

Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra Known as Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions

Ārya Daśadigandhakāraavidhvaṃsana nāmā mahāyānasūtra

'phags pa phyogs bcu'i mun pa rnam par sel ba bzhes bya ba theg pa chen pa'i mdo¹

Summary

The Buddha taught this sūtra near Kapilavastu, to a Shakya youth named Supremely Radiant Face who requested a ritual to protect him from harm while travelling. The Buddha described the names and realms of the Buddhas in each of the various directions, and taught the youth that paying homage to and imagining those Buddhas before him would protect him from fear during his journey and bring about the accomplishment of his goals. Supremely Radiant Face and all others who heard the Buddha bestow this teaching became able to directly behold those Buddhas in their various realms. Then the Buddha prophesied the youth and the assembly's eventual enlightenment. The Buddha explained that through the blessings of those Buddhas, merely reading, teaching, or keeping this sūtra will bestow protection from fears of miserable death or harm. This sūtra is often chanted at the beginning of undertakings to overcome obstacles and bring success.

Translators' Introduction

Noble Mahayana Sūtra Known as Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions was translated from Sanskrit and included in the Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese Buddhist canons, however the Sanskrit original is no longer known to exist.

The colophon to this sūtra states that it was initially translated into Tibetan by the Indian Abbot Viśuddhasiṃha and the Tibetan translator Bhante Tsang Devendrarakṣita, who was probably the same as Tsang Legdrup, one of the first seven Tibetans to be ordained by Shantarakṣita at the newly established Samye Monastery in the mid-eighth century.²

The probability that Bhante Tsang Devendrarakṣita and the Tibetan monk Tsang Legdrup are the same is based upon the following analysis of the relationship between the two names. Bhante Tsang Devendrarakṣita means Bhante (monk) from Tsang (gtsang). The name Tsang Legdrup also contains the same birthplace name, Tsang. His Tibetan name Lekdrup (Well Accomplished) may have been changed to Devendra when he became ordained. His second name, Rakṣita, may have been the Dharma name given at ordination by the abbot Shantarakṣita, as it was and still is a custom for an abbot to give a piece of his name to those he ordains. Therefore, it is possible that the first translator of this text was one of the first seven monks to be ordained in Tibet.

The colophon to this text states that it was revised by Lotsawa Lui Gyaltsen, who was one of the three most famous translators of the first period of the propagation of the Dharma in Tibet: Kawa Paltseg, Lui Gyaltsen and Shang Nanangpa. If the original translator, Bhante Tsang Devendrarakṣita, was indeed the same as Tsang Legdrup, he was probably a contemporary of Lotsawa Lui Gyaltsen and also of the Indian masters

¹ Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra known as *Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions* (Ārya Daśadigandhakāraavidhvaṃsana nāmā mahāyānasūtra - 'phags pa phyogs bcu'i mun pa rnam par sel ba bzhes bya ba theg pa chen pa'i mdo) Toh 269; sde dge Kangyur Vol (mdo sde, YA), folios 7a-13a.

² Mangthu Ludrup Gyatso (mang thos klu sgrub rgya mtsho) *Chronology* (bsdan rtsis gsal ba'i nyid byed lhag bsam rab dkar zhes bya ba Book 5). Contained in Editors sa skya'i dpe nying bsdu sgrig u lhan nas bsgrigs Title: sa skya'i chos 'byung gces bsdu published by krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008. Page 216.

Shantarākṣita, Padmasambava, and Vimalamitra who came to Tibet to establish the Dharma at the invitation of the second great Tibetan Dharma King Trisong Detsen.

At that time, the Indian Panditas worked with over a hundred Tibetan translators, among them Lotsawa Lui Gyaltzen, to translate the sūtras and tantras.³ Tsang Devendrarākṣita may have also been part of that group. Lotsawa Lui Gyaltzen also participated in the eighth-century revision of the Tibetan language to better translate various proper names and Buddhist technical terms, revising the work of the earliest translators who worked under the first Dharma King Songtsen Gampo.⁴

This translation into English is based upon the *sde dge* version of the Kangyur, with reference to the differences between various other versions of the Kangyur as found in the *dpe sdur ma*⁵ comparative edition. The few small variations between the versions of the Kangyur change only a word or two of the English translation, and these variations have been noted in footnotes.

Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions is part of the Chinese Buddhist canon (Taisho catalog numbers 435, and B. Nanjio catalog numbers 515).⁶ It is also included in the Japanese canon.

This sūtra describes many of the infinite number of Buddhas dwelling in countless buddha realms throughout the universe, and how remembering them, paying respect to them, and imagining them in front of one while on a journey bestows the blessings of safety and accomplishment of one's goals.

The sūtra was taught at the Nyagrodha grove near the city of Kapilavastu, the Buddha's childhood home. As a young man named Supremely Radiant Face was embarking from the city, he encountered the Buddha and requested a ritual to protect himself and his parents from any harm that he might encounter on his journey. The Buddha described to him the names and realms of the Buddhas in each of the various ten directions, and taught him that if he remembered those Buddhas while travelling in those directions, prostrated to them, and imagined them before himself, that fear or harm would not arise, and that the purpose of the activity for which he travelled would be accomplished.

Supremely Radiant Face promised to do so, and by the power of the Buddha became able to actually behold all of the Buddhas of the ten directions in their various realms, just as he could behold the Buddha in front of him. All of the thousand beings who also heard the Buddha's Dharma discourse also became able to behold the Buddhas in their realms without any obscuration or darkness. As a result the Buddha named this text *Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions*.

Then the Buddha prophesied that all who had heard the discourse would accomplish all the accumulations of enlightenment and become perfectly complete Buddhas. The Buddha explained that furthermore, anyone who holds this Dharma discourse, reads it, understands it, teaches it, or even merely writes it down and keeps it will be protected from fear of miserable death or from drowning, thieves, poison, and weapons. Then Indra, king of the gods, also promised to protect those who keep this sūtra, whether they dwell in homes, in a monastery, in isolated places, or are travelling on the road.

³ *Rime Philosophy of Jamgon Kongtrul the Great: A Study of Buddhist Lineages in Tibet*. Ringu Tulku and Ann Helm. Shambala 2006, p. 237.

⁴ *Dungkar Losang Khrinley Dungkar (Tibetological Great Dictionary)* translation by Sam van Schaik accessed on October 15, 2010 at <http://readingtibetan.wordpress.com/resources/dungkar>

⁵ bka' 'gyur dpe bsdur ma/ krung go'i bod kyi shes rig zhib 'jug lte gnas ki bka' bstan dpe bsdur khang gis dpe bsdur byas). par gzhi 1. Pe cin : krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2006-2009.

⁶ *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons*, edited by Ui, Suzuki, Kanakura, and Tada. Tōhoku Imperial University, Sendai, Japan, 1934. Entry number 269.

Because of this, recitation of this sūtra is known to be beneficial at the beginning of an undertaking, as a means of invoking the Buddhas' blessings to bring about conditions to accomplish one's goals. This sūtra is also kept as a blessing in dwellings, or in a special place among one's possessions when on a journey.

Based on this sūtra, over the centuries, other Tibetan Buddhist texts with similar names involving dispelling the darkness of the ten directions have been written or discovered as termas. Although the specific names of the Buddhas in the various directions may differ and other versions include other holy beings such as Bodhisattvas, goddesses, etc. these texts also offer protection in the form of the blessings of the Buddhas upon those embarking on undertakings and journeys large or small.

This sūtra includes the names of many Buddhas in various realms, which are not among those commonly named in other sūtras. As the original Sanskrit version of this sūtra is no longer extant, the names of these Buddhas and their realms have been rendered from Tibetan into English.

Translation

[F.7.a] In Sanskrit: *Ārya Daśadikandhakāra-vidhvansana Nāma Mahāyāna Sūtra*

In Tibetan: *'phags pa phyogs bcu'i mun pa rnam par sel ba bzhes bya ba theg pa chen pa'i mdo*

In English: Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra Known as Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions

Prostrations to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Thus I have heard at one time. The Tathāgatha was dwelling among the Śākya in the garden of Nyagrodha in Kapilavastu, with a great assembly of 1,250 bhikṣus, together with a great retinue of Bodhisattvas, including Maitreya and Mañjuśrī.

Then, in the morning, the Tathāgatha put on his lower robe⁷ and carrying his almsbowl and upper dharma robe^{8,9}, completely surrounded by an assembly of bhikṣus, led by an assembly of bhikṣus, travelled to the great city of Kapilavastu to receive alms.

At that time, a Śākya youth known as Supremely Radiant Face was coming out of Kapilavastu to do some activities, riding a horse-drawn chariot. The Śākya youth Supremely Radiant Face saw the Tathāgatha coming toward him even from afar. Seeing him, he dismounted from the chariot and went to where the Tathāgatha was, folded his hands in respect, bowed his head in the direction of the Tathāgatha, and prostrated at the Tathāgatha's feet. Then he did three circumambulations around the Tathāgatha, [F.7.b] and with folded hands, sat before the Tathāgatha.

Then the Śākya youth Supremely Radiant Face addressed the Tathāgatha, "Tathāgatha, both my father and mother might be harmed while either awake or asleep by non-human beings. Tathāgatha, I myself, too, when traveling to other lands, might be harmed by bandits and thieves, or harmed by wild animals. Therefore, Tathāgatha, Thus Gone One, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha, for the sake of your compassion for me, by all means, from harm caused by human and non-human beings as well as any other being in the category of animals, thus please well protect me. Please teach me a protection ritual, too." Thus he requested.

⁷ A monk's lower robe: sham thabs

⁸ A monk's upper robe: chos gos

⁹ The sde dge edition reads *carrying* (bsnams) his almsbowl and upper dharma robe. However, the li tang, pe cin, snar thang, co ne, and shol read *wearing* (mnabs) his almsbowl and upper dharma robe.

Then, the Tathāgatha bade the Śākya Youth Supremely Radiant Face, “Youth, for that purpose, I shall instruct you. Listen carefully and keep this in your mind.” The youth replied, “Tathāgatha, that I shall do.”

Then the Śākya Youth Supremely Radiant Face hearkened to the Tathāgatha, and the Tathāgatha bade him thus. “Youth, in the east, passing eighty thousand Buddha realms beyond this Buddha realm, there is a world known by the name Shaking All Defilements. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as Buddha Subsequent Conduct presently living and dwelling there. Youth, if you embark to the east to undertake any activity, then remember that Tathāgatha, do prostrations, and keep him before you. If you travel with your mind continuously imagining thus, fear will not arise in you. [F.8.a] Then, holding that Buddha in mind without distraction, you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.”

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

The Great Sage, Fully Enlightened Buddha;
After well prostrating to that Lord,
If that One is always imagined,
While you travel, no fear will arise in you.

“Youth, in the south passing ninety thousand Buddha realms beyond this Buddha realm, there is a world known by the name, Destruction of Darkness and Dense Darkness. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as the Buddha King of the Thoroughly Elevated Due to Freedom from Fear and Intimidation from Any Activity since First Generating Enlightenment Mind presently living and dwelling there. Youth, if you embark to the south to undertake any activity, then remember that Tathāgatha, do prostrations, and keep him before you. If you travel with your mind continuously imagining thus, with your mind undistracted by household thoughts, etc., fear will not arise in you anywhere. Then, holding that Buddha in mind without distraction, you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

Be free of all thoughts
Which arise about any household;
If you travel to the south,
Fear will not arise in you.

“Youth, in the west passing as many Buddha realms beyond this Buddha realm as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, there is a world known by the name Pleasant Land. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as the Buddha Complete Suppressor of Resentment and Conceit presently living and dwelling there. Youth, if you embark to the west [F8.b] to undertake any activity, then remember that Tathāgatha, do prostrations, and keep him before you. If you travel with your mind continuously imagining thus, and mindfully travel without defilements and distractions in your mind¹⁰, fear will not arise in you anywhere. Then holding that Buddha in mind without distraction, you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

¹⁰ The *gkung lo*, *lit hang*, *pe cin*, *snar thang*, *co ne*, and *shol* editions insert the word *you* (*khyod*) at this point

None of these phenomena are born,
 Nor do any cease;
 For those who understand all phenomena thus,
 No fear occurs in them.

“Youth, in the north passing one thousand million Buddha realms beyond this Buddha realm, there is a world known by the name Possessed of a Buddha’s Courage. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as the Buddha Precious Form Body of Overpowering Light presently living and dwelling there. Youth, if you embark to the north to undertake any activity, then remember that Tathāgatha, do prostrations, and keep him before you. If you travel with your mind continuously imagining thus without distraction, fear will not arise in you anywhere. Then holding that Buddha in mind, you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

Always make the mind equal
 Toward all sentient beings;
 If you do not condemn¹¹ any sentient being,
 Fear will not occur in you.

“Youth, in the northeast passing eighty thousand Buddha realms beyond this Buddha realm, there is a world known by the name Conquered a Host of Maras. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as Maras and Doubt Completely Subdued and Suppressed presently living and dwelling there. That Tathāgatha, by merely sitting under the Bodhi tree, [F.9.a] caused all the gods of the hordes of maras that exist in the three great thousand worlds of existence to enter the irreversible state of unsurpassable perfectly complete enlightenment. Youth, indeed that Tathāgatha had such skill by sitting under the Bodhi tree. Youth, if you embark to the northeast to undertake any activity, then remember that Tathāgatha, do prostrations, and keep him before you. If you travel with your mind continuously imagining thus without distraction, fear will not arise in you anywhere. Then, holding that Buddha in mind, you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.”

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

The One who by his first thought,
 Defeated maras and reached Buddhahood:
 If you travel while remembering him,
 Fear will not arise in you.

“Youth, in the southeast passing twenty thousand Buddha realms beyond this Buddha realm, there is a world known by the name Ever Radiant. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as Irreversible Wheel’s Rising Glory from the Moment of First Generating Enlightenment Mind presently living and dwelling there. Youth, that Tathāgatha had such valor that, Youth, from the moment of first generating of enlightenment mind until the achievement of Buddhahood, without any hindrance, that Tathāgatha bestowed gifts, guarded morality, always relied upon patience, performed diligence, adopted meditative concentration, and developed wisdom. Youth, when you embark to the northeast to undertake

¹¹ The glung lo and pe cin editions read *forget* (brnyes), while the sde dge reads *condemn* (brnyas).

any activity, do prostrations with your five limbs¹² to that Tathāgatha, and if you subsequently travel from your home, later [F.9.b] no regret nor fear will arise in you anywhere. Youth, holding that in mind without distraction, you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

Prostrate with the five limbs.
 Later, if you go from your home,
 You will travel without being overpowered
 By any bandits or thieves.

“Youth, in the southwest passing thirty thousand Buddha realms beyond this Buddha realm, there is a world known by the name Covered by a Golden Net. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as Uplifting and Illuminating a Precious Canopy presently living and dwelling there. Youth, if you embark to the southwest to undertake any activity, then remember that Tathāgatha, do prostrations, and keep him before you. If you travel with your mind continuously imagining thus without distraction, no fear will arise in you anywhere. Then mindfully holding that Buddha in mind, you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.”

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

Having prostrated to the perfectly complete Buddha,
 Strew flower petals;
 If you travel to the southwest,
 Fear will not arise in you.

“Youth, in the northwest passing as many Buddha realms as there are sands in six Ganges Rivers beyond this Buddha realm, there is a world known by the name Completely Purified and Thoroughly Exalted. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as Bodhisattva Tamer presently living and dwelling there. Youth, that Tathagata’s buddharealm has no impurities, no sexual activities, no females, [F.10.a] no thorns, no roughness, no gravel, nor the five degenerations. Youth, if you embark to the northwest to undertake any activity, correctly observe pure conduct, and after that, travel from home without distraction in your mind. Youth, fear will not arise in you anywhere and you will accomplish the purpose for which you embarked.

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verse:

Correctly observe pure conduct,
 Later when you travel from¹³ your home
 Wherever you travel,
 You will not be overpowered by bandits and thieves.

“Youth, in the zenith passing as many Buddha realms as there are sands in sixty Ganges Rivers beyond this buddha realm, there is a world known by the name One with the Concept of Non-Objectification. In that

¹² A prostration with five limbs is performed by putting the two hands, two feet, and the head upon the ground

¹³ The gkung lo, lit hang, pe cin, snar thang, co ne, and shol editions of the text read *return to* (logs) your home, while the sde dge edition reads *travel from* (song).

realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as Fearlessly Free of Darkness King of Greatly Exalted Meditative Concentration presently living and dwelling there. Youth, if you prostrate to that Tathāgata, remember him and imagine yourself in his presence, whether you are sitting or standing, if your loving kindness pervades all sentient being and you remain like this, fear will not arise in you anywhere.

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verses:

With undistracted mental involvement
 Be always mindful of that Victorious One;
 Always develop loving kindness in your mind,
 No fear will arise in you.

“Youth, in the nadir passing as many as ninety-two thousand buddha realms beyond this buddha realm, there is a world known by the name Decorated with All Good Qualities. In that realm, there is a Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha, known as Cutting Doubt and Shaking the Defilements[F.10.b] from the First Generation of Enlightenment Mind presently¹⁴ living and dwelling there. Youth, whatever activities you begin, remember that Thus Gone One, whether you are standing, sitting, walking, or doing any other activity. Do prostrations, keep that Buddha in mind, and generate thoughts of kindness and and thoughts of benefit toward all sentient beings. Youth, no fear will arise in you, and all needs will be effortlessly accomplished.

Then the Tathāgatha spoke the following verses:

In every activity, both day and night
 Be mindful of that Buddha;
 Do not release enlightenment mind and
 No fear will arise in you.

Youth, you must excellently hold all of these holy names of the Tathāgathas, Arhats, perfectly complete Buddhas, excellently keep and excellently and comprehensively understand this. Then, none of these fears, anxieties, and terrors, will arise in you. Thus the Tathāgatha spoke to the Youth.

Then, the Śākya youth, Supremely Radiant Face said, "Tathāgatha, I will hold the holy names of the Tathāgathas, Arhats, perfectly complete Buddhas in my memory. Tathāgatha, for me, there is no darkness whatsoever in those worlds of existence. Tathāgatha, I can see all of those worlds of existence, and all of those Tathāgathas, Arhats, perfectly complete Buddhas, just as I now see the Tathāgatha dwelling among his retinue giving Dharma teachings!"

Then, among that gathering, the Śākya Youth Supremely Radiant Face and most of the other beings looked toward the Tathāgatha, [F.11.a] prostrated, made offerings, and paid homage. Then, all of the thousand beings who gathered there to listen to this Dharma teaching stood up, placed their upper robes upon their shoulders, touched their right knees upon the floor, folded their hands in the direction of where the Tathāgatha was, paid respect, and offered these words to the Tathāgatha. “Tathāgatha, because the Tathāgatha taught this holy Dharma discourse for our benefit, Tathāgatha, for us there is no darkness in any of the directions or the worlds of existence. Tathāgatha, we can see those worlds and those Tathāgathas just as we now see the Tathāgatha teaching the Dharma.”

¹⁴ The pe cin edition reads *thus* (de tar), while the sde dge edition reads *presently* (da ltar).

Then, by the power of the Buddha, Venerable Śāriputra stood up from his cushion, put his upper robe upon one shoulder, touched his right knee upon the floor, folded his hands in the direction of where the Tathāgatha was, paid respect, and in the presence of the Tathāgatha, offered these words to the Tathāgatha. “Tathāgatha, when you taught this Dharma discourse to these noble sons and daughters, O Tathāgatha, when these beings heard the holy names of these Tathāgathas, their eyes were completely purified and they were able to directly see all of those worlds of existence in the ten directions and also the Tathāgathas in those realms. Tathāgatha, why do they have the merit of eyes that are purified? Will they or will they not lose this merit when they change from this life to their next life?”

Then the Tathāgatha spoke thus, “Śāriputra, those sons of noble family¹⁵ who have correctly entered the Bodhisattva vehicle, have eyes thus completely purified because they have no obscurations. [F.11.b] Śāriputra, do you see these full thousand beings? Śāriputra, each of them will be able to attain the life of a universal emperor, as many times as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River because of the power of the root of virtue of remembering the holy names of these Buddhas. In their last life and last physical body, all of these beings will accomplish all of the accumulations of enlightenment, and then in one eon, every one of them will become a Buddha, known by the name Tathāgatha Ornamented with Pure Buddha Eyes, Arhats, Perfectly Complete Buddhas, and all of them will achieve unsurpassable, perfect complete Buddhahood.

At the moment of the Tathāgatha’s prophecy to those noble sons and daughters, immediately the entire three thousand great thousand worlds of existence vibrated in six ways: vibrating, vibrating greatly, vibrating greatly everywhere; trembling, trembling greatly, trembling greatly everywhere; roaring, roaring greatly, roaring greatly everywhere; thumping, thumping greatly, thumping greatly everywhere; clashing, clashing greatly, clashing greatly everywhere; quaking, quaking greatly, quaking greatly everywhere.

At that moment, even the gods above proclaimed, “Amazing! Friends, it is greatly amazing that merely by remembering the names of these Tathāgathas, these sons and daughters of noble family will become able to fully grasp unsurpassable perfectly complete Buddhahood and become Tathāgathas who comprehensively understand all meanings by knowing all phenomena exactly. Who would not develop faith in the Buddha because of this?” Thus they spoke.

The gods, beginning with those in Cāturmahārājika, Trāyastriṃśa, Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāraṇa, the Paranirmitavaśavartins of the horde of mara, Brahma’s Horde, Brahmāpurohita, and Mahābrahma; [F.12.a] onward up to to gods in Akaniṣṭha; all of these gods above the earth heard these words and rejoiced, and were thoroughly joyful. Their mental joy and bliss was expressed with these words, “Amazing! It is greatly amazing! Friends! Thus, these sons and daughters of noble family, by merely remembering the holy names of these Tathāgathas, will be able to fully grasp unsurpassable, perfectly complete Buddhahood, and to become Tathāgathas who comprehensively understand all meanings by knowing all phenomena exactly. Who would not develop faith in the Buddha because of this?” Thus they spoke.

Then, the Tathāgatha bade the venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, any sons or daughters of noble family who have correctly entered the Bodhisattva vehicle, and who after hearing this Dharma discourse, grasp and keep it in mind, read it, fully understand it, correctly teach it widely to others or even merely write down this text and keep it, those sons and daughters of noble family are blessed by the Buddhas. Regard them as having done special service to the previous Buddhas. Regard them as those to whom fear of death will not occur, who will

¹⁵ Sons of noble family = rigs kyi bu

not die with inferior motivation, who will not die miserably, who will not die from harm by their opponents. Trust that for them, fear of harm by water, robbers and thieves, poison, and weapons will not occur.

Realizing that the great Bodhisattvas like these were guarded and prophesized by Buddhas and in order to keep this Dharma discourse,

Then, Indra, king of gods, realizing that great Bodhisattvas like these were guarded and prophesized by the Buddhas, in order to retain this Dharma discourse went into the presence of the Tathāgatha completely surrounded by one thousand sons of the gods. Led by them he offered prostrations with his head at the feet of the Tathāgatha, and thrice circumambulated the Tathāgatha. [F.12.b] Then, Indra strewed divine sandalwood powder, divine mandārava flowers, and great mandārava toward the Tathāgatha and the full thousand sentient beings who had received a prophecy from the Tathāgatha that they would in the future become unsurpassably, perfectly complete Buddhas.

Then he sat with folded hands to one side and offered these words, “Tathāgatha, I will protect any sons and daughters of noble family who grasp this Dharma discourse, hold it, read it, and fully understand it, whether those noble sons and daughters dwell in homes, or dwell in a monastery, or dwell among the trees, or dwell in empty houses, or dwell in isolated temples, or dwell on the road, or dwell on the wrong road. Whether they are asleep or awakened from sleep, I will protect them so that they will not be harmed or killed by others.” Thus he said.

Then the Tathāgatha bade the Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, even if some noble sons and daughters were to offer Dharma robes, almsfood, accommodation, bedding, medicines for illness, and other necessities throughout the entire life of the Tathāgatha, Arhat, perfectly complete Buddha who is presently alive and dwelling here, Ānanda, that alone would not be considered veneration of the Tathāgatha, would not be veneration of him as a guru, would not be honoring him, would not be making offerings. Those sons and daughters of noble family who have correctly entered the Bodhisattva vehicle, and who after hearing this Dharma discourse grasp it, hold it, read it, fully understand it, correctly teach it widely to other beings or even merely write down this text and keep it, Ānanda, [F.13.a] those sons and daughters of noble family by that alone, nobly venerate the Tathāgatha, nobly venerate him as exalted, nobly honor him, and nobly venerate him with offerings. Thus they venerate him, venerate him as exalted, honor him, and make offerings.”

Then, Venerable Ānanda arose from his seat, placed his upper robe upon one shoulder, put his right knee upon the floor, folded his hands in respect in the direction of where the Tathāgatha was and inquired with the following words, “Tathāgatha, what is the name of this Dharma discourse? How should we keep it?” Thus he inquired.

Then the Tathāgatha bade Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, in this case, you should keep the name of this Dharma discourse as *Thoroughly Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions*, and as *Correct Description of the Holy Names of the Tathāgathas*, and as *Realization of the Non-Material*, and also as *Realization of Lack of Characteristics*.”

The Tathāgatha having spoken thus, the Venerable Ānanda, the Venerable Śāriputra, the Śākya Youth Supremely Radiant Face, and a full thousand sentient beings, the lord of gods Indra, the bhikṣus, Bodhisattvas, gods, humans, semi-gods, scent eaters, and all worldly beings rejoiced, and praised what the Tathāgatha had said.

This completes *The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra known as Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions*. The Indian Abbot Viśuddhasiṃha and the Tibetan translator Bhante Tsang Devendrarakṣita translated it into

Tibetan. The final editing was done by the great editor Lotsawa Lui Gyaltzen.

This was translated from Tibetan into English by the Sakya Pandita Translation Group, Tsechen Kunchab Ling Division by Venerable Khenpo Kalsang Gyaltzen and Ani Kunga Chodron in 2010.

Bibliography

Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra known as Completely Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions (Ārya

Daśadigandhakāraṁśana nāmā mahāyānasūtra - phags pa phyogs bcu'i mun pa rnam par sel ba bzhes bya ba theg pa chen pa'i mdo) Toh 269; sde dge Kangyur Vol (mdo sde, YA), folios 7a-13a.

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