

Chapter 3

The Monk Meghaśrī

THEN SUDHANA the merchant's son eventually made his way to the country of Rāmāvarānta. Upon arrival, he wandered about in the country of Rāmāvarānta, and being one who had produced previous roots of merit, he enjoyed pleasures there that are agreeable to a mind empowered through having destroyed past karma.¹ He then approached mount Sugrīva, ascended it, and set out toward the east in search of the monk Meghaśrī (Cloud Splendor). In the same way, he set out toward the south, the west, the north, the northeast, the southeast, the southwest and the northwest. Seeking the monk Meghaśrī, he even looked up and down. After seven days, he saw the monk walking on the plateau of one of the peaks. He then approached Meghaśrī, placed his head at his feet, circumambulated him, stood in front of him with hands joined together, and said this:

Indeed, the Noble One² should know that I am resolved for supreme, complete awakening. But I do not know how the course of conduct of a bodhisattva is to be learned, understood, undertaken, carried out, perfected, purified, penetrated, realized, gone after, grasped, or spread; or how bodhisattvas perfect the maṇḍala of Samantabhadra's course of conduct. I have heard that the Noble One gives admonition and instruction to bodhisattvas. May the Noble One speak to me about how bodhisattvas go forth to supreme, complete awakening.

Once this was said, the monk Meghaśrī spoke these words to Sudhana, the merchant's son:

It is very Good, Son of Good Family, that you who have made a resolve for supreme, perfect enlightenment, ask about the course of conduct of the bodhisattvas. For this is difficult, supremely difficult—namely seeking the course of conduct of bodhisattvas, seeking the range of bodhisattvas, seeking the purity of

¹ *dārakarmādhiṣṭhānamanobhirucitān*? Is this a scribal error? Read: *dāraka*? Check mss. and Tibetan.

² Suzuki-Idzumi edition has *arya*.

the deliverance of the bodhisattvas, seeking the purity of the path of bodhisattvas, seeking the purity of the development of the course of conduct of bodhisattvas, seeking the purity of the accomplishment of superpowers by the bodhisattvas, seeing the liberations of the bodhisattvas, seeing the bodhisattvas' manifestations of tenderness toward the world, conforming one's mental disposition to the world like bodhisattvas, seeing bodhisattvas' entrance into nirvāṇa from the cycle of existence; and seeking bodhisattvas' contemplation undefiled by the conditioned, the unconditioned, hate or fear.

Son of Good Family, through a purification leading to vision, determination, and faith, which spreads through the power of my resolution; through the appearance of an unwavering light of gnosis; through a universal resolution; through a vision bound to an universal range that has dispersed all obstructions; through insight; through skilfulness; through the purity of my body that is purified by the sphere of universal vision; through the skill of my prostrations with my body bent down, facing toward, appearing and rushing out in all directions; through maintaining a cloud of teachings of all buddhas; and through the power of my spells, I see tathāgatas in lands throughout all directions. Namely, to the east I see one tathāgata; and I also see two, ten, a hundred buddhas; a thousand buddhas; a hundred thousand buddhas; ten million buddhas; a billion buddhas; ten billion buddhas; a thousand billion buddhas; hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of buddhas; I see measureless, unfathomable, innumerable, inconceivable, unequalled, uncountable,³ unlimited, immeasurable, indescribable [49] numbers of tathāgatas. I see tathāgatas equal in number to the atoms in Jambudvīpa; equal in number to the atoms in the four island continents of this world realm; equal in number to the atoms in a thousand, two thousand, three thousand, a great many thousand buddha lands. I see tathāgatas equal in number to the atoms in ten buddha lands, a hundred buddha lands, a thousand buddha lands, a hundred thousand buddha lands, ten million buddha lands, a billion buddha lands, ten billion buddha lands, a thousand billion buddha lands, hundreds of thousands of millions of

³ *asamantān*? non-contiguous = uncountable??

billions of buddha lands; I see as many tathāgatas as atoms in an indescribable number of buddha lands.

As I see in the east, so I also see one tathāgata in the south, the west, the north, the northeast, the southeast, the southwest, the northwest, upward and below. In these directions also I see as many tathāgatas as atoms in buddha lands far beyond descriptions. Looking in every direction I see tathāgatas of various classes; I see tathāgatas with various forms, various miracles, with various miraculous displays of great majesty, with manifold arrays of assembled groups, with numerous arrays of pure abodes within manifold buddha lands emitting lights with nets of light rays of many colors, with their instructions according to the mental dispositions of the world which are completely cleansed from the standards of the various life forms, with their manifold miraculous entrances into the purity of complete awakening, and with their roaring the best lion's roar of the buddhas.

Son of Good Family, I have attained this recollection of the buddhas that is a light uniting knowledge with all its bases within an universal entrance. But how am I to know the course of conduct of bodhisattvas who have been purified through the maṇḍala of infinite gnosis, or to speak of the qualities of those who have obtained entrance into the recollection of the buddhas within the maṇḍala of universal manifestation by means of their vision directed toward the array that is the pure abode of all buddha lands within the maṇḍala of all tathāgatas; or those who have obtained the recollection of the buddhas displayed throughout all worlds by means of the purity of their vision of the tathāgatas made known according to the mental dispositions of the world; or those who have obtained a recollection of the buddhas that displays the ten powers by means of their conformity to the infinite power of the ten tathāgatas; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas that displays the Dharma by means of their vision of clouds of bodies of all tathāgatas with the appearance of listening to the Dharma; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas with an essence that illuminates everywhere by means of their penetration into oceans of individual buddhas within the oceans of all directions; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas that enters the ten direction by means of their

penetration into the miracles and great majesty of all tathāgatas based on the subtle; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas that is displayed throughout an eon by means of their manifesting a vision inseparable from tathāgatas throughout all eons; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas at one time by means of their not abandoning their abode within the vision at one time of the tathāgatas of all times; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas in one land by means of manifesting a vision of the unsurpassed bodies of buddhas arisen in all buddha lands; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas within the three times by means of uniting their own intentions with the maṇḍala of the tathāgatas of the three times; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed on one ground by means of their manifesting the vision that has arrived at the succession of tathāgatas upon all grounds; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed as tranquility by means of their manifesting the final nirvāṇa of all tathāgatas within all world realms in a single instant; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed as cessation by means of their manifesting the procession of all [50] tathāgatas in all dwellings within a single heaven; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas expansively displayed by means of their manifesting bodies of seated buddhas that completely fill the Dharma Realm with many tathāgatas; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas subtly displayed by means of their penetrating into the attainment of the production of an indescribable number of buddhas through a single pore; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed as an array by means of manifesting a vision of the miracle of perfect awakening within all world realms in a single instant; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed as action by means of their having obtained the light of gnosis that is the miracle of the Dharma wheel producing all buddhas; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed by means of their having attained the appearance of all tathāgatas through a vision from their own minds; or those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed as action by means of their

vision reflected in the accumulated actions of the entire world; or those have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed as a miracle by means of their manifesting in all directions the miracle of the noble buddhas upon lotus flowers completely filling the entire Dharma Realm; or those have obtained entrance into a recollection of the buddhas displayed in the sky by means of their vision in the sky of the Dharma Realm arranged with clouds of images of tathāgatas?

Son of Good Family, go to the region call Sāgaramukha right here in the South. There is a monk who dwells there named Sāgaramegha. Approach and ask him how the course of conduct of bodhisattvas is to be learned, and how it is to be understood. Son of Good Family, he will explain about the spiritual guide; he will make you comprehend⁴ the cause for the requisite roots of merit; he will cause you to produce the great requisite stage; he will cause you to praise the great power of the force of the roots of merit; he will produce in you the great cause of the requisite of the mind of awakening; he will incite in you the great cause of the light of the Mahāyāna; he will reveal to you the great power of the requisite perfections; he will purify in you the great comprehension of the ocean of conduct; he will cause you to purify the great maṇḍala of vows; he will cause in you the maturation of the great array of universal deliverance; and he will cause to grow within you the mighty strength of great compassion.

Then Sudhana, the merchant's son, placed his head at the feet of the monk Meghaśrī, circumambulated him many hundreds of thousands of times, and while gazing upon him, departed from the monk Meghaśrī's presence.

⁴ *samavatārayiṣyati*. future to caus. of *sam+ava=tī*? “S/He will cause to descend, take down, remove.” Here: “He will cause (you) to comprehend...”