mahayana; that one is also always thirsty for the Dharma.”

Then the millions of gods, nagas, humans, and daughters of gods arose and, placing their palms together in the direction of the Blessed One, addressed the Blessed One: “Blessed One, we too are thirsty for the Dharma, and that being so, may the Blessed One completely fulfill the wishes of us and of all sentient beings.”

At that time, at that moment, the Blessed One showed a smile.

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura arose and bowed down, placing his palms together toward the Blessed One. He addressed the Blessed One as follows: “Blessed One, what is the cause of your smile, what is the condition?”

Then the Blessed One spoke to the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura: “Sarvashura, those sentient beings who came here will be completely enlightened in the unsurpassed, perfectly completed awakening. They will all fully accomplish the experiences of the tathagatas.”

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: “Blessed One, by what cause, by what condition will the sentient beings who came here be completely enlightened in the unsurpassed, perfectly completed awakening?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, it is good, very good that you ask the Tathagata about this topic. Therefore, Sarvashura, listen to the attributes of dedication:

“Sarvashura, at a time long past, countless eons ago, a tathagata, an arhat, a fully enlightened buddha named Ratnashri, endowed with knowledge and good conduct, gone to bliss, a knower of the world, unsurpassed helmsman of beings to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, a buddha, a blessed one, arose in the world.

“Sarvashura, at that time, at that moment, I was a brahmin youth. All those sentient beings whom I was leading to the gnosis of a buddha were at that time wild animals. At that time, at that moment, I made this prayer: ‘Any wild animal who is now tormented by suffering, may they all be reborn in my buddha-field. May they all also be led by me to the gnosis of a buddha.’ And all those wild animals, having heard those words, assenting, said, ‘May it be so.’

“Sarvashura, therefore, by this root of merit these sentient beings have come to be like this. They will be completely enlightened in the unsurpassed, perfectly completed awakening.”

Thereupon, after hearing this greatly joyful thing from the Buddha, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said the following to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what lifespan is possible for those sentient beings?”

The Blessed One spoke: “A lifespan of 80,000 eons is possible for those sentient beings.”

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: “Blessed One, how much is the measure of an eon?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Child of the lineage, listen. It is as follows. To make an analogy, a man might erect an enclosure some twelve yojanas in circumference and three yojanas in height, and that enclosure is completely filled with nothing but sesame seeds. Then, when one hundred years have passed, that man casts away a single sesame seed from that enclosure that is completely filled with sesame seeds. In such a manner, even when that man has used up all those sesame seeds, and even the foundation and base of that enclosure no longer exist, still an eon would not have been used up.

“Moreover, Sarvashura, it is as follows. To make an analogy, there might be a mountain fifty yojanas in depth and some twelve yojanas in height. Then a man erects a house on the side of that mountain, and for a long time, whenever one hundred years have passed, that man wipes it one time with a silken cloth. Having done that, although the mountain would be used up, an eon would not have been used up.

“Sarvashura, such is the length of time of an eon.”

Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura arose and addressed the Blessed One: “Blessed One, if even one dedication produces a large mass of merit such that it can bring about a happy lifespan of eighty eons, what need could there be to mention someone who greatly reveres the teachings of the Tathagata?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Listen, child of the lineage. If anyone who hears the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya is able to live a lifespan of 84,000 eons, what need is there to mention one who has the Sanghata-sutra written out and who reads it? Sarvashura, that one will produce an extremely large mass of merit.

“Sarvashura, anyone who makes heartfelt prostrations to the Sanghata-sutra with a mind of faith will remember their past lives for ninety-nine eons. That person will become a wheel-turning king for sixty eons. Even in that lifetime, everyone will like that person. Sarvashura, that person’s death will not be brought about by weapons. That person’s death will not be brought about by poison. That person will not be harmed by black magic. At the time of death, too, that person will see ninety-nine million buddhas directly, and, Sarvashura, those buddhas, those blessed ones, will say to that person: ‘Holy being, because the great Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya, explained in detail, has been heard by you, therefore, this mass of merit has arisen.’ And those ninety-nine million buddhas, the blessed ones, will also predict the place of enlightenment.

“Sarvashura, what need is there to mention whoever hears this great Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya to the end, completely and extensively? Therefore, they will comfort that person, saying, ‘Do not fear.’”

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said this to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, I too will listen to the great Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya; what mass of merit will I then produce, Blessed One?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, those sentient beings too will produce a mass of merit as much as the merit of the number of buddhas, tathagatas, equaling the number of grains of sand in the Ganges River.”

He said: “Blessed One, when I listen to the great Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya, I can’t get enough of it.”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, it is good, very good, that you are unable to get enough of the Dharma teachings. Sarvashura, I too am unable to get enough of the Dharma teachings. Therefore, Sarvashura, what need is there to mention that ordinary beings do not get enough? Sarvashura, a son or daughter of the lineage, anyone who generates faith in the Mahayana, will not go to wrong destinies for a thousand eons; will not become an animal for 5,000 eons; will not be evil-minded for 12,000 eons; will not be born in a remote province for 18,000 eons; will be a major sponsor of the Dharma for 20,000 eons; will be born in the world of gods for 25,000 eons; will be celibate for 35,000 eons; will renounce the householder’s way of life for 40,000 eons; will uphold the Dharma for 50,000 eons; and will meditate on the recollection of former lives for 65,000 eons.

“Sarvashura, not even the slightest negative karma will occur to that son or daughter of the lineage. The evil maras will not find an opportunity to harm them. They will never be reborn in the womb of a mother. Sarvashura, anyone who hears this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, no matter where they are born, for ninety-five countless eons they will not fall into a wrong rebirth. For 8,000 eons they will uphold what they have heard. For 1,000 eons they will abandon killing. For 99,000 eons they will abandon telling lies. For 13,000 eons they will abandon slander.

“Sarvashura, sentient beings who have heard this dharma-paryaya are difficult to find.”

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura arose, placed his upper robe over one shoulder, set his right knee on the ground, placed his palms together in the direction of the Blessed One, and addressed the Blessed One as follows: “Blessed One, whoever abandons this dharma-paryaya, how large will be the mass of negative karma they produce?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, it is much.”

He said: “Blessed One, how large will be the mass of negative karma that these sentient beings produce?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, be quiet. Be quiet. Do not ask me about all the masses of negative karma. Sarvashura, compared to generating ill will toward as many tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas as there are grains of sand in twelve Ganges Rivers, those who are contemptuous of the Sanghata-sutra will produce a far greater mass of nonvirtue. Sarvashura, those who generate ill will toward the Mahayana also will produce a far greater mass of nonvirtue than that. Sarvashura, those sentient beings are burnt. They are just burnt.”

Sarvashura asked: “Blessed One, are these sentient beings unable to become liberated?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, that is so. They are unable to be liberated.”

“Sarvashura, it is as follows. To make an analogy, were some man’s head to be cut off, if someone were to apply to their head, as a poultice, either honey or sugar or molasses or butter or any medicinal poultice, what do you think about this, Sarvashura? Would this person be able to rise up again?”

Sarvashura said: “Blessed One, this cannot be.”

The Blessed One spoke: “Moreover, Sarvashura, there will also be another man. If he were to strike another sentient being one blow with a sharp weapon, although by that he would be unable to kill him, Sarvashura, there would occur a wound. If medicine were applied, his wound would heal. At the time when he has revived, recalling the suffering, that man would think, ‘Now I understand, and so at no time will I create sin, negative karma.’ As one who reflects in this way, Sarvashura, when that man recalls the suffering, he completely abandons sin. At that time, he will realize all the Dharmas. Having realized all Dharmas, at that time, he will bring to completion all the virtuous Dharmas.

“Sarvashura, it is as follows: To make an analogy, the parents of some man who died grieve and lament, but nevertheless they have no ability to protect him. In the same way, Sarvashura, ordinary individuals are unable to help themselves or others. Like the parents whose hopes have been cut off, these sentient beings too at the time of death will have their hopes cut off.

“Sarvashura, there are two sentient beings whose hopes are cut off. Which are the two? They are as follows. One is a sentient being who does evil or has it done. The other is one who abandons the holy Dharma. These two sentient beings, at the time of death, have their hopes cut off.”

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: “Blessed One, what is the rebirth of these sentient beings? What is their life afterward?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, limitless are the rebirths of sentient beings who are contemptuous of the Dharma. Limitless are their future lives. Sarvashura, sentient beings who abandon the Dharma will experience sensations for an eon in the sentient beings’ great hell of Sobbing; for an eon in the Crushing Hell, an eon in the Hot Hell, an eon in the Extremely Hot Hell, an eon in the sentient beings’ great hell of Black Lines, an eon in the sentient beings’ great hell Avici, an eon in the sentient beings’ great hell called Hair Rising, an eon in the sentient beings’ great hell called ‘Kyi Hu,’ and, Sarvashura, they will have to experience the sufferings of these eight sentient beings’ great hells for eight eons.”

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said the following: “Blessed One, it is suffering. One Gone to Bliss, it is suffering. It is not joyful to hear.”

Then, at that time, the Blessed One spoke these verses:

“How beings in the beings’ hell
experience such sufferings,
Greatly fearsome words like these
You find joyless just to hear.

Who does virtuous actions
That will become bliss.
Who does negative actions

That becomes only suffering.

Who knows not happiness's cause,
Being born, will suffer evermore
Torment of death and bound to grief.
Who recalls the Buddha as supreme,
These wise ones are happy.

Also, who has faith in the Great Vehicle
Will not go to lower rebirth.
Sarvashura, in this way, urged by previous karma,
Having done even a small action,
Limitless results will be enjoyed.
In the buddha-field, the supreme field,
if one plants a seed, great will be the results.
Just as from planting a few seeds,
many results are enjoyed,
so those who take joy in the Conqueror's teachings,
those skilled ones will be happy.
Negativities they will abandon,
And virtue too will greatly do.
As an offering to my teachings,
whoever offers even a mere hair
will for eighty thousand eons
have great possessions and much wealth, too;
Wherever they are born,
they will always be generous.
In that way the Buddha, a deep place of giving,
has great results.

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said this to the Blessed One: "How is the Dharma that is taught by the Blessed One to be had? Blessed One, after hearing the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya, how are the roots of virtue to be firmly held?"

The Blessed One spoke: "Sarvashura, the mass of merit of one who listens to this Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya should be known as the same as someone who worships as many tathagatas, arhats, fully enlightened buddhas as the number of grains of sand in twelve Ganges Rivers, providing them with everything required for their happiness."

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura says "Blessed One, how are the roots of virtue to be thoroughly completed?"

He asked this, and the Blessed One spoke to the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura as follows: "These roots of virtue are to be understood to be equal to a tathagata."

"Those roots of virtue which are to be equal to a tathagata, what are they?"

The Blessed One spoke: "The expounder of the Dharma is to be understood to be equal to a tathagata."

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: "Blessed One, who is an expounder of the Dharma?"

"Whoever recites the Sanghata-sutra, that one is an expounder of the Dharma."

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: "If even those who hear the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya will produce such a mass of merit, what need is there to mention those who write it down and read it. How much a mass of merit will they produce?"

The Blessed One spoke as follows: "Sarvashura, listen. It is as follows: To make an analogy, in each of the four directions, as many tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas as the number of grains of sand in twelve Ganges Rivers remain for twelve eons and teach the Dharma, yet even if they should

express the mass of merit of the one writing the Sanghata-sutra, they would not be able to realize its end nor express it in words. If even as many buddhas, blessed ones, as the number of grains of sand in forty-eight Ganges Rivers are unable to express the mass of merit of the one writing it, what need is there to mention that whoever writes or reflects on or recites it will become a treasury of the Dharma?"

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: "How much will be the mass of merit of the one who recites it?"

Then, at that time, the Blessed One spoke these verses:

As for the virtues of one who has read
merely just a four-line verse,
Conquerors as many as the grains of sand
found in eighty-four Ganges,
though expressing without pause the merits
that the one who read it has,
will not exhaust that merit.
The Dharma taught by the buddhas
is hard to find, and endless.

And also at the time, at that moment, 84,000 ten billions of millions of gods made homage by putting their palms together in the direction in which the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya was taught and said this to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, for whatever purpose the Blessed One placed such a Dharma treasury as this on this planet earth, it is good, very good."

Further, 18,000 ten billions of millions of Jain ascetics arrived at the place where the Blessed One was and said this to the Blessed One: "O Ascetic Gautama, may you be victorious!"

The Blessed One spoke: "The Tathagata is always victorious. O extremist nudists, how could you extremists be victorious?"

They said: "Be victorious. Ascetic Gautama, be victorious."

The Blessed One spoke: "I do not see a victor amongst you.

If you abide wrongly,
How are you to be victors?
You naked ones, listen, and
I will express something beneficial for you.
The mind of a child has nothing pleasant.
How are you to be victorious?
Therefore, by the buddha-eye, to whomever it is to be taught
I will teach also the profound path.

Then those Jain ascetics, out of anger at the Blessed One, generated a disbelieving mind. At that time, at that moment, the lord of the gods, Indra, swung his thunderbolt, and the 18,000 millions of Jain ascetics, having become terrified, were in despair on account of the great suffering and sobbed with tears flowing. And the Blessed One also made his body disappear. Then the Jain ascetics sobbed with tear-filled faces and, not seeing the Blessed One, said these verses:

Now there is no one to shelter us,
Neither father nor mother.
We see it as a wilderness:
No empty house, no place to stay.
Here too no water is
Nor any tree nor any bird.
Here no being is seen.
Without a protector, suffering is felt.

Not seeing the Tathagata,
Inexhausted, great suffering is experienced.

Then at that time, too, the 18,000 millions of Jain ascetics rose, knelt with both feet on the ground, and raising their voices, sung out:

Tathagata, compassionate one,
Completed Buddha, supreme among humans,
Do benefit to us.
Please be a refuge to despairing beings.

Then the Blessed One showed a smile, and spoke to the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura: “Sarvashura, go and teach the Dharma to the extremist naked ones.”

Having spoken thus, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said the following to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, if the Black Mountain demolishes its rock paying homage with its peak to Mount Sumeru, the king of mountains, how am I to teach the Dharma while the Tathagata is present?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Be quiet. Child of the lineage, by any of the skillful means of the buddhas, Sarvashura, go, look in the universes in the ten directions, and look where the tathagatas are appearing and where the seats are set up, and, Sarvashura, I myself will teach the Dharma to the others, the extremist naked ones.”

The bodhisattva Sarvashura said: “Blessed One, by means of my own magic or rather by the magic of the tathagatas, by the power of whose magic shall I go?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, go by the blessing of the strength of your own miraculous power. Sarvashura, return by the Tathagata’s miraculous power.”

Then the bodhisattva Sarvashura arose, circumambulated the Blessed One, and right there, became invisible. Then the Blessed One taught the Dharma to the others, those extremist naked ones: “Friends, birth is suffering. Even birth itself is suffering. Having been born, there occur many fears of suffering. Having been born, fears of sickness occur. From sickness, the fear of aging occurs. From aging, the fear of death occurs.”

“Blessed One, saying, ‘From birth, the fear of being born will be born,’ what is that?”

“Having been born as a human, many fears occur. Fear of the king arises. Fear of thieves occurs. Fear of fire occurs. Fear of poison occurs. Fear of water occurs. Fear of wind occurs. Fear of whirlpools occurs. Fear of the actions one has done occurs.”

The Blessed One taught the Dharma in many such aspects as the topic of birth, and at that time, at that moment, the others, those extremist naked ones, were utterly terrified and said: “From now on, we do not ever wish birth.”

When the Blessed One explained this Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya, the others, those 18 million extremist naked ones, completed the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. From his own retinue as well, 18,000 bodhisattvas were abiding on the tenth ground, and they all manifested magical emanations as well, such as the following: Some displayed the form of a horse, the form of an elephant, the form of a tiger, the form of a garuda, the form of Mount Sumeru and forms like a swastika, and some the form of a tree. They all sat cross-legged on lotus thrones as well.

Nine thousand million bodhisattvas sat down to the right of the Blessed One. Nine thousand million bodhisattvas sat down to the left of the Blessed One, and the Blessed One remained in meditative equipoise the entire time, and he appeared to teach the Dharma by skillful means. On the seventh day, the Blessed One stretches out the palm of his hand, and knows that the bodhisattva, the great being, Sarvashura is coming there from the Unsurpassed Lotus universe.

When the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura was going various places by the blessing of the strength of his own miraculous power, it took seven days to go to that Padmottara (Unsurpassed Lotus) universe.

When the Blessed One stretched out his hand, at that time the bodhisattva Sarvashura was in the presence of the Blessed One. After circumambulating the Blessed One three times, his mind becoming inspired with trust in the Blessed One, he placed his palms together in homage in the direction where the Blessed One was and said this to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, since I went to all the universes of the ten directions, Blessed One, by one of my miraculous powers I saw 99,000 millions of buddha-fields, and by two of my miraculous powers, I saw a thousand million blessed ones, and on the seventh day, having gone to the Unsurpassed Lotus universe, on the way, I also saw hundreds of thousands of millions of unshakable buddha-fields.

“Blessed One, then the buddhas, the blessed ones, display magical emanations, and in 92,000 millions of buddha-fields blessed ones teach the Dharma. And on that very day, I saw in 80,000 millions of buddha-fields 80,000 million tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas arising in the world. After making prostrations to all those blessed ones, I went forward.

“Blessed One, on that very day, I passed 39,000 million buddha-fields, and in those 39,000 million buddha-fields, 39,000 million bodhisattvas arose, and on that very day, they were completely enlightened in the unsurpassed, perfectly completed awakening. I circumambulated those blessed ones, tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas, three times, and I became invisible by means of miraculous power.

“Blessed One, I also saw buddhas, blessed ones, in 60 million buddha-fields. Blessed One, I made prostrations to the buddha-fields and to the buddhas, the blessed ones, and continued on.

“Blessed One, I saw in another eight million buddha-fields tathagatas producing the deed of passing into nirvana. After making prostrations to those blessed ones as well, I continued on.

“Moreover, Blessed One, in 95 million buddha-fields, I saw the disappearance of the holy Dharma. I became distressed and burst into tears. Moreover, I saw gods, nagas, yakshas, rakshasas, and many embodied beings of the desire realm weeping, pierced with great agonizing pains. Moreover, similarly, Blessed One, to these buddha-fields together with their oceans, with their Mount Sumerus, and with their land, which were all without exception burnt, I made prostrations, and becoming without hope, I went off.

“Blessed One, up until I came to the Padmottara universe, Blessed One, I saw also five hundreds of thousands of millions of thrones set up. In the southern direction, 100,000 million thrones were set up. In the northern direction, I saw 100,000 million thrones set up; in the eastern direction, 100,000 million thrones set up; in the western direction, 100,000 million thrones set up; in the upper direction, 100,000 million thrones set up. Blessed One, also those thrones that were set up were only made from the seven types of precious jewels. And on all these thrones, too, tathagatas sit and are teaching the Dharma. I was amazed at those blessed ones and then asked those tathagatas, ‘What is the name of this buddha-universe?’ And those blessed ones spoke, ‘Child of the lineage, this universe is named Padmottara.’

“Blessed One, then, after I had circumambulated those tathagatas, I asked: ‘What is the name of this buddha-field’s tathagata?’

“They spoke: ‘The one called Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly completed Buddha Padmagarbha (Lotus Essence) performs the activities of a buddha in this buddha-field.’

“Then I asked this of them: ‘Since there are even many hundreds of thousands of millions of buddhas, and since I have not encountered the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha Padmagarbha, which is that one?’

“That Blessed One spoke: ‘Child of the lineage, I will show you the one called Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly completed Buddha Padmagarbha.’

“Then the holy bodies of all those tathagatas disappeared, and they were only present in the forms of bodhisattvas. A lone tathagata being present, I made prostrations with my head at the holy feet of that tathagata. When I went there, a throne arose, and then I went to that throne. And, Blessed One, at that time, many thrones arose, but not seeing anyone going to those thrones, I said to that tathagata: ‘Blessed One, I do not see any sentient beings at all on those thrones.’

“That tathagata spoke: ‘Sentient beings who have not produced the root of virtue do not have the power to sit on those thrones.’

'I said: 'Blessed One, if one makes what kind of root of virtue will one go to those thrones?'

"That Blessed One spoke: 'Listen, child of the lineage. Sentient beings who have heard the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya, by that root of virtue, will sit on these thrones, and there is no need to mention those who have written or read it. Sarvashura, you have heard the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya, and therefore, you are sitting on this seat. But otherwise, how would you have entered into this buddha-field!'

"That Blessed One spoke thus, and I said the following to that Blessed One: 'Blessed One, how much is the mass of merit that one who hears the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya will produce?'

"Then the Blessed One, the Tathagata Padmagarbha, showed a smile. I inquired of that Blessed One for what purpose that Blessed One showed a smile: 'Blessed One, what is the reason and for what sort of purpose did the Tathagata show a smile?'

"That Blessed One spoke: 'Child of the lineage, bodhisattva, great being Sarvashura, one who has attained great power, listen. It is as follows: To make an analogy, someone is a wheel-turning king ruling four continents. If he plants sesame in the fields of the four continents, Sarvashura, what do you think about this? Would many seeds grow?'

Sarvashura said: "Blessed One, many. One Gone to Bliss, many."

The Blessed One spoke: "Sarvashura, a sentient being would make a single pile from the sesame grains, and some other person would take each sesame grain from that pile of sesame grains one by one and place it aside. Sarvashura, what do you think about this? Would it be possible for that sentient being to count those sesame grains or make an analogy for them?'

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: "Blessed One, he would not. One Gone to Bliss, he would not. He would be incapable of counting those sesame grains or making an analogy."

"Likewise, Sarvashura, apart from the Tathagata, no one else can make an analogy for the mass of merit of this Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya.

"Sarvashura, it is as follows: To make an analogy, even if as many tathagatas as there were sesame grains should all proclaim the merits of the roots of virtue from hearing the Sanghata dharma-paryaya, even by means of an analogy, that merit would not be exhausted. As for one who writes and recites and has it written, there is no need to mention."

The bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said: "What sort of mass of merit will be produced by writing?'

The Blessed One spoke: "Child of the lineage, listen. Someone cuts up all the grass or wood of a million world systems to the size of a mere finger, and, Sarvashura, listen to two more analogies. If as many stones or precipices or earth or particles of dust as there are in a million world systems were to become wheel-turning kings ruling four continents, would it be possible to make an analogy of their merit?'

Sarvashura said: "Blessed One, it would not. Unless one does not include tathagatas."

"Sarvashura, similarly, it is impossible to make an analogy of the mass of merit of writing the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya either. Compared to the mass of merit of that many wheel-turning kings, the mass of merit too of one who writes down just one syllable of this dharma-paryaya will produce a much greater mass of merit. Although their merit is extremely large, those wheel-turning kings are not like that. Sarvashura, likewise, a bodhisattva, a great being, who is holding the holy Dharma of the Mahayana and abides practicing cannot be outshined by a wheel-turning king. Likewise, an analogy cannot be made for the mass of merit of writing down the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya. Sarvashura, this Sanghata-sutra reveals a treasury of merit. It is a pacifier of all that is delusional. It makes the lamp of all Dharmas blaze brightly. It defeats all the evil demons. It makes the abodes of all the bodhisattvas blaze brightly. It brings about the complete accomplishment of all Dharmas."

He spoke thus, and the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said this to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, here the practice of celibacy is a very difficult practice. If one wonders what the reason for this is, Blessed One, the practice of a tathagata is rare, and likewise, the practice of celibacy is also rare. At the time when one engages in the practice of celibacy, one will see the Blessed One directly. Day and night, one will see the Blessed One. At the time when one sees the Blessed One directly and one looks at the

Blessed One day and night, one sees the buddha-field. When one sees the buddha-field, one sees all treasures. At the time of dying, terror will not be born. Then, too, one will not become sorrowful. One will not be bound by the noose of craving.”

He said this, and the Blessed One spoke thus to the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura: “Sarvashura, the occurrence of tathagatas is difficult to find.”

He said: “Blessed One, it is difficult to find. One Gone to Bliss, it is difficult to find.”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, likewise, this Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya is also difficult to find. Sarvashura, anyone whose ear this Sanghata dharma-paryaya falls upon will remember past lives for eighty eons. For 60,000 eons, they will attain wheel-turning kingship. For 8,000 eons, they will have attained the position of Indra. For 20,000 eons, they will be born equal in fortune to the gods of the pure abodes. For 38,000 eons, they will become the great Brahma. For 99,000 eons, they will not go to wrong rebirths. For 100,000 eons, they will not be born among pretas. For 28,000 eons, they will not be born among animals. For 13,000 eons, they will not be born in the realm of the asuras. Their time of death will not be brought about by weapons. For 25,000 eons, their wisdom will not be distorted. For 7,000 eons, they will be intelligent. For 9,000 eons, they will be handsome and considered attractive. Just as the Tathagata’s form bodies have been accomplished, one will become like that. For 25,000 eons, they will not be born among those whose nature is feminine. For 16,000 eons, they will not catch physical illnesses. For 35,000 eons, they will possess the divine eye. For 19,000 eons, they will not be born in the birthplaces of nagas. For 60,000 eons, they will not be overcome by anger. For 7,000 eons, they will not be born poor. For 80,000 eons, they will live on the two continents. Even when they are born poor, they will obtain pleasures like the following: For 12,000 eons, they will not be born in the birthplace of a blind person. For 13,000 eons, they will not be born in the three realms of bad migration. For 11,000 eons, they will be patience-preaching sages.

“Also, at the time of death, when the final consciousness ceases, they will not have incorrect perceptions. They will not be overcome by anger. In the eastern direction, they will see as many buddhas, blessed ones, as the number of grains of sand in twelve Ganges Rivers. In the southern direction, they will see directly as many buddhas, blessed ones, as the number of grains of sand in twenty million Ganges Rivers. In the western direction, they will see as many buddhas, blessed ones, as the number of grains of sand in twenty-five Ganges Rivers. In the northern direction, they will see directly as many buddhas, blessed ones, as the number of grains of sand in eighty Ganges Rivers. In the upward direction, they will see directly ninety million buddhas, blessed ones. In the downward direction, they will see directly as many buddhas, blessed ones, as the number of grains of sand in eight million Ganges Rivers, and to that child of the lineage, these buddhas will say: ‘Child of the lineage, you have heard the Sanghata dharma-paryaya, and therefore, in future lives you will have good qualities, benefits, and this kind of happiness. Therefore, do not fear.’ Saying that, they will reassure him.

He says: “O child of the lineage, have you seen as many tathagatas as the numbers of grains of sand in many hundred of billions of millions of Ganges Rivers?”

He says, “Blessed One, I have seen. One Gone to Bliss, I have seen.”

He says: “O child of the lineage, these tathagatas have arrived to see you.”

He says, “Due to having done what sort of virtuous action have this many tathagatas arrived at the place where I am?”

He says: “Child of the lineage, listen. You obtained a human body, the Sanghata dharma-paryaya fell upon your ear, and therefore, due to that you produced this great a mass of merit.”

He says: “Blessed One, if even my mass of merit becomes this much, what need is there to mention one who hears it to the end completely!”

He says: “Be quiet, be quiet. O child of the lineage, I will describe the merit of a four-line verse; therefore, listen. Child of the lineage, it is as follows: To make an analogy, even compared to the mass of merit of as many tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas as the number of grains of sand in thirteen Ganges Rivers, it produces a much greater mass of merit than that. Compared to one who worships as many tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas as the number of grains of sand in

thirteen Ganges Rivers, if one who hears just a four-line verse of this Sanghata dharma-paryaya also produces a much greater mass of merit than that, what need is there to mention someone who hears it completely to the end? Child of the lineage, listen about one who hears the Sanghata dharma-paryaya completely to the end. If someone were to plant sesame seeds in all the million world systems, and there were as many wheel-turning kings as that number of sesame seeds, and then there were a rich person, with much wealth and great possessions, who from it made charity to those wheel-turning kings – compared to that, one who makes charity to one stream-enterer produces a much greater mass of merit. If all those sentient beings of the million world-systems were to become stream-enterers, compared to the mass of merit of one who makes charity to all of them, the mass of merit produced by one who makes charity to one once-returner would be much greater. If all the sentient beings of the million world-systems were once-returners, compared to the mass of merit of one who makes charity to all of them, the mass of merit produced by one who makes charity to one non-returner would be much greater. If all the sentient beings of the million world-systems were non-returners, compared to the mass of merit of one who makes charity to all of them, the mass of merit produced by one who makes charity to one arhat would be much greater. If all the sentient beings of the million world-systems were arhats, compared to the mass of merit of one who makes charity to all of them, the mass of merit produced by one who makes charity to one pratyekabuddha would be much greater. If all the sentient beings of the million world-systems were pratyekabuddhas, compared to the mass of merit of one who makes charity to all of them, the mass of merit produced by one who makes charity to one bodhisattva would be much greater. If all the sentient beings of the million world-systems were bodhisattvas, compared to the mass of merit of one who makes charity to all of them, if the mass of merit produced by one whose mind becomes inspired with trust toward one tathagata and one who makes their mind inspired with trust toward a million world-systems completely full of tathagatas and one who hears this Sanghata dharma-paryaya would produce a much greater mass of merit than that, then, Sarvashura, what need is there to mention whoever writes this Sanghata dharma-paryaya down, or memorizes it or recites or understands it! Sarvashura, what need is there to mention prostrating with a mind inspired with trust toward this Sanghata dharma-paryaya!

“Sarvashura, what do you think about this? If someone should wonder, ‘are all ordinary individuals able to hear this?’ even if they hear it, they will not generate faith.

“Sarvashura, listen. Is there anyone from among ordinary individuals who is able to get to the bottom of the great ocean?”

He said: “Blessed One, there is not.”

He spoke: “Is there any sentient being who uses up the ocean with the palm of one hand?”

He said: “Blessed One, there is not. One Gone to Bliss, there is not.”

He spoke: “Just as there is no sentient being at all who is able to dry up the great ocean, Sarvashura, neither is any sentient being of lower aspiration able to listen to this dharma-paryaya. Sarvashura, those who have not seen millions of tathagatas, as many as the number of grains of sand in eighty Ganges Rivers are not able to write out this Sanghata dharma-paryaya. Those who have not seen as many tathagatas as the number of grains of sand in ninety Ganges Rivers are not able to hear this dharma-paryaya. Those who have not seen 100 million myriad tathagatas, having heard this dharma-paryaya, will reject it. Sarvashura, those who have seen 100 million tathagatas, as many as the number of grains of sand in the Ganges River, having heard this dharma-paryaya, will produce a mind of faith. They will be pleased. They will know the truth, exactly as it is. That one will have faith in this Sanghata dharma-paryaya and will not reject it.

“Sarvashura, listen. Those who write just a four-line verse from this Sanghata-sutra, having passed 95,000 million universes, their buddha-field will become just like the Sukhavati universe. Sarvashura, the life span of those sentient beings will have the capacity of 84,000 eons.

“Sarvashura, listen. As for those bodhisattvas, those great beings, who hear as little as a four-line verse from this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, it is as follows: To make an analogy, they are like a sentient being who has either committed the five uninterrupted actions or ordered them done or rejoiced in their doing, and who, if they hear just a four-line verse from this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, will purify those evil karmas of the five uninterrupted actions.

“Sarvashura, listen and I will explain still another good quality. It is as follows. To make an analogy: A sentient being destroyed stupas, made a split among the Sangha, causes a bodhisattva to waver from their meditative absorption, obstructs the wisdom of a buddha, and takes human life. Afterward, that sentient being regrets it and is saddened. ‘By this body, I am ruined, and ruined too in the next world. I am worthless.’ Thinking this, great sorrow arose and he experiences a feeling of grief. He experiences an unbearable feeling. Sarvashura, that sentient being will be rejected by all sentient beings. He will be despised. This sentient being will be burnt and worthless. Worldly and supramundane dharmas have also been made untenable for him. Like a log burnt to cinder, so too will this man be for many eons. Like the pillars and beams in a well-designed house, which, if they are burnt, are not beautiful, so too will this man be. In this world, too, he is not beautiful. Wherever he goes, also, in all those places, sentient beings will criticize and beat him, and he will suffer from hunger and thirst and will not find even the slightest bit to eat or drink.

On account of that, he experiences a feeling of suffering, and the cause of the hunger and thirst and the cause of the abuse remind him of the karma of the destruction of the stupas and of the five uninterrupted actions, and having been reminded, on account of that, he thinks, ‘Where am I to go? Who is my protector?’ and becomes depressed, thinking, ‘Since no one at all is a protector to me here, let me go to a mountain or ravine and there put an end to my life.’ He said:

Since I have done sinful acts,
I’m like a cinder, forever burnt.
Both in this world not lovely
and in the next world, lovely not.
Within the house too, not lovely;
Also outside, lovely not.
Sins were done, because of flaws,
Through that to lower realms I go.
In other lives, too, suffer I shall
In whatever bad state I dwell.
As he sobbed and choked on tears,
even by gods his words were heard:
‘There’s no hope for the world beyond.
Alas! To the lower realm I go.’

“The gods said to him:

Foolish person thinking so!
Drop this suffering mind and go!
‘Father killed and mother killed,
Since five heinous deeds I did,
Refuge, comrade: none for me;
Suffering feelings I will have.
To the mountain peak I go,
my body there to cast away.’
Foolish being, do not go.
With this mind that would do harm
many sins were done by you.
Do not do this sinful act!
Who does harm unto themselves
to the suffering hells will go.
That one will grieve and cry aloud,
And due to that, fall to the ground.
By that effort, a buddha will not be.
Nor a bodhisattva become.
Even a hearer’s state’s not attained.

By another effort, strive.'
Go to that mountain where a sage is.
Having gone and seen the greatness of the sage,
at his feet pay homage with one's head.
'Holy being, my refuge be!
I'm so oppressed by fears, by woes.
Essence of beings, Sage, please hear my words!
Seated, make an opportunity for thought.
Explain virtuous Dharma even for an instant.
Since I'm oppressed by terrors, by woes,
Please sit just for a moment,
Let me confess the many evils I've done.
May the sage please speak to me.

The sage said:

Weeping at sufferings and oppressed by lamentation,
you are afflicted by hunger and thirst,
traveling in the three worlds, hopeless.
Thus, eat the food given.
To satisfy the body, the
sage gave food.
'After eating this delicious, tasty food,
a being will feel delight.
Then the Dharma that purifies all sins
I will later explain.'
In an instant he ate his tasty food,
And having eaten, he washed his hands
And circumambulated the sage.
As he sat cross-legged,
those sins he had committed he told.
'Father killed and mother killed, and
Stupa destruction I have done.
I have obstructed a bodhisattva's accomplishment of buddhahood.'
When he heard the words of that man
the sage spoke these words:
'Since you have done evil,
Oh my, you are not virtuous.
Make a confession of the evil actions you have done or ordered done.'

At that time, at that moment, pierced with agonizing pains and having become distressed with terror, he said to the sage:

Who will be my protector?
Since I have done evil actions,
suffering feelings I will have.
Then that man placed both knees on the ground.
All the evils I have done and ordered done
I confess.
May they not become evil results.
May I not experience sufferings.
Since I am close to you,
Sage, you have become my refuge,
without regret and pacified, thus

Pacify my evil karma.

Then at that time, at that moment, that sage said to the man, comforting him: 'Being, I will be your refuge. I will be your support. I will be your helper; therefore, listen to the Dharma in my presence without fear. Have you heard even a little of the dharma-paryaya called Sanghata?'

That one said, 'I have not heard it at all.'

The sage said, 'Except for one who teaches the Dharma to sentient beings abiding in compassion, who will teach the Dharma to a burnt sentient being?'

He said, 'Child of the lineage, listen further. At a time immeasurably long ago, immeasurably many eons past, at that time, there was a righteous Dharma king named King Vimalachandra. Child of the lineage, a son was born into the house of King Vimalachandra. Thereupon, the great King Vimalachandra assembled the augural brahmins and said to them, 'Brahmins, what sort of sign do you see for the youth?' Then the augural brahmins said, 'Great king, it is not good. This youth who was born is not good.' The king said, 'Brahmins, what will become of him?' The augurs said, 'King, this youth, if he attains the age of seven years, will endanger the bodies of his mother and father.' Then the king spoke as follows: 'Even if there may be an obstacle to my life, fair enough, but I will not kill this son of mine. Even if it is rare, since birth as a human in this world has been attained, I will not commit such harm to the body of any human.' Then the youth grew rapidly. Specifically, when he reached the age of one month, he had grown the amount that others grow in two years. After that, the King Vimalachandra knew, too, that the youth had grown because of karma that the king himself had accumulated. Then the king granted his royal diadem to that youth and spoke as follows: 'May you become a king well renowned, and with a great kingdom. Rule righteously with Dharma; not by what is not Dharma.' Then, having granted the diadem to him, he bestowed on him the name 'king.' And King Vimalachandra acted no more as king of his own land. Then the million ministers proceeded to the place where King Vimalachandra was, and having gone there, they spoke to King Vimalachandra as follows: 'O great king, why is it that you are not now acting as king of your own land?' The king said, 'Although for immeasurably many eons I have ruled as one having kingdoms, wealth, and power, I have never experienced satisfaction.' And at that time, at that moment, before much time had passed, that child took the lives of his father and mother, and there he accumulated the karma of the five uninterrupted actions.

'O being, I also remember the time when the experience of suffering arose for that king, and he felt regret and sobbed, choking on tears, and I generated great compassion for him, and having gone there, taught the Dharma, and when he too heard that Dharma, those five uninterrupted actions were quickly purified, without any remainder.'

He said, 'Those great ascetics who hear the Sanghata dharma-paryaya, the king of sutras, will attain the unsurpassed source of Dharma, the purification of all evils and the pacification of all delusions.

The Dharmas by which one will be rapidly liberated,
I shall explain, so listen carefully.
If just one four-line verse
Is explained in a continual stream,
Having purified all evils,
Stream-entry will be attained;
One will be liberated from all evil.
Saying this, when these aphorisms are uttered,
From the bondage of fearing hell
Sentient beings are totally released from suffering.

Then the man from that seat rose
And, having placed palms together,
Prostrated to him with his head.
He approved with the word, 'Excellent.'
'Excellent, virtuous friends.
Excellent, those who teach the great method,

The Sanghata-sutra, which destroys evil.
And also for those who hear it, excellent.

After that, at that time, at that moment, from the middle of the space above, 12,000 divine sons, placing their palms together, came in front of the sage, prostrated to his feet and said the following: ‘Blessed One, for how long back do you cognize?’ Likewise, four million naga kings came and 18,000 yaksha kings came. Having placed their palms together in the direction of the sage and having bowed respectfully, they said the following: ‘Great One, for how long back do you cognize?’ The sage said: ‘For hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of countless eons.’

They said, ‘By which virtuous karma will this evil karma be completely pacified in an instant?’

He said, ‘By hearing the Sanghata dharma-paryaya. From among the sentient beings who have gathered here, all those who had faith upon hearing this dharma-paryaya are predicted to unsurpassed, perfectly completed awakening. Those persons who have committed the five uninterrupted actions, if they even just hear this dharma-paryaya called ‘Sanghata,’ they will entirely exhaust their karma of the five uninterrupted actions in an instant and purify them completely. For countless hundreds of thousands of myriad millions of eons, the doors to the lower realms will be closed; the thirty-two doors to the gods’ worlds will be opened. If the roots of merit of one who even hears a mere four-line verse from this Sanghata dharma-paryaya will become like that, what need is there to speak of one who honors and venerates it, makes drawings, makes offerings with flowers, incense, fragrance, garlands, unguents, powders, robes, canopies, banners, and pennants, or who joins together cymbals and rejoices afterward just once, approving by saying, ‘Excellent, excellent’?

Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura said this to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, as for one who places their palms together when the Sanghata dharma-paryaya is expounded, what mass of merit will that one produce by merely prostrating with their palms together?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Child of the lineage, listen. Anyone who has committed the five uninterrupted actions, has ordered them done, and also who has rejoiced in the doing of them and who places their palms together upon hearing as little as a mere four-line verse from this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, when they prostrate, if all the negative karma of the five uninterrupted actions will be completely purified, Sarvashura, what need is there to mention those who hear this Sanghata dharma-paryaya comprehensively to the end? This one will produce a much greater mass of merit than the former. Child of the lineage, I will show you an analogy in order to make the meaning of the Sanghata-sutra understood. Sarvashura, it is as follows: To make an analogy, from the palace of the naga king Anavatapta, where the sun never rises, five great rivers issue forth. If some human should count the drops of these five great rivers, Sarvashura, would it be possible to realize the end by counting their drops?”

He said: “Blessed One, that cannot be.”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, likewise, by counting the roots of merit of the Sanghata dharma-paryaya for 100 eons or even for thousands of eons, it is not possible to realize the end by counting. Sarvashura, if you are wondering why this is so, doesn’t the one who propounds this Sanghata dharma-paryaya for even an instant undertake hardships?”

He said: “Blessed One, that one undertakes hardships.”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, the one who will be able to propound this Sanghata dharma-paryaya undertakes much greater hardships than that. It is as follows. To make an analogy: By means of counting the drops in the five great rivers that arrive from the Anavatapta Lake, it is not possible to realize the end.”

He said: “Blessed One, what are those five great rivers?”

The Blessed One spoke: “They are as follows: Ganges, Sita, Vakshu, Yamuna, and Chandrabhaga. These are the five great rivers that arrive at the ocean. Each of the five great rivers is accompanied by 500 rivers. Sarvashura, these 500 rivers, too, arrive from the sky with a thousand rivers each, and by them beings are satisfied.”

He said: “These accompanying thousands, what are they?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sundari is accompanied by thousands, Shamkha is accompanied by thousands, Vahanti is accompanied by thousands, Chitrasena is accompanied by thousands, and Dharmavritta is accompanied by thousands. These great rivers each possess a thousand accompanying rivers.

They release a stream of rain on the planet earth. Sarvashura, whenever the streams of raindrops are sent down, this produces flowers and fruits and crops. When the streams of rain are released onto the planet earth, water will be produced. Because water is produced, fields and gardens are all sated and made happy. Sarvashura, it is as follows. To make an analogy: The lord of beings makes all the planet earth happy. Likewise, Sarvashura, this Sanghata dharma-paryaya is proclaimed on earth for the benefit of many beings and for the happiness of many beings. As is the lifespan of gods of the thirty-three, the life of humans is not thus. Sarvashura, if you should ask what are the gods of the thirty-three, where the lord of the gods, Indra, abides, those are called the thirty-three. Sarvashura, whoever engages in good verbal conduct is also there, and it is impossible to make an analogy for their mass of merit. There are also sentient beings who engage in bad verbal conduct, and it is impossible to make an analogy for their rebirths in sentient beings’ hells and as animals. Those sentient beings who will experience the sufferings of the sentient beings’ hell, of animals, and of pretas have no refuge at all. Their hopes having been cut off; they lament and fall into sentient beings’ hells; they should be seen as under the power of nonvirtuous friends. And those sentient beings who engaged in good verbal conduct and for whose mass of merit it is impossible to make an analogy, they should be seen as under the power of virtuous friends. When one sees a virtuous friend, a tathagata is seen. When one sees a tathagata, all one’s evils will have been purified. When the lord of beings causes joy on earth, it will be impossible to make an analogy for the happiness of the sentient beings on earth.

“Sarvashura, likewise, this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, too, performs the functions of a buddha for the sentient beings on earth. Whoever will not hear the Sanghata dharma-paryaya is unable to be completely enlightened in the unsurpassed, perfectly completed awakening. They are unable to turn the wheel of Dharma. They are unable to beat the Dharma gong. They are unable to sit on the lion’s throne of the Dharma. They are unable to enter the sphere of nirvana. They are unable to illuminate with countless light rays. Sarvashura, likewise, those who do not hear this Sanghata dharma-paryaya also are unable to sit in the heart of enlightenment.”

Sarvashura said: “Blessed One, may I ask about a certain wonder? One Gone to Bliss, may I ask about a certain wonder?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, ask whatever you wish and I will clear away your doubts.”

He said: “That sage by whom those sentient beings are liberated from the karma of the five uninterrupted actions and later placed one-by-one on the level of a non-returner – who is that?”

He spoke:

The speech of buddhas is subtle.
Sarvashura, listen to me.
The Sanghata-sutra, the teacher,
is revealed in the form of the sage.
The Sanghata teaches, out of kindness,
even through the bodies of buddhas.
As many grains of sand as the Ganges holds,
in just that many forms it teaches.
It teaches in the form of a buddha.
It teaches the very essence of Dharma.
Who wishes to see a buddha,
Sanghata is equivalent to a buddha.
Wherever the Sanghata is,
Always, there the Buddha is.

The Blessed One spoke: “Child of the lineage, listen. Sarvashura, at a time long past, ninety-nine countless eons ago, there arose twelve million buddhas. There arose the Tathagata named Ratnottama,

and after becoming a major donor, I worshipped those twelve million buddhas named Chandra. I attended them with offerings of food, drink, fragrance, garlands, unguents, whatever pleases them, good meals, and everything required for their comfort. Having attended them thus, I recall hearing there a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment.

“Sarvashura, I recall that there arose eighteen million buddhas named Ratnavabhasa, and at that time, too, having become a major donor, I worshipped eighteen million tathagatas named Garbhasena with garlands, unguents, ornaments, and decorative attire as was appropriate to each, and having done so, I heard there a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment.

“Sarvashura, I recall twenty million buddhas, and every one of them was named Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly completed Buddha Shikhisambhava.

“Sarvashura, I recall twenty million buddhas, and every one of those tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas was named Kashyapa. At that time, too, having become a major donor, I honored the tathagatas with fragrance, garlands, and unguents, and then I offered them reverential service just as service should be offered reverentially to tathagatas, and there, too, I attained a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment.

“Sarvashura, there arose sixteen million buddhas named Buddha Vimalaprabhasa, and at that time I was a rich householder, with great wealth and possessions. Having become a donor giving away all my belongings, I offered them reverential service with offerings of sitting cloths, garments, fragrance, garlands, unguents, and blankets, just as reverential service should be offered to tathagatas, and at that very time I attained a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. This, too, I remember, but the time and conditions for the prediction still had not arrived.

“Sarvashura, listen. Ninety-five million buddhas arose in the world, and as for all of them, every one of those tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas was named Shakyamuni. I, at that time, was a righteous king and worshipped those ninety-five million tathagatas named Shakyamuni with fragrance, garlands, unguents, sitting cloths, garments, incense, banners, and pennants, and at that very time I attained a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. This I remember.

“Sarvashura, there arose in the world ninety million tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas named Krakutsanda, and at that time I was a rich young brahmin, with much wealth and possessions. Having become a donor giving away all my belongings, I worshipped all those tathagatas with fragrance, garlands, unguents, sitting cloths, and garments, and having offered reverential service to those tathagatas as was appropriate to each, at that very time I attained a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. This, too, I remember. But I had not arrived at the time and conditions for the prediction.

“Sarvashura, there arose in the world eighteen million buddhas, and as for all of them, every one of the tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas was named Kanakamuni. At that time, having become a major donor, I worshipped all those tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas with fragrance, garlands, unguents, sitting cloths, and ornaments. Just as tathagatas should be offered service, so I offered them service, and at that very time I also remember attaining a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. But the time and conditions for the prediction had not arrived.

“Sarvashura, there arose in the world thirteen million buddhas, and as for all of them, every one of those tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas was named Avabhasashri. I worshipped those tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas with sitting cloths, garments, fragrance, garlands, unguents, blankets, and ornaments. Just as tathagatas should be offered reverential service, so I offered them reverential service, and those tathagatas also having explained many introductions to the Dharma to ascertain its meanings and the discipline, at that very time also I attained a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. This I remember, but then, too, the time and conditions for the prediction had not arrived.

“Sarvashura, there arose in the world twenty-five million tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas named Pushya. At that time, I was a renunciate, and I worshipped those tathagatas. As Ananda offers me service now, likewise, I offered service to those tathagatas, and there I attained a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. This I remember, but then, too, the time for the prediction had not arrived.

“Sarvashura, there arose in the world twelve million tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas named Vipashyin. I worshipped those tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas with sitting cloths, garments, fragrance, garlands, and unguents. Just as tathagatas should be offered service, so I offered them service. At that time, having become a renunciate, right then I also remember attaining a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. Soon thereafter, I was aware that the last Vipashyin to arise had explained this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, and then at that time a rain of the seven precious jewels rained upon the earth. Then the sentient beings of the earth became without poverty, and I at that very time attained a prediction of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. After that, for a long period of time I was not predicted.”

He said: “What was that time? What was that condition?”

The Blessed One spoke: “Sarvashura, listen. A countless eon after that, the Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly completed Buddha Dipamkara arose in the world, and at that time, I was a brahmin boy named Megha. At the time when Tathagata Dipamkara arose in the world, I was practicing celibacy in the form of a brahmin boy. Then, having seen Tathagata Dipamkara, I scattered seven utpala flowers and dedicated to unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment, and that Tathagata predicted to me, ‘Young brahmin, in the future, in a countless eon, in this world, you will become a tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, named Shakyamuni.’

“Sarvashura, after that, I sat in the middle of space, at a height of twelve palmyra trees and attained the state of forbearance with regard to non-productive phenomena. Just as if yesterday or today, I remember directly all those roots of merits from when I practiced celibacy countless eons and possessed the perfections. And after that, too, Sarvashura, if I have led countless hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of sentient beings individually to virtuous Dharma, Sarvashura, now having directly, completely awakened into unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment, what need is there to say that I want to benefit all sentient beings? Sarvashura, I teach the Dharma in many aspects to sentient beings. Whatever the form of those to be subdued, I teach the Dharma in that form. In the world of the gods, I teach the Dharma in the form of a god. In the land of nagas, I teach the Dharma in the form of a naga. In the land of the yakshas, I teach the Dharma in the form of a yaksha. In the land of the pretas, I teach the Dharma in the form of a preta. In the world of humans, I teach the Dharma in the form of a human. To those sentient beings who are to be subdued by a buddha, I teach the Dharma in the form of a buddha. To those sentient beings who are to be subdued by a bodhisattva, I teach the Dharma in the form of a bodhisattva. By whatever form it is sentient beings are to be subdued, I teach the Dharma in that very form. Sarvashura, in that way, I teach the Dharma to sentient beings in many aspects.

“If one should wonder what the reason is, Sarvashura, just as sentient beings hear the Dharma in many aspects, in the same way those sincere sentient beings will make roots of virtue in many aspects: They will engage in acts of generosity, they will make merits, they will even go without sleep for their own sake, they will meditate also on remembering death. Such virtuous karmas as these that are to be formed, they will do. Due to the cause of having heard the Dharma, they will remember the previous roots of virtue. That will be for the long-term aim, benefit, and happiness of gods and humans.

“Sarvashura, that being so, as soon the Sanghata dharma-paryaya is heard, the good qualities and benefits in this way become immeasurable.

“Then, those sentient beings will tell each other the following: ‘By what was done and accumulated, there must be some other ripening result of the virtuous Dharma of directly, completely awakening into unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment and of wanting to benefit all sentient beings.’ Whoever, after trusting in the Dharma, says the following: ‘There is a Dharma perfectly in accordance with things as they are,’ the great ripening result of their happiness will be the unsurpassed happiness of the Dharma. Those ignorant, foolish sentient beings who say the following: ‘There aren’t any dharmas; there is no passing beyond the dharmas either,’ their great ripening result will be to go to bad realms. Again and again they will course toward the ground of bad realms. For eight eons, they will experience the sensations of the sufferings of sentient beings’ hells. For twelve eons, they will experience the sensations of the sufferings in the lands of pretas. For sixteen eons, they will be born among the asuras. For 9,000 eons, they will be born among the demonic spirits and goblins. For 14,000 eons, they will be without tongues. For 16,000 eons, their time of death will come in their mother’s womb. For 12,000 eons, they will become round balls of flesh. For 11,000 eons, they will be born blind and will experience suffering

sensations, and their parents will think, ‘We have suffered meaninglessly. The birth of our son was meaningless. Bearing him in the womb for nine months was meaningless.’ They will experience the sensation of cold and heat. They will experience intensely the suffering of hunger and thirst also. They will experience many sufferings in this life as well. Even when the parents see a son in their house, there is no joy and the parents’ hopes will be utterly cut off.

“Sarvashura, in that way, the sentient beings who abandon the holy Dharma are coursing toward hell and animal rebirths.

[SANSKRIT TRANSLATION BEGINS HERE]

“At the time of their death they will be affected by the great arrows of sorrow. Sarvashura, those who speak such words as these: ‘There is Dharma. There is a profound scholar in the Dharmas,’ by that root of good they will be born in the Uttarakurus for twenty eons. They will be born in the community of the devas of the Trayastrimsha for 25,000 eons. Having fallen from among the Trayastrimsha devas, they will be born again in the Uttarakurus. They will not be born in the uterus of a mother. They will see 100,000 worlds. Having seen the vision of all the buddha-fields that have the name Sukhavati, and having established themselves there, they will fully realize enlightenment in that very place. Sarvashura, the great efficacy indeed of this Sanghata dharma-paryaya is such. Those who place belief in this will by no means die by a blow of misfortune. They will be endowed with pure morality.

“Sarvashura, there are beings who will say thus: ‘The Tathagata frees many beings day and night. Even so, the world of beings does not diminish. Many make the resolution to enlightenment. Many are born in the celestial world. Many are made to attain happiness. Then, for what reason is it that there is no diminution of beings?’”

Then, the sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, and nonbelievers had a thought like this: “We shall go. We shall dispute with the ascetic Gautama.”

Thereupon, the ninety-four sectarians, wanderers, religious mendicants, brahmins, and many hundreds of nonbelievers approached there, where the great city Rajagriha was. At that time, at that moment, the Blessed One displayed a smile.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Maitreya, having risen from the seat, putting his upper robe over one shoulder, placing his right knee on the earth, and making obeisance with folded hands in the direction of the Blessed One, spoke to the Blessed One thus: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason for displaying a smile? Not without cause, not without reason, do tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas display a smile.”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, son of the lineage. Today, there will be a great assembly in this great city of Rajagriha.”

He said: “Blessed One, who will come here? Devas, or nagas, or yakshas, or human beings, or nonhuman beings?”

The Blessed One said: “Maitreya, all of them: devas, nagas, yakshas, human beings, and nonhuman beings are coming here today. And 84,000 brahmins will also come here; 90,000 million sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, and nonbelievers will come here. They will dispute with me. I will preach the Dharma to silence the disputes of all of them. All those brahmins will produce the thought of supreme, perfectly completed enlightenment. Nine million millions of sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, and nonbelievers will attain the fruit of a stream-enterer. Eighteen thousand million naga kings will come. They will hear the Dharma from me. Having heard it, all will produce the thoughts of supreme, perfectly completed enlightenment. Sixty thousand million sons of deities of the pure abodes will come. Mara, the evil one, will come with his retinue of 32,000 million followers. Twelve thousand million asura kings will come. Kings, 500 in number, will come with their retinues to hear the Dharma. Having heard the Dharma from me, they will all produce the thought of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment.”

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Maitreya, having worshipped at the feet of the Blessed One with his head and having circumambulated the Blessed One, vanished in that very place.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura, having risen from the seat, putting his upper robe over one shoulder, placing his right knee on the earth, and making obeisance with folded hands in the direction where the Blessed One was, spoke to the Blessed One thus: “Blessed One, what are the names of the kings, 500 in number?”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, Sarvashura. There is the king named Nanda, the king named Sunanda, the king named Upananda, the king named Jinarsabha, the king named Brahmasena, the king named Brahmaghosha, the king named Sudarshana, the king named Jayasena, the king named Nandasena, the king named Bimbisara, the king named Prasenajit, and the king named Virudhaka. Thus preceded by them are the kings, 500 in number. Each king is accompanied by 2,000,000 million followers. All of them have set out for the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment except the king Virudhaka. In the eastern direction 30,000 million bodhisattvas are coming. In the northern direction 80,000 million bodhisattvas are coming. In the nadir 90,000 million bodhisattvas are coming. In the zenith 100,000 million bodhisattvas are coming. All of them are established in the ten stages.”

Then, all those bodhisattvas approached there, where the great city Rajagriha was, where Vulture’s Peak was, and where the Blessed One was, in order to see the Blessed One; and all those bodhisattvas had set out for the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment.

Then, the Blessed One addressed the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura: “Sarvashura, go. Speak in this manner to the bodhisattvas in all the worlds in the ten directions: ‘Today, the Tathagata preaches the Dharma in the great city of Rajagriha. Therefore, all of you dwelling in the worlds in the ten directions, pay homage with folded hands.’ Proclaim it for a short time only, and again come back to listen to the Dharma.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura, having risen from his seat, having worshipped at the feet of the Blessed One with his head, and having circumambulated the Blessed One, vanished by miraculous power.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura, having gone to the worlds in the ten directions, announced to the bodhisattvas: “Friends, today, the Shakyamuni Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha, preaches the Dharma to beings in the great city of Rajagriha in the Saha world. Therefore, you all express your approval. This very day, it will be a great profit for you, for your welfare and happiness.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura, having gone to the worlds in the ten directions, respectfully venerating all the buddhas, and having addressed the bodhisattvas, just as when a strong man snaps his fingers, in that interval, having come there where the great city Rajagriha and where the Blessed One was, stood in front of the Blessed One. All the sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, nonbelievers, and brahmins were assembled there. Many devas, nagas, human beings, nonhuman beings, and the kings, numbering 500, were assembled with their followers. Thirty-three thousand million maras, the evil ones, were also assembled with their followers. Now then, at that time, the great city of Rajagriha trembled. Thereupon, celestial sandalwood powder rained down in the worlds in the ten directions, and a rain of celestial flowers rained down, too; that formed into a pavilion on the interstice of the head of the Blessed One. At that time, Indra, the chief of the devas, struck a thunderbolt in front of the Tathagata.

Thereupon, at that moment, four great violent winds blew to the four directions. They removed from the city all the sweepings, dust, and sand that were in the great city Rajagriha. Perfumed water rained in the worlds in the ten directions. Utpala flowers, lotuses, kumudas, and pundarikas rained in the worlds in the ten directions, and those flowers stood above the heads of those beings as flower umbrellas; and 84,000 pavilions formed in the sky, over the head of the Tathagata. In those 84,000 flower pavilions, 84,000 seats were provided, and they appeared to be made of seven kinds of jewels. In every seat a tathagata, seated, was preaching the Dharma. Then, these three thousand great thousand worlds trembled in six ways.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura, making obeisance with folded hands there, where the Blessed One was, spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason that such miracles as these are seen in the great city Rajagriha?”

The Blessed One said: “It is just as if a certain man were unsteady, wavering, arrogant, and selfish, and he were very poor. Then, that man, in his pride, having gone as far as the royal gate thinking that the king

would anoint his head, would wish to enter that royal palace by force. Then, those royal ministers and attendants would seize that man and beat him in many ways. Then, at that time, at that moment, the king would hear of the occurrence how that poor man desired to enter inside by force. Having heard, it would thus occur to him: ‘This man, by all means, desired to kill me.’ Then, that king would speak thus, with anger, to those attendants: ‘Sirs, you go. Take that man to a cleft in the mountain and kill him. Destroy all his dependants: parents, sons, daughters, maid servants, men servants, and workmen.’ Then all of them were killed. All the groups of his own people and relatives would be afflicted by the arrows of extreme sorrow. In the same way, Sarvashura, the Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly completed Buddha preaches the Dharma to the beings.

“Then, just like that arrogant person, common ordinary people, having taken a sign from the form, color, gender, and figure of the Tathagata, think, ‘This is the body of a tathagata.’ Then, having heard many Dharma teachings, they fall into arrogance. They speak various sorts of nonsense. Overcome by self-interest and selfishness, they do not hear the Dharma themselves nor do they proclaim it. If someone explains a sutra, a stanza, or so much as an example to them, they neither grasp it nor are they attentive, but rather they say, ‘We know this ourselves.’ What is the reason for that? It is because of this arrogance that they become infatuated with their own learnedness. Those who associate with common ordinary people and do not hear such speech connected with the Dharma will be infatuated with that learnedness. Such men put out their own poems. They put out their own literary compositions and prefaces. They cause misfortune to the whole world and to themselves. Uselessly, they will eat much public alms too. But after eating they will not digest it properly.

“At the time of death, they will fear greatly, and those beings will say thus, ‘Many have been trained by you in this knowledge of crafts. Why is it that you are unable to establish yourself?’ He would say to them thus, ‘Friends, now it is not possible to establish myself.’ There, those beings will lament in various ways. Just as on account of that one person, many groups of relatives, though they were innocent, were deprived of their life as a result of their own karma, so similarly, these beings, having lamented at the time of their death, contemplate themselves stuck in hells and the wombs of animals, due to the association with nonvirtuous friends.

“Thus I say to you brahmin, sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, and nonbelievers: Do not be reckless. Just as a bird without wings is not able to proceed into the sky to reach the world of the gods, so for you who abide in self-interest and selfishness, it is not possible to attain nirvana. Such a miraculous power is not found in you. What is the reason for that? On account of karma, you are like those born from the womb of a hen. Soon, this body, whose nature is dissolution, will end in death. At the time of death there will be despair and trouble: ‘Why have we maintained this body, we who will not enjoy the happiness of the devas or the happiness of the human world? Nor will we dwell in the place of nirvana. Uselessly was this body of ours maintained. What will be our rebirth? Who will be our protector? Where will be our birth and end?’”

Then, the Blessed One addressed those sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, and brahmins: “Friends, do not despair of the Jambudvipa made of the seven kinds of jewels. Do not become excludible from the Dharma jewel. Friends, ask the Tathagata whatever you doubt. I will fulfill all your requests.”

Thereupon, all those sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, nonbelievers, and brahmins, having risen from their seats, covering one shoulder with their mantle, and holding their hands folded, asked the Blessed One: “The Blessed One releases many beings from samsara day and night. But neither a deficiency nor a fullness of the world of beings is known. Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason that the beings, being the same in number, show origination and cessation?”

There, the Blessed One addressed the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajysena: “The sectarians are equipped with the great spiritual armor. They ask a great series of questions to dispel great mental disturbances, to light the great torches of the Dharma. At a later date, indeed, there will not be any beings, young or old, who cause origination and cessation. Bhaishajyasena, there are old and young ones, indeed, who do not know anything.

“Bhaishajyasena, it is as if a certain man should wash his head, should put on new garments, and should come out of the house. The people address that man thus, ‘Your new garments are well worn.’ Then, there

would be a certain other person. He would wash his head, would put on old garments. Those garments are loose and are not beautiful; that man has his head washed well, but his dress is not beautiful. Similarly, Bhaishajyasena, there are old ones who do not beautify Jambudvipa. The young ones, however, show origination and cessation.”

Thereupon, all those sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, nonbelievers, and brahmins, having risen from their seats, said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, who of us is old and who is young?”

The Blessed One said: “Old are those of you who, having seen again and again the painful sensations of the hells and of animals and pretas, still today have not had enough of that.”

Then, all those sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, nonbelievers, brahmins, and all the naga kings said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, we can no longer bear to experience the painful sensations of samsara.”

And those sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, nonbelievers, and brahmins said thus: “There are no young ones who could realize directly the true nature of things.”

Then the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Venerable Blessed One, see to what extent these beings are hard to make actively interested.”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, Bhaishajyasena. The Tathagata now apprehends the whole world.”

Thereupon, 94,000 million new beings, having stood in front of the Tathagata, neither saluted nor spoke nor conversed with the Tathagata, but remained in silence.

Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, that these beings neither speak nor converse nor salute the Blessed One nor question the Blessed One?”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, Bhaishajyasena. You should see those novices who say thus: ‘The novices are not able to realize the normal condition.’”

And those beings said thus: “Venerable Blessed One, we are novices. Venerable One Gone to Bliss, we are novices.”

The Blessed One said: “Sirs, of these beings, realize this world properly and show the extent of the world from your own body.”

Then, at that time, at that moment, the 94,000 million novices, having stood in the sky, after the dissolution of the body, became possessed of the ten stages.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, such beings who strive have well gained their gain of the cessation and exhaustion in samsara. Blessed One, this very day these beings were born. Blessed One, this very day these beings have been released. All are seen to be established in the ten stages.”

Thereupon, for their part, all the sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, nonbelievers, and brahmins and the naga kings and Mara, the evil one, with his followers approached to cause confusion. And they all said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, we had approached the Blessed One in order to cause confusion. Blessed One, having heard this dharma-paryaya, we have become inspired with faith in both the Buddha and the Dharma. Blessed One, all of us then wish to gain the same sort of buddha-happiness as that of the Blessed One. We wish to become the same sort of tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas in the world.”

The Blessed One said: “Just so, good sirs, just so. As you have approached the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha, and generated thoughts of unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment after hearing the Sanghata-sutra dharma-paryaya, by that root of virtue, good sirs, you will soon awaken into the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment.”

Then, as soon as this word was spoken by the Blessed One, at that very moment, all those sectarians, wandering ascetics, religious mendicants, nonbelievers and brahmins attained the state of forbearance with regard to non-productive phenomena, and all became bodhisattvas established in the ten stages. And

all those bodhisattvas, having ascended above in the atmosphere to a height of seven palm trees in the air, offered seven pavilions made of jewels to the Tathagata; and all wrought acts of transformation, control, and miraculous powers. Then, at that moment, having stood above the head of the Blessed One, they all strewn the Blessed One with various flowers. They contemplated the tathagatas. They produced the notion of a buddha in their own body. Many 100,000 million billions of devaputras, too, bestrewed the Tathagata with flowers.

They spoke a word thus: “The ascetic Gautama has great gain; he is a great field; a savior of the world; he has arrived at the attainment of samadhi power; cognizant; he is in possession of discretion, who releases such beings from samsara, gradually, through skill in means. By this good saying alone, so many beings are released from samsara.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having risen from his seat, putting his upper robe over one shoulder, placing his right knee on the earth, and making obeisance with folded hands in the direction where the Blessed One was, spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, that these devaputras speak such words, perform many miraculous feats, and with many eulogies of virtue truly praise the Tathagata?”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, son of the lineage. They do not praise me. They praise their own body. They will place their own body on the Dharma throne; they will establish their own body on the superior Dharma seat; they will send forth the Dharma ray from their own bodies; they will be embraced by all the buddhas. Having realized the realization of the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment, they will preach the Dharma.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Many beings, Venerable Blessed One, many beings, Venerable One Gone to Bliss, are released day and night. Even now there is no exhaustion of beings.”

The Blessed One said: “Excellent, excellent, Bhaishajyasena, that you think it proper to inquire on this matter from the Tathagata. Listen, Bhaishajyasena. It is as if there were a certain man, opulent, a possessor of great riches, a possessor of great wealth, and abounding in possessions. He has much money and grain, treasures, and granaries. He also has many female servants, men servants, and workers. He also has a great mass of riches. He is also provided with many fields and gardens abounding in wealth and grain, such as barley, wheat, rice, sesame, wild –beans, and beans. During the season of spring that man would sow all that wealth and grains. Then during a later season all that wealth and grain would mature. Knowing that it is completely matured, after reaping the crops, he would send them into the house. That man stores those seeds of grain, separately, in his house, and having stored them, he possesses them. During the spring season, he again sows those seeds. In the same way, Bhaishajyasena, having performed virtuous actions in the past, these beings, seeking the fields of merit again and again, plant roots of virtue when those actions have exhausted. Having planted the roots of virtue, there they put into effect their virtuous practice in that good Dharma. Having put into effect the virtuous practice, they make all Dharmas increase. Having made all Dharmas increase, they produce happiness and delight. Then, by that thought of happiness and delight, Bhaishajyasena, they will not perish for many thousand million eons.

“In the same way, Bhaishajyasena, the bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution [to enlightenment] will never be subjected to ruin. He knows all the Dharmas in a condensed form.”

He said: “Blessed One, what dream does a bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution see?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, the bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution sees many fears in his dream. What is the reason for that? When fears are seen in dreams, then he purifies all evil actions. Bhaishajyasena, it is not possible for an evil being to repel the severe pains. But by seeing an evil dream he has no fear.”

Bhaishajyasena said, “Blessed One, what are the fears that a bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution sees in his dream?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, he sees a fire blazing. There that bodhisattva should produce a thought like this: ‘I have burnt all desires.’ Secondly, Bhaishajyasena, he sees the water stirred and agitated. There, that bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution should not fear. What is the reason for that? Bhaishajyasena, it is because having thrown off all the bonds of delusion, all evils are destroyed

by the bodhisattva. Thirdly, Bhaishajyasena, the bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution sees a fearful dream.”

He said: “Blessed One, what is it?”

“He sees that the head on his own body is shaven. There, Bhaishajyasena, that bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution should not fear. What is the reason for that? Because then, he should produce a thought like this: ‘Passion, hatred, and delusion I have shaven off. Samsara, with the six states of existence, I have overcome.’ For him, in fact, there will not be any dwelling in a hell, nor in the abodes of animals, pretas, asuras, nagas, and devas. Bhaishajyasena, the bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution receives birth in the pure buddha-fields.

“Bhaishajyasena, at a later time, at a later period, if a certain person shall cause to mature a thought of bodhi, then he will receive great reproach and will be in a humiliated state. There Bhaishajyasena, the bodhisattva who has formed the initial resolution should not produce a depressed thought, nor settle upon one.

“Bhaishajyasena, many are the Dharmas I have taught. Bhaishajyasena, I engaged in arduous practices for many hundreds of thousands of countless eons, not for the sake of enjoying sovereignty, not for the sake of the enjoyment of a way of life, nor for the sake of enjoying power. I engaged in arduous practices, Bhaishajyasena, for the purpose of understanding the nature of reality. And I did not actualize the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment until I heard this dharma-paryaya. Bhaishajyasena, at the very moment I heard this Sanghata dharma-paryaya, on that very day I awakened into unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. Bhaishajyasena, profound is this dharma-paryaya. Bhaishajyasena, hearing this dharma-paryaya is rare even within hundreds of thousands of countless eons.

“The birth of a tathagata, Bhaishajyasena, is extremely rare. Very rare, Bhaishajyasena, are those who retain this dharma-paryaya in memory. All those who hear this dharma-paryaya will realize the unsurpassed, perfectly completed enlightenment. For 100,000 eons, Bhaishajyasena, these beings will surpass samsara. They will acquire the pure buddha-field. They will also realize the way of cessation. They will be able to realize the support. They will be able to realize the points of skillfulness. They will be able to realize the points of skillfulness in the intuitive knowledge. They will be able to realize the cessation of the points of skillfulness. Bhaishajyasena, what meaning is said through ‘cessation’?”

He said: “Blessed One, ‘the point of Dharma’ is the meaning said.”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, what is the ‘the point of Dharma’?”

He said: “Blessed One, the Dharma is said to be: ‘resoluteness,’ ‘morality,’ and ‘possessed of morality.’ Such is said to be the Dharma treasure. Blessed One, this comprises the Dharma treasure.”

The Blessed One said: “Excellent, excellent, Bhaishajyasena, that you think it is proper to ask the Tathagata on this matter.”

He said: “Blessed One, for what reason do tathagatas appear in the world?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, those who know the provision of great learning, they know the appearance of the tathagatas. Having known the appearance of the tathagatas, they know that this appearance of tathagatas is the place of happiness. And when the tathagatas appear in the world, then, the beings know all Dharmas; know skill in means. They know mundane and supramundane dharmas and know the mundane and supramundane types of knowledges.”

He said: “Having known the knowledge, how do they understand nirvana?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, they know the Dharma itself. Having known the Dharma itself, Bhaishajyasena, they create the initial advantage of those who know the collection of Dharmas. Having grasped what is righteous (Dharmic), there will be profit. It is as if, Bhaishajyasena, there were a certain man, a merchant. Travelling for profit, he would set out with others’ gold and his own, the load of a thousand men. As he sets out, his parents say: ‘Listen, son of the lineage. Now you have taken others’ gold and your own, the load of a thousand men. Therefore, you should keep this gold safely, and none of it must be wasted. After you make a great profit, keep the gold safely. That will be a great profit for us, and we will live happily.’ That son would also say to his parents: ‘I will do so.’ Having said that and

taking the gold, he would go. Then, the merchant, by carelessness, would lose all the gold within just one month and disperses it. Then, that man, thinking intensely and with a heart pierced by the arrows of sorrow, would not enter his own house through shrinking and shame. Those parents of his would hear, 'Your son squandered all that gold.' Having heard that, they lose hope, with hearts pierced by the arrows of sorrow. Tearing their clothes, lamenting and crying aloud, they wail thus: 'An ill son was born in our house as our son. The whole house, indeed, is ruined. Having made us helpless, he has made us slaves and workers.' Then those parents of his, with hearts filled with thoughts of anxiety, died in despair. Then, the son heard: 'My parents died in despair.' The son also died in despair. Just so, Bhaishajyasena, the Tathagata, on his part, explains this matter. Those beings who have no faith in my message, cut off from the great Dharma jewel, die in despair with hearts pierced by the arrows of sorrow at the time of death. Just as those parents, because of the gold, crying and lamenting in despair with hearts pierced by the arrows of sorrow, died with minds full of trouble and afflicted by the arrows of sorrow, because of the gold of others' and of their own, just so, Bhaishajyasena, those who do not have faith in my message will lament; being tormented, they suffer grievous pain later, during the time of death.

"Having enjoyed the [results of] good actions done in the past, they do not perform further good actions after reaching a happy field. There, exhausting their merits and their hearts being pierced by the arrows of sorrow, at that time, at that moment, having seen the fearful and dreadful birth in hell, in the womb of animals, and in the Yama-world, it occurs to him, thus, at the time of death: 'Who will be a protector for me, so that I do not see the regions of hell, animals, and pretas and the realm of Yama and so that I may not suffer grievous pains there?' While he talks wildly and approaches the next world, his parents speak thus: 'What shall we do, dear son?' And they addressed him in stanzas too:

There, indeed, the pain of disease,
great fear cannot seize you.
Son, death is not upon you.
Fear of death is for the sick.
Release from the danger and terror of disease will be yours.
Be steadfast, O son!
You will triumph over this.

"The son said:

My consciousness is constricted. My body is greatly pained.
All my limbs are painful. I see my own death.
My two eyes do not see, and my ears do not hear.
Never again shall I obtain hearing. The body does not cope with anything.
My limbs pain me, as inanimate pieces of wood.
Console me, O mother, by saying, 'Your death has not come.'

"The mother said:

Son, do not say so, please. Do not fill me with alarm.
Your body is affected with fever, and you see things inverted.

"The son said:

I do not see fever in my body:
neither a disease nor does it pain.
I see dreadful death; my body is violently attacked.
I myself see my whole body oppressed with misery.
Unto whom shall I go for refuge? Who will be my savior?

“The parents said:

‘Son, the anger of the deva is against you.
By performing a sacrifice to the devas all will be well.’

“The son said:

Do it yourselves.
Do it in such a way that all will be well for me.
Go quickly, and ask the temple priest.

“Then his parents, having gone to the temple, had the priest offer incense to the deva. After offering the incense to the deva, the temple priest said this: ‘The deva is angry with you. You must make an offering to the deva; a sacrifice must be performed. A victim should be killed, and a man should be killed, too. Then, your son will be delivered from the fever.’ Then, at that moment, those parents thought: ‘What shall we do? We are poor. If the deva is not pleased, our son will die, or else he will favor us. Therefore, though very poor, we will bring a victim, a man.’ Then, having gone quickly to their own house and having sold everything, all the belongings there were in the house, they went to buy a victim. Then, they would say to a certain man thus, ‘Sir, man. Give us gold. We ask for it on loan. It will be good if we are able to give it back on the tenth day. If we are not able to give it back, then we two will become your slaves, your servants.’ They took that gold and went to buy a victim, a man. Then the victim, the man, was bought by them both; but the man did not know they would deprive him of life. Then, those parents, becoming giddy, did not reenter their own house. Having gone to the temple, they addressed that temple priest: ‘Now, perform this sacrifice quickly.’ Then, the parents killed that victim themselves and deprived that man of life. Then, the temple priest kindled the oblation of fat for the offering, beginning the sacrifice. Then, that deva, descending, said thus, ‘Your son has been accepted by me.’ Then, those parents, blooming with happiness and delight, said, ‘It is better that our son live, though we will be slaves.’ There, those parents worshipped the deva well and turned back to their own home. When they reached it, they saw that their son had died. Then, those parents, in grief and misery, with hearts pierced by the arrows of sorrow, died in despair on that very spot. This, Bhaishajyasena, is precisely how the association with nonvirtuous friends should be seen.”

He said: “Blessed One, I wish to ask a question. One Gone to Bliss, I wish to ask a question.”

He said: “Ask, Bhaishajyasena.”

He said: “Blessed One, where were those beings born? What were their destinies?”

He said: “Enough, Bhaishajyasena. What is it to you to ask of this matter?”

He said: “I ask, Blessed One. I ask, One Gone to Bliss.”

The Blessed One said: “There, Bhaishajyasena, the mother was born in the great hell Raurava. The father was born in the great hell Samghata. The son was born in the great hell Tapanā. The temple priest was born in the great hell Mahā Avīci.”

He said: “Blessed One, where was the innocent man born? What was his destiny?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, here it should be known that the birth of the innocent man was in the community of the Trayastrimśa devas.”

He said: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason for that man to be born in the community of the Trayastrimśa devas?”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, Bhaishajyasena. At the time of his death, while he was being deprived of life, that man placed his faith in the Tathagata and said these words: ‘Homage be to the Blessed One, the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha.’ This he did once. By that root of good, Bhaishajyasena, he will enjoy the happiness of the Trayastrimśa devas for sixty eons. He will become one who remembers past lives for eighty eons. From birth to birth, he will be free of all sorrows. As soon

as he is born, all his sorrows will be extinguished. Surely, all those beings cannot wholly extinguish them.”

When this was spoken, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, how is it that not all beings are able to extinguish them?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, vigor must be exercised.”

He said: “Blessed One, what is the application of vigor?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, listen. Vigor is said to be the display of fruits: namely, the fruit of stream-enterer is a stage of vigor. The fruit of once-returner is a stage of vigor. The fruit of non-returner is a stage of vigor. The fruit of the condition of being an arhat and the cessation of an arhat is a stage of vigor. The fruit of pratyekabuddhahood, with the knowledge of the fruit of pratyekabuddhahood, is a stage of vigor. Also the fruit of the stage of the bodhisattva, the stage of realization, is a stage of vigor. Bhaishajyasena, these are known as the stages of vigor.”

He said: “Blessed One, how should a stream-enterer and the fruit of a stream-enterer be shown?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, it is as if a certain man should plant a tree. From the tree that has been planted, a sprout grows out on the same day. On that very day on which the sprout grew out, that sprout grew downward to the extent of a yojana. And similarly, a second man planted a tree. On that day, by being shaken by the wind, no sprouts grew. Then, that man would uproot that tree from that place. Then, the other man would start to dispute with him, quarrelling, abusing, and attacking him: ‘For what reason did you dig up my property?’ And at that time, at that moment, the king so heard, ‘Two men quarrel and attack each other and are disputing.’ The king would send a messenger there, to the two: ‘Go, sir, man. Bring those two men.’ That man, having replied, ‘So be it, Your Majesty,’ having run quickly, said thus to those two men, ‘The king summons the two of you.’ Then, at that time, one man there becomes afraid and alarmed, but the second man was not frightened or alarmed. Having been led there, where the king was, they were placed before the king. Then, the king spoke thus, to those two, ‘Why did the two of you, sirs, dispute in a quarrel, abuse and attack each other?’ Thereupon, those two men, rising up, said this to that king, ‘Listen, Your Majesty. We have no land of our own. On a rented piece of land, a tree was planted. On the very day that it was planted, a sprout, leaves, flowers, and fruits appeared, half unripe and half ripe. On that very day, on that plot of land, a tree was planted by this second man. No sprouts grew from that tree, nor did leaves, flowers, or fruits appear because it was shaken by the wind. Great king, the roots of that tree did not go down a yojana. Therefore, this man disputes with me, saying, ‘It is your fault.’ Moreover, Your Majesty, examine for yourself and know. There, no fault in me is seen.’ Then the king, having summoned his thirty million ministers and having assembled them, said thus, ‘Do you speak?’ The ministers said, ‘Great King, what shall we say?’ The king said, ‘Have you seen or heard of a sprout growing on the very day a tree is planted, and that leaves, flowers, and fruits grow, too, half ripe and half unripe? This should be decided by you, sirs.’ Thereupon, those ministers, having risen from the seats, said thus to the king. ‘Great King, it is not proper for us to make a decision on this, and we are not able to make a decision on this. This is a wonder, great king. This man should be questioned further.’ The king said, ‘Speak up, sir, man. Is this matter true which you state?’ He said, ‘Great King, this matter is true.’ The king said:

I have not heard nor seen at all. These words of yours, that “on the day a tree was planted, it sprouted on that very day,” are hard to believe.

You say that leaves, flowers, and fruits were yielded on that very day. With folded hands, that man spoke thus, to the king,

“Go, plant a tree yourself, and see a sprout grow up.”

“Thereupon, the king went out with the thirty million ministers. He also had those two men imprisoned. Then, the king planted a tree himself. But the tree gave neither sprouts, nor leaves, nor flowers, nor fruits. Then, the king said thus, in anger, ‘Go, sirs. Quickly bring wood-cutting axes.’ As soon as they were brought, in anger he felled that tree that was planted by that man, and on which leaves, flowers, and fruit appeared. And when that single tree was felled, twelve trees appeared. The twelve trees were felled;

twenty-four trees appeared, with roots, leaves, fruits, and sprouts, made of seven kinds of jewels. Then, from those twenty-four trees there appeared twenty-four cocks, with crests and beaks of gold, and wings made of the seven kinds of jewels. Then, the king, overcome with anger, taking the axe in his own hands, struck a tree. When it was struck, liquid nectar flowed from that tree. Then, the king, becoming agitated mentally, ordered, 'Go, release those two men from imprisonment.' They said, 'So be it, Your Majesty,' and having quickly run at once, they released those two men from the prison and led them to where the tree was. Then the king asked, 'Why is it that the tree you planted, having been one, when felled grew twice as many until it reached twenty-four; and that tree planted by me neither gave sprouts, nor leaves, nor flowers, nor fruit?' Then the man said thus, 'Great king, the kind of merit that I have is not found in you.' Then, those thirty million ministers, placing both knees on the ground, said thus to that man, 'You should rule. The former king is not fit.' Then, that man replied to those ministers in stanzas:

'Sovereignty is of no use to me, nor is corn or wealth.
My faith is placed in the buddhas.
May I become supreme among two-footed beings.
May I go to the sphere of nirvana, where the Tathagata dwells, in calm. May I teach you
the Dharma, which leads to the city of nirvana.'
Seated cross-legged, then, he confessed: 'I have done evil in the past; I came into the
prison of the king. But having made a resolution right there, may my evil acts be
exhausted.'

"Then, those twenty-four cocks struck musical instruments with their diamond beaks. Then, at that time, at that moment, 32,000 pavilions appeared; and each pavilion appeared to be twenty-five yojanas in size. In each pavilion twenty-five cocks with golden beaks, golden crests, and golden faces appeared. They uttered human speech:

It is not proper in you, great king, that the tree was felled by you. Twenty-four trees, of
the 100 million trees, stood before him. Because of evil actions, you will consume
undesirable fruit. Do you know what person it was who planted the tree?

"The king said:

I do not know this matter. Explain, great ascetic. What great being was he, who planted
the tree?

"The birds said:

He indeed is the lamp of the world; he will arise as the leader,
releasing all beings from the bondage of birth in samsara.

"The king said:

Who was the second man whose tree did not grow? What are the evil actions done by
him? Expound it, birds.

"The birds said:

He of whom the tree did not grow is the foolish Devadatta.
How could his tree grow, without his doing good actions?

"Then, at that time, at that moment, the thirty million ministers, having heard this dharma-paryaya, all

became bodhisattvas established in the ten stages, possessing intuitive knowledge. And that king, being established in the ten stages, obtained a realization of the good Dharma.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, that thirty million people gained intuitive knowledge and were established in the ten stages?”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, Bhaishajyasena. I shall explain.”

Then, the Blessed One displayed a smile at that moment. Then, in the very instant that the Blessed One smiled, 840,000 rays of numerous and various colors, many hundreds of thousands of colors, such as blue, yellow, red, white, madder-color, crystal, and silver, issued out of the mouth of the Blessed One. Those rays, having illuminated the limitless and incalculable worlds, turning back again and having circumambulated the Blessed One three times, vanished in the head of the Blessed One. Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having arisen from his seat, covering one shoulder with his garment, placing his right knee on the earth, and making obeisance with folded hands there where the Blessed One was, spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, for displaying a smile? Not without any cause, not without any reason, do tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas, smile.”

The Blessed One said: “Do you see, Bhaishajyasena, the whole body of people coming from all around the worlds of the four directions in my presence?”

He said: “Not so, Blessed One. I do not see.”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, then make a survey and see the multitude.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having surveyed, saw a tree appearing in the eastern direction, 7,000 yojanas in extent. There, on one side, a body of people 25,000 million in number was assembled, but they did not speak, nor converse, nor talk, nor speak together, nor eat, nor rise, nor walk. They waited in silence. In the southern direction a tree appeared, 7,000 yojanas in extent. There, a body of people, 25,000 million in number, was assembled. But they did not talk, nor converse, nor speak together, nor speak, nor rise, nor walk. They waited in silence. In the western direction, a tree appeared 7,000 yojanas in extent. There, a body of 25,000 million in number was assembled. But they did not converse, nor talk, nor speak together, nor chat, nor rise, nor walk. They waited in silence. In the northern direction a tree appeared, 7,000 yojanas in extent. There, a body of people, 25,000 million in number, was assembled. But they did not talk, nor converse, nor speak together, nor speak, nor rise, nor walk. They waited in silence. In the zenith a tree appeared, 7,000 yojanas in extent. There, a body of people, 25,000 million in number, was assembled. But they did not talk, nor converse, nor speak together, nor speak, nor rise, nor walk; they waited in silence. In the nadir a tree appeared, 7,000 yojanas in extent. There, a body of people, 25,000 million in number, was assembled. But they did not talk, nor converse, nor speak together, nor speak, nor rise, nor walk. They waited in silence.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said to the Blessed One: “I wish to ask a certain matter from the Blessed One, the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha, if the Blessed One would give an opportunity to be asked for the solution of the question.”

When this was spoken, the Blessed One said thus to the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Bhaishajyasena, ask whatever you desire. I shall satisfy your thoughts by solving each question asked.”

When this was spoken, the bodhisattva, the great being, said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, why is it that such a body of people in the worlds in the four directions have come and stay? Why is it that a body of people, 500 million in number, from the space between zenith and nadir have come and stay? They do not converse with, nor talk to, nor chat with, nor pay homage to, nor speak with, the Blessed One. Neither do they rise, nor do they walk. They wait in silence. Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, go. Ask the tathagatas yourself: ‘From what world have such bodies of people come?’ ”

He said: “Blessed One, by whose miraculous power shall I go? By the miraculous power of the Tathagata, or else by my own miraculous power?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, go by your own miraculous power, and again come back through the miraculous power of the Tathagata.”

Thereupon the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having circumambulated the Blessed One three times, disappeared in that very place.

Now, beyond ninety-six millions of worlds from this world, there is a world named Chandrapradipa. There stays, exists, and lives the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha named Chandravati-kshetra. He was preaching the Dharma, placed in front, surrounded by 80,000 million bodhisattvas, great beings. Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena arrived there, where the world Chandrapradipa was.

Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena approached there where the Blessed One was and, having approached and worshipped with his head at the feet of the Blessed One Chandravati-kshetra, the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha, stood in front. Having stood and having made obeisance with folded hands there where the Blessed One was, he said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, I have come passing 96,000 million worlds, from the buddha-field of the Blessed One Shakyamuni Tathagata in the Saha world. Blessed One, nowhere have I seen so many beings as I saw there. Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, that in the presence of the Blessed One Shakyamuni Tathagata, in the Saha world, a great body of people has assembled, has come from the ten directions? I do not see staying here as many as those who are remaining there.”

That Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, in that very place they wander about and remain.”

He said: “Blessed One, how so then?”

The Blessed One said: “As beings produced from insensate trees.”

He said: “Blessed One, whence has it been seen, whence has it been heard, that people are born of insensate trees?”

That Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, have you not seen and have you not heard that people are born of an insensate tree?”

He said: “Blessed One, neither have I seen nor have I heard that people are born of an insensate tree.”

That Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, do you wish to see? If so, I will show you now.”

He said: “Blessed One, I desire it. One Gone to Bliss, I desire it.”

Then, the Blessed One Chandravati-kshetra Tathagata, at that moment, stretched out his arms, embellished of a hundred merits. From that arm there appeared 100,000 million bodies of people, each body of people having stretched out a hundred arms and spread various perfumes and unguents on the Tathagata.

Then, that Blessed One Chandravati-kshetra Tathagata, addressed the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Do you see, Bhaishajyasena, that such a body of people scatters various perfumes, flowers, and unguents on the Tathagata?”

He said: “I see, Blessed One. I see, One Gone to Bliss.”

The Blessed One said: “Thus, the insensate bodies of people appear. Thus, the insensate men are born.”

Thereupon, those hundred arms of each one of the 100,000 million multitudes were spread out. Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having seen that, said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, why is this? One Gone to Bliss, why is this? Of these people, a hundred arms were spread out in just an instant. Blessed One, if the hundred-armed ones are not to be released, how much less are the two-armed people released?”

The Blessed One said: “Just so, Bhaishajyasena; the insensate beings are born and insensate beings cease to be born. Bhaishajyasena, it should also be understood that our body is insensate.”

He said: “Blessed One, who are those beings who are young? And who are old?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, there are young ones, and there are old ones.”

He said: “Blessed One, who are the young ones, and who are the old ones?”

The Blessed One said: “Those who were spread out now were the old ones. Those who were born of trees were the young ones.”

He said: “I wish to see the young ones.”

Then, the Blessed One Chandravati-kshetra Tathagata stretched out the right palm. Then, from the ten directions, 100,000 million bodies of people arrived. From the nadir and zenith the bodies of 50 million people arrived. Those bodies of people, having arrived and having worshipped with their heads at the feet of the Blessed One, did not converse nor talk with the Tathagata, but remained in silence.

Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said thus: “Blessed One, why do these beings not converse, nor talk with the Tathagata, but remain in silence?”

The Blessed One said: “Do you not know, Bhaishajyasena? The insensate beings in this land neither speak nor converse, nor understand the corpus of Dharma teachings. What is the reason for that? Bhaishajyasena, all the young ones here do not understand birth, do not understand cessation, and have seen neither old age nor disease, grief, lamenting, separation from dear ones, union with those not dear, death, nor untimely death. Even having seen all those bitter sufferings, they are not moved to exert themselves. How will they understand? Bhaishajyasena, they must be taught again and again.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, from where did the young ones, those who do not know the Dharma, come? From where do they fall? Where will they be born?”

The Blessed One said: “Listen, Bhaishajyasena. The human form that they take is not made by a jeweler. It is not made by a blacksmith. It is not made by a carpenter. It is not made by a potter. It does not appear through fear of the king. It is produced on account of negative karma, in conjunction with the union of a man and woman. Again and again they teach crafts to those beings, and endless sharp pains occur to them. There, they experience sharp pains, the ripening of the negative deeds performed in the past. Bhaishajyasena, those young ones who do not rise and who experience such grievous pains have come to this very place. Bhaishajyasena, for this reason they do not converse and do not speak together. Therefore, Bhaishajyasena, those young ones, not knowing the good, do not know birth and do not know cessation, and they will not obtain the body of human beings. Bhaishajyasena, they are called ‘young ones.’”

He said: “Blessed One, how are the young ones born and how do they cease?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, it is as if a certain man came to touch fire with a piece of wood. Then, gradually, that piece of wood would glow with fire. Just so, Bhaishajyasena, the human body has its first origin. And being born, he senses feeling.”

He said: “Here, who is well born? Who has passed to parinirvana?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, the Buddha indeed is born well. The Tathagata indeed has passed to parinirvana. It is just as if, Bhaishajyasena, a king should imprison a man in some dungeon in a dark house. There, that man sees the gloomy dungeon inside the house, after entering the dark house. Then, some other man, who has experienced grievous pains earlier, would think, ‘This man is ruined. His life will be lost as he has not experienced pain.’ Having brought fire to that place he would place a small fire inside the house, and that man, who is imprisoned, would see the flame of the fire. Having seen it, he would be encouraged and would nourish his courage. Then that fire, for some reason, would blaze forth, and by that blazing of the fire that house would catch fire entirely, and that man also would burn to death in that very place. Then, the king, having heard of his being burned, would be affected with anxiety. It would occur to him thus, ‘I shall no more imprison anybody in my own dominion.’ Then the king would thus encourage the people living in his own dominion, ‘Sirs, fear not. Be not alarmed. Security will be yours. There will be no more beating or imprisonment in my dominion. I will not destroy the life of any being. You, sirs, should be fearless.’ Bhaishajyasena, just so; the Tathagata has destroyed all afflictions and has cured all diseases. Just as that man burnt up his body through the burning of the house, he advances for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of the beings. He would release beings from bondage and imprisonment. In the same manner, the Tathagata releases beings. Being himself free of the impurities of

attachment, hatred, and delusion, appearing in the world as a light to all beings, he releases the beings, young and old, from the states of hell and the bodies of animals, pretas, and asuras.”

Then, as far as the atmosphere above, these stanzas issued forth:

Ah, the field, the victorious field, the excellent field, is well prepared, There where seeds,
once sown, do not perish at all.
The buddha-field, the victorious field, is the lauded message of the Victorious One.
The teacher develops his skillfulness to encompass all beings.
Established in the sphere of nirvana, he is seen on this earth.
Having calmed the whole world, he purifies the Buddha-recipient.
He releases the new ones and releases the old ones.
Having released all the beings from the triple world, and having fastened the doorways of
the hells and released the animals and the pretas, he has made calm in this world and
happiness in the next.

Thereupon, the Blessed One displayed a smile and said:

It is excellent to see the excellent ones, excellent to see the Buddha. Excellent is the field
that is the good quality of the Dharma.
Seeing the entirety of the Sangha is excellent.
Excellent is the exposition of the Sanghata, the extinguisher of all evil.
Those who hear this sutra will attain the supreme path.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, making obeisance with folded hands there where the Blessed One was, said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, for displaying a smile?”

The Blessed One said: “Do you see, son of the lineage, these young ones?”

He said: “I see, Blessed One. I see, One Gone to Bliss.”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, this very day all of them will become bodhisattvas established in the ten stages.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, standing 80,000 yojanas up in the sky, and 80,000 million devaputras rained a rain of flowers upon the Blessed One. Having seen him, the young ones all folded their hands and paid homage. Then, the bodhisattva, the great being, just as he was standing in the sky, uttered these words. At that time, he filled the three thousand great thousand worlds with his voice. The beings who were born in the thirty-two great hells heard that voice. The thirty-two groups of devas also heard that voice. The three thousand great thousand worlds trembled in six different ways. Eighty-four thousand naga kings were shaken in the great ocean. Thirty thousand million rakshasas came to this planet. Twenty-five thousand million pretas, yakshas, and rakshasas, coming from the metropolis of Adakavati, stood before the Blessed One, gathered in a great assembly. Then, the Blessed One preached the Dharma to those young ones. The bodhisattvas, the great beings, of 100,000 million billion worlds in the ten directions came, each by their own miraculous power.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, making obeisance with folded hands there where the Blessed One was, said thus to the Blessed One: “Many, Blessed One, many, One Gone to Bliss, are the bodhisattvas assembled and seated together. Blessed One, many are the devas and nagas assembled and seated together. Also, numerous rakshasas and pretas, having come from the metropolis of Adakavati, are assembled and seated together for the purpose of hearing the Dharma.”

Thereupon the Blessed One addressed the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Come, son of the lineage.”

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having descended from above through the force of his own miraculous power and having made obeisance with folded hands there where the Blessed

One was, spoke thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, one says, ‘the mass of Dharma, the mass of Dharma.’ Blessed One, what is this ‘mass of Dharma’?”

The Blessed One said, “Son of the lineage, it is called ‘the mass of Dharma’ when someone searches out chastity and, by searching out chastity, avoids all evils. Do you see, son of the lineage? The young ones avoid non-chastity. They will become possessors of dharani power and also will become endowed with all Dharmas.”

He said: “By what means, Blessed One, have many beings assembled to hear the mass of Dharma?”

Thereupon, the Blessed One addressed the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Bhaishajyasena, there are many beings who do not hear that birth indeed is suffering. They do not hear that aging is suffering. They do not hear that sickness is suffering, or the suffering of grief, the suffering of lamentation, the suffering of separation from dear ones, the suffering of union with those not dear, or that death, which causes all sorrow, carries away life from the body. Bhaishajyasena, this is called ‘all-suffering.’”

Thereupon, the young ones, having heard this instruction, making obeisance with folded hands there, where the Blessed One was, said thus: “Blessed One, must we die indeed?”

The Blessed One said: “Indeed, you, sons of the lineage, and all beings, must die.”

They said: “Blessed One, how does the time of death approach?”

The Blessed One said: “At the time of death, sons of the lineage, when the final moment of consciousness occurs, three winds - a wind called ‘the cessation of consciousness,’ a wind called ‘the distraction of consciousness,’ a wind called ‘disturbing consciousness’ – disarrange, shake, and disturb the final moment of consciousness at the time of death.”

They said: “Blessed One, what are the three that destroy the body at the time of death, when the final cessation of consciousness occurs?”

The Blessed One said: “Friends, those that destroy the body are called ‘cutting,’ ‘piercing’ and ‘injuring.’”

They said: “Blessed One, what is this, called ‘the body’?”

The Blessed One said: “Friends, it is called ‘blazing,’ ‘abiding in fire,’ ‘causing phlegm,’ ‘discharging mucus,’ ‘frequenting cemeteries,’ ‘stupid,’ ‘heavy with burdens,’ ‘completely suffering from birth,’ ‘fully agitated by birth,’ ‘completely defeated by life,’ ‘death,’ and ‘separation from what is dear.’ Friends, these are the names of the body.”

They said: “How does one die? And how does one live?”

The Blessed One said: “O long-lived ones, what is called ‘consciousness’ dies. O long-lived ones, what is called ‘merit’ lives on. Friends, the body dies, that which is held together with millions of nerves, held together with 84,000 pores, held together with 12,000 limbs, and held together with more than 360 bones. Eighty-four classes of insects live inside the body. Death occurs to all breathing beings, and cessation which is death also occurs. Then, all the breathing beings become hopeless. When a man dies, an agitation of the wind stirs all the breathing beings [in the body] to devour each other. Then, they suffer miserable pains. Some, for their part, suffer on account of sons, and others are afflicted with all sorrows of suffering, such as suffering on account of daughters and suffering on account of relatives. All, pierced by the arrows of sorrow, begin to devour one another. All of them gradually eat each other, and finally only two breathing beings remain. They battle for seven days, and at the end of the seventh day, there, one breathing being having conquered, one escapes. O long-lived ones, what is that which is called ‘Dharma’? What do you think? Just as all the breathing beings died by quarreling with each other, similarly, foolish common people get into quarrel with each other and battle with one another. They are not afraid of birth, not afraid of old age, not afraid of disease, not afraid of death. Just as those two breathing beings battle, similarly, foolish common people battle with one another. Then, at the time of death they are addressed by righteous men, ‘Sir, why do you feel confidence? How is it that you saw no misery in the world?’ He said, ‘O long-lived one, I saw the misery of birth, I saw the misery of old age, and I saw the misery of disease. I saw all the misery after death.’ He said, ‘How was it that you did not

create the roots of good that were to be created? Then, how was it that you did not create the roots of virtue, the mass of Dharma, which lead to the happiness of both worlds? Friends, secondly I ask, why did you not create the collection of good virtues so that you might be released from birth and death? How did you not reflect on the fundamental mental comprehension? How did you not hear the sound of the beating of the gong on earth? Did you not see people giving alms and planting the roots of virtue in the tathagata-field? Did you not see the giving of perfume or garland or lamp or hard and soft foods to the Tathagata and did you not see the four groups – bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasaka, and upasika – being contented, these four groups who are devoted to the message?’ Thus, they speak words for his good. ‘For you, O king, have you not done ill? O, man! Are you done coming to Jambudvipa?’

At that time, the Dharma king uttered verses of exhortation to that dead man:

Having seen the arising of the Tathagata, having heard the beating of the gong, and having heard the preaching of the Dharma, peaceful and leading to nirvana, how is it that merit was not created by you, for the happiness in this world and in the one beyond? You will undergo suffering in hell as a fruit of karma that is unwanted.

Then the man replied:

I was of a stupid mind through following evil companions
and evil deeds I have done with a mind deluded by desire.
A dreadful result has befallen me for following desire.
I have caused harm to living beings and destruction to what belongs to the Sangha.
By my own wicked self, I broke down stupas.
I have spoken coarse words, and my mother I have tormented.
I am conscious of the crimes done in my own body.
I see my birth in the dread hell of Raurava.
Having undergone pain in the Samghata and similarly in the Pratapana, I shall experience sharp pains in the Maha Avici.
I shall cry out with extreme grief in the hell Maha Padma.
I shall be born in the Kalasutra, in great fear, 100 times.
The beings in the hells, having been struck down, perceive that fear again. They fall 100 yojanas into great fear.
They will not find a doorway again, having fallen into the pitcher.
One thousand knives will appear in the hell named Kshura.
One hundred thousand million knives are produced in front.
With those, they split the limbs on account of my own evil actions.
Vastly terrible tempest-tossings cut up this whole body.
I must undergo such pains in hell.
All beings will see my body extremely distressed.

The wealth of others, not given, I carried off for household needs. So too my sons, daughters, brother and sister, also my parents, friends, troops of relatives, servants, also workmen, dependents, cattle, and domestic animals likewise: I went astray through my misdeeds.

I went astray by silver and gold vessels and similarly by fine clothes and in order to construct a house.

Having constructed a well-painted house, crowded with men and women, my uncontrolled mind was delighted with playing music on the lute.

I anointed my body with fragrant water, and I also felt no gratitude.

O, insensate body! I went astray because of you.

No protector is found for me, nor will anyone be so later.

At the torment of the body in the vastly terrible tempest-tossings, having enjoyed sweet savories with my tongue, many splendid garlands were tied on my head.

My eye was misled by beauty; there is no protection from the eye.

I saw that the two eyes were a cause of evils. But in what I did further, I was impelled by

the ear.

My arms were pierced with diamonds, bangles were worn on both arms, rings were put on the fingers, and strings of pearls were worn on the neck.

Both legs were also fully adorned, and chains made of gold were placed on them. All sorts of jewels were worn on the body, and similarly golden straps too were worn.

Having enjoyed excessively great riches, my mind also became extremely delighted. I, having sensed the feeling of very soft things, was very desirous of their view, things such as carpets and bedding.

I would indulge myself in frolics. Bathing with perfumed water of good quality, I would anoint myself with perfumes, with heavenly riches such as camphor and with sandalwood.

I would fill the air with fragrances, and having processed fine colors, I would anoint myself with musk, sweet-scented jasmine oil, jasmine, champaka, and so forth.

Having daubed them on, I would clad myself in fine muslin and white clothes, too.

Getting down from the back of an elephant, I would desire to ride on the back of a horse.

I would consider myself a king, and the people in front of me would run away.

I would be familiar with female attendants, too, who are fully trained in singing and dancing.

Animals cause no injury, but many animals were killed by me.

In this manner I did evil without knowing the other world.

I would eat the flesh of others, and on account of that, this irresistible misery has approached me.

I did not know what death was.

I had been with an ignorant mind.

I nurtured my body, too.

Today death has approached me, and there is no protector indeed.

All you relatives, why look at me, into my face?

On what account do you tear your clothes?

Why do you cry and utter lamentations? Why do you tear your hair?

Why too do you draw blood? Why do you scatter dust on the head?

Why do you beat your chest? I led a life of miseries, and why do you hold on to the family that should be renounced?

My body will be devoured by wolves, by dogs, crows, and birds.

To nurture this body is of no use. Being possessed by the serpent of death, a man will always be born.

To be delivered from this fear, such medicines should be served. That medicine, given to me by some physician, will never be what is needed to save me from the serpent of lust.

Now, the Dharma medicine should be given to me just at the moment of death.

Do not give me meat and nurture this body, which will undoubtedly die. Why should misery be offered? Why should a mass of evil be received?

This body has been fully nurtured indeed, made to be destroyed.

Why do you sons and daughters look at me with your eyes?

There is no reason, and for what purpose should I be saved from this sickness?

You all, sons and daughters, do not cause any ruin.

For the sake of nurturing you, others' wealth has been stolen by me.

Now, the time of death has come. Why should there be despair?

Birth in undesirable states is very fearful, and dying is also full of suffering.

Sensation, consciousness, conditioned states, touch, perception, desire, ignorance, and delusions, these beget painful consequences indeed.

Birth in a wicked family – there indeed one will be bound with misery.

Thinking that religious merit is little, I caused misery to other beings. Offerings and moral observance have disappeared, and I turned away from the Dharma, still not knowing birth.

Not perceiving that they are troubled by the serpent of lust, from where could ignorant beings get release, without getting lost?

Not having known the meaning of release, and through deception, I did evils.
Foolishly deranged by lusts, the mind is completely disturbed always.
With all sorts of fetters, the body is fully ablaze with fire.
The body wanders with complete distortion to where there is no happiness, not knowing even whence happiness is found.
Happiness is offered in the buddha-field.
The wheel of Dharma is the best of medicines.
Ethical conduct and the truth of ethical conducts are the pure voice of the Tathagata.

Thereupon, the Blessed One spoke to the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Bhaishajyasena, in the same manner, the beings lament at the time of death without having any fruits of well-performed actions to be ripened and without having anyone to protect them.”

Having said this, the Blessed One uttered these verses, too:

By doing evil deeds, one falls into the hells and will wear burning garments, will drink liquid iron out of thirst.
Glowing embers of fire will fall over the bodies.
The burning is extremely irresistible. Great are the fears in the hells. There the bodies are completely burnt, not knowing enjoyments, and not knowing even the Dharma.
Foolish beings, going astray by non-Dharma, will not acquire even a little happiness.
One who has faith and is perfected with morality, who has wisdom and great asceticism, who associates with virtuous friends, will soon become a tathagata. The Buddha arises in the world in order to hold all beings who have undertaken to practice the best of diligence; and similarly with a compassionate mind, to preach the Dharma of good action. Bhaishajyasena, you have set upon the best and pure conduct.
Having listened to these words, make the most splendid achievement and see the complete release from rebirth, and see the Buddha, the leader who has a famous voice.
He is the father and the mother of the world, and he is called ‘bodhichitta.’ One who preaches this Dharma in the world is the best virtuous friend and is hard to find.
Those who respectfully hear the preaching of the Buddha will become supreme buddhas, Ones Gone to Bliss.
Those who respect the sublime sons of the Buddha, all those beings will be released and will be protected in the world.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, why is it that the side of this mountain is trembling?”

When this was said, the Blessed One spoke thus to the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Bhaishajyasena, look carefully.”

The bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena looked and saw the earth split apart in the four directions; and from the crevices where the earth had split, twenty million people emerged from the nadir, and twenty million people emerged from the zenith.

Thereupon those young ones, having observed that, said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, who are these who have been born here?”

The Blessed One said: “Have you seen this mass of people?”

They said: “Blessed One, we have seen.”

The Blessed One said: “This mass of people was born for the sake of your happiness.”

They said: “Will there be death for these beings also?”

The Blessed One said: “Friends, it will be so. For all beings there will be death.”

Thereupon, these aforementioned young ones, who had been born first, having made obeisance with folded hands there where the Blessed One was, said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, we cannot bear to see birth and death again.”

The Blessed One said: “Do you wish to gain the power of energy?”

They said: “We have seen the Tathagata in person. Later, we heard with delight the Dharma we requested to hear. We have seen the Sangha, the assembly of the disciples of the Tathagata, and have seen the great forces of the miraculous power of the bodhisattva. Blessed One, in the same manner, we cannot bear to see birth and death.”

Thereupon the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, through miraculous power, together with 500 bodhisattvas, having arisen from their seats, all proceeded into the sky through miraculous power and, having seated themselves cross-legged, entered a state of meditation. From all their bodies there appeared lions, tigers, serpents, and elephants, and they exhibited many transformations through great miraculous powers. They sat cross-legged on the tops of mountains twenty yojanas in height, transformed themselves into 10,000 million suns and moons, and caused those suns and moons to descend.

Thereupon, these young ones said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, that there is a great ray of light and that great miraculous transformations have appeared in the world?”

The Blessed One said: “Sons of the lineage, have you seen those suns and moons?”

They said: “Blessed One, we have seen them. One Gone to Bliss, we have seen them.”

The Blessed One said: “These rays of light and the wondrous and miraculous transformations were shown by the bodhisattva’s own body. Having shown them, he will also preach the Dharma for the benefit of many beings, for the happiness of many beings, with compassion for the world, and to the advantage, benefit, and happiness of the great assembly of beings, devas, and men. Here, having exhibited the demonstrations of the vigor of physical strength, they will show similar powers.”

They said: “May the Blessed One preach the Dharma on the cause of the appearance of this bright ray of light.”

When this was told, the Blessed One spoke thus, to the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Bhaishajyasena, did you see the three thousand great thousand worlds tremble in the six ways?”

He said: “I saw it, Blessed One. I saw it, One Gone to Bliss. I wish to ask a certain matter of the Tathagata.”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, ask whatever you wish. I will satisfy your thoughts by explaining those questions. I will explain them clearly. Bhaishajyasena, I will explain all the events of the past, present, and future times.”

He said: “May the Blessed One speak to clear up certain doubts. Blessed One, I see the Tathagata is surrounded by 84,000 devaputras, 84,000 million bodhisattvas, 12,000 million naga kings, 18,000 million yakshas, and 25,000 million pretas and pishachas.”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, these beings are here to hear the Dharma from me. For what else surely do they sit in the assembly? Bhaishajyasena, today they will overcome samsara itself. All beings will be benefited on this very day, today, by becoming established in the ten stages. Having been established in the ten stages, they will be placed in the sphere of nirvana later.

In order to become free of old age and death, good deeds should be done. Having broken the noose of lust, one will then be placed in the order of Buddha.”

He said: “Blessed One, why is it that many beings from various localities have appeared here and are staying surrounding the Blessed One?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, listen:

These foolish beings do not know where their emancipation will be. Today, many young ones will obtain dharanis. On account of gaining the ten stages they will perform the activities of a buddha. They will turn the wheel of the Dharma and will scatter the rain of the Dharma. In that way, the beings who have assembled will be delighted in my exposition. The devas, nagas, pretas, asuras, and very fierce ones, having been placed in the ten stages, will proclaim the voice of the Dharma. They will beat the drum of the Dharma and will blow the conch of the Dharma. These young ones also will become possessed of the resource of energy. They will attain today the Dharma, just as it was reached by the Tathagata.”

Thereupon, as many as 5,000 young ones, having arisen from their seats, paid homage with folded hands there where the Blessed One was and spoke thus to the Blessed One:

Why should we not desire to terminate death in samsara?
Blessed One, the body is a heavy load, fearful and irresistible.
The path is not understood completely; also there is no path indeed.
We do not see a protector. We jointly request: we ask for courage.
May the leader preach the Dharma. We are born with little wisdom.
We do not desire pleasures. May the Buddha preach the Dharma for us and deliver us from this irresistible misery.
Wherever we are born, may we see the Buddha.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having gone there where the young ones were, said thus:

You should eat food prepared with many flavors.
Having become ready later, listen to the Dharma without fear.

They said:

Noble elder, who are you? We do not know you.
We see that you are very graceful, and your figure is a great renowned field of calmness.
Just as a living being who has been rescued from the great fears of the world of pretas, the hells, and the world of animals, in the same way, all your evils are pacified.
There is a receptacle made of seven kinds of jewels in your hand.
Golden strings are worn on your body, and we see that you are adorned with a mass of brightness.
We are not able to reply to the calm words you have spoken.
Foods and good-tasting drinks are not necessary for us.
Gastric discharges are produced from food.
Similarly, drinks will become urine.
Blood will be made from the liquids; in the same way flesh will be made from blood. The mixture of food and drink is not necessary for us.
The comforts of silks, woolen clothes, and fine garments are not necessary.
Golden bracelets are not necessary. Garlands of pearls are also not necessary. Rings on fingers are also not necessary.
All those things are of an impermanent nature.
We are miserable creatures who do not desire to proceed with life.
In order to obtain the happiness of the devas and the alms of the Dharma, virtuous friends are necessary, and not wheel-turning kings.
Leaving the continent of extreme pleasures, a wheel-turning king will also die. Sons will not go after him, nor even the consorts and the daughters. The seven kinds of precious

objects will never follow him.
 Many gatherings of people will never go after him.
 In the same way, it will not be possible even to run ahead later.
 The life of a king is impermanent, and it wanders without any purpose. By doing many evil deeds they fall into the Raurava hell.
 They are surrounded by the great miraculous forces of the seven precious objects everywhere in the four continents.
 When they create results in the Raurava, where has that miraculous power gone?
 Their land is not to be found.
 It is not possible to beget miraculous power from death.
 Elder, listen to us. Go there where the Tathagata resides.
 The Tathagata is like our parents.
 Proceed in order to see him.
 We do not have a mother, nor a father, nor brothers.
 The Tathagata, the guru of the world, is the very father and mother, the very sun and moon.
 He shows the way of happiness. He will not be born again.
 He saves beings from samsara. Great is the fear of the river of lust. He is the raft that could save us from the river.
 He crosses beings over, not to return again later.
 He preaches the pure Dharma, too, and shows the supreme bodhi.
 Food is not necessary for us, and we do not desire the fruit of a kingdom. We do not wish to proceed to the world of the devas or to fearful hells.
 The life of human beings is happy: there the all-knowing ones appear.

Life is short and it has wandered, and evil deeds have been done with one's own body.
 They are ignorant of death and crave the enjoyment of the kingdom. Ensnared by birth and death, they are without fear and without any knowledge.
 The mind is deranged and not lasting.
 They do not know the fine Dharmas, do not perform any good deeds, do not know the sphere of calmness, and are without any sorrow regarding rebirth. They will be born again and again.
 They will undergo much suffering for a long time, and having been punished and beaten always, they will be captured by others and, in the same way, will be tied up and killed.
 Having been escorted by the evils of the past, they will be bound with the five fetters, and they will be separated from hope and afflicted with pain and misery.
 At the cessation of consciousness they will bewail pathetically:
 'Who will protect me? I will offer all my enjoyments, gold, silver, and crystals. I will also become a slave and do the activities of a slave. I will do all the work. I do not want the enjoyment of the kingdom. Wealth and grain are not necessary. I do not want my own body, which is not released by doing evil deeds.'
 Elder, similarly, food is not necessary for us.
 Those kings who eat savory foods will also die.
 The devas who drink the best of drinks will also die.
 Kings eat food, provided with solids and liquids which have no substance at all. Kings are attached to the tastes and do plenty of evil deeds, too. Why should one be attached to tastes that are without any substance and are impermanent?
 We do not want any food. Food is not necessary indeed.
 What deliverance will there be for us from suffering?
 What is necessary is what is of the nature of reality.
 We desire to be delivered from bonds; we desire to be released from lusts.
 In order to be delivered from all fetters, we go for refuge to the Buddha, to the Great Sage, the Protector of the World.
 Having seen the suffering of beings, go on our behalf and pay homage.
 We do not know your name. Please tell us your glorious name.

Bhaishajyasena said:

You, and all beings, wish to hear the name in the same way.
The Tathagata is surrounded by a thousand million young ones.

They said:

You are a follower of the Buddha. Your name is profound and glorious. All the living beings, similarly, wish to hear your name.

He said:

My name is Bhaishajyasena. I am the medicine (bhaishajya) of beings, and I will preach you the best of all medicines.
Living beings, who suffer from all diseases, will be cured of all diseases. The disease of passion is a great disease; it is irresistible and destroys the world.
The disease of delusion, which makes foolish beings go astray, is a great disease, and it makes beings proceed to the spheres of hells and similarly to the worlds of animals and pretas.
Ignorance and anger, these will be pacified just the same.

They said:

By hearing this good Dharma may we be delivered from all misery, foolishness, and ignorance.
Having been delivered from all miseries, all evil actions will be abandoned.
We hear the offering of the Dharma; and having abandoned all the evils, irresistible fears will also be abandoned.
The medicine, this king of medicines, pacifies all diseases and removes all miseries; and we will see the Buddha quickly indeed.
Elder, depart soon in order to make obeisance to the Tathagata.
Making obeisance, tell our words to the Leader of the World; and do pacify this disease.
All the body is ablaze, and it is burning without any allay. Pacify this irresistible fire.
The burden of the body is a great burden; it is indeed an irresistible sharp burden, which gives us painful miseries.
Have pure compassion for us.
Living beings are continually oppressed and carried away by the burdens of anger and delusion.
They carry the burden again and again, without knowing a way to be free of the burden.
They do not know a way of deliverance, nor do they see a way of deliverance, and yet they do not beget fear at the moment the consciousness of death appears.
We never imagined that death is a happy place.
None of the illusions will die.
Even having seen death, we do not recollect it.
They do not think beyond, that they would always suffer from disease and will agitate with lust.
When food is eaten, we are wearied without any sense and exhausted with misery without any knowledge.
From you, such miseries as ignorance are produced, from which consciousness, thoughts, and feelings are produced.
Great are the fears of the heavy burden of those who do not know the Dharma-consciousness.
Wandering with foolishness and desire, the body is surrounded with a burden.

Birth in the world is without any meaning.
 What will happen to this body, which needs bathing, anointing, and extremely fine and clean garments?
 Savory food will be necessary.
 Similarly, the ears hear the charming sounds of the five kinds of musical instruments.
 The eyes become attached to the forms produced by the seven kinds of jewels.
 The tongue has felt all the sweet tastes.
 The body always feels soft and fine touch.
 The flesh and the body, both were also made delightful.
 This body is born without any sense, and therefore, it meets something delightful.
 I give comfort to its legs, with shoes and fine garments; but at the time of death the garments and unguents will not protect it.
 The body also cannot be protected.
 Why should garments and unguents be necessary?
 This body known as 'person' receives the great force of respiration, the power of listening and thorough consideration. That body has great attributes.
 In former times, surrounded by all the horses and elephants, it played and roamed about without giving it the Dharma of emancipation.
 Of what evil deeds was I fond?
 Without knowing the next world I set about taking part in evil frolics.
 I was born again and again, and again death has approached me.
 And again and again I see misery.
 Bound with lamentation, I see mothers die, and I see the death of fathers, relations, sisters, and sons.
 I see that wives also die.
 The aggregates are all empty.
 The mind is attached to passion.
 With a mind consumed with lust, I destroyed confidence.
 The Dharma of calmness is imperceptible.
 There is no delight in death. Because of a mind defiled with desire, I did not give any offerings.
 There is no evil similar to desire that does not depart still.
 We are born confused. The entire world is confused.
 Confused, we hear sound, not grasping it as the pure Dharma.
 The body, perpetually, does not honor, seek, or contemplate emancipation.
 Mainly on account of the living beings of the world, may the Buddha give instructions.
 Buddha is the father and the mother of the world.
 The Buddha is the one who points out the path; and he causes to rain a rain of jewels everywhere in Jambudvīpa.
 Foolish beings do not know what the collection of Dharma is like.
 By resolving the mind on enlightenment, one would obtain the collection of the Dharma.
 All conditioned states are empty.
 Likewise, the enjoyment of riches is empty, too.
 Self should also be seen as empty.
 Having seen it so, one should be without any desires.
 Elder Bhaishajyasena, listen to our words.
 On account of the bodhisattvas we wish you to proceed with our message.
 Remembering the misfortunes of samsara, bodhisattvas are without weariness.
 They are possessed of vigor and great asceticism and collect all the virtues.
 Go there, where the Teacher resides, the Teacher who is well and duly awakened, the Conqueror who does not become weary even a little.
 Make a request on our behalf, 'You have conquered Mara and vanquished his strength, too. In order to hold all the beings, those who possess the thought to become buddhas, may there be the blazing Dharma soon.'
 We have not heard the Dharma.

For the sake of our benefit we say, 'Elder, go quickly.'
We have not seen the Tathagata who has the thirty-two marks, and therefore, we have not crossed over.
All of us respectfully offer salutation.

Bhaishajyasena said:

"Look above, for a short time, and see what is there."
They looked above and saw 3,500 pavilions in all. In all, there were seats bedecked with seven kinds of jewels and beautifully decorated with jeweled nets. Flowers were bestrewn in the center; heavenly riches and incense were also scattered. Then, the young ones asked the Elder, "Why is it that we see such pavilions, bedecked with jeweled nets, all placed like lotus-anthers?"

Bhaishajyasena said:

These seats are for you to go to see the Buddha, to help you go there, where the Master who has passed beyond the world, the Light of the World, resides.

They said:

We do not know the way; and we do not see the Tathagata. We do not know where the path is. Where should we go to pay homage?

Bhaishajyasena said:

Just as the endless sky cannot be properly reached, it is not possible to go in order to pay homage to the Teacher, the giver of deathlessness. Just as Sumeru exists, the Teacher also resides in his place. The Buddha is like Sumeru and the great ocean, which measures deep. Bodhisattvas, as many as the minute particles of dust in the three thousand great thousand worlds, having come from the ten directions and not knowing where the Buddha had appeared, worshipped the Light of the World.

They said:

We would see the Protector of the World; we wish to be perfected. We beings wish to pay homage to the Teacher and obtain the fruits thereof.

Bhaishajyasena said:

The Teacher, who will deliver us from the constituent states, who grasps beings, is not fond of incense, garlands, or unguents.
Go to the Buddha, by whom the mind has been conquered.
The most irresistible Mara will not fight with him.
Then, one will quickly gain the dharani and will not proceed to the force of death. The mind, having become very devoted, will then see the Tathagata.

Thereupon, the Blessed One, the Tathagata, smiled with the sweet voice of a cuckoo. Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, having risen from the seat, making obeisance with folded hands there where the Blessed One was, said thus to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, that the Blessed One displayed a smile, which caused 840,000 rays to appear from the mouth of the Blessed One? All those three thousand great thousand worlds were filled with all those rays;

and also thirty-two great hells became filled with them; even the thirty-two palaces of the devas were illuminated. Those rays, also of a variety of colors, such as blue, yellow, red, white, poppy-color, crystal, silver, and so forth, having issued from the mouth of the Blessed One, kindling delight in the beings in the three thousand great thousand worlds, returned and, after circumambulating the Blessed One seven times, disappeared at the top of the head of the Blessed One.”

Then, again, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, if I were given the opportunity, I would like to ask a certain matter of the Blessed One, the Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly completed Buddha.”

When this was said, the Blessed One said thus to the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena: “Bhaishajyasena, ask whatever you wish. I shall satisfy you by explaining whatever will be asked.”

He said: “Blessed One, 30,000 million young ones have appeared. They, having understood the subtle exposition of the Tathagata, speak thus to the old ones, ‘Old ones, you do not know the Dharma. You say that there is no Dharma. You are fond of unhappiness. Thus, you do not consider that subtleties exist and do harm by abusing.’ Blessed One, why do they speak pleasant and agreeable words?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, did you not know why they speak these words? They speak soft and pleasant words to the Tathagata. Bhaishajyasena, by hearing the Dharma they will bear in mind the meaning of all the Dharmas, they will possess all the virtues, and all of them will perceive the dharanis. Thereafter, they will be placed in the ten stages. Today they will send forth the sound of the great Dharma drum. Today, they will become possessed of the system of great Dharma. Bhaishajyasena, do you see these pavilions?”

He said: “Blessed One, I have seen them. One Gone to Bliss, I have seen them.”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, these young beings, after stepping into these pavilions today, will gain a clear realization of the Dharma. On this very day, today, they will become fully accomplished with all good Dharmas. They will strike the great Dharma drum today. Today, the regions of the devas will gain the clear realization of the Dharma. The beings in the hells, and in many places of perversity, having heard the demonstration of the perfect wisdom of the Tathagata, will destroy samsara and become victorious. At that time, all the 90,000 million old ones will obtain the fruit of stream-enterer. All of them will also become possessed of the Dharma. Bhaishajyasena, all of them will completely abandon all suffering. Bhaishajyasena, all of them will become the seers of the Tathagata. Bhaishajyasena, all of them will possess the sound of the great Dharma drum, too. Bhaishajyasena, look at the four directions.”

The bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena observed the four directions and saw that as many bodhisattvas as the sands in fifty million Ganges Rivers had come from the eastern direction; from the southern direction, bodhisattvas as many as the sands in sixty million Ganges Rivers had come; from the western direction, bodhisattvas as many as the sands in seventy million Ganges Rivers had come; from the northern direction, bodhisattvas as many as the sands in eighty million Ganges Rivers had come; from the nadir, bodhisattvas as many as the sands in ninety million Ganges Rivers had come; and from the zenith, bodhisattvas as many as the sands in 100 million Ganges Rivers had come. Having arrived in the presence of the Blessed One, they sat to one side and to the other side.

Then, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena said thus to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, what are the black and red forms that appear there in the sky?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, do you not know what these black and red forms are? The Tathagata knows. Bhaishajyasena, this is Mara. Bhaishajyasena, do you wish to see?”

He said: “I wish, Blessed One. I wish, One Gone to Bliss.”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, in the same way, bodhisattvas as many as the sands in 100 million Ganges Rivers have arrived.”

He said: “Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason, that these bodhisattvas have arrived?”

The Blessed One said: “Bhaishajyasena, they have come on account of the young ones. All these beings will possess the Dharma of meditation. Bhaishajyasena, do you see many masses of beings who have come here, who have come here through various miraculous powers?”

He said: “I see bodhisattvas as many as the sands in 100 million Ganges Rivers and bodhisattvas as many as the sands in 100,000 billion million Ganges Rivers are placed in the miraculous powers: placed in many forms, many colors and many shapes. I see that these bodhisattvas are placed in the state of Dharma of the aryas, and these bodhisattvas along with their retinues are established in the dwelling of the Dharma.”

When the Blessed One spoke these words, the bodhisattva, the great being Sarvashura, the bodhisattva, the great being Bhaishajyasena, all the old and young ones, and all those who were with their retinues, such as devas, human beings, asuras, and gandharvas, were delighted and praised the speech of the Blessed One.

The Noble Sanghata-sutra-dharma-paryaya is concluded.

Colophon to the translation of the Tibetan into English:

This early draft of a translation from Tibetan into English is offered by Ven. Lhundup Damchö as an interim measure to enable the sutra to be recited by as many people as possible quickly. All the mistakes are hers; all that is done well is the result of Geshe Lhundup Sopa's kindness in reading the first half of the text with her from September 2002 through January 2003 in Madison, Wisconsin. Translation was done using the Taipei edition of the bka' 'gyur, with some emendations based on the Lhasa and Peiking editions and with reference to the Sanskrit. With thanks to Ven. Connie Miller for copy-editing the English draft in September, 2004.

Colophon to translation of Sanskrit into English:

The translation from Sanskrit to English appears in the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation of the late Sri Lankan scholar R. A. Gunatilaka, submitted to Cambridge University in 1967. A large number of Sanskrit terms left untranslated by Gunatilaka are here translated into English for ease of recitation and comprehension. Other preliminary emendations were made to this translation by Ven. Lhundup Damchö in consultation with the original Sanskrit, in some places correcting for English grammar and punctuation and in others retranslating selected passages.

This draft is current as of May 2005.