

THE FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

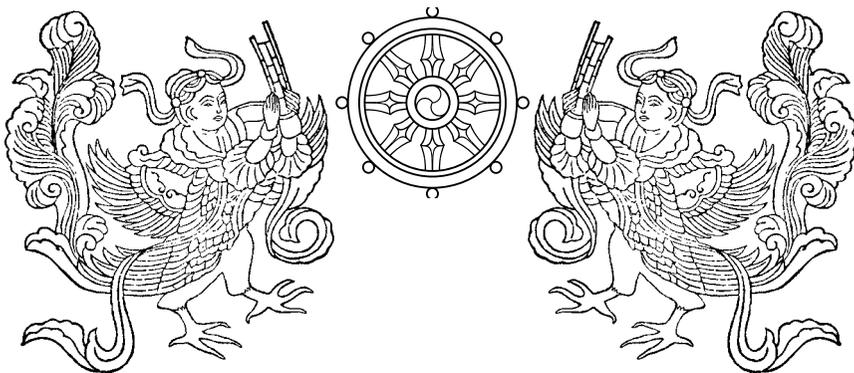
*The Great Expansive
Buddha's Flower Adornment Sutra*

An Annotated Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra

By Bhikshu Dharmamitra

WITH A COMMENTARIAL SYNOPSIS
OF THE FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

VOLUME ONE



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Avataṃsaka Sūtra or 'The Great Expansive Buddha's Flower Adornment Sutra'

rendered from Tripitaka Master Śikṣānanda's circa 699 CE Sanskrit-to-Chinese

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Vol. 10, no. 279). It consists of 39 chapters that introduce an interpenetrating,

infinitely expansive, and majestically grand multiverse of countless buddha

worlds while explaining in great detail the cultivation of the bodhisattva path

to buddhahood, most notably the ten highest levels of bodhisattva practice

known as 'the ten bodhisattva grounds.' To date, this is the first and only

complete English translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*."-- Provided by publisher.

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CHAPTER 4

The Formation of the Worlds

At that time, aided by the Buddha's spiritual powers, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva-mahāsattva everywhere contemplated the oceans of all worlds, the oceans of all beings, the oceans of all buddhas, the ocean of the entire Dharma realm, the oceans of all beings' karma, the oceans of all beings' faculties and aspirations, the oceans of all buddhas' Dharma wheels, the ocean of all three periods of time, the oceans of the vow power of all *tathāgatas*, and the oceans of spiritual transformations of all *tathāgatas*. Then, having contemplated in this way, he told all the bodhisattvas in the oceanic congregation at that site of enlightenment:

Sons of the Buddha:

The pure knowledge possessed by the buddhas, the *bhagavats*, by which they know the creation and destruction of all oceans of worlds is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they know the oceans of all beings' karma is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they know the oceans of everything established throughout the entire Dharma realm is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they speak of all the boundless oceans of buddhas is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they penetrate the oceans of all aspirations, understandings, and faculties is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they know all three periods of time in but a single mind-moment is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they reveal all *tathāgatas'* measureless oceans of vows is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they reveal the oceans of all buddhas' spiritual transformations is inconceivable;

The knowledge by which they turn the wheel of Dharma is inconceivable;

Their establishment of an ocean of expository teaching is inconceivable;

Their pure buddha bodies are inconceivable;⁶⁶

Their boundless oceans of forms and characteristics emanating
 pervasive illumination are inconceivable;
 Their major marks and secondary signs, all of which are pure, are
 inconceivable;
 Their boundless oceans of fully purified forms, characteristics,
 and radiant auras are inconceivable;
 Their oceans of radiant clouds of many different kinds of forms
 and characteristics are inconceivable;
 Their oceans of flaming radiance emanated by especially superior
 jewels are inconceivable;
 Their oceans of perfect voices are inconceivable;
 Their oceans of manifestations of the three kinds of sovereign mas-
 tery by which they train and ripen all beings are inconceivable;⁶⁷
 Their oceans of courageous efforts in training beings which are
 never carried out in vain are inconceivable;
 Their abiding on the ground of buddhahood is inconceivable;
 Their entry into the Tathāgata's sphere of action is inconceivable;
 Their awesome power to afford protection is inconceivable;
 Their contemplation of the actions arising from the knowledge of
 all buddhas is inconceivable;
 Their perfect fulfillment of the powers by which they are invin-
 cible is inconceivable;
 The meritorious qualities of their fearlessness which no one can
 surpass are inconceivable;
 Their dwelling in nondiscriminating samādhi is inconceivable;
 Their transformations produced by their spiritual superknowl-
 edges are inconceivable;
 Their pure and masterful wisdom is inconceivable; and
 All the indestructible dharmas of buddhahood are inconceivable.

With the assistance of the Buddha's spiritual powers as well as with
 the assistance of the awesome spiritual powers of all *tathāgatas*, I
 will fully explain all dharmas such as these, doing so:

To enable beings to enter the ocean of the Buddha's wisdom;
 To enable all bodhisattvas to become securely established in the
 ocean of the Buddha's meritorious qualities;
 To enable all the oceans of worlds to become adorned by all bud-
 dhas' sovereign masteries;
 To enable the lineage of the *tathāgatas* to never be cut off at any
 point in the oceans of kalpas;
 To enable the true nature of all dharmas to be revealed through-
 out all the oceans of worlds;

- To enable the expounding of the Dharma to be adapted to the ocean of beings' countless different understandings;
- To enable the implementation of skillful means adapted to the ocean of all beings' various faculties so that they may be enabled to bring forth the dharmas of buddhahood;
- To enable adaptation to the ocean of all beings' various aspirations and thereby crush all their mountains of obstacles;
- To enable adaptation to the ocean of all beings various mental actions so as to enable their purifying cultivation of the path to emancipation; and
- To enable all bodhisattvas to become securely established in the ocean of Samantabhadra's vows.

At this time, because Samantabhadra Bodhisattva also wished to enable those in the measureless ocean of the congregation at the site of enlightenment to be filled with happiness, to enable them to increase their delight in all dharmas, to enable them to bring forth a vast ocean of genuine resolute faith, to enable them to purify the universal gateway to the body of the treasury of the Dharma realm, to enable them to become securely established in the ocean of Samantabhadra's vows, to enable them to purify the wisdom eye with which one equally enters all three periods of time, to enable them to increase the ocean of great wisdom which everywhere illuminates the treasury of all worlds, to enable their development of the *dhāraṇī* powers by which one preserves all wheels of the Dharma, to enable the complete revealing of the buddhas' entire spheres of action in all sites of enlightenment, to enable the expounding of the Dharma gateways of all *tathāgatas*, and to enable growth in [their understanding of] the nature of the Dharma realm's vast and extremely profound omniscience, he then spoke these verses:

His extremely profound wisdom and ocean of meritorious qualities appear everywhere throughout the ten directions in countless lands. In accordance with whatever beings should see, his light everywhere illuminates and turns the wheel of the Dharma.

The ocean of *kṣētras* throughout ten directions is inconceivable. For countless kalpas, the Buddha has purified them and, for the sake of teaching beings and enabling their ripening, he appears in all lands.

The Buddha's sphere of action is extremely deep and inconceivable. He everywhere reveals it to beings and thus enables them to enter. As their minds delight in the small and attach to stations of existence,⁶⁸ they are unable to comprehend what the Buddha has awakened to.

Wherever there are those with pure faith and solid resolve
who are always able to draw near to a good spiritual guide,
all buddhas bestow their powers on them.

These are then enabled to enter the wisdom of the Tathāgata.

Those who have abandoned flattery and deceit, who have pure minds,
who always enjoy being kind and compassionate, are naturally happy,
and are people of deep faith whose aspirations are vast—
Whenever they hear this Dharma, they become filled with joy.

Those who dwell securely on the ground of Samantabhadra's vows,
who cultivate the pure path of the bodhisattva,
and who contemplate the Dharma realm as like empty space—
These then become able to know the Buddha's sphere of actions.

These bodhisattvas acquire the benefit of goodness
and witness the power of all the Buddha's spiritual superknowledges.
None of those who cultivate other paths are able to know them.
Those adopting Samantabhadra's practices are then able to awaken.

Though the realms of beings are boundlessly vast,
the Tathāgata is protectively mindful of them all.
Turning the wheel of right Dharma, there are none he does not reach.
Such is the power of Vairocana Buddha's sphere of actions.

All of the *kṣetras* have entered my very body.
So too have all buddhas who dwell there within them.
You should contemplate all of my pores.
I will now thus reveal to you the Buddha's sphere of action.

The conduct and vows of Samantabhadra are boundless.
I have already cultivated them and reached their complete fulfillment.
The sphere of vision of the universal eye and the vast body
are the domain of the Buddha's practice. You should listen attentively.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva-mahāsattva addressed the
great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, regarding the oceans of worlds, there are ten
matters of which all buddhas of the past, present, and future have
spoken, now speak, and will speak. What then are those ten? They
are as follows:

- The causes and conditions necessary for the arising and comple-
tion of the oceans of worlds;
- That upon which the oceans of worlds depend for their abiding;
- The forms of the oceans of worlds;
- The essential nature of the oceans of worlds;
- The adornments of the oceans of worlds;

The purity of the oceans of worlds;
 The arising of buddhas in the oceans of worlds;
 The kalpas during which the oceans of worlds abide;
 The differences in the transformations of oceans of worlds and kalpas; and
 The gateway of the absence of differentiating aspects in the oceans of worlds.

Sons of the Buddha, generally speaking, the oceans of worlds involve these ten matters. If one were to undertake an expansive explanation of them, then their number would equal the number of atoms in an ocean of worlds. All buddhas of the past, the present, and the future have spoken about them, now speak about them, and will speak about them.

Sons of the Buddha, generally speaking, there are ten types of causes and conditions through which all oceans of worlds have become established, now become established, and will become established in the future. What then are those ten? They are:

Because of the spiritual powers of the Tathāgata;
 Because the Dharma is such that these matters should occur in this way;
 Because of the actions practiced by all beings;
 Because of what is acquired by all bodhisattvas in realizing all-knowledge;
 Because of the roots of goodness jointly accumulated by all beings and bodhisattvas;
 Because of the power of all bodhisattvas' vows to purify lands;
 Because of all bodhisattvas' complete fulfillment of their irreversible conduct and vows;
 Because of all bodhisattvas' sovereign mastery in implementing their pure resolute intentions;⁶⁹
 Because of what flows from all *tathāgatas'* roots of goodness as well as from the sovereign power of all buddhas when they attain enlightenment; and
 Because of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's sovereign mastery of the power of vows.

Sons of the Buddha, this is a general explanation of but ten kinds of causes and conditions. If one were to undertake an expansive explanation of them, then their number would equal the number of atoms in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

The ocean of boundlessly many *kṣetras* of which we speak
has been completely purified by Vairocana Buddha.
The Bhagavat's sphere of action is inconceivable.
So too are his wisdom and power of spiritual superknowledges.

In cultivating the ocean of vows, the bodhisattvas
everywhere adapt to the aspirations of beings' minds.
Beings' various mental practices are boundlessly vast.
The bodhisattvas' lands are everywhere in the ten directions.

In their progression toward all-knowledge, the bodhisattvas
diligently cultivate the many different miraculous spiritual powers⁷⁰
which everywhere come forth from their measureless oceans of vows
by which they bring all the vast *kṣetras* to perfection.

Their cultivation of the ocean of practices is boundless.
Their penetration of Buddha's sphere of actions is also measureless.
In order to purify the lands of the ten directions,
they pass through each and every land for countless kalpas.

Beings are confused and muddled by the afflictions,
hence their discriminations and inclinations are not of a single sort.
The karma they create by following their thoughts is inconceivable.
All the oceans of all *kṣetras* are established by this.

The sons of the Buddha's oceans of *kṣetras* are a treasury of adornment
composed of their radiant jewels of immaculate purity.
This arises from the mind of vast resolute faith.
Wherever they dwell in the ten directions, they are all like this.

The bodhisattvas able to cultivate the conduct of Samantabhadra
roam throughout the destinies within the atoms of the Dharma realm.
Within all those atoms, there appear countless *kṣetras*
that are as pure and as vast as empty space.

In realms as extensive as space, they manifest their spiritual powers
and all go to the sites of enlightenment where the buddhas dwell.
Sitting atop their lotus thrones, revealing their many marks,
each and every one of their bodies contains all *kṣetras*.

In but a single mind-moment, they appear throughout the three times
and establish all the oceans of *kṣetras*.
Using skillful means, the Buddha enters them all.
These are what Vairocana has purified.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great
assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, throughout every one of the oceans of worlds,
the bases on which they abide are as numerous as the atoms in an
ocean of worlds. For example:

Some abide in reliance on all sorts of adornments;
 Some abide in reliance on empty space;
 Some abide in reliance on the light of all sorts of jewels;
 Some abide in reliance on the light of all buddhas;
 Some abide in reliance on light the color of all sorts of jewels;
 Some abide in reliance on the voices of all buddhas;
 Some abide in reliance on a vajra-wielder in the form of an
 immensely powerful *asura* born from illusion-like karma;
 Some abide in reliance on the body of any of the lords of the world;
 Some abide in reliance on the bodies of all the bodhisattvas; and
 Some abide in reliance on any of the different oceans of adorn-
 ment produced from the vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

Sons of the Buddha, the oceans of worlds have bases such as these
 on which they abide that are as numerous as the atoms in an ocean
 of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awe-
 some power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed
 the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

All the lands everywhere filling
 the realms of space throughout the ten directions,
 with the assistance of the Tathāgata's spiritual powers,
 appear directly before one in place after place so all can see them.

In some cases, there exist all sorts of different lands,
 none of which are not made of immaculate jewels.
 The most especially marvelous pristine *maṇi* jewels
 emanate blazing radiance which everywhere manifests oceans of light.

In some cases, there exist pure and radiant *kṣetras*
 which dwell in reliance on the realms of empty space.
 In some cases, they reside in an ocean of *maṇi* jewels.
 Then again, there are those securely abiding in a treasury of light.

The Tathāgata dwells within this congregation as vast as an ocean,
 expounding, turning the Dharma wheel, always with wondrous skill.
 The sphere of action of the buddhas is boundlessly vast.
 When beings witness this, their minds are filled with joyous delight.

There are those where *maṇi* jewels produce their adornments which
 form flower-shaped lamps widely spreading their illumination
 in clouds of fragrant flaming light, blazing with colored radiance.
 These are covered by a suspended shining net of marvelous jewels.

In some cases, there are boundless *kṣetras*
 dwelling in a deep and immense ocean of lotus flowers

which are vast, pure, and unique among the worlds
because they are adorned with the sublime goodness of all buddhas.

In some cases, there are oceans of *kṣētras* swirling like wheels
which are established by the Buddha's awesome spiritual powers.
Congregations of bodhisattvas reside everywhere within them
in which one always sees endless arrays of vast treasures.

In some cases, they abide in the hand of a vajra-wielding spirit.
Then again, sometimes they abide in the body of a celestial lord.
Vairocana Buddha, the unexcelled supreme honored one,
always turns the wheel of Dharma in these places.

In some cases, they abide, perfectly level, in a tree of jewels.
Or, again, in the same way within a cloud of fragrant flaming light.
In some cases they exist in dependence on an immense body of water
or else abide on an ocean of solid vajra.

In some cases, they abide in dependence upon a vajra banner.
Sometimes, they exist within an ocean of flowers.
With vast spiritual superknowledges, none of which are not pervasive,
Vairocana Buddha is able to produce appearances such as these.

Some long, some short, these exist in countless varieties.
Those with ring-like appearances are also not of merely a single type.
Such treasuries of sublime adornment differ from those in the world,
yet, through purity in cultivation, one then becomes able to see them.

Of the many different types such as these, each of which differ,
all abide in reliance on an ocean of vows.

In some instances there are lands forever residing in space
in which buddhas everywhere fill them like clouds.

In some cases, they dwell hanging upside down in space.
Sometimes they exist for a time and sometimes they do not remain.
In some cases, there are lands that are extremely pure
which dwell within a bodhisattva's jeweled crown.

The great spiritual powers of the buddhas of the ten directions
are all seen within these
and the voices of the buddhas everywhere fill them all.
These are all transformations brought about by the power of karma.

In some cases, these lands are everywhere in the Dharma realm,
pure, immaculate, arising from the mind,
like reflections, like conjurations, boundlessly vast,
and, as in the net of Indra, each different from the other.

They sometimes appear as treasuries of many different adornments
which are established as residing in space.

The spheres of objective experience born of karma are inconceivable.
The buddha's powers reveal them and enable everyone to see them.

Within the atoms of each and every land,
the buddha *kṣetras* appear in every mind-moment
in countless numbers equal to the number of all beings.
The deeds done by Samantabhadra are always just like this.

Because he wishes to enable the maturation of beings,
he cultivates his practices here throughout an ocean of kalpas.
Of his vast spiritual transformations, none are not manifested,
for, within the Dharma realm, they are all pervasively present.

In each and every atom of the lands of the Dharma realm,
all the great oceans of *kṣetras* reside there within them.
Clouds of buddhas equally cover them all
and, in every place, completely fill them.

Just as they freely function even within a single atom,
so too, within every atom, this is also just so.
All buddhas' and bodhisattvas' great spiritual superknowledges,
Vairocana Buddha is able to show them all.

All of the vast *kṣetras*
are like reflections, like conjurations, and like flames.
Nowhere in the ten directions can one see where they came from,
nor is there any place from which they come or to which they go.

Their destruction and creation recur in cycles
and never in all of space do they pause for even a moment.
None of these do not come forth from pure vows
and they are sustained by the vast power of karma.

Then Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, the oceans of worlds exist in many different sorts of shapes and appearances. For example, some are spherical, some are rectangular, and some are neither spherical nor rectangular. There are countless differences. Some resemble the shape of a whirlpool, some resemble the shape of a flaming mountain, some are shaped like a tree, some are shaped like a flower, some are shaped like a palace, some are shaped like living beings, and some are shaped like a buddha. There are different forms such as these as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

The oceans of lands have all kinds of differences, including all types of adornments and all kinds of ways in which they abide. Their extraordinary shapes, all beautiful, pervade the ten directions. You should all join in contemplating them.

In appearance, some are spherical and some are rectangular. Yet others are triangular, and so on, or even octagonal. Some are shaped like *maṇi* jewel spheres or like lotuses, and so forth. All of them are caused to be different because of karma.

In some cases, they are adorned with pure flaming radiance, real gold inlay, and many other such extraordinarily fine aspects. Where the gates and doors readily open without being blocked, this is due to broadly beneficial karma and pure intentions.

Oceans of *kṣetras* contain a boundless treasury of differences like those in the clouds spread out across the sky. Jewel wheels are spread across the ground as marvelous adornments in which the buddhas' light shines forth with dazzling illumination.

The discriminations made by the minds in all lands are illuminated and revealed by many different kinds of light. Throughout such oceans of *kṣetras* as these, the Buddha displays the power of his spiritual superknowledges in each of them.

Some of these are defiled, whereas others are pure. The experience of sufferings and enjoyment of pleasures differ in each. This is due to an inconceivable ocean of karma. All dharmas of cyclic existence are always this way.

There are an inconceivable number of *kṣetras* even in a single pore. The different bases for their abiding are as numerous as atoms.⁷¹ In each of them, there dwells a universally illuminating *bhagavat*, abiding amidst a congregation, proclaiming the wondrous Dharma.

Even within a single atom, there are large and small *kṣetras* existing in all sorts of different ways as numerous as atoms. Level, towering, or low-lying—the circumstances differ in each case. The Buddha goes to all of them and turns the wheel of the Dharma.

The *kṣetras* revealed within all of these atoms all exist by the power of original vows and spiritual superknowledges. In accordance with many different distinctions in mental inclinations, he is able to do this in all of them throughout empty space.

In all of the atoms contained within all lands—the Buddha enters into every one of those atoms and everywhere produces spiritual transformations for beings. The Dharma of Vairocana Buddha is of this very sort.

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva then again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, one should realize that the oceans of worlds are composed of many different substances. For example:

Some are composed of adornments made of all kinds of jewels;

Some are composed of all kinds of adornments made from one type of jewel;

Some are composed entirely from the radiance emanated by all kinds of jewels;

Some are composed of all kinds of different colored lights;

Some are composed of light emanated from all kinds of adornments;

Some are composed of indestructible vajra;

Some are composed of sustenance from the Buddha's powers;

Some are composed of aspects of marvelous jewels;

Some are composed of the Buddha's spiritual transformations;

Some are composed of spheres made of solar *maṇi* jewels;

Some are composed of the most minute jewels;

Some are composed of the flaming radiance emanated by all kinds of jewels;

Some are composed of many different types of incense;

Some are composed of floral crowns made of all kinds of jewels;

Some are composed of reflected images emanated by all kinds of jewels;

Some are composed of manifestations produced by all kinds of adornments;

Some are composed of spheres of objective experience manifested everywhere by a single thought of the mind;

Some are composed of jewels made into the shape of a bodhisattva;

Some are composed of the stamens of flowers made of jewels; and

Some are composed of the voice of the Buddha.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

In some cases there are oceans of *kṣetras*
 composed of combinations of marvelous jewels
 which are indestructibly solid
 and which exist on lotus flowers made of jewels.

In some cases, they are [composed of] pure light
 which produces an unknowable [number]

of all kinds of radiant adornments.
These abide in the midst of empty space.

In some cases, pure light is what constitutes their substance
even as they also exist in dependence on light.
Clouds of light create adornments
where the bodhisattvas travel together to dwell.⁷²

In some cases, there are oceans of *kṣetras*
produced by the power of vows
that exist like reflected images
which cannot be apprehended through verbal descriptions.⁷³

Some of them are composed of *maṇi* jewels
everywhere emanating radiance from their solar core.
Their grounds are adorned with wheels of pearls
and they are full of bodhisattvas.

There are *kṣetras* composed of the flaming radiance of jewels
which are covered by clouds of flaming light.
Shining with the extraordinarily marvelous glow of many jewels,
these are all encountered because of one's karma.

In some cases they are born from the marvelous marks
and have the many characteristics adorning their grounds.
These may be like crowns which everyone wears or holds.⁷⁴
These all arise from transformations produced by the Buddha.

In some cases, they are produced by an ocean of minds
and exist in conformity with what those minds understand.
Like mere conjurations, they have no location.
All of them are produced by discriminations.

Some arise from the light of buddhas
and have the radiance of *maṇi* jewels as their substance.
All buddhas appear within them
and each brings forth the power of his spiritual superknowledges.

In some cases, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva
transformationally manifests oceans of *kṣetras*
which are adorned by the power of his vows.
They are all extraordinarily marvelous.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, one should realize that the oceans of worlds
have many different types of adornments. For example:

In some cases, their adornments consist of supremely marvelous
clouds emanated from all sorts of other adornments;

- In some cases, their adornments consist of proclamations of the meritorious qualities of all bodhisattvas;
- In some cases, their adornments consist of explanations of the karmic retributions of all beings;
- In some cases, their adornments consist of the revelation of all bodhisattvas' oceans of vows;
- In some cases, their adornments consist of displays of reflected images of all buddhas of the three periods of time;
- In some cases, their adornments consist of showing in a single moment the spheres of experience associated with limitless kalpas of the spiritual superknowledges;⁷⁵
- In some cases, their adornments consist of revealing the body of all buddhas;⁷⁶
- In some cases, their adornments consist of manifesting clouds of all sorts of jewels and incense;
- In some cases, their adornments consist of revealing the dazzling illumination in all sites of enlightenment produced by the radiance of all sorts of precious and marvelous things; and
- In some cases, their adornments consist of revealing all the conduct and vows of Samantabhadra.

Such varieties of adornment are as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

Such vast oceans of *kṣetras* are boundless.
 All of them are created from pure karmic deeds.
 With every sort of adornment and every sort of basis for abiding,
 they everywhere fill up all the ten directions.

Clouds of flaming jewel light with boundless forms and appearances
 create vast adornments that are not of but a single sort.
 Always appearing in the oceans of *kṣetras* of the ten directions,
 They everywhere emanate sublime voices and thus teach the Dharma.

The bodhisattvas' boundless oceans of meritorious qualities
 are adorned by their many different types of great vows.
 Even as, in this land, they simultaneously emanate sublime voices,
 they everywhere shake the web of *kṣetras* of the ten directions.

The ocean of beings' karma is measurelessly vast.
 As befits the retributions they elicit, each circumstance differs.
 From within the adornments present in all places,
 because of all buddhas, they are all able to expound on these matters.

The spiritual superknowledges of all *tathāgatas* of the three times appear everywhere throughout the oceans of *kṣetras*.
 In each and every phenomenon, all buddhas appear.
 You should contemplate such adornment and purification as this.

All lands everywhere in the ten directions throughout the kalpas of the past, future, and present and all the great adornments within them—
 Every one of these are all seen within each *kṣetra*.

In all phenomena, there are countless buddhas equal in number to the beings everywhere in the world.
 In order to train them, they bring forth spiritual superknowledges and use these to adorn the oceans of *kṣetras*.

All of these adornments pour forth wondrous clouds, such as all sorts of flower clouds and clouds of fragrant flaming light, Clouds of *maṇi* jewels are always appearing.
 The oceans of *kṣetras* take these as their adornments.

In all places in the ten directions where they achieve enlightenment, the many different sorts of adornments are all fully present.
 Their flowing light spreads out afar like varicolored clouds.
 Even within this ocean of *kṣetras*, everyone is enabled to see them.

For kalpas equal to the number of beings, Sons of the Buddha diligently cultivate the vows and conduct of Samantabhadra, thereby adorning all the boundlessly many lands.
 Within all places, all of this is revealed.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, one should realize that the oceans of worlds have oceans of skillful means for achieving purity⁷⁷ as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds. For example, bodhisattvas [achieve purity]:

- By drawing near to all good spiritual guides, thereby developing the same roots of goodness;
- By increasing their vast clouds of meritorious qualities until they pervade the Dharma realm;
- By purifying and broadening all of the supreme liberations;
- By deeply contemplating the spheres of experience of all bodhisattvas and then becoming securely established in them;
- By cultivating all the *pāramitās* to the point where they are all perfectly fulfilled;
- By deeply contemplating all the bodhisattva grounds and then entering and dwelling in them;

By bringing forth the ocean of all pure vows;
 By cultivating all the practices leading to emancipation;
 By entering the ocean of all adornments; and
 By perfecting the power of the skillful means for achieving purity.
 [Skillful means for achieving purity] such as these are as numerous
 as the atoms in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

The adornments in all the oceans of *kṣetras*
 are born from the power of countless skillful means and vows.
 The perpetual dazzling radiance of all the oceans of *kṣetras*
 comes forth from the power of measureless pure karma.

By having for a long time drawn close to good spiritual guides
 and thus cultivated good actions together, all of which are pure,
 vast kindness and compassion extend everywhere to all beings.
 By this means, they adorn all the oceans of *kṣetras*.

Wherever the buddhas dwell, they undertake purifying cultivation
 of all the Dharma gateways, the samādhis, and so forth, including
 the grounds of the *dhyāna* absorptions, liberations, and skillful means.
 By this they produce all the oceans of *kṣetras*.

Through generating measureless resolute understanding,
 being able to understand in the same way as a *tathāgata*, no differently,
 and by having cultivated an ocean of expedients leading to patience,
 they are therefore able to purify limitless *kṣetras*.

To benefit beings, they cultivate supreme practices,
 and always strive to increase their vast merit
 which spreads like a cloud and becomes equal to all of space.
 So it is that all the oceans of *kṣetras* are completely perfected.

The perfections are so measureless as to equal the atoms in a *kṣetra*.
 Having cultivated them all, they enable their complete fulfillment.
 The *pāramitā* of vows is endless.
 The oceans of pure *kṣetras* all come forth from this.

They purely cultivate all the peerless dharmas
 and bring forth boundless practices for reaching emancipation.
 They use many different skillful means to teach the many beings
 and in this way adorn the oceans of lands.

They cultivate the grounds of skillful means and adornment,
 enter the ocean of Dharma gates to the Buddha's meritorious qualities,
 and everywhere enable beings to dry up the source of their sufferings.
 Thus they bring about the perfection of vast pure *kṣetras*.

With an incomparably vast ocean of powers,
 they everywhere enable beings to plant roots of goodness.
 By making offerings to all *tathāgatas*,
 boundless lands are thus all purified.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, one should realize that all the oceans of worlds have differences in the way that buddhas manifest that are as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds. For example:

- In some cases, they appear in a small body;
- In some cases, they appear in a large body;
- In some cases they appear with a short life span;
- In some cases, they appear with a long life span;
- In some cases, they only purify a single buddha land;
- In some cases, they purify countless buddha lands;
- In some cases, they manifest the Dharma wheel's teaching of a single vehicle;
- In some cases, they manifest the Dharma wheel's teaching of an inconceivable number of vehicles;
- In some cases, they manifest as training only a small number of beings; and
- In some cases, they manifest as training boundlessly many beings.

[Differences] such as these are as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

The buddhas use many different sorts of skillful means
 in the way they come forth and appear in all the oceans of *kṣetras*.
 In all cases, they adapt to beings' mental dispositions.
 This is a function of the Tathāgata's powers of skillful means.

The Dharma body of the buddhas is inconceivable:
 Formless, shapeless, and devoid even of any reflected images.
 Still, they can manifest many appearances for the sake of beings,
 adapting to their mental dispositions, thus enabling them all to see.

In some cases, they appear before beings as having a short life span.
 In some cases, they appear with a life span of countless kalpas.
 The Dharma body appears before them throughout the ten directions,
 adapting to what is fitting in its manifestations within the world.

In some cases, they purify inconceivably many oceans of *kṣetras* throughout the ten directions.

In some cases, they purify only one land, manifesting in one of them and not in any others.

In some cases, adapting to beings' dispositions, they manifest inconceivably many different types of vehicles.

In some cases, they may proclaim only the One Vehicle's Dharma, thus revealing measurelessly many within a single expedient means.

In some cases, they attain right enlightenment on their own⁷⁸ and then enable but a few beings to dwell on the path.

In some cases, they are able in but a single mind-moment to awaken a numberless multitude of the many confused beings.

In some cases, they emanate conjured clouds from their pores and thereby manifest countless and boundlessly many buddhas.

Thus everyone in the world is able to directly see the many different skillful means they use to liberate beings.

In some cases, their voices everywhere pervade all places, adapt to their dispositions, and then teach the Dharma.

Thus, throughout inconceivably many great kalpas, they train oceans of countless many beings.

In some cases, there are countless adorned lands in which they sit majestically in the midst of pure congregations even as buddhas spread forth like clouds among them, having no oceans of *kṣetras* in the ten directions they do not fill.

The skillful means of the buddhas are inconceivable.

Adapting to beings' minds, they appear before them all.

They dwell everywhere in many different types of adorned *kṣetras* and are pervasively present throughout all lands.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, one should realize that the oceans of worlds have as many durations of existence in kalpas as there are atoms in an ocean of worlds. For example:⁷⁹

In some cases, they exist for an *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa;

In some cases, they exist for a measureless kalpa;

In some cases, they exist for a boundless kalpa;

In some cases, they exist for an incomparable kalpa;

In some cases, they exist for an innumerable kalpa;

In some cases, they exist for an indescribable kalpa;

In some cases, they exist for an inconceivable kalpa;

In some cases, they exist for an immeasurable kalpa; and
 In some cases, they exist for an ineffable kalpa.

[Durations of existence] such as these are as numerous as the atoms
 in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awe-
 some power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed
 the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

In the oceans of worlds, they have many different kalpa durations
 during which they are adorned through vast skillful means.
 By contemplating the lands of the ten directions,
 one clearly understands all the differences in numerical durations.

As I observe the oceans of worlds throughout the ten directions, I see
 their countless different kalpa durations are as numerous as beings.
 In some cases long, in some cases short, in some cases boundless.
 With the voice of the Buddha, I now describe them.

As I observe the oceans of *kṣetras* throughout the ten directions,
 I see some endure for kalpas as numerous as atoms in a single land,
 some endure for one kalpa, and some endure for countless many.
 It is due to many different kinds of vows that they are each different.

Some of them are entirely pure, some are entirely defiled,
 and yet others possess a mixture of both defilement and purity.
 Oceans of vows establish many different variations.
 Their abiding corresponds to the thoughts in the minds of beings.

Having cultivated for past kalpas equal to the atoms in a *kṣetra*,
 they acquire vast and pure oceans of worlds.
 The realms of the buddhas are replete in adornments
 and they dwell forever throughout boundlessly vast kalpas.

There are those known as Radiance of the Many Sorts of Jewels.
 Others are known as Treasury of Equal Sounds or Flaming Light Eyes,
 Light of Defilement Transcendence, or Worthy Kalpa.
 These pure kalpas include them all.

There are pure kalpas in which a single buddha appears.
 In some cases, in a single kalpa, there are countless such appearances.
 With endless skillful means and the power of great vows,
 they enter into all the many different kinds of kalpas.

In some cases, countless kalpas are subsumed within a single kalpa.
 Or, then again, a single kalpa may be subsumed within many kalpas.
 All the oceans of kalpas involve many different variations
 which are all clearly apparent among the lands of the ten directions.

In some cases, all the adorning phenomena present in all kalpas are all apparent and visible within but a single kalpa.

And in some cases, the adornments in but a single kalpa everywhere enter all the boundlessly many kalpas.

From their first single mind-moment until they finally become a kalpa, they all rely on the thoughts of beings as the bases for their arising.

All the oceans of *kṣetras* and the boundless kalpas are all purified through a single skillful means.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, one should realize that the oceans of worlds have differences in kalpa transformations which are as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds. For example:

Because the Dharma is this way, the oceans of worlds undergo countless kalpa transformations affecting their formation and destruction;

Because defiled beings come to dwell in them, oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing defilement;

Because beings who cultivate vast merit come to dwell in them, oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing the purification of defilement;

Because bodhisattvas possessed of resolute faith come to dwell in them, oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing the purification of defilement;

Because countless beings resolve to attain bodhi, oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing complete purification;

Because bodhisattvas individually roam to their worlds, oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing boundless adornment;

Because bodhisattvas from all worlds of the ten directions gather like clouds, oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing countless great adornments;

Because the buddhas, the *bhagavats*, enter nirvāṇa, the oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing the cessation of their adornments;⁸⁰

Because the buddhas appear in the world, the oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing vast purification; and

Because of transformations arising from the Tathāgata's spiritual superknowledges, the oceans of worlds undergo kalpa transformations producing pervasive purification.

[Kalpa transformations] such as these are as numerous as the atoms
in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

All lands are born
in accordance with the power of karma.
You should all contemplate
the characteristics of transformation such as these.

All defiled beings'
entanglement in karma and afflictions is fearsome.
Their minds cause the oceans of *kṣetras*
to all become defiled.

In a case where they possess pure minds
and cultivate all sorts of meritorious actions,
their minds cause the oceans of *kṣetras*
to progress from defilement toward purity.⁸¹

When bodhisattvas possessed of resolute faith
are born into those kalpas,
in accordance with whatever exists in their own minds,
they will perceive either defilement or purity.

Where countless beings
have all resolved to attain bodhi,
their minds cause the ocean of *kṣetras* to be constantly pure
during the period of the kalpas' abiding.⁸²

When countless *koṭīs* of bodhisattvas
go forth throughout the ten directions
although the adornments they produce are no different,
during those kalpas, there are differences in what is perceived.

Even within each and every atom,
there are buddha *kṣetras* as numerous as atoms.
Where the bodhisattvas gather like clouds,
those lands are all pure.

Wherever *bhagavats* enter nirvāṇa,
the adornments of those lands then perish.
When there are no beings who can serve as Dharma vessels,
the world becomes defiled.

If a buddha appears in the world,
everything becomes marvelously fine.
In accordance with the purity of the minds within it,
its adornments may all become perfectly complete.

Due to the power of the buddhas' spiritual superknowledges,
 whatever then appears is inconceivable.
 At this time, the oceans of *kṣetras*
 all become completely pure.

At that time, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly, saying:

Sons of the Buddha, one should realize that the oceans of worlds have ways in which they do not differ that are as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds. For example:

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are ways they do not differ that are as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds;

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in the ways in which buddhas manifest their awesome powers;

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in all the sites of enlightenment throughout the ten directions of the Dharma realm;

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in the congregations at all *tathāgatas'* sites of enlightenment;

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in the way the light of all buddhas pervades the Dharma realm;

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in all buddhas' spiritual transformations and titles;⁸³

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in the way the voices of all buddhas pervade the oceans of worlds for the duration of boundless kalpas;

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in the skillful means [used when turning] the Dharma wheel;

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there are no differences in the way all oceans of worlds enter a single atom; and

In every one of the oceans of worlds, there is no difference in the way that the sphere of action of all the buddhas, the *bhagavats*, of the three periods of time appears in every atom.

Sons of the Buddha, generally speaking, these are the ways in which the oceans of worlds have no differences. If one were to undertake an expansive discussion of this matter, the ways in which there are no differences would be as numerous as the atoms in an ocean of worlds.

At that time, wishing to restate his meaning and assisted by the awesome power of the Buddha, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva surveyed the ten directions and then spoke these verses:

Within a single atom, there are many oceans of *kṣetras*.
 Although their locations are different, they are all adorned.
 In this way, the measureless enters into whatever is singular,
 yet every separate entity remains free of any intermixing or overlap.

In every atom, there are inconceivably many buddhas.
 Adapting to beings' minds, they appear everywhere before them.
 Of all oceans of *kṣetras*, there are none they do not entirely pervade.
 In all such skillful means as these, there are no differences.

In every atom, all the kings of trees
 have many different adornments hanging down.
 They all equally appear in all lands throughout the ten directions.
 In all matters such as these, there are no differences.

In every atom are congregations as numerous as atoms,
 all of which join in surrounding the lords among all men
 who, transcending them all, pervade the world,
 and yet this still occurs with no crowding, intermixing, or disarray.

In every atom, there are countless light rays
 that everywhere pervade all lands of the ten directions.
 They all reveal the bodhi practices of all buddhas
 which, even throughout all the oceans of *kṣetras*, do not differ.

In every atom, there are countless bodies
 transformationally conjured, pervading everywhere like clouds.
 The Buddha's use of spiritual power to lead the many types of beings
 does not differ even in all the lands throughout the ten directions.

Even in every atom, he teaches the many types of dharmas.
 His Dharma is pure, as when the wheel is turned.
 The various skillful means and gateways of sovereign mastery,
 in the ways these are all expounded, there are no differences.

From in a single atom, there everywhere emanates all buddhas' voices
 filling all those beings who are vessels fit for preserving the Dharma.
 They pervade and endure in the oceans of *kṣetras* for endless kalpas.
 In their voices such as these, there are also no differences.

Of the countless marvelous adornments in the oceans of *kṣetras*,
 there are none that do not all enter even into a single atom.
 Such powers of the buddhas' spiritual superknowledges as these
 all arise entirely from the nature of karma.

In every atom, the buddhas of the three periods of time,
 adapting to the inclinations of beings, allow them all to see.
 Their essential nature has neither any coming nor any going.
 It is through their power of vows that they pervade all worlds.

The End of Chapter Four

60. The Tathāgata is said to speak with a “single voice” that countless beings then each understand in accordance with their type, hence the reference here to this single voice being “measureless.”
61. “That most revered one of two-legged beings” (兩足尊 / *dvipadottama*) refers to one of the titles of the Buddha by which he is declared to be the most superior among all devas and humans. It is usually said to also implicitly refer by analogy to the Buddha’s peerless two-fold fulfillment of merit and wisdom, the two primary provisions necessary for progressing on the path to enlightenment (*bodhisambhāra*).
62. HH says that this “mastery of dreams” refers to teaching Dharma to beings in their dreams.
63. Although one might otherwise defensibly read this line as referring to enabling beings who were dwelling in wrong meditative absorptions to then enter right meditative absorptions, the presence here (and in the same passage in the BB translation as well) of the very standard technical terms *xie ding* (邪定, skt. *mithyātva-niyata*) and *zheng ding ju* (正定聚, skt. *samyaktva-niyato rāṣiḥ*) makes it clear that this is instead intended to refer to enabling those who are certain to progress toward what is wrong to become certain to progress toward what is right. These are two of the “three definitely determined groups” (*trayo rāṣayah*): 1) those who are certain to follow correct paths; 2) those who are certain to follow wrong paths; and c) those whose future course is not yet decided. QL notes only that “they use the bodhisattva practice gateways to enable them to become certain to follow what is right” (以菩薩行門令入正定).
64. I follow four other editions (S, Y, M, G) as well as QL, Hanshan, and Li Tongxuan in preferring *zuo* (坐), “sits,” to *li* (立), “stands,” making this emendation on sensibility grounds.
65. I follow HH in seeing an implicit intended reference here to what is seen “within the pores of the bodies of every buddha” (在每位佛身上的毛孔中). Absent this idea, it is very hard to make much sense of this quatrain in the context in which it appears. Of course the big problem in this whole series of verses is the choice on the part of SA and his translation team to switch to five-character verse lines which are obviously inadequate to fully translate the conceptual density found within the Sanskrit verses typical of this scripture which we find for instance in the still extant Sanskrit for Chapters Twenty-six and Thirty-nine.
66. HH explains this by saying, “All of the buddhas, the world honored ones—they are all able to purify the buddha body. They have this kind of inconceivable sphere of action.” (諸佛世尊，他們都能清淨佛身。有這種不可思議的境界。)

67. HH identifies these three kinds of sovereign mastery as relating to physical, verbal, and mental actions.
68. HH explains “attach to stations of existence” as “attachment to dwelling in the twenty-five stations of existence within the three realms” (著住在三界二十五有).
69. What I translate as “resolute intentions” (勝解) corresponds to a standard Chinese translation of the Sanskrit *adhimukti* which of course has a wide variety of meanings including: “resolute faith, belief, or conviction”; “intention”; “inclination”; etc.
70. Although one would ordinarily think *zizai li* (自在力) would refer to “sovereign masteries and powers,” “sovereign powers,” “freely invoked powers,” etc., when we compare SA’s Chinese with the Sanskrit of Chapter Thirty-Nine, we find that *zizai* (自在) in any sort of proximity to “spiritual superknowledges” or “spiritual powers,” or just “powers” is nearly always translating some permutation of *vikurvati*. Hence, at least in these contexts *zizai* means “miraculous,” etc.
71. I follow CB in emending the original Taisho text here in accordance with a variant reading found in four other editions, this to correct an obvious graphic-similarity scribal error in which “lords” (主) was accidentally substituted for the clearly intended “abiding” (住) character.
72. For these two lines, the BB translation has: “Clouds of light adorn the palaces of the bodhisattvas.” (光明雲莊嚴，諸菩薩宮殿。 / T09n0278_p0411a13.)
73. The intended meaning of the Chinese for this line, though somewhat ambiguous in SA, is clear in BB: “If one attempts to use words to grasp them, they cannot be apprehended.” (言取不可得 / T09n0278_p0411a15.)
74. In the place of this somewhat ambiguous line in the SA translation, the BB translation has “[They are like] crowns inlaid with the various jewels.” (間錯雜寶冠 / T09n278_p0411a21.)
75. In clarifying this concept, HH cites a quotation apparently from Sino-Buddhist literature: “Condensing countless kalpas into a single mind-moment and stretching a single mind-moment into measureless kalpas.” (縮無量劫為一念，延一念為無量劫.)
76. In clarifying this concept, HH cites another quotation apparently from Sino-Buddhist literature: “The mountains, rivers, and trees are all the Dharma body [of all buddhas].” (山河樹木，皆是法身.)
77. Were it not for the BB translation, the topic here would be ambiguous, for the same Chinese characters in the SA translation (清淨方便) can

just as easily be intended to refer to either “pure skillful means” or “skillful means for achieving purity.” Because the BB translation only refers (twice) to “kinds of purity as numerous as the atoms in a world” (世界塵數清淨) and does not refer to “skillful means” even one time, it is fair to conclude that “skillful means” in the SA translation is only intended to be a reference to “techniques for achieving purity,” *not* to “ten kinds of pure skillful means” which one might otherwise suspect this passage could be referring to.

78. *Ziran* (自然) here does *not* refer to “naturally,” but rather to the buddhas’ unique feat of attaining enlightenment “on their own,” i.e. “without a teacher.” The BB translation is much clearer here: “On their own, without a teacher, attaining right enlightenment...” (自然無師得正覺).
79. The following list of kalpa durations correspond to the first nine of what are sometimes referred to as “the ten big numbers,” namely: *asaṃkhyeya*; *aparimāṇa*; *aparyanta*; *asamanta*; *aḡaṇeya*; *atulya*; *acintya*; *ameya*; and *anabhilāpya*.
80. I follow QL’s interpretation of this line. In his HYSC, he states that, “As for ‘the cessation of adornments,’ this clarifies that this circumstance involves the loss of good conditions and the appearance of what is bad.” He goes on to comment: “This is to say, with the Tathāgata’s manifestation of the appearance of entering cessation, there was a corresponding deterioration of capabilities such that, just a hundred years after the Buddha’s entering nirvāṇa, the milk of the time was not even comparable to the water [at the time of the Buddha], how much the less in the present [Tang Dynasty] era, and how much even less so when, [in the future], matters deteriorate to their most extreme point. Then, mere grainfield weeds will be regarded as *haute cuisine* and the most superior adornments will be made only of cast iron.” (嚴滅者此明失善緣而惡現謂如來示滅能事隨滅佛滅百年乳不及水況今之世況於滅極稗為上味鐵為上嚴。 T35n1735_p0578b04–07.)
81. My translation of this fourth line may not seem obvious to everyone. It depends on the more traditional classical and medieval uses of *ji* (及) common in the period when this translation was made such as “to reach to,” “to arrive at,” “to attain,” etc.
82. “The period of the kalpas’ abiding” (住劫 / *vivartasthāyikalpa*) during which it is more or less “stable” is the second of the four phases in the life-cycle of an eon (formation, abiding, destruction/dissolution, and nothingness).
83. HH points out that “titles” (名號) here refers to the list of ten names which is standard for all buddhas.
84. In his HYSC, QL complains that this chapter title as translated is an excessive abbreviation on the part of the translators who, in looking