

**NĀGĀRJUNA**  
**ON**  
**MINDFULNESS OF THE BUDDHA**

**Part 1: The Easy Practice**

**Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Ten Grounds*, Chapter 9**

**As Translated into Chinese by Tripiṭaka Master Kumārajīva**  
**Annotated English Translation by Bhikshu Dharmamitra**



## An Introductory Note on “The Easy Practice

This chapter on “The Easy Practice” is preceded by Nāgārjuna’s very detailed description in earlier chapters of his “Treatise on the Ten Grounds” of the difficulties, hazardousness, and lengthiness of the bodhisattva path to buddhahood in contrast to the relative ease of the much swifter paths of śrāvaka disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*.<sup>1</sup> In the immediately preceding chapter on the *avaivartika*,<sup>2</sup> he describes the qualities of the bodhisattva who, while cultivating the ten grounds, finally achieves “irreversibility” on the bodhisattva path, qualities that are very rare, very hard won, and only acquired after a very long time on the bodhisattva path.<sup>3</sup>

In Chapter One, with regard to the length of time required to perfect the cultivation of the ten bodhisattva grounds and become a fully enlightened buddha, Nāgārjuna says:

In the case of those who cultivate the Great Vehicle, some may require a number of great kalpas as numerous as the sands of a single Ganges River, and some may require a number of great kalpas as numerous as the sands in two, three, or four Ganges Rivers, and so forth until we come to kalpas as numerous as the sands contained in ten, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or a *koṭi* of Ganges Rivers. They may require an even longer period of time than that.

With this background in mind, it should become much easier then for us to understand the rationale of the interlocutor in this chapter when, at the bottom of the first page, he asks Nāgārjuna for an easier alternative path, “an easily-practiced path by which one might rapidly succeed in arriving at the ground of the *avaivartika*.”

Then again, given how much effort Nāgārjuna has just devoted in the first seven chapters of his treatise to describing the incredible heroism of the bodhisattva who so fearlessly conquers all obstacles on the ten grounds, it is perhaps understandable, too, why, at the top of the second page, he responds so harshly to a question that searches instead for an “easy” way to reach the “irreversibility” by which one avoids the possibility of falling down onto the śrāvaka or *pratyekabuddha* grounds.

## Endnotes

- 1 In Chapter one, Nāgārjuna notes that it may require only as few as one or two lifetimes for someone to become an arhat and only as few as seven lifetimes for someone to become a *pratyekabuddha*.
- 2 An *avaivartika* is someone who has become irreversible on either the individual liberation path of the arhats or on the universal-liberation path of the bodhisattvas and buddhas.
- 3 In the immediately preceding chapter on the *avaivartika* (irreversible) bodhisattva, we have a verse describing such a bodhisattva's qualities:

The bodhisattva does not apprehend the existence of any self,  
and also does not apprehend the existence of any being.  
He does not engage in discriminations as he discourses on Dharma,  
nor does he apprehend the existence of bodhi.

He does not perceive a buddha by his [physical] signs.  
It is on account of these five meritorious qualities  
that he is referred to as a great bodhisattva  
and becomes an *avaivartika*.

# PART ONE

## The Easy Practice

### Ch. 9: On the Easy Practice

#### I. CHAPTER NINE: ON THE EASY PRACTICE

A. Q: HOW DIFFICULT! IS THERE AN EASIER PATH TO THE AVAIVARTIKA GROUND?

**Question:** Given that this *avaivartika* bodhisattva's initial endeavors are such as previously discussed, one aspiring to reach the ground of the *avaivartika* would have to practice all manner of difficult practices for a long time and only then be able to reach it. [This being the case], he might become prone then to fall down onto the grounds of the *śrāvaka* disciples or *pratyekabuddhas*. If that were the case, this would be for him an immensely ruinous calamity. As stated in the Dharma of *The Provisions Essential for Bodhi (Bodhisambhāra Śāstra)*:<sup>1</sup>

If one were to fall onto the ground of the *śrāvaka* disciples  
or onto the ground of the *pratyekabuddhas*,  
this amounts to "death" for a bodhisattva,  
for he then loses all beneficial effects [of his bodhisattva practice].

If one faced the prospect of falling into the hells,  
he would not become filled with such fear as this.  
If one were to [contemplate] falling onto the Two Vehicles' ground,  
then this would bring about great terror.

If one were to fall into the hells,  
he could still ultimately succeed in reaching buddhahood.  
If one were to fall onto the grounds of the Two Vehicles, however,  
this would ultimately block the realization of buddhahood.

In the scriptures, the Buddha himself  
explained matters such as these, stating that  
this is just as with a person who covets a long lifespan:  
If he is faced with decapitation, he is then filled with great fear.

The bodhisattva is also just like this.  
If [confronted with the prospect of] the *śrāvaka* disciples' ground  
or the *pratyekabuddhas'* ground,  
he should react with great terror.

Therefore, if, as a skillful means, the Buddhas have mentioned the existence of an easily-practiced path by which one might rapidly succeed in arriving at the ground of the *avaivartika*, then please explain it for me.

B. A: HOW WEAK & INFERIOR! BUT, IF YOU WANT THAT, I WILL EXPLAIN

**Response:** Statements such as you have just made are symptomatic of a weak, pusillanimous, and inferior mind devoid of the great resolve. These are not the words of a heroic man possessed of determination and ability.

How is this so? If a person has brought forth the vow to strive for the realization of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, during that interim period in which he has not yet gained the *avaivartika* stage, he must not be sparing of even his own body or life. Rather he should strive with vigor both day and night, acting with the same urgency to save himself as someone whose turban has just caught fire. This is as stated in the *Bodhisambhara Śāstra*:

So long as the bodhisattva has not yet succeeded in reaching  
the ground of the *avaivartika*,  
he should always diligently practice vigor,  
acting with the urgency of one whose turban has caught fire.

Taking up the heavy burden  
for the sake of striving to attain bodhi,  
he should always act with diligent vigor,  
refraining from developing an indolent mind.<sup>2</sup>

Even were one to seek the *śrāvaka* disciples' vehicle  
or the *pratyekabuddha*'s vehicle,  
thus seeking only to perfect one's own benefit,  
even then, one should always diligently practice vigor.

How much the more should this be so in the case of the bodhisattva,  
one who strives to liberate both himself and others.  
Compared to these men of the Two Vehicles,  
he should be a *koṭi*'s number of times more vigorous than they are.<sup>3</sup>

In speaking of the practice of the Great Vehicle, the Buddha described it thus: "As for generating the vow to attain buddhahood, it is a challenge heavier than lifting all of the worlds in a great trichiliocosm."

As for your saying, "This dharma of the *avaivartika* ground is so extremely difficult to accomplish that one can only reach it after a long time" and "If there were only some easily-traveled path by which one could swiftly reach the *avaivartika* ground," these are the words of those who are weak and inferior. These are not statements of a great man possessed of determination and ability. Still, if you definitely do wish to hear of this skillful means, then I shall now explain it for you.

#### 1. THE PRACTICE OF CALLING ON TEN BUDDHAS, ONE IN EACH DIRECTION

The Dharma of the Buddha has measurelessly many gateways. This is just as with the world's various routes among which there are those

that are difficult and those that are easy. When taking overland routes, the traveling may involve suffering, whereas in the case of water routes where one boards a boat, it may instead be pleasurable.

So too it is in the case of the bodhisattva path. In some instances, one is diligently devoted to the practice of vigor, whereas in others that involve faith and skillful means, one adopts an easy practice by which one swiftly arrives at the station of the *avaivartika*. This is as described in the following verse:

In the East, there is Meritorious Qualities Buddha.

In the South, there is Candana Qualities Buddha.

In the West, there is Measureless Light Buddha.

In the North, there is Emblematic Qualities Buddha.

In the Southeast, there is Sorrowless Qualities Buddha.

In the Southwest, there is Giver of Jewels Buddha.

In the Northwest, there is Floral Qualities Buddha.

In the Northeast, there is Three Vehicles' Practices Buddha.<sup>4</sup>

Toward the Nadir, there is Brilliant Qualities Buddha.

Toward the Zenith, there is Vast Multitude of Qualities Buddha.

*Bhagavats* such as these

now abide throughout the ten directions.

If a person wishes to swiftly reach

the ground of irreversibility,

he should, with a reverential mind,

take up and maintain the practice of invoking these buddhas' names.

If a bodhisattva wishes in this very body to succeed in reaching the ground of the *avaivartika* and then attain *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, then he should bear in mind these buddhas of the ten directions and invoke their names. This is just as explained in the "Avaivartika Chapter" of the *Sutra Spoken in Response to the Questions of the Youth Precious Moon*,<sup>5</sup> in which the Buddha told Precious Moon:

Off in the East, going beyond a number of buddha lands equal to the sands in a measureless, boundless, and inconceivable number of Ganges Rivers, there is a world system named Sorrowless. Its ground is level and composed of the seven precious things. Strands of purple powdered gold are woven throughout that realm and rows of jeweled trees serve as adornments there.

There are no destinies of the hells, animals, hungry ghosts, or *asuras*, nor are there any places beset by difficulties. It is pure, free of any filth, and also free of gravel, ceramic shards, stones, mountains, hillocks, deep pits, and dark ravines. The devas' always rain down flowers that cover its ground.

That world now has a buddha named Meritorious Qualities Tathāgata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Enlightenment, Perfect in Knowledge and Conduct, Well-Gone One, Knower of the Worlds, Unsurpassable One, Tamer of Those to Be Tamed, Teacher of Devas and Humans, Buddha, Bhagavat. He is respectfully surrounded by an assembly of great bodhisattvas. His body's characteristic radiance and appearance are like a great flaming gold mountain and like a great aggregation of precious jewels.

For the sake of everyone in that great assembly, he extensively proclaims the right Dharma that is good in the beginning, middle, and end, that is eloquently presented and meaningful. Whatever he proclaims is free of admixture, perfect in its purity, accordant with reality, and free of error.

What is meant by "free of error"? It is free of any error with respect to the [four great elements of] earth, water, fire, and wind, is free of any error with respect to the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm and is free of error with respect to [the five aggregates of] form, feelings, perceptions, formative factors, and consciousness.

Precious Moon, from the time this buddha achieved buddhahood until the present, sixty *koṭis* of kalpas have passed. Moreover, in that buddha's country, there is no difference between the day and the night. It is only by reference to the enumeration of days, months and years of Jambudvīpa that one describes his lifetime in terms of a particular number of kalpas.

The light from that buddha always illuminates that world. In the course of a single discourse on Dharma, he causes a measureless and boundless number of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *asaṃkhyeyas* of beings to abide in the unproduced-dharmas patience. Twice this number of people are thereby caused to abide in the first, second, and third type of patience.

Precious Moon, the power of that buddha's original vows is such that, if there are any beings in other regions who have planted roots of goodness under a previous buddha, he need only be touched by this buddha's light in order to immediately attain the unproduced-dharmas patience.

Precious Moon, if there is a son or daughter of good family who but hears this buddha's name and is then able to have faith and accept him, such a person will immediately achieve irreversibility with respect to the attainment of *anuttarasamyakṣambodhi*.

The circumstances related to the other nine buddhas are just like this. Now we shall explain the names of those Buddhas as well as the names of their lands.



As for “Meritorious Qualities Buddha,” his qualities are associated with pure goodness and the possession of peace and happiness. They are unlike the meritorious qualities of devas, dragons, and spirits which delude and trouble beings.

As for “Candana Qualities Buddha,” in the South, off at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world named Delightful. The name of the buddha there is Candana Qualities. He is right now proclaiming the Dharma that is as fragrant and cooling as *candana*.<sup>6</sup> The fame of that buddha’s name is heard afar, circulating and spreading about like the fragrance of incense. It extinguishes the heat from the fire of beings’ three poisons and thereby causes them to experience refreshing coolness.

As for “Measureless Light Buddha,” off in the West, at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world named “Excellence.” That buddha is named Measureless Light. He is at this very time proclaiming the Dharma. The light from that buddha’s body and the brilliant illumination from his wisdom reach an incalculable and boundless distance.

As for “Emblematic Qualities Buddha,” off in the North, at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world known as “Immovable.” Its buddha is known as Emblematic Qualities. He is right now proclaiming the Dharma. That buddha’s meritorious qualities are lofty and prominently displayed, appearing like a banner.

As for “Sorrowless Qualities Buddha,” in the Southeast, off at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world named “Lunar Brilliance.” The buddha who abides there is named Sorrowless Qualities. He is even now proclaiming the Dharma. That buddha’s spiritual qualities are such that they cause all of the devas and men there to be free of any sort of sorrow.

As for “Giver of Jewels Buddha,” in the Southwest, off at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world named “Multitude of Signs.” The buddha who abides there is known as Giver of Jewels. Even now he is proclaiming the Dharma. That buddha always bestows on beings the jewels of the uncontaminated root-faculties, powers, limbs of enlightenment, the path, and so forth.

As for “Floral Qualities Buddha,” in the Northwest, off at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably

and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world known as "Multitude of Sounds." The Buddha who abides there is known as Floral Qualities. Even now, he is proclaiming the Dharma. That buddha's physical body is like a marvelous flower and his meritorious qualities are incalculably numerous.

As for "Three Vehicles' Practices Buddha," in the Northeast, off at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world known as "Peaceful and Secure." The buddha who abides there is known as Three Vehicles' Practices Buddha. Even now, he is proclaiming the Dharma. That buddha always explains the practices of the *śrāvaka* disciples, the practices of the *pratyekabuddhas*, and the practices of the bodhisattvas. There are those who state that it is because he explains the superior, the middling, and the lesser levels of vigor that he is named Three Vehicles' Practices.

As for "Brilliant Qualities Buddha," in the Nadir, off at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world known as "Expansive." The buddha who abides there is known as Brilliant Qualities. Even now he is proclaiming the Dharma. "Brilliant" refers to the light that shines from his body, the light of his wisdom, and the light that shines from his jeweled tree. These three kinds of brilliance always illuminate that world.

As for "Vast Multitude of Qualities Buddha," in the Zenith, off at a distance from here of buddha lands as numerous as the sands in incalculably and boundlessly many Ganges Rivers, there is a world known as "Many Moons." The buddha who abides there is known as Vast Multitude of Qualities. Even now he is proclaiming the Dharma. It is because the meritorious qualities of that buddha's disciples are vast that he is known as Vast Multitude of Qualities.

Now, as for these buddhas of the ten directions, beginning with Meritorious Qualities Buddha and concluding with Vast Multitude of Qualities Buddha, if a person single-mindedly invokes their names, he will thereby immediately succeed in gaining irreversibility with respect to the attainment of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. This is as described in a verse:

If there is a person who is able to hear  
the utterance of all these buddhas' names,  
he will immediately acquire countless meritorious qualities,  
just as was explained for Precious Moon.

I bow in reverence to these buddhas  
 presently abiding throughout the ten directions.  
 Whosoever invokes their names  
 immediately attains irreversibility.

Off in the East, in the realm known as Sorrowless,  
 that buddha named Meritorious Qualities  
 has a form resembling a mountain of gold.  
 The reach of his fame is boundless.

If a person so much as hears his name,  
 he immediately attains irreversibility.  
 With palms pressed together, I now bow in reverence to him  
 and pray that worries and afflictions may be entirely dispelled.

Off in the South, in the realm known as Delightful,  
 there is a buddha named Candana Qualities.  
 His countenance is as pristine as the full moon  
 and the radiance of his light is measureless.

He is able to bring about the extinguishing of beings'  
 fiery afflictions produced by the three poisons.  
 If one but hears his name, he then attains irreversibility.  
 I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

Off in the West, in a realm known as Excellence,  
 there is a buddha known as Limitless Light.  
 The light from his body and the brilliance of his wisdom  
 are boundless in the range of their illumination.

If there be anyone who but hears his name  
 he will immediately attain irreversibility.  
 I now bow down in reverence to him,  
 praying that I may put an end to the limits imposed by *saṃsāra*.

Off in the North, in a realm known as Immovable,  
 there is a buddha named Emblematic Qualities.  
 His body is replete with the many signs and minor characteristics  
 with which he is personally adorned.

He utterly defeats the hordes of Māra, the enemy,  
 and skillfully teaches both humans and devas.  
 Those who hear his name attain irreversibility.  
 I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

Off in the Southeast, in a world known as Lunar Brilliance,  
 there is a buddha named Sorrowless.  
 His illumination surpasses that of the sun and moon.  
 Those who encounter it are thus able to extinguish their afflictions.

He always explains the Dharma for the sake of the multitude,  
thus ridding them of all inward and outward sufferings.

The buddhas of the ten directions praise him.

I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

Off in the Southwest, in a realm known as Multitude of Signs,  
there is a buddha named Giver of Jewels.

He always uses all manner of Dharma jewels  
to engage in extensive universal giving.

All the devas bow down in reverence to him

so that their jeweled crowns are brought low at his feet.

I now, bowing in reverence with all five extremities,

take refuge in the Bhagavat, Giver of Jewels.

Off in the Northwest, in a realm known as Multitude of Sounds,  
there is a buddha named Floral Qualities.

That world is graced with an abundance of jeweled trees  
that send forth sounds expounding the sublime Dharma.

He always uses the flowers of the seven limbs of enlightenment  
to bestow adornments on those beings.

His mid-brow white hair tuft mark is like the moon.

I now bow down in reverence to him.

Off in the Northeast, in a world known as Peaceful and Secure,  
one that is composed of all manner of jewels,

there is a buddha named Three Vehicles Practices  
whose body is adorned with the measureless marks.

The light from his wisdom is measureless.

It is able to dispel the darkness of ignorance

and cause beings to become free of worry and afflictions.

I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

Off toward the Zenith, in a world known as Many Moons,  
adorned with the many types of jewels,

attended by a congregation of greatly virtuous *śrāvaka* disciples  
and bodhisattvas who are incalculable in number,

there is a lion among the Āryas

named Vast Multitude of Qualities.

He is feared by all the *māras*.

I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

Off toward the Nadir, there is world known as Expansive  
in which there is a buddha named Brilliant Qualities.

His physical marks are far more marvelous

even than a mountain of *jambūnada* gold.

He always uses the sun of his wisdom  
to open the blossoms of beings' roots of goodness.

His land of jewels is extremely vast.

From afar, I bow down in reverence to him.

In the past, countless kalpas ago,  
there was a buddha named Oceanic Meritorious Qualities.

These buddhas of the present era

all made their vows under him.

His lifespan was incalculably long  
and the reach of his light's illumination was endless.

His country was extremely pure.

Those hearing his name became definitely bound for buddhahood.

These [buddhas] who now abide in the ten directions  
are completely equipped with the ten powers.

I therefore bow down in reverence to them,

these most venerable ones among all humans and devas.

2. Q: CAN ONE INSTEAD CALL ON OTHER BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS?

**Question:** Is it the case that one may only be able to reach irreversibility with respect to *anuttarasamyakṣaṃbodhi* through hearing these ten buddhas' names and bearing them in mind? Or is it the case that there are yet other buddhas' and other bodhisattvas' names through which one may succeed in reaching the station of the *avaivartika*?

3. A: YES, THERE IS AMITĀBHA AS WELL AS OTHER SUCH BUDDHAS

**Response:**

There is Amitābha and also other such buddhas  
as well as the great bodhisattvas.

If one invokes their names and single-mindedly bears them in mind,  
one will also thereby attain irreversibility.

In addition, there is Amitābha as well as other buddhas to whom one should also respectfully bow down in reverence and utter their names. I shall now set forth their names in full:

Limitless Life Buddha, King of Sovereign Mastery in the World Buddha, Lion Mind Buddha, Dharma Mind Buddha, Brahman Signs Buddha, World Signs Buddha, Sublimity of the World Buddha, Kindness and Compassion Buddha, World King Buddha, King Among Men Buddha, Moon-like Virtues Buddha, Precious Virtues Buddha, Qualities of the Marks Buddha, Great Marks Buddha, Jeweled Canopy Buddha, Lion Mane Buddha, Destroyer of Ignorance Buddha, Flower of Wisdom Buddha, Tamālapattra Candana Fragrance Buddha, and Upholder of Great Meritorious Qualities Buddha.

There are also: Rain of the Seven Precious Things Buddha, Excellent Bravery Buddha, Enmity Transcendence Buddha, Great Adornment Buddha, Signlessness Buddha, Jewel Treasury Buddha, Summit of Virtue Buddha, Tagara Fragrance Buddha, Candana Incense Buddha, Lotus Fragrance Buddha, Adorned Path Buddha, Dragon Canopy Buddha, Rain of Flowers Buddha, Scatterer of Flowers Buddha, Floral Radiance Buddha, Solar Voice Buddha, Eclipsing the Sun and Moon Buddha, Lapis Lazuli Treasury Buddha, Brahman Sound Buddha, and Pure Radiance Buddha.

There are also: Treasury of Gold Buddha, Sumeru Summit Buddha, King of the Mountains Buddha, Masterful Voice Buddha, Pure Eyes Buddha, Lunar Radiance Buddha, Mount Sumeru Likeness Buddha, Sun and Moon Buddha, Acquirer of Multitudes Buddha, Flower-born Buddha, Proclaimer of the Brahman Sounds Buddha, Lord of the Worlds Buddha, Lion-like Practice Buddha, Sublime Dharma Mind Lion's Roar Buddha, Pearl Canopy Coral Appearance Buddha, Dispeller of the Darkness of Delusion and Desire Buddha, Water Moon Buddha, Multitude of Flowers Buddha, Opener of Wisdom Buddha, and Retainer of Various Jewels Buddha.

There are also: Bodhi Buddha, Flower Transcendence Buddha, Radiance of True Lapis Lazuli Buddha, Outshining Sunlight Buddha, Retainer of Great Qualities Buddha, Realizer of Right Wisdom Buddha, Heroic Strength Buddha, Beyond Flattery and Deception Buddha, Dispensing with Planting Roots of Evil Buddha, Great Fragrance Buddha, Path Splendor Buddha, Water Light Buddha, Roamer in Oceanic Clouds of Wisdom Buddha, Virtue Summit Flower Buddha, Floral Adornment Buddha, Solar Voice Buddha, Lunar Supremacy Buddha, Lapis Lazuli Buddha, Brahmā-like Voice Buddha, and Light Buddha.<sup>7</sup>

There are also: Treasury of Gold Buddha, Mountain Summit Buddha, Mountain King Buddha, Sound King Buddha, Dragon Vigor Buddha, Stainless Buddha, Pure Countenance Buddha, Lunar Countenance Buddha, Sumeru Semblance Buddha, Candana Fragrance Buddha, Awesome Strength Buddha, Blazing Lamp Buddha, Difficult to Overcome Buddha, Precious Virtue Buddha, Joyous Sound Buddha, Radiance Buddha,<sup>8</sup> Dragon Supremacy Buddha, Defilement Transcendence Light Buddha, Lion Buddha, and King Among Kings Buddha.

And there are also Supremacy of Powers Buddha, Floral Garden Buddha,<sup>9</sup> Fearless Brilliance Buddha, Fragrant Summit Buddha, Universally Worthy Buddha, Universal Flower Buddha, and Precious Signs Buddha.

These buddhas, *bhagavats*, abide now in pure worlds throughout the ten directions. One should invoke the names of all of them and bear them in mind.

a. AMITĀBHA'S ORIGINAL VOWS AND A PRAISE VERSE

The original vows of Amitābha are of this sort: "If any person bears me in mind, invokes my name, and takes refuge in me, he will immediately enter the stage of certainty with respect to attaining *anuttarasamyakṣaṃbodhi*."

One should therefore always remain mindful of him. I set forth his praises here with a verse:

He possesses boundless illumination and wisdom  
and his body is like a mountain of gold.

Paying homage to him with body, speech, and mind, I now  
place my palms together and bow down in reverence to him.

His marvelous golden-colored light  
everywhere streams into all worlds,  
increasing in its brilliance in response to each being.  
I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

If, when life's end comes, a person  
succeeds in being reborn in that land,  
he immediately acquires countless meritorious qualities.  
I do therefore take refuge in him.

Whoever is able to bear in mind this buddha  
possessed of measureless powers and awe-inspiring qualities  
will immediately enter the stage of certainty.  
I do therefore always bear him in mind.

That land is such that if, at the end of one's life,  
one should otherwise undergo all manner of suffering,  
even so, one will not then fall into those terrible hells.  
Therefore, taking refuge in him, I now bow down in reverence.

If a person gains rebirth in his land,  
he will never again fall into the three wretched destinies  
or into the realms of the *asuras*.  
Taking refuge in him, I now bow down in reverence.

Though his body is similar to that of humans and devas,  
it resembles the summit of a mountain of gold.  
This is the place to which all supreme [qualities] return.  
I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

Those who have been reborn in his land,  
gain the powers of the heavenly eye and ear  
that reach unimpededly throughout the ten directions.  
I bow down in reverence to the one honored among the Āryas.

All the beings in his land  
perform supernatural transformations, know others' thoughts,  
and are endowed with the knowledge of past lives as well.  
Therefore, taking refuge in him, I bow down in reverence.

Those who are reborn in his land  
have no conception of either "I" or "mine."  
They do not have thoughts conceiving of "others" or "self."  
I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

He has stepped beyond the prison of the three realms.  
His eyes are like the petals of a lotus.  
The assembly of *śrāvaka* disciples there is measurelessly vast.  
I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

All the beings in his land  
are in nature gentle and harmonious  
and they naturally practice the ten good deeds.  
I bow down in reverence to this king of the many *āryas*.

It is from such goodness that his pure light is produced  
that, in the number of its rays, is measureless and boundless.  
He is foremost among those who stand on two feet.  
I do therefore take refuge in him.

If a person vows to become a buddha  
and then bears in mind Amitābha,  
when the time is right, he will appear for his sake.  
I do therefore take refuge in him.

Through the power of that buddha's vows  
the bodhisattvas of the ten directions  
come to make offerings and listen to the Dharma.  
I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

All the bodhisattvas in his land  
are endowed with all the major marks and secondary characteristics  
by which they thereby adorn their own bodies.  
Taking refuge in him, I now bow down in reverence.

Three times every day,  
all those great bodhisattvas  
make offerings to the buddhas of the ten directions.  
I therefore bow down in reverence.

If a person who has planted roots of goodness  
retains doubts, then the flower will not open.  
If one's mind of faith is pure,  
the flower will open and one will then see the Buddha.



For many different reasons,  
 the buddhas of the present throughout the ten directions  
 praise the qualities of that buddha.  
 Taking refuge in him, I now bow down in reverence.

His land is especially majestic in its adornment,  
 surpassing in its excellence the palaces of all the devas.  
 Its qualities are especially profound and abundant.  
 I therefore bow down in reverence at the feet of the Buddha.

The Buddha's feet carry the sign of the thousand-spoked wheel.  
 They are soft and, in appearance, resemble the blossoms of a lotus.  
 Those who see them are all filled with delight  
 and bow down their heads in reverence at the feet of the Buddha.

The light from the white hair tuft between his brows  
 appears like a pristinely shining moon,  
 enhancing the radiance displayed by his countenance.  
 I bow down in reverence at the feet of the Buddha.

When he originally sought out the path to buddhahood,  
 he performed all manner of distinctive and marvelous works.  
 These are just as described in the sutras.  
 I bow down in reverence to him.

That which is proclaimed by that buddha  
 eliminates the roots of karmic offenses.  
 His eloquent discourse brings benefit to many.  
 I now bow down in reverence to him.

By resorting to such eloquent discourse,  
 he rescues beings from all maladies arising by clinging to pleasures.  
 He has already liberated such beings and now liberates yet more.  
 I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

The devas bow down in reverence  
 to he who is the most honored of all humans and devas.  
 Their seven-jeweled crowns are brought low and touch his feet.  
 I do therefore take refuge in him.

The Sangha of all the Worthies and the Āryas  
 as well as the multitudes of humans and devas  
 all join in taking refuge in him.  
 Therefore I too bow down in reverence to him.

One who boards his ship of the eight-fold path,  
 will be able to cross beyond that sea so difficult to cross,  
 delivering himself to liberation while liberating others as well.  
 I bow in reverence to he who has achieved sovereign mastery in this.

If, for countless kalpas, the Buddhas  
 proclaimed their praises of his meritorious qualities,  
 they would still be unable to come to the end of them.  
 I take refuge in he who has become such a purified person.

In this same manner, I now proclaim  
 the praises of his boundless qualities.  
 I pray that, due to the causes and conditions of this merit,  
 the Buddha may therefore always bear me in mind.

By whatever merit I have created in the present or previous lives,  
 whether it be but little or much,  
 I pray that my mind will become forever purified  
 in the very presence of the Buddha.

As for the supremely marvelous qualities that may be acquired  
 through the causes and conditions of such merit as this,  
 I pray that all of the many varieties of beings  
 shall all become able to acquire them as well.

4. ALSO, THE SEVEN BUDDHAS OF THE PAST AS WELL AS MAITREYA

One should also bear in mind Vipāśyīn Buddha, Śikhin Buddha,  
 Viśvabhū Buddha, Krakucchanda Buddha, Kanakamuni Buddha,  
 Kāśyapa Buddha, and Śākyamuni Buddha, as well as Maitreya, the  
 future Buddha. One should bear them all in mind and bow down in  
 reverence to them. I set forth their praises here in verse:

The Bhagavat Vipāśyīn  
 abides beneath an *aśoka* bodhi tree,<sup>10</sup>  
 having perfected all-knowledge  
 and all of the subtle and marvelous meritorious qualities.

Having rightly contemplated the world,  
 his mind has succeeded in gaining liberation.  
 I now, with all five extremities, bow down in reverence,  
 taking refuge in that unsurpassable Honored One.

The Bhagavat, Śikhin Buddha,  
 sat in the *bodhimaṇḍa*  
 beneath a *puṇḍarīka* bodhi tree  
 where he then achieved the complete realization of bodhi.<sup>11</sup>

His physical appearance is incomparable.  
 It resembles a mountain of flaming purple gold.  
 I now take refuge in the Honored One  
 who is unsurpassed by anyone in the three realms of existence.

Viśvabhū Bhagavat  
 sits beneath the *śāla* tree  
 where he naturally acquired the penetrating comprehension  
 of all forms of sublime wisdom.

Among all humans and devas,  
 he is the foremost and without peer.  
 I do therefore take refuge in the Honored One  
 who is the most supreme among them all.

Krakucchanda Buddha  
 succeeded in attaining  
*anuttarasamyaksambodhi*  
 beneath the *śirīṣa* tree.<sup>12</sup>

He perfected the great wisdom,  
 and became forever liberated from *saṃsāra*.  
 I now take refuge and bow in reverence  
 to that supreme and incomparable Honored One.

Kanakamuni,  
 the great Ārya and unsurpassable Honored One,  
 attained the perfect realization of buddhahood  
 beneath the *udumbara* tree  
 and reached the penetrating comprehension  
 of all the measurelessly and boundlessly many dharmas.  
 I do therefore take refuge in him,  
 that foremost and unsurpassable Honored One.

Kāśyapa Buddha, the Bhagavat,  
 with eyes like a pair of lotus blossoms,  
 achieved the perfect realization of buddhahood  
 beneath the *nyagrodha* tree.

Throughout the three realms, there is nothing he fears.  
 His gait is like that of the king of the elephants.  
 I now take refuge in him, bowing down in reverence  
 to that insuperable Honored One.

Śākyamuni Buddha,  
 beneath the *aśvattha* tree,<sup>13</sup>  
 conquered Māra, the enemy,  
 and perfected the unsurpassed enlightenment.

His countenance is like the full moon,  
 pure and free of any blemish.  
 I now bow down in reverence  
 To that heroically brave and supreme Honored One.

Maitreya, the buddha of the future,  
 sitting beneath the *nāga* tree,  
 shall attain the perfect realization of the vast resolve  
 and then naturally realize buddhahood.

His meritorious qualities are so extremely solid and durable  
that no one is able to surpass them.

I do therefore take refuge in him,  
that incomparable king of the sublime Dharma.

5. ALSO, BY CALLING ON TEN OTHER BUDDHAS

Additionally, there are: Supreme in Meritorious Qualities Buddha, Universal Illumination Buddha, Victorious over Adversaries Buddha, Marks of the Sovereign<sup>14</sup> Buddha, King of the Marks Buddha,<sup>15</sup> King of Measureless Qualities' Brilliance and Sovereign Mastery Buddha, Unimpeded Medicine King Buddha, Jeweled Traveler Buddha, Precious Flower Buddha, Peacefully Abiding Buddha,<sup>16</sup> and Mountain King Buddha. One should remain mindful of them as well, respectfully bowing in reverence to them. I set forth their praises here in verse:

In the world known as Invincible,  
there is a buddha named Supreme in Meritorious Qualities.  
I now bow down in reverence to him  
as well as to his Dharma Jewel and his Sangha Jewel.

In a world known as Joy in Whatever One Wishes,  
there is a buddha named Universal Illumination.  
I now take refuge in him  
as well as in his Dharma Jewel and his Sangha Jewel.

In the world known as Universal Excellence,  
there is a buddha named Victorious over Adversaries.  
I now take refuge in him and bow down in reverence to him  
as well as to his Dharma Jewel and his Sangha Jewel.

In the world known as Accumulation of Goodness and Purity,  
there is a buddha named Marks of the Sovereign's Banner.  
I now bow down in reverence to him  
as well as to his Dharma Jewel and his Sangha Jewel.

In the world known as Accumulation of Stainlessness,  
there is a buddha named Measureless Qualities' Brilliance  
whose sovereign mastery extends throughout the ten directions.  
I therefore bow down in reverence to him.

In the world known as Undeceptive,  
there is a buddha named Unimpeded Medicine King.  
I now bow down in reverence to him  
as well as to his Dharma Jewel and his Sangha Jewel.

In the world known as Present Accumulation,  
there is a buddha named Jeweled Traveler.  
I now bow down in reverence to him  
as well as to his Dharma Jewel and his Sangha Jewel.

In the Beautiful Sound World, there is Precious Flower Buddha.  
 [So too,] Peacefully Established and Mountain King Buddhas.  
 I now bow down in reverence to them  
 as well as to their Dharma jewels and sangha jewels.

All of these *tathāgatas* now abide  
 off in the regions to the East.  
 With a respectful mind, I spread their praises and,  
 taking refuge in them, bow down in reverence to them.

I only pray that the Tathāgatas  
 will bestow their deep kindness and sympathy  
 and thus manifest their bodies before me  
 so that I might be allowed to personally<sup>17</sup> see them all.

6. ALSO, BY CALLING ON ALL BUDDHAS OF THE THREE TIMES

Additionally, one should exhaustively and comprehensively bear in mind and respectfully bow in reverence to all buddhas of the past, the future, and the present. I set forth their praises here in verse:

All buddhas of the past  
 conquered the many *māras*, their adversaries  
 and, using the power of great wisdom,  
 provided vast benefit to beings.

The beings who existed in those eras  
 were entirely devoted to making offerings to them all,  
 showed them reverence, and proclaimed their praises.  
 I therefore bow down in reverence to them.

The incalculably many buddhas of the present  
 throughout the worlds of the ten directions  
 are so measurelessly and boundlessly many  
 as to surpass the number of sands in the Ganges River.

Out of kindness and pity for beings,  
 they always turn the wheel of the sublime Dharma.  
 I do therefore accord them respect,  
 take refuge in them, and bow down my head to them in reverence.

The buddhas of the future  
 shall appear with bodies resembling mountains of gold  
 that emanate measureless illumination  
 and display the self-adornment of their many characteristic signs.

They shall appear in the world and liberate beings,  
 after which they shall then enter nirvāṇa.  
 To all such *bhagavats* as these,  
 I do now bow down in reverence.

## 7. ALSO, BY CALLING ON THE GREAT BODHISATTVAS

Additionally, one should bear in mind the great bodhisattvas, namely: Good Intentions Bodhisattva, Good Eyes Bodhisattva, Moon Hearer Bodhisattva, King Śibi Bodhisattva, Universally Supreme Bodhisattva, Knower of the Great Earth Bodhisattva, Great Medicine Bodhisattva, Kapotaḡṛha Bodhisattva, Arenemin Bodhisattva, Summit Born King Bodhisattva, Delightful View Bodhisattva, Uttara Bodhisattva, Sarvadāna Bodhisattva, Long Life King Bodhisattva, Kṣānti Bodhisattva, Velāma Bodhisattva, Flashing Light Bodhisattva, Moon Covering Bodhisattva, Brilliant Leader Bodhisattva, Dharma Leader Bodhisattva, Perfecting Benefit Bodhisattva, and Maitreya Bodhisattva.

In addition, there are: Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, Vajra Leader Bodhisattva, Treasury of Non-defilement Bodhisattva, Vimalakīrti Bodhisattva, Dispeller of Doubts Bodhisattva, Undefined Virtue Bodhisattva, Net-like Brilliance Bodhisattva, Immeasurable Brilliance Bodhisattva, Great Brilliance Bodhisattva, Akṣayamati Bodhisattva, Mind King Bodhisattva, Boundless Mind Bodhisattva, Sun Sound Bodhisattva, Moon Sound Bodhisattva, Beautiful Sound Bodhisattva, Beautiful Voice Bodhisattva, Great Voice Bodhisattva, Solid Vigor Bodhisattva, Ever Solid Bodhisattva, and Solidly Generated Bodhisattva.

There are also: Adornment King Bodhisattva, Ever Compassionate Bodhisattva, Never slighting Bodhisattva, Dharma Superior Bodhisattva, Dharma Mind Bodhisattva, Dharma Joy Bodhisattva, Dharma Leader Bodhisattva, Dharma Accumulation Bodhisattva, Generator of Vigor Bodhisattva, Wisdom Bodhisattva, Pure Awesome Virtue Bodhisattva, Nārāyaṇa Bodhisattva, Good Meditation Bodhisattva, Dharma Meditation Bodhisattva, Bhadrāpāla Bodhisattva, Dharma Benefit Bodhisattva, Lofty Virtue Bodhisattva, Lion Traveler Bodhisattva, Joyous Faculties Bodhisattva, and Supreme Jewel Moon Bodhisattva.

There are also: Virtue Free of Falseness Bodhisattva, Dragon Virtue Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, Wonderful Sound Bodhisattva, Cloud Sound Bodhisattva, Supreme Mind Bodhisattva, Illuminating Brilliance Bodhisattva, Brave Assembly Bodhisattva, Supreme Assembly Bodhisattva, Awesome Department Bodhisattva, Lion Mind Bodhisattva, Superior Mind Bodhisattva, Beneficial Intentions Bodhisattva, Augmented Mind Bodhisattva, Precious Brilliance Bodhisattva, Wisdom Summit Bodhisattva, Peak of Eloquence Bodhisattva, Possessed of Virtue Bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara King Bodhisattva, and Dhāraṇī Mastery King Bodhisattva.

There are also: Great Sovereign Mastery King Bodhisattva, Sorrowless Virtue Bodhisattva, Not Seen in Vain Bodhisattva, Beyond the Wretched Destinies Bodhisattva, Universally Brave and Strong Bodhisattva, Dispeller of Darkness Bodhisattva, Merit Jewel Bodhisattva, Floral Awesome Virtue Bodhisattva, Gold Necklace Brilliant Virtue Bodhisattva, Beyond the Aggregates and Hindrances Bodhisattva, Unimpeded Mind Bodhisattva, Pure in All Actions Bodhisattva, Equal Vision Bodhisattva, Unequaled Vision Bodhisattva, Wandering Joyfully in Samādhi Bodhisattva, Sovereign Mastery in Dharma Bodhisattva, Dharma Marks Bodhisattva, Brilliant Adornment Bodhisattva, Great Adornment Bodhisattva, and Jeweled Summit Bodhisattva.

There are also: Jeweled Mudrā Hand Bodhisattva, Ever Raised Hand Bodhisattva, Ever Lowered Hand Bodhisattva, Ever Piteous Bodhisattva, Ever Joyful Bodhisattva, Joy King Bodhisattva, Possessed of Eloquent Voice Bodhisattva, Sound of Thunder in Space Bodhisattva, Upholder of the Jeweled Torch Bodhisattva, Valiant Giving Bodhisattva, Imperial Net Bodhisattva, Horse Light Bodhisattva, Empty and Unimpeded Bodhisattva, Jeweled Supremacy Bodhisattva, Celestial King Bodhisattva, Demon Crusher Bodhisattva, Lightning Virtue Bodhisattva, Sovereign Mastery Bodhisattva, Summit Sign Bodhisattva, and Beyond Transgressions Bodhisattva.

And there are also: Lion's Roar Bodhisattva, Cloud Shade Bodhisattva, Able to Conquer Bodhisattva, Mountainous Marks Banner Bodhisattva, Fragrant Elephant Bodhisattva, Great Fragrant Elephant Bodhisattva, White Fragrant Elephant Bodhisattva, Ever Vigorous Bodhisattva, Never Resting Bodhisattva, Sublime Birth Bodhisattva, Floral Adornment Bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva, Water King Bodhisattva, Mountain King Bodhisattva, Indra's Net Bodhisattva, Jewel Giving Bodhisattva, Crusher of Demons Bodhisattva, Adorner of Lands Bodhisattva, Golden Topknot Bodhisattva, and Pearl Topknot Bodhisattva.

One should bear in mind all such bodhisattvas and bow down to them in reverence as one seeks to attain the ground of the *avaivartika*.

## The End of Chapter Nine





## Part One Endnotes

1. These *ślokas* correspond to *ślokas* 24–28 of Nāgārjuna’s *Bodhisambhāra Śāstra*. In my English translation of that entire text with its Indian commentary, they read as follows:

So long as he has not generated great compassion or the patiences, even though he may have gained an irreversibility, the bodhisattva is still subject to a form of “dying” which occurs through allowing negligence to arise.

The grounds of the *śrāvaka* disciples or the *pratyekabuddhas*, if entered, become for him the same as dying because he would thereby sever the bodhisattva’s roots of understanding and awareness.

Even at the prospect of falling into the hell-realms, the bodhisattva would not be struck with fright.

The grounds of the *śrāvaka* disciples and the *pratyekabuddhas*, however, do provoke a great terror in him.

It is not the case that falling into the hell realms would bring about an ultimate obstacle to his bodhi.

The grounds of the *śrāvaka* disciples and the *pratyekabuddhas*, however, do create just such an ultimate obstacle.

Just as is said of he who loves long life, that he becomes fearful at the prospect of his own beheading, so too, the grounds of the *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* should bring about a fearfulness of just this sort.

2. The first two quatrains correspond to the *Bodhisambhāra Śāstra*’s *śloka* numbers 22 and 23 which read as follows:

In the bodhisattva’s striving for bodhi, so long as he has not yet gained irreversibility, he acts as urgently as the person whose turban has caught fire. Thus one should take up just such intensely diligent practice.

Thus it is that those bodhisattvas, when striving for the realization of bodhi, should not rest in their practice of vigor, for they have shouldered such a heavy burden.

3. These last two quatrains correspond to the *Bodhisambhāra Śāstra*’s *śloka* numbers 91 and 92 which read as follows:

Even if one were to take up the vehicle of the *śrāvaka* disciples or the vehicle of the *pratyekabuddhas*, and hence practiced solely for one’s own self benefit,

still, one would not relinquish the enduring practice of vigor.

How much the less could it be that a great man,  
one committed to liberate himself and liberate others,  
might somehow not generate  
a measure of vigor a thousand *koṭis* times greater?

4. I emend here the verse-abbreviated “Three Practices Buddha” reading to “Three *Vehicles* Practices Buddha” to accord with the explanatory text which follows at 42a02–06.
5. See *The Sutra on the Youth Precious Moon’s Questions on Dharma* (大乘寶月童子問法經 / T14n0437\_p108c01–110a07). The names vary, but the ideas are the same, i.e. sincere mindfulness of ten buddhas in the ten directions can bring irreversibility with respect to one’s future attainment of buddhahood.
6. “*Candana*” usually refers to sandalwood, but as noted in MW, it may also be used as a term to refer to anything that is the most excellent of its kind. MW: “mn. sandal (*Sirium myrtifolium*, either the tree, wood, or the unctuous preparation of the wood held in high estimation as perfumes; hence; a term for anything which is the most excellent of its kind.”
7. The Chinese translation for this eightieth buddha’s name, *guang-ming fo* (光明佛), “Light Buddha,” is duplicated in the name of the ninety-sixth buddha (see next paragraph). Since we do not know the Sanskrit antecedents for these two buddhas’ names, I have distinguished them here with slightly variant English translations (“Light Buddha,” “Radiance Buddha”).
8. The Chinese translation for this ninety-sixth buddha’s name, *guang-ming fo* (光明佛), “Radiance Buddha,” is duplicated in the name of the eightieth buddha (see previous paragraph). Since we do not know the Sanskrit antecedents for these two buddhas’ names, I have distinguished them here with slightly variant English translations (“Light Buddha,” “Radiance Buddha”).
9. On sensibility grounds, I adopt here the SYMG editions’ variant, *hua yuan fo* (華園佛), “Floral Garden Buddha,” to correct what seems to be a graphic-similarity scribal error in the *Taisho* edition, *hua chi fo* (華齒佛), “Floral Teeth Buddha.”
10. I reconstruct “*aśoka*,” lit. “sorrowless” as the name of this bodhi tree as it is a tree that grows throughout India (*Saraca asoca*) and is in fact said to also be the same kind of tree under which the historical Buddha’s mother gave birth to him.
11. VB provides the following citation: “See DN II 4: *Sikhī, bhikkhave, bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho puṇḍarikassa mūle abhisambuddho.*”

12. The *śirīṣa* tree is identified by MW as *acacia sirissa*.
13. An “*aśvattha*” tree is an ancient name for what is more commonly known in Buddhist texts as the “bodhi” tree (*ficus religiosa*).
14. In the verses below (at 44b07), this Buddha’s name is enhanced with an additional character to “Marks of the Sovereign’s Canopy” (王幢相).
15. I suspect that there should only be ten buddhas in this list and that this buddha’s name may appear here only as a result of an accidental scribal redundancy, this for two reasons:
  - a) The Chinese name is identical to that of the previously listed buddha except that the characters are in reverse order (*wangxiang* [王相] versus *xiangwang* [相王]); and
  - b) Although the other ten buddhas’ names are mentioned in the following praise verses, this buddha’s name is not mentioned there at all.
16. This buddha’s name is only slightly different in the verses that follow, occurring there (at 44b15) as “Peacefully Established” (安立).
17. I emend the reading of the reading here by preferring the *zi* (自), “personally,” of the SYMG editions to the *mu* (目), “eyes” of the *Taisho* text, this to correct an apparent graphic-similarity scribal error.