

Dandala, Dhāraṇī, and Denarii
A T'ien-t'ai Perspective on
The Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra

Paul L. Swanson

(Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nanzan University)

The *Ta fang-teng t'o-lo-ni ching* 大方等陀羅尼經, or “The Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra” (T #1339, 21.641–661)¹ appears to have been one of the earliest dhāraṇī texts available in China, the translation into Chinese being attributed to Fa-chung 法衆 sometime between 402 and 413.² It served as the basis for T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's 天台智顓 (538–597) explication of the “Vaipulya Samādhi” 方等三昧, one of the two practices explained under the category of the “Both-walking-and-sitting Samādhi” 半行半坐三昧 in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* 摩訶止觀 (T 46.13a–14b).³ It is therefore of interest at many levels. First, it is the scriptural basis for Chih-i's explication of the Vaipulya Samādhi, which in turn served as authoritative for the subsequent T'ien-t'ai tradition, with its broad

*ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: I would like to thank Jan Nattier and the anonymous readers for their many constructive comments on this translation. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Kōsei Publishing for their project to translate the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. This portion of research from the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* project is published with their understanding and approval.

¹ This title is Sanskritized in the Hōbōgirin Taishō catalogue (p. 116) as **Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (same as for T #417 and #418), but this must be a mistake; **Mahā-vaipulya-dhāraṇī-sūtra* would be a better reconstruction from the Chinese.

² As Daniel Stevenson points out, “an earlier translation of a *Ta fang-teng t'an-ch'ih* (or *t'an-t'eh*) *t'o-lo-ni ching* in one fascicle dating from between 291 and 299 is mentioned in certain early catalogs as well, but whether it represents an earlier recension of the work is unknown.” See p. 91, note 54 in “The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism,” *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, Peter Gregory, ed., Honolulu: The University of Hawai'i Press, 1986, pp. 45–97. Yamabe Nobuyoshi has done some work on this sūtra, in conjunction with his study of the *Fan wang jing*, and claims (personal communication, 21 April 1995) that there is reason to believe that the text (or at least parts of it) is apocryphal.

³ For details on this samādhi see the article by Stevenson quoted above.

influence on Buddhist practices in East Asia. Second, it serves as an example of Buddhist practice during the early years of Buddhism in China, as well as a specific practice undertaken by Chih-i himself in his younger years. Third, it contains some surprising and intriguing contents—such as the dreams required to authenticate a person’s insight and allow one to continue to practice, and the story of the man who sells himself for a few denarii (Roman currency) in order to make offerings to his master. Finally, it is an example of an early dhāraṇī text, whereas most of the scriptures important in the esoteric (Jpn. *mikkyō*) tradition of later Tendai Buddhism in Japan were translated into Chinese after the time of Chih-i.

The Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra and its use in medieval Chinese Buddhism merits study on its own—the practice of the Vaipulya rite was widespread in early medieval China and certainly not limited to Chih-i and his associates. In this translation, however, I have focussed on the sections of the sūtra referred to by Chih-i in his texts such as the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. Passages quoted by Chih-i in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* or other texts are highlighted with bold type. I have thus omitted many tales, points of cultic lore, doctrinal dialectics, and sections that would be of interest to those concerned with the sūtra itself, the influence of dhāraṇī texts, or the significance of the Vaipulya rite in early medieval Chinese society. A fully annotated translation of the complete sūtra and a broader analysis of its influence would certainly be welcome, but would require a book-length study and is left to those with a greater expertise in these issues.

The Contents of the Sūtra and its Central Dhāraṇī

The *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* teaches about the origins, merits, methods of practice, and so forth, of the *Mo-ho t’an-ch’ih t’o-lo-ni* 摩訶袒持陀羅尼 (**Mahā t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī*—“Great Dhāraṇī for Overcoming Evil and Upholding the Good,” or “Great Dhāraṇī for Subduing *Dandala”). Before outlining the contents of this sūtra, some comments are in order concerning the meaning of the characters *t’an-ch’ih* 袒持, particularly as understood by Chih-i.

In the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* (T 46.13b22–23) Chih-i glosses the compound *t’an-ch’ih* to mean “inhibiting evil and upholding good.” Although *ch’ih* means “upholding,” the character *t’an* 袒 does not mean preventing or inhibiting, but rather “to lay bare, to strip,” and

the character appears often in the sūtra as part of the compound “laying bare the shoulder” when one pays homage to the Buddha. It seems more likely that *t’an* is used here for its phonetic value to represent a Sanskrit sound, perhaps the Sanskrit letter *ḍa* or *dha*. Mochizuki suggests that *ḍa* can stand for the (Prakrit) word *ḍahati* (Skt. *dahati*, to burn), and can therefore signify “burning away the defilements.”⁴ Perhaps this is the reason why Chih-i glosses the character to mean “inhibiting” or “overcoming” evil.

There is another possibility for interpreting this compound. The sūtra itself (T 21.641c–642) says that the dhāraṇī were provided by the Buddha as a means to subdue the evil power of the Māra (demon) king “T’an-t’u-lo” 袒荼羅, who had threatened to destroy the good roots of the Buddha’s followers, and the Māra king is indeed subdued by these dhāraṇī in the course of the sūtra’s narrative (642c). The first character in the name of this Māra king, *t’an* 袒, is the same as that in the name of the dhāraṇī. It is possible, despite Chih-i’s gloss, that this phrase means “great T’an(-t’u-lo)-subduing dhāraṇī.” These two explanations need not be contradictory—in either case the dhāraṇī are meant to subdue evil influences.⁵ As for the name of the Māra king, the Karlgren phonetic readings for these characters is ‘d’ân-ḍ’a-lâ, suggesting a possible transcription of *Dandala.⁶

Another possibility is that *t’an-ch’ih* is a “mixed binome,” a transliteration-cum-translation of the term “dhāraṇī” itself. *T’an* could be a transliteration of some form of the Sanskrit root of *dhar* or *dhr*, and the character *ch’ih* 持 (“to hold”) commonly occurs in the compound 總持, a translation of dhāraṇī. As Stevenson explains:

The Sanskrit term dhāraṇī, derived from the root *dhā* [or *dhr*], “to

⁴ See Mochizuki Shinkō’s *Bukkyō daijiten*, Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai, (revised edition) 1954, vol. 4, pp. 3183–84.

⁵ The only reference to this dhāraṇī that I could track down [thanks to the help of Charles Orzech] was an entry in Soothill and Hodous’s *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (though the fourth character is a misprint; 特 instead of the correct 持), which defines the phrase as “Mahā-tantra(dhāraṇī), great spell power for overcoming the evil and cleaving to the good” (p. 437).

⁶ Endō Yūjin et al., in their recent Japanese translation of *The Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (*Shin Kokuyaku Daizōkyō* 12, Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1994, p. 211), opt for the transliteration “Daṇḍala,” linking the name with 檀陀羅, one of the five great *yakṣa* associated with Vaiśravaṇa in the Āgama texts (see T 1.130c).

hold” or “to retain,” carries the general meaning of something that enables one to retain, recollect, secure, hold, and so forth. Chih-i’s description of dhāraṇī as “securing the good” and “checking evil” renders this basic idea and, in fact, itself seems to derive directly from a definition of the term in the *Ta chih tu lun*, which states:

Dhāraṇī is a word from the western regions. In this region it translates as “able to secure” or else “able to check.” As for being able to secure, it gathers and secures various wholesome qualities and is able to hold and secure them and prevent them from being scattered or lost.... As for being able to abolish, when evil or unwholesome propensities arise, it is able to check them and prevent them from manifesting. [T 25.95c10–16]⁷

If this interpretation is correct, then the name of the dhāraṇī in this sūtra would translate “Great-dhāraṇī Dhāraṇī”—a bit redundant, but there are more extreme examples of redundancy in Buddhist literature.

Let us now take a quick look at the contents of the sūtra. In brief, the sūtra consists of five parts:

1. INTRODUCTION [641A–648A]

The Buddha responds to the entreaty of Mañjuśrī by revealing a variety of dhāraṇī that are efficacious for practicing confession or repentance, extinguishing evil and bestowing blessing, quelling demonic forces, and so forth. These are the *mahā t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī* (given along with a set of eighteen other types of dhāraṇī). These dhāraṇī are taught to subdue the demonic Māra king *Dandala, who had threatened to destroy the “good roots” of one of Buddha’s followers. The bodhisattva “Flower Cluster” 華聚 (*Puṣpakūṭa) uses these dhāraṇī to overcome the demons, who then become the “twelve dream kings” responsible for protecting those who practice the dhāraṇī rite. The Buddha explains the “history” of these dhāraṇī, how they have helped various figures overcome temptation and arouse *bodhicitta*, and the various powers of the dhāraṇī.

2. PREDICTIONS [648A–651C]

The Buddha entrusts these dhāraṇī to Ānanda and predicts the eventual realization of Buddhahood by various divine, human, and sub-human beings. He sings the praises of these dhāraṇī and, in response again to Mañjuśrī’s entreaty, explains their meaning and

⁷ See Stevenson, “Samādhi in Early T’ien-t’ai,” pp. 63–64.

how to cultivate them. Finally, the Buddha explains the evil karma that will befall those who slander this Dharma.

3. THE PRACTICE OF DREAMS [652A–656A]

The Buddha, with reference to the “twelve dream kings,” explains in detail the seven-day practice of these dhāraṇī. He teaches that one who keeps and recites these dhāraṇī will be reborn in the pure land of Flower Cluster. This is the section referred to most frequently by Chih-i in explaining the content of the Vaipulya Samādhi.

4. KEEPING THE PRECEPTS [656A–658A]

The Buddha explains the dhāraṇī and method of repentance taught by the seven Buddhas in the past for the sake of those who have broken the four major precepts, as well as the dhāraṇī and method of repentance for those who have broken the eight major precepts. The Buddha encourages his listeners to accept and follow the eight major precepts, and explains the content of the precepts, five matters with regard to keeping the precepts, and the fact that the practice of keeping the precepts has two aspects—the worldly and the transworldly.

5. ON THE INCONCEIVABLE LOTUS [658A–661A]

The Buddha praises the benefits of the dhāraṇī and encourages the assembly to disseminate and keep these dhāraṇī.

T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's Practice of the Vaipulya Samādhi

It is known that Chih-i's master Hui-ssu 慧思 (515–577)⁸ taught a “Vaipulya samādhi” based on this sūtra, but Chih-i was familiar with the sūtra and the samādhi taught therein even before practicing under Hui-ssu. According to the biography of Chih-i by Kuan-ting (T 50.191c), Chih-i practiced this samādhi in his early twenties on Mt. Ta-hsien 大賢山, and again at Mt. Ta-su 大蘇山 under the tutelage of Hui-ssu.⁹ Basically it consisted of chanting over and over the *mahā t'an-ch'ih*

⁸ For details on the life and work of Hui-ssu, see Paul Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi (Les origines de la secte bouddhique chinoise du Tiantai)*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1979.

⁹ See Satō Tetsuei, *Tendai Daishi no kenkyū*, Kyoto: Hyakka'en, 1961, pp. 192ff.; Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-i*, *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques XII*, 1980, pp. 107ff.

dhāraṇī as one circumambulated a Buddha image or altar, repented of one's inadequacies, and then retreated to sit in contemplation. It was a method open not only to monks but also to lay people, and promised such "worldly benefits" as the healing of disease and fostering a long life. It was very popular during the era of the Northern and Southern dynasties in China (5th–6th centuries), and it is said that Chih-i's brother also practiced this samādhi and lengthened his life by fifteen years (T 50.197c).

This samādhi is discussed in detail by Chih-i in two other works:

- 1 the *Fang-teng san-mei hsing-fa* 方等三昧行法 (Method for practicing the Vaipulya Samādhi), T #1940, 46.943–949; and
- 2 Section 6 (*Fang-teng ch'an-fa* 方等懺法, The Vaipulya repentance method) of the *Kuo-ch'ing pai-lu* 國清百錄 (One hundred records of the Kuo-ch'ing temple, a collection of one hundred and four historical records, including letters, explanations of temple life and regulations, etc., connected with Chih-i), T #1934, 46.796b–798c.

The first of these two works, the *Hsing-fa*, is not mentioned at all in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. Neither does it appear in any of the early catalogues of Buddhist texts until 1024, when it was reintroduced to China from Japan by Jakushō, a disciple of Genshin, in the tenth century. These facts lead one to suspect that the *Hsing-fa* may not be properly attributed to Chih-i. Satō Tetsuei, however, upon comparing the contents of the text to other works known to be by Chih-i, and references to it in Buddhist works by later authors, concludes that it is an authentic yet very early work of Chih-i that came to be overlooked in favor of the simpler accounts in the *Kuo-ch'ing pai-lu* and *Mo-ho chih-kuan*.¹⁰ The practice taught in the *Hsing-fa* is very similar to, though much more complicated than, the later explanations. For example, it calls for many more days of practice than the seven suggested in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. The structure of the explanations is also quite different:

The *Hsing-fa* consists of six sections:

- 1 Preparing the six conditions 具六緣
- 2 Being conscious of the obstacles to practice 識遮障
- 3 Prohibitions 禁法
- 4 An outline of the "internal" precepts 內律要訣
- 5 The practice proper 修行
- 6 Accepting the precepts 受戒

¹⁰ See Satō, *Tendai-daishi no kenkyū*, pp. 216–21.

[The last two sections, 5 and 6, are not extant.]

The *Kuo-ch'ing pai-lu* account (the *Ch'an-fa*) consists of five sections on:

- 1 Exhortations 勸修
- 2 Preparations 方便
- 3 The method 方法
- 4 Mental states that are contrary to or in accordance with [nirvāṇa and saṃsāra] 逆順心
- 5 Manifestation of [the symbolic significance of] the method 表法

The presentation of Vaipulya samādhi in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* consists of the three sections: 1. on the body (what actions to take), 2. speech (when to speak and when to be silent), and 3. mind (the purpose or goal of contemplation), followed by exhortations to practice this samādhi.

As Satō points out, these three works attributed to Chih-i are quite different in apparent structure, but a comparison of their actual content shows that they are quite similar. Most of the content of the *Ch'an-fa*, though in an abbreviated form, is given in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. The content of section 4 of the *Kuo-ch'ing pai-lu* on “a mind that is contrary to or in accord with [nirvāṇa or saṃsāra]” is found in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* not under the explanation of the Vaipulya Samādhi, but in a later section (fascicle 4, part 1; T 46.39c). Another difference between the texts is that in the *Hsing-fa* the interpretation of the content of samādhi (referred to as *kuan* 觀 in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*) is not discussed in terms of the integrated threefold truth and threefold contemplation, the central philosophical insight of Chih-i's mature work. This indicates that the *Hsing-fa* was an earlier work of Chih-i, taught before his great insight into the integrated threefold truth attained during his seclusion on Mt. T'ien-t'ai between 575 and 585 and his major explication of this insight in his later works.

Satō (p. 218) concludes that the abbreviated explanation in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* assumes knowledge and use of the version provided in the *Kuo-ch'ing pai-lu*, and that the much earlier and more complicated *Hsing-fa* was superseded by these versions. Thus the material in the *Ch'an-fa* of the *Kuo-ch'ing pai-lu* is crucial for a full understanding of the Vaipulya Samādhi as presented in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, while the details in the *Hsing-fa* provide insight into the early development of Chih-i's teaching concerning this practice.¹¹

¹¹ Translations of these two works are under preparation as part of the

Finally, it is significant that Chih-i is not much concerned with the dhāraṇī themselves, nor in their magical or supranormal powers as explained in the sūtra. Chih-i does not deny their magical powers, but the practice is seen, especially in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, as “merely” another means for attaining the higher goal of realizing the integrated threefold truth of emptiness, conventionality, and the Middle (see the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, T 46.13a24–14b25).

Partial Translation

Ta fang-teng t'o-lo-ni ching

大方等陀羅尼經

[*The Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra*]

[T #1339, 21.641–661]¹²

translated by the monk Fa-chung 法衆 of Pei-liang 北涼, at Kao-ch'ang commandery 高昌郡 [Turfan].

1. *Introduction* [641a–648a]

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was at the Jeta grove in

project to translate the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. See Swanson, “Report on the 10-Year Project to Translate the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* into Western Languages,” *Bulletin of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* 15 (1991), pp. 13–20. Daniel Stevenson has prepared annotated translations of both of these works which, I hope, will be published eventually.

¹² As explained above, my interest in this sūtra derives from its use by Chih-i, particularly in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. The sections translated below were chosen on the basis of being referred to by Chih-i in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, not necessarily on the basis of their intrinsic interest or importance in other contexts. Phrases or passages referred to by Chih-i in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* or other texts are given in bold type. There are many suggestive passages in the sūtra that beg for more detailed annotation, but I offer this partial translation as one perspective in hopes that those more qualified in such topics as early Chinese sūtras, the use of dhāraṇīs, dream interpretation, and Sanskrit-Chinese transliteration will provide a more thorough study.

Taishō page numbers are given in brackets at appropriate breaks in the text and at a column break. I have translated about a third of the content of the sūtra. Sections left untranslated are marked by ellipses and/or short summaries of the content.

Śrāvastī, together with five hundred great disciples. At that time Mañjuśrī, the prince of the Dharma, came from Rājagṛha together with an assembly of ninety-two *koṭis* 億¹³ of bodhisattva-mahāsattvas. Their names were Prince of the Dharma Mañjuśrī, Prince of the Dharma Compassion-King, Prince of the Dharma Great Eyes, Prince of the Dharma Brahma Sounds, Prince of the Dharma Wondrous Appearance, Prince of the Dharma Candana Incense Grove, Prince of the Dharma Sound of the Lion’s Roar, Prince of the Dharma Wonderful Voice, Prince of the Dharma Wonderfully Formed Visage, Prince of the Dharma Myriad Adornments, Prince of the Dharma Śākya Banners, Prince of the Dharma Ūṛṇa, and so forth, ninety-two *koṭis* in all. They arrived at the Jeta grove and saw the Buddha, the World Honored One. They circumambulated the Buddha three times, bowed their heads at his feet and withdrew to one side, beseeching the World Honored One to turn the wheel of the Dharma.

[641a13–b4: Five hundred princes led by King Prasenajit, six hundred *upāsaka*, five hundred devout *upāsikā*, and five hundred sons of *grhapati* 長者子 also arrive and beseech the Buddha to preach the Dharma].

[641b4] At that time Mañjuśrī arose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, put his right knee on the ground, pressed his palms together with respect, and without wavering in his gaze spoke to the Buddha, saying, “O World Honored One, Tathāgata, all the dhāraṇī gates that you expound, from beginning to end, are supreme in the world, supreme within the Saddharma, and supreme among all the gods. Sentient beings, here and with these supreme dharmas, can **enter the gates of dhāraṇī and contemplate the realm of Buddhahood**. World Honored One, through the power of your great compassion—and for the sake of innumerable, boundless sentient beings—expound and explain the names 名字 of the dhāraṇī.”

The Buddha said to Mañjuśrī, “Excellent, excellent, good son. You have asked about the gates of dhāraṇī for the sake of [relieving] the immeasurable suffering of sentient beings. Good son, you should now listen carefully. I will now briefly teach for your sake the names of the dhāraṇī.”

¹³ The Sanskrit *koṭi* usually means “ten million,” and the Chinese 億 means 100 million. The most elegant solution would be to round these numbers off to the English “million” or “billion,” but in this translation I will retain the term *koṭi*.

Good son, [there are many kinds of dhāraṇī]:

- [1] **there is a dhāraṇī called *mo-ho t'an-ch'ih*** 摩訶袒持 [K. 'd'ân-
d'i];¹⁴
- [2] there is a dhāraṇī called **Mahā-revati* 摩訶離婆帝 [K. ʎjiɛ-
b'ûâ-tiei'];
- [3] there is a dhāraṇī called *Jeweled Banner* 寶幢;
- [4] there is a dhāraṇī called *Jeweled Flame* 寶焰;
- [5] there is a dhāraṇī called *Jeweled Parasol* 寶蓋;
- [6] there is a dhāraṇī called *Vajra Parasol* 金剛蓋;
- [7] there is a dhāraṇī called *Vajra Resplendence* 金剛曜;
- [8] there is a dhāraṇī called *Various Colored Adornments* 諸色莊嚴;
- [9] there is a dhāraṇī called *Vajra-Colored Body* 金剛色身;
- [10] there is a dhāraṇī called *Assorted Adornments* 種種莊嚴;¹⁵
- [11] there is a dhāraṇī called **Bahudara* 跋睺陀羅 [K. b'ûât-ɛ̃ɣ̃u-
d'â-lâ];
- [12] there is a dhāraṇī called **Vigadara* 毘伽陀羅 [K. ʎji-g'ïa-
d'â-lâ];
- [13] there is a dhāraṇī called *Water-Light* 水光;¹⁶
- [14] there is a dhāraṇī called *Samādhi* 三昧;
- [15] there is a dhāraṇī called *Flower Cluster* [**Puṣpakūṭa*] 華聚;
- [16] there is a dhāraṇī called *Established* 決定;
- [17] there is a dhāraṇī called *Eternal Abiding* 常住;
- [18] there is a dhāraṇī called *Many Flower Fragrances* 衆華香;
- [19] there is a dhāraṇī called *Assorted Rays of Light* 種種光明.

“Good son. In this way there are ninety-two *koṭis* of gates of dhāraṇī, as many as the sands of the Ganges River. Each and every dhāraṇī also has ninety-two *koṭis* of gates, as many as the sands of the Ganges River. Accordingly, the wise one[s] explain successively in accordance with three sets [of dhāraṇī].”

When the names of these dhāraṇī were taught, the ninety-two *koṭis* of bodhisattvas led by Mañjuśrī dwelt in the patience [of tolerating the knowledge] that dharmas do not arise 無生法忍 (*anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti*), the six hundred *upāsaka* dwelt with the aspiration to become a

¹⁴ See my discussion of this term above.

¹⁵ I follow the variant reading for this term.

¹⁶ Or, “Eternal Light.” It is possible that the character 水 “water” is a mistake for 永, “long” or “eternal.”

pratyekabuddha 住辟支佛心 (*pratyekabodhicitta*); the five hundred *upāsikā* were liberated from defilements and attained the purity of the Dharma-eye; and the five hundred sons of *grhapati* aroused the aspiration for full enlightenment (*sambodhi*).

Then the princes led by King Prasenajit went before the Buddha and asked for permission to become home-departed ones. [641c] The Buddha said to the princes, “Excellent, excellent. Now is the proper time for you to be able to seek permission to become home-departed ones in my Dharma.”

The Buddha said [further] to the princes, “Welcome 善來, bhikṣus” [*ehi bhikṣu*]. Then their hair and beards fell off and Dharma robes clothed their bodies, and [the princes] became śramaṇas, replete with the precepts.

At that time the World Honored One taught the Dharma of the four [noble] truths for the sake of the bhikṣus. Then the bhikṣus became endowed with the three illuminating insights 三明 and the six supranormal powers 六神通.¹⁷ Then the bhikṣus beseeched the World Honored One to turn the wheel of the Dharma.

At that time the World Honored One silently gave his seal of approval 印可 and, entering the gates of dhāraṇī, emitted a great ray of light that illumined the immeasurable *koṭis* of thousands of *nayutas* of trichiliocosms to the east ... [and so forth to the west, south, north, the four intermediate directions, nadir, and zenith]. ... Each one had immeasurable *koṭis* of thousands of *nayutas* of assemblies of *yakṣa* having seen this light, and they were led by this light to this saḥā-world. Arriving at the Jeta grove, they saw the Tathāgata Śākyamuni having entered the gate of dhāraṇī, and saw Mañjuśrī and the princes of the Dharma seated near the Buddha, wishing to beseech the Buddha to turn the wheel of the Dharma.

¹⁷ The “three illuminating insights” are three supranormal insights attained by arhats: 1) the ability to see the conditions and events of the past and thus know the faults of oneself and others; 2) the ability to see the results that are to come in the future, and thus be able to sever mistaken views; and 3) the ability to know and thus exhaust all the passionate afflictions of the present. The six supranormal powers (*abhijñā*) are 1) the ability to appear anywhere one wishes; 2) the ability to see one’s own and others’ future lives; 3) the ability to hear sounds that others cannot hear; 4) the ability to read other peoples’ minds; 5) the ability to perceive one’s own and others’ past lives; and 6) the ability to remove one’s passionate afflictions.

At that time the assembly of immeasurable thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of *yakṣa*, along with Mañjuśrī and all the bodhisattva-mahā-sattvas, and the five hundred great disciples and *upāsaka* and *upāsikā* and householders and householders' sons each followed the Buddha in entering the gate of dhāraṇī.

At that time in the crowd there was a certain bhikṣu named Thunder Voice 雷音. He arose from his seat, came to the [Jeta] grove, and entered meditation (*dhyāna samādhi*).

Then in the sky there was an assembly of māra-demons. **At that time in that assembly there was a Māra king named *Dandala** 袒荼羅 [K. 'd'ân-d'a-lâ]. There, in mid-air, he thought to himself, “Just now, the Buddha Śākyamuni, surrounded on all sides by an immeasurable assembly of beings, has preached the Dharma so that they reap great and good benefits. Now this bhikṣu [Thunder Voice] has also entered into meditation. If I do not destroy the good roots and conditions of this bhikṣu, then this bhikṣu will undoubtedly during this *bhadrakalpa* attain *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, attain omniscience (*sarvajña*), and reap great and good benefits. I should now lead my retinue [of demons] to destroy the good roots and conditions of this bhikṣu.”

At that time the Māra king led his retinue of ninety-two *koṭis* [of demons] and came to the Jeta grove, and attempted to cover up and conceal this bhikṣu's good roots and conditions. Then the bhikṣu Thunder Voice, in great lamentation cried out in a great voice, “I pay homage (*namo*) to the immeasurable Buddhas of the ten directions and the three times [of the past, present, and future]. I pay homage to the immeasurable Dharmas of the ten direction and the three times. I pay homage to those who are content with little 少分足人 (*ārya-sangha?*)¹⁸ in the ten directions.” He thus intoned in this way.

At that time the Buddhas of the ten directions intoned in unison, [642a] “What Dharma can save this bhikṣu?”

Then the Treasure-King Buddha raised his hand and said, “There are a great many bodhisattvas in this bodhisattva assembly. Is there no one who can save this bhikṣu from his suffering?”

At that time there was within the assembly **a bodhisattva named Flower Cluster** 華聚 (*Puṣpakūṭa). He arose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, put his right knee on the ground, and pressed his

¹⁸ Endō, et al., interpret this phrase to mean “bodhisattvas” (p. 211, note 13), in light of a later passage (642a20) which uses this phrase to refer to a *bhūmi*-stage at which 84,000 bodhisattvas were dwelling.

palms together in the direction of the Buddha. Then he said to the Buddha, “What Dharma is able to command this Dandala?”

Then the Buddha said to the bodhisattva-mahāsattva Flower Cluster, “Do you not know? I can command this Dandala with the secret Dharma of the Buddhas.” At that time the Buddha spoke to the bodhisattva-mahāsattva Flower Cluster, “I can, by means of the verses of the **Mahā t’an-chih dhāraṇī*, conquer the evil one (Pāpīyān) and increase the good roots of that monk. Listen well now, and I will explain for you this secret Dharma of the Buddhas.”

Flower Cluster said to the Buddha, “May it be so, World Honored One. I joyfully desire to hear such a wonderful Dharma as this.”

The Buddha said to Flower Cluster, “I now say to you, do not recklessly proclaim such a wondrous Dharma as this. One should use [a sign from] **the spirits 神明 as a confirmation.** Who are these called ‘the spirits’? Good son, there are surely twelve ‘dream kings.’ **When someone sees one of these kings**, you can expound [the verses] to them.”¹⁹

Then the World Honored One explained the verses of the *dhāraṇī*.

[642a15–c12: The Treasure-King Buddha expounds and teaches to Flower Cluster two sets of *dhāraṇī* (642a15–19). Flower Cluster magically transports himself to the Sāha realm, confronts and subdues Dandala and his retinue by calling on the power and wisdom of the Buddha, and recites these two sets of *dhāraṇī* (b23–23 and b29–c1). At Flower Cluster’s urging, Dandala and his retinue see the error of their ways and recite a third set of *dhāraṇī* (642c9–12) in order to arouse *sambodhicitta*. (These three sets of *dhāraṇī* comprise the *t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī*.) Flower Cluster praises Dandala as a “son of the Buddha” and for his receiving the verses of the *t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī*. Dandala and his retinue become the Twelve Great (Dream) Kings and vow to uphold the verses of the *mahā t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī*, bless those who pay homage to and receive this sūtra, and act as the “twelve spiritual kings” to protect these people from suffering and misfortune. Flower Cluster gives the names of the twelve kings (c20–24), and each king vows to save and protect those who recite and practice this *dhāraṇī* sūtra. They thus serve as the sworn protectors of the Vaipulya *Dhāraṇī* and its rite. Again, upholding this sūtra causes people to quickly attain *samyaksambodhi*.]

[643a2–8] At that time Thunder Voice arose from his seat, pressed his palms together, paid respect to Flower Cluster, and said, “Well

¹⁹ For details on the dream kings and the role of dreams, see section 3 of the sūtra on “The Practice of Dreams” [652a1–656a23].

done, you who have accumulated many dharmas. By upholding these great Vaipulya dhāraṇīs, you have come and saved me. I have been caused to have **an increase in life-span**, and to arouse a mind that is within the Dharma. **It is as if a dead person has come back from the dead.** I am also now like this. Your fortitude in the Dharma is now such that you are the mother of Dharmas. I have been caused to have a mind that is firm in the Dharma, and life has been given to my body.” Then Flower Cluster said, “I am not the mother of Dharmas. **Dhāraṇī like these are surely the mother and father.** You should accept and uphold these dhāraṇīs.” ...

[643a8–645a6: Thunder Voice tells Flower Cluster about Śākyamuni. They set off for the Jeta grove, accompanied by Dandala and his retinue, to pay homage to Śākyamuni. The gods anticipate hearing of the ambrosia of the Dharma from this encounter and cause a stir; Śākyamuni hears this heavenly music and instructs Ānanda to go out and meet the approaching visitors. Flower Cluster emits a ray of light that illuminates immeasurable lands in all directions. This light liberates Vasu²⁰ and ninety-two *koṭis* of offenders, who join the assembly at Jeta. There follows a lengthy discussion of these figures—where they came from, the conditions that led them here, and the efficacy of the Vaipulya dhāraṇī. These figures provide the background for the following story. The Buddha points out to Thunder Voice that these figures were his teachers (“good friends”) in the past.]

[645a6] [The Buddha said to Thunder Voice,] “Now, you should listen clearly. I will expound this for your sake. Good son, in the past there was a Buddha named *Caṇḍanapuṣpa 梅檀華, a Tathāgata, an unattached one (arhat), one who has reached the truth (arhat),²¹ a samyaksambuddha. This Buddha departed from the world at an exceedingly great and inconceivable span of time ago. At this time [my relationship] to him was no different than yours [to me now].

Also, good son, at this time there was a bodhisattva named Foremost One 上首 [*Pūrvamaṅgala], who as a mendicant entered the city to beg for food. At that time there was a bhikṣu named *Gaṅgā 恒伽 [K. γṅga] ²² who asked the mendicant, “From where did you come?” He

²⁰ Vasu was a sage who fell into hell due to committing offenses such as taking life. See, for example, the *Ta chih tu lun*, T 25.76a.

²¹ The use of two different epithets for “arhat” suggests that this is an apocryphal text.

²² Lit. “swift-goer,” that is, the river Ganges. See Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899, p. 341.

answered, **“I have come from the midst of the truly real.”**

Gaṅgā then asked, “What is real?”

He said, **“It is truly real if it is marked by quiescent extinction.”**

[Gaṅgā] said, “Is there something to be sought within that called ‘the marks of quiescent extinction’?”

Foremost One answered, **“There is nothing to be sought.”**

He said, “If there is nothing to be sought, then what use is seeking?”

Foremost One answered, **“Precisely because I am in the midst of that which cannot be sought, I seek it.”**

[Gaṅgā] said, “But in the midst of that which cannot be sought, how does one seek?”

He answered, **“Whatever one seeks, all is empty. Attainment is empty; attachment to something is empty; reality is empty; he who comes is also empty. Speech is also empty; questions are also empty. The quiescent extinction in nirvāṇa again is also empty. All of space and the realms of the world are also all empty.** Because of this progressively ordered dharma of emptiness [that has just been expounded], I seek the truly real.”

Gaṅgā said, “How does one seek the ‘real’? You say that all the myriad dharmas are also empty. Then how does one seek?”

He answered, **“Because the empty [dharmas] are empty 空空, they are real.”**

[Gaṅgā] asked, “Where should the bodhisattva now seek the real dharmas?”

He answered, **“One should seek them within the midst of the six pāramitās.**

“What are these six?”

“They are *dāna-pāramitā*, *sīla-pāramitā*, *kṣānti-pāramitā*, *vīrya-pāramitā*, *dhyāna-pāramitā*, and *prajñā-pāramitā*.”

When Foremost One had spoken (thus), at that time Gaṅgā rejoiced and danced for joy, and immediately respectfully bowed his head at Foremost One’s feet, and asked further, “What food should be offered to this person [i.e., you]?” Foremost One answered, “This person [I] should be offered the flavor of ambrosia 須陀 (*sudhā*).”²³

Then Gaṅgā went toward the city and announced, “I want to sell my body. Who needs it?”

At that time there was within the assembly a certain householder

²³ *Sudhā* refers to “the nector of the gods.” See Monier-Williams, p. 1225.

named *Vinuli 毘奴律 [K. ˌbʰji-nu-ḷi-nē t; pʰi-nu-lu] who came forward and said, “I want to buy it. How much are you asking?”

[645b1] Gaṅgā replied, “I’m asking for *dināra* 陀那羅.”²⁴

He said, “How many pieces do you want?”

Gaṅgā replied, “I want five pieces.”

Then the householder immediately counted out five coins 五錢, thus purchasing this monk, and used him to fill [the ranks of] his servants.

Then Gaṅgā said to the great householder, “My body belongs to you. [But] temporarily, for seven days, I wish to make offerings to the bhikṣu Foremost One.”

At that time the householder spoke to Gaṅgā, saying, “I will now take you and show you my house; then you will be free to go back.” So Gaṅgā saw the house [of the householder], and then walked back on the road and returned. He saw that Foremost One had not yet received any food from his begging rounds, and so he took Foremost One into the city and bought **food and drink of a hundred flavors**. After he had bought this food [and drink], he brought him to a certain temple. The temple was called “The Four Kings” 四王. He arranged gifts of various kinds of mats and seats, **various kinds of**

²⁴ Nakamura’s *Bukkyōgo daijiten* (p. 901) states that this is the transliteration for Skt. *dināra*, or a Roman denarius, an ancient Roman silver or gold coin. Though the standard of exchange would be different, this is a coinage also quoted in the Bible as the wages for a day’s work (see the parable of the workers in the vineyard [Matthew 20:1–16], who agree to work for a denarius a day). Nakamura cites Paramārtha’s translation of the *Abhidharmakośa*, T 29.230a10; see also the *Sphutarthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, *The Work of Yaśomitra*, ed. by Unrai WOGIHARA, Tokyo: The Publishing Association of Abhidharmakośavyākhyā, 1932–1936 (reprinted in two parts, Sankibo Buddhist Book Store, 1971), p. 368. *The Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, HIRAKAWA Akira, et al., eds., Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan, part two (Chinese-Sanskrit), 1977, p. 317, also lists this compound as “dināra.” Perhaps the use of this common currency is not so surprising if we consider that the use of Roman coins was widespread in the ancient world from Europe to India.

Or should the four characters 須陀那羅 be taken as a full transliteration of *sudhā nara*, since *sudhā* (ambrosia) is the requested offering (as with Endō, et al., p. 232)? But then why would the next question be, “how many pieces do you ask for?” And the character 須 is definitely used in its verb form in Gaṅgā’s answer in the next line that he wants five pieces, and “five coins” are offered. Nevertheless the coincidental use of the same characters is interesting, perhaps reflecting some playful word games on the part of the translator?

incense and flowers, and made offerings to Foremost One. He also set up various food and drink and with these made offerings to Foremost One. He also made offerings with assorted wonderful offerings.

At that time Foremost One said to Gaṅgā, “Good son, now is the time. **You should now listen carefully and I will explain the real dharmas that are accepted and practiced by all Buddhas.**”

Then Foremost One, for the sake of Gaṅgā, expansively explained the acceptance and practice of the real dharmas: “You should receive the dhāraṇī verses as follows”:

[645b14–21: the sūtra repeats the full *t’an-ch’ih* dhāraṇī; receiving this dhāraṇī is said to be equivalent to receiving “the real dharmas that are received and practiced by the Buddhas.”]

[645b22] At that time Gaṅgā rejoiced, dancing with joy, and asked, “How does one receive and uphold the real dharmas of the Buddhas?”

At that time Foremost One said to Gaṅgā, “If there is a good son or a good daughter who wishes to hear, then you should go before that person in a dream and manifest your body. If that person sees your body, then you should teach him/her to practice the real dharmas such as these.”

[Gaṅgā] asked, “How should one practice them?”

[Foremost One] answered Gaṅgā, saying, “At the time when one wishes to practice, [he should proceed as follows.] **For seven days, fast after noon, wash [the body] three times daily, and put on pure and clean robes. Set up an image of the Buddha and make a five-colored parasol. Chant the lines of this text one hundred and twenty times while circumambulating [the Buddha image] one hundred and twenty times. When you are finished, sit down and meditate.** When you are finished meditating, again chant the lines of this text. Do this for **seven days.**”

[645c1] Then Gaṅgā asked, “Foremost One, [on] what days should [one perform this practice]?”

“Good son. One should practice these dharmas on **the eighth and fifteenth day** of the month. Then, [even] if a sentient being commits the **five heinous offenses and his body breaks out with leprosy, it will not be the case that one cannot remove these features**; if a layman (*upāsaka*) offends against the three refuges up to six times, and there will be no case in which [the offenses] are not removed and [the leprosy] healed; or if a bodhisattva [offends against] the twenty-four [bodhisattva] precepts [see below], the *śramaṇa* [against] the ten precepts; or

the novices, monks, and nuns [against their] precepts; in this way if one offends against the precepts, against each and every precept, then one should singlemindedly repent, and it will not be the case that one cannot recover [the holy life], and it will remove the imperfect heart [that caused the transgressions].”

Next, good son, at that time Foremost One taught Gaṅgā in detail the terms of the twenty-four major precepts:

- 1 Suppose there is a bodhisattva, and starving sentient beings came to him seeking food, drink, and shelter. If [the bodhisattva] does not respond accordingly [to their needs], then this is an offense against the first major precept.
- 2 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who is filled with lust without degree, and not choosy with regard to birds and animals; this is called an offense against the second major precept.
- 3 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees a bhikṣu who is nurturing a wife and children, and freely speaks about his faults; this is called an offense against the third major precept.
- 4 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees a person who is depressed and unhappy and wishes to commit suicide [“destroy his own body”], but out of his own self-interest [the bodhisattva] exacerbates the other man’s anger and frustration, causing him to do harm to his life faculties, as someone with fire might set everything around him ablaze; this is called an offense against the fourth major precept.
- 5 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who goes out from the retreat (*vihāra*) [of the Buddha’s disciples] and onto the wide avenues, finds material wealth and takes it as he likes; this is called an offense against the fifth major precept.
- 6 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees that another person is angry and wants to injure others, yet with flattering words [the bodhisattva] praises [and encourages] that person’s anger; this is called an offense against the sixth major precept.
- 7 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees that another person is angry, and if he hears that [in his] hostility he wants to burn down the sangha’s dwellings; if he does not to the limit of his resources [try to] constrain these evil people, then this is called an offense against the seventh major precept.
- 8 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees a certain person or hears of a certain person who commits severe offenses; this bodhisattva should secretly call this person to come to him and

counsel him, saying “I have some good medicine that can nourish the roots of [one’s desire to keep] the precepts, and can lead you to recover the holy life.” If the man does not respond, you should exhort him three times; if you do not do so a full three times, then this is called an offense against the eighth major precept.

- 9 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who hears or sees that a person has committed the five heinous offenses. He should go to this person and say the following: “This is against the true Dharma. You are acting contrary to the pure practices (*brahmacaryā*). You should not do these things.” If he does not do like this, then this is called an offense against the ninth major precept.
- 10 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees or hears that another person wishes to do a great and good deed, but then feels anger and destroys the other’s good wisdom; this is called an offense against the tenth major precept.
- 11 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees another person absorbed in drink and drunk with wine. He should bring him to his senses and scold that other person. Just removing the causes and conditions is not *brahmacaryā*. [646a1] This is called an offense against the eleventh major precept.
- 12 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees or hears of a certain person who debauches another person’s wife, and goes to the woman’s husband and tells him, “so-and-so is violating you; perhaps you should look into it.” This is called an offense against the twelfth major precept.
- 13 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees a family against which his family bears a grudge, and arouses in himself thoughts of this family hatred; this is an offense against the thirteenth major precept.
- 14 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees another person who is angry and has thoughts like a little child, and [this bodhisattva] goes to this [angry] person and says, “Look here. Why do you perceive these people like a little child? This is an inauspicious quality.” This is called an offense against the fourteenth major precept.
- 15 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees a group of other people fighting, and goes to them to offer help, but with his power aids them with his own energies. This is called an offense against the fifteenth major precept.

- 16 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees another person's private matters and exposes them, and slanders [this person] in front of the four assemblies, thus causing this person not to feel joy but to arouse anger. This is called an offense against the sixteenth major precept.
- 17 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees or hears another person doing good deeds, but does not speak of this [to others]. This is called an offense against the seventeenth major precept.
- 18 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who goes out on the road and comes across other people who are building a stupa, or comes across people who are building a *vihāra*, and does not help them. This is called an offense against the eighteenth major precept.
- 19 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees or hears a person who distances himself from his good friends, or who is becoming closely acquainted with evil friends, and does not admonish him, telling him, "For the sake of what is good, leave those evil friends and associate with good friends." This is called an offense against the nineteenth major precept.
- 20 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who does not go to the places of outcasts, or of evil people, or of evil dogs, or the places of the śrāvaka and those of the two vehicles, or other such places of trouble, and try to remove such adversity. This is called an offense against the twentieth major precept.
- 21 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees and hears and suspects a killing [of an animal for meat to feed him], and eats this meat deliberately; this will cut off the seed of compassion within him, for he has committed a great offense. If he has doubts about the killing but has not seen or heard of it, and thinks that there is no wrong in eating it anyway, then this is called an offense against the twenty-first major precept.
- 22 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who sees and hears and suspects a killing [of an animal for meat], or has doubts about the killing but has not seen or heard of it, and goes ahead and eats this meat. This person has lost the treasure-store of the Buddhas of the three times, and has lost the grace of the Buddhas of the three times. If one thinks that such a person should be honored, this is called an offense against the twenty-second major precept.
- 23 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who understands [skillful] means and knows the faculties of sentient beings, and yet does not

expound it [to save those people], thinking that the people should reap the retribution for their offenses. This is called an offense against the twenty-third major precept.

- 24 Suppose there is a bodhisattva who, at the time when he is keeping these precepts, perceives Flower Cluster, or perceives Ākāśagarbha, or perceives Avalokiteśvara, or perceives each and every bodhisattva. Whether it is something seen, not seen, or any other sort of experience, in all cases one may not profess it to others saying, “I have seen such and such Dharma-princes.” If a person says that he has seen such things, that person makes an obstruction for the manifestation of these bodies, he may get leprosy, or at times may go mad or become blind or have his sight become blurry, or become deluded and discriminate [falsely] concerning the essential of the Dharma of the Buddhas, and suffer the disease of madness. If you slander these precepts you bring misfortune upon yourself in this way. When you uphold these precepts, you should not verbalize or proclaim to others that “I have seen such and such.” As you do not speak of it within the seven days [of the practice of this rite], you should not speak of it outside of this period. Good son, these are called the twenty-four precepts of the bodhisattva-mahāsattva.

Good son, this secret Dharma of all Buddhas should not be recklessly expounded just anywhere. Good son, each and every Buddha, without exception, has attained supreme enlightenment through these precepts. In the past all Buddhas have also attained supreme enlightenment by means of these precepts. All Buddhas in the future will do likewise.

Then Gaṅgā said to Foremost One, “What about kṣatriyas, brahmins, vaiśyas, and śūdras? Should they [all] receive these precepts or not?”

Foremost One answered, “People of all castes may receive these precepts.”

Gaṅgā said, “How should one receive such wonderful precepts as these?”

Foremost One said, “**When you receive these precepts, you should petition a single bhikṣu who understands the features of these precepts.** You may make this request of the sangha-assembly as often as you want. **Also, you should petition the twenty-four images, though more would not impede [the practice]. Provide various sorts of ritual food and drink, and make offerings to the assembly of monks and to**

[individual] bhikṣus. Bow down, touching the ground with the five points [of the body; two feet, two hands, and head], and in front of the images and all the accomplished monks, pay respect with a sincere mind and chant these words: ‘[Before] the forms of all Buddhas and the whole assembly of monks outside, I now take refuge in and accept the noble Dharma of the precepts. May the assembly [of monks], in their expansive loving-kindness, recognize and accredit me.’ Also chant these words: ‘You wonderful and noble ones who are brave in the Dharma, listen to me as I now proclaim that I will accept and uphold these precepts.’ At this time, this person should himself say these things. Having fully comprehended the precepts, he should thrice repeat the three requests. When finished, he will have a pure and mature precept-nature. To the end of this present state and even unto the change of his form, he will uphold them. Those who truly accept, truly hear, truly practice without transgressing, and uphold these precepts, will be reborn according to their will. Gaṅgā, this is the method by which all bodhisattva-mahāsattvas who consummate their bodhi-nature hear and receive these precepts.” [end of fascicle 1]

[646c1–647a23: Foremost One explains the origin of the dhāraṇī in the distant past with another *avadāna* involving the Buddha Caṇḍanapuṣpa, King Ratnacaṇḍana, his younger brother Fruit Grove 林果, and the king’s nine-hundred ninety-nine sons.]

[647a24] Then the Buddha said to Ānanda: “Have you heard the true Dharma of the Buddhas?

[Ānanda answered,] “Yes indeed, World Honored One, today I have heard the profound Dharma treasury of texts [of dhāraṇī] like these that are extraordinarily marvelous, and which can cause all hell-beings, hungry ghosts, gods and humans—that is, all beings to be liberated—to be able to extinguish all the retribution from karmic offenses [by means of these dhāraṇī].

Then the Buddha said to Ānanda, “Good son, I am happy you have spoken these words. What you have said is genuine and not vacuous. **Whether I am still in the world or have already left the world, this sūtra is present in Jambudvīpa and illuminates the world like the shining rays of the sun; sentient beings benefit from its grace and can [thereby] see in [all] four directions.**

“Also, just as Mt. Sumeru is the highest among all the mountains, and if one dwells on its peak one can all see what is happening in all four directions, so this [*Vaipulya*] *dhāraṇī sūtra* is the highest among all

dharmas, and one can [thereby] perceive the marks of the dharmas.

“Also, it is like the great sea that is of unlimited depth. This *Dhāraṇī sūtra* is also like this; it is of unlimited depth, there is no bottom to the benefits to be gained. Good son, in this way I have access to the unlimited Dharma treasury, and entrust it to you. You should maintain and cultivate and receive and uphold it.”

[647b5–c22: The Buddha and Ānanda discuss the upholding and cultivating of this sūtra.]

FURTHER PRAISES FOR THE SŪTRA [647C22–648A14]

[647c22] “Good son, one should know that this sūtra has immeasurable spiritual vitality 威神 and power of virtues. It is for these reasons that I now tell this to you: receive and uphold this sūtra. After I have left this world, if this sūtra remains in this world of Jambudvīpa, it will be a great and precious treasure to sentient beings. **If someone is able to cultivate and practice, receive and uphold, read and chant [this sūtra], one should know that this person will fully utilize this treasure. If also there is a person who is only able to read and chant it, then one should know that this person will attain a middling portion of this treasure. If one makes offerings of various kinds of perfumed paste, powdered [末=抹 ?] incense, flowers, silk banners, and parasols, then one should know that this person will attain a small portion of this treasure.**

“Good son, I will now explain to you the conditions and marks of the small portion of this treasure. Good son, [648a1] suppose there is a person whose supranormal powers are unobstructed like Mañjuśrī or like myself, or who is unobstructed in eloquence just like Mañjuśrī and myself, and throughout an entire kalpa constantly utilizes this eloquence and is able to preach the Dharma to immeasurable and unlimited numbers of sentient beings, and lead them to dwell in the state of a bodhisattva-mahāsattva who has only one more life to live (*ekajāti-pratibaddha*) [before becoming a Buddha]; that this person exhausts these supranormal powers by offering various kinds of robes, bedding, food and drink, and medicines to the bodhisattvas. Would this person’s good karmic rewards be many, or not?”

Then Ānanda said, “They would be exceedingly many, World Honored One.”

“Good son, suppose there is another person who uses perfumed paste, powdered incense, flowers, silk banners, and parasols to make offerings to one four-lined verse from within this sūtra; or again he

reads and chants this as his offering, this person's merit will surpass that of the two of us. How much more so if one exhausts the forms by cultivating and practicing, receiving and upholding, and reading and chanting [this sūtra]! This person's merit is incalculable. If a mathematician or a mathematician's student attempted to calculate [this merit], it would add up to beyond the calculation of hundreds of thousands of millions, and could not be known by a single person.

“Good son, ponder this matter. Suppose there are bodhisattvas who in just one more life will attain Buddhahood. Even if ten thousands of *koṭis* of bodhisattvas—more numerous than the sands of the Ganges River—exhaust their supranormal powers and exhaust their eloquence; if for one kalpa or for even ten thousands of *koṭis* of kalpas they all enter samādhi, even such immeasurable bodhisattvas as these would not equal one hundredth, one thousandth, or one ten-thousandth [of the merit] of a person who desires to ponder, cultivate and practice, receive and uphold, read and chant this *mahā-vaipulya-dhāraṇī* sūtra.

Good son, you should know that this sūtra has great spiritual vitality and the power of virtue. It is a great treasure-house for whatever country it is in. All sentient beings can take refuge in it. For these reasons I now speak of it to you. Receive and uphold this sūtra in Jambudvīpa. Preach and disseminate it widely for the sake of sentient beings. Cause the sentient beings to attain ultimate bliss.”

At that time Ānanda and the five hundred great disciples and the immeasurable great assembly arose from their seats, bared their right shoulders, placed their right knees on the ground, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and joyfully received this practice.

[end of Introduction; 648a22]²⁵

2. *Chapter on Predictions* 授記 [648a23–651c19]

[648a23] At that time Thunder Voice arose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, pressed his palms together, and facing the Buddha said, “Excellent, World Honored One, is your skillful preaching of the causes and actions that were done in the past. Now you have finished preaching. This *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* has been entrusted to

²⁵ This could be the original ending of the sūtra, with the following sections added at a later time.

Ānanda for disseminating later. Immeasurable sentient beings will gain great and good benefits from this sūtra. Excellent, World Honored One, the master of great compassion!”

The Buddha said to Thunder Voice, “Good son, it is as you say. I have now finished preaching what should be preached. I should now preach on things that have not yet been preached. Truly it is as you say.”

“Good son, in this good eon (*bhadrakalpa*) you will attain Buddhahood and be named Thunder Voice Treasure-King, a Tathāgata, an arhat, a samyaksambuddha, one who is equipped with knowledge and conduct, a well-gone one, one who understands the world, a supreme one, a tamer of men, a teacher of humans and gods, and Buddha, a World Honored One. Your land will be called “Universal Majesty” 普威. It will be pure and incomparable, with only bodhisattvas gathered there. These bodhisattvas will be of unhindered eloquence and immeasurable supranormal powers, fully capable in skillful means. Each of the bodhisattvas possess great radiance, capable of illuminating eighty tens of thousands of *koṭis* of lands, as many as the sands of the Ganges River. Those who see this light will attain the power of memory to embrace all 總持 [that is, dhāraṇī] and immeasurable supranormal powers, no different from other bodhisattvas. This land is adorned in a way incomparable with this [mundane] world. In that world you will attain Buddhahood. Your lifespan will be six million two hundred thousand years, and [the duration of your] True Dharma (Saddharma) and Shadow Dharma will be the same.

[648b10] At that time the śrāvakas, the assembly of five hundred great disciples, arose from their seats, arranged their robes properly, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, withdrew to one side, and chanted in unison:

**The wisdom of the World Honored One is like empty space—
All-perceiving of the characteristics of the coming and going of
sentient beings,
Seeing and hearing all in the ten directions;
We will now pay reverence to the King of All Treasures.**

At that time the Buddha said to the assembly of five hundred great disciples, “Each of you will certainly become a Buddha, all with the same title, the title ‘Treasure Moon King,’ ...”

[and so forth, as the Buddha gives the prophecy of future Buddhahood to those in the assembly of five hundred disciples. The Buddha then expounds on the benefits to be gained from keeping these dhāraṇī. Śāriputra then asks the Buddha how people should uphold this sūtra.]

[649a11] At that time Śāriputra said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, this sūtra has such immeasurable spiritual power that it is able to draw and gather all divine and human beings, asuras, hellish beings, and hungry ghosts to the place of enlightenment. The power of the sūtra is such that it is able to save all beings; what are the merits for those who receive and uphold the sūtra?”

Then the Buddha said to Śāriputra, “I have already spoken of this; why do you ask me this question?”

Then Śāriputra said to the Buddha, “With what offerings should the people who receive and uphold this sūtra pay homage?”

The Buddha said to Śāriputra, “If there is a person who can offer to me his head, eyes, body, wife, sons, daughters, elephants, horses, and seven kinds of jewels, this is not equal to [the merit of] a person who is able to make a single act of worship to these sūtra-scrolls 經卷. Again, **if there is a person who can lift up the four continents and can pile up treasures until they reach the Brahmā heavens and offer these to me, it is not equivalent to offering a single meal with which to fill the body of one who receives and upholds this sūtra.** Again, if there is a person in this trichiliocosm who accumulates precious jewels until it makes the world collapse, and offers these to me, it is not equivalent to a person who upholds this text for a day and a night. How much more so for one who exhausts his body and life-force in keeping and upholding such a text; the merit from this is immeasurable.

Again, if there is a person who accumulates precious jewels so that they fill the worlds [as numerous as] particles of dust in the ten directions, up to the top of these worlds, and exhaustively offers these to me, this would not be equivalent to a person who upholds a single four-line verse [of this sūtra] and transmits and teaches it to others; the merit [from this] is immeasurable and unlimited.

[649a27–650a29: The Buddha continues to tell Ānanda of the benefits of upholding this sūtra. Mañjuśrī joins the conversation, and then enters into a discussion with Śāriputra on the meaning of granting *vyākaraṇa* (prediction of the attainment of Buddhahood), specifically on the issue of śrāvakas and arhats receiving prediction of Buddhahood. This possibility is compared to dead and dessicated wood producing new branches, water running upstream to its source in the mountains, a cracked boulder becoming whole again, or burnt seeds giving rise to new sprouts (649c14–16). The issue is resolved with the emptiness logic of *prajñā-pāramitā*-style dialectics.]

[650b1] Then the five hundred great disciples immediately arose from their seats, bowed their heads at [the Buddha's] feet, and said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, as the Buddha explained, when a person practices this Dharma, Pāpīyān [Māra] will come to destroy these persons' good roots and conditions. How did you know this?"

Then the Buddha said to the assembly of five hundred great disciples, "When these demons come there will be forty ten-thousands of *koṭīs* [of them]. They will come and let out a great evil voice. The land will shake and a great evil wind will be released. At times they will produce fire and at times flood, wishing to kill this person. At times they will stand before him in a dream and extract his tongue. At times they will spew forth fire in his face. At times they will lift up a mountain and threaten to crush him. This person should respond, 'It is good that you have come.' Upon saying this he will chant silently in his heart the words of the *mahā t'an-chih dhāraṇī*. **Also he should chant the words 'I pay homage to Śākyamuni; I pay homage to the Dharma-prince Mañjuśrī, the Dharma-prince Ākāśagarbha, the Dharma-prince Avalokiteśvara, the Dharma-prince Vaiśravaṇa, the Dharma-prince Ākāśa [Space], the Dharma-prince Breaker of Darkness, the Dharma-prince Universal Hearer, the Dharma-prince Wonderful Form, the Dharma-prince Great Emptiness, and the Dharma-prince True Thusness.'** In this way the bodhisattva-mahāsattva should be mindful of these names. In this way all of these princes will certainly come to where he is and protect that person. They will cause this person to experience pleasure, not pain. If any bhikṣus experience these difficulties, they should be mindful of the names of these [Dharma-] princes in this way."

At that time Ānanda spoke to the Buddha, saying, "World Honored One, when a practitioner suffers fear like this due to [actions of] Pāpīyān such as this, the princes with great compassion will be able to save him. With what offerings should one pay homage to these princes?"

Then the Buddha said to Ānanda, after the Pāpīyān are gone, **one should prepare various kinds of incense and flowers and perfumed paste and make offerings to these princes. Prepare various kinds of incense and rub [the incensed] mud [on the walls?] in the room and paint colorful pictures. In unison²⁶ praise the Dharma-princes.**"

[650b21] "At that time Avalokiteśvara will enter the room, either as a monk, or as a *śramaṇera*, or as a *śramaṇerī*, or as an *upāsaka*, or as a

²⁶ Lit., "different mouths, same sound."

mendicant, or as a starving dog; in this [guise] he will enter the room. Or he will come as a wandering traveller, entering the room and staying there. Or he will come as a king or prince, and enter the room. Or he will come as an ordinary person, and enter the room.”

Then Ānanda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, when one practices this dharma, should there be a large number of people or not?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda, “**There should not be more than ten people.**”

At that time Ānanda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, when one practices this dharma, should one carry on any [secular] business or use jocular language, or not?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda, “One should only be singleminded, being mindful of the words of the *mahā t’an-chih dhāraṇī*. One should not be embroiled in jocular talk, nor defile one’s thought with any kind of evil [650c1]; how much more so [should one avoid] having [secular] duties.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda, “If there is a good son or a good daughter who cultivates the practice of this sūtra, and if with their eyes they see [**ten Buddhas:**] the Buddha of Immeasurable Life (Amitāyus), the Buddha Śākyamuni, the Buddha Vipāśyin, the Buddha Śikhin, the Buddha Viśvabhu, the Buddha Krakucchanda, the Buddha Kanakamuni, the Buddha Kāśyapa, the Buddha King of Thunder Voice of the Past, and the Buddha Secret Dharma Treasury, and if he or she **sincerely repents in front of these Buddhas**, he or she will extinguish the offenses of ninety-two *koṭis* of lives and deaths.” ...

[650c6–651c29: Ānanda asks about the qualifications needed for cultivating the dhāraṇī rite, wondering how it is possible for lay people to be involved. Ānanda’s doubts are addressed; then the seven Buddhas of the past appear and chastise Ānanda for his Hīnayānistic, annihilationist views, and correct him. The fascicle ends with a lengthy section of the retributions that will befall people who slander and/or misuse the dhāraṇī.] [end of fascicle 2]

3. *The Practice of Dreams* [652a1–656a23]

[652a1] At that time the Buddha said to the Dharma-prince Mañjuśrī, “While I am in this world or after I have left this world, if there are good sons and good daughters who come to where you are, seeking

[this] dhāraṇī sūtra, **you should teach them to seek the twelve dream kings. If they are able to see one of the [dream] kings, you should teach and confer upon them the teaching of the seven-day practice.**”

Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha, “What are the names of these twelve dream kings?²⁷ What is that called the ‘the teaching of the seven-day practice’?”

The Buddha said to Mañjuśrī, “Good son:

- 1 If there is a good son or a good daughter who in a dream [sees a figure] that can miraculously fly and hangs up silk banners and parasols in back of this person; the one who is seen like this is *Dandala 袒荼羅 (*t’an-t’u-lo*, K. d’ân-d’a-lâ).
- 2 If there is a good son or good daughter who in a dream sees a figure of a relic stūpa and [surrounded by] a great assembly of monks, the one who is seen is “Chin-t’i-lo” 斤堤羅 (K. kī an-d’iei-lâ).
- 3 If there is a good son or good daughter who in a dream sees kings and ministers, wearing clean and pure robes and each riding on a white horse, the one who is seen is “Mao-chih-lo” 茂持羅 (K. məu’-d’i-lâ).
- 4 If there is a good son or good daughter who in a dream sees [a figure] riding an elephant across a great river; the one who is seen is “Kan-chi-lo” 乾基羅 (K. kân[.g’iän]-kji-lâ).
- 5 If there is a good son or good daughter who in a dream [sees a figure] riding a camel over a high mountain; the one who is seen is “To-lin-lo” 多林羅 (K. tâ-lī əm-lâ).
- 6 Suppose there is a bhikṣu who seeks this dharma, and in a dream [sees a figure] on a high seat turning [the wheel of the Dharma] of *prajñā*; the one who is seen is “Po-lin-lo” 波林羅 (K. puâ-lī əm-lâ).
- 7 Suppose there is a bhikṣu who in a dream [sees a figure who] arrives at the foot of a tree where there is an ordination platform, and there accepts the precepts; the one who is seen is “T’an-lin-lo” 壇(檀)林羅 (K. d’ân-lī əm-lâ).
- 8 Suppose there is a bhikṣu who in a dream [sees a figure who] sits in front of an image of the Buddha and beseeches the assembly of monks to make offerings; the one who is seen is “Ch’an-to-lin-lo” 禪多林羅 (K. tân-tâ-lī əm-lâ).

²⁷ Note that these twelve names are those given to the converted Dandala and his retinue above at 642c21–25.

- 9 Suppose there is a bhikṣu who in a dream sees a tree blossoming with flowers and fruit, and [a figure who] sits at the foot of the tree and enters into dhyāna-samādhi; the one who is seen is “Ch’iung-chia-lin-lo” 窮伽林羅 (K. ˩gʻiung-˩gʻia-˩liəm-˩lâ).
- 10 Suppose there is a great king who in a dream fastens a sword around his waist and roams in all directions; [652b] the one who is seen in this way is “Chia-lin-lo” 迦林羅 (K. ˩gʻia-˩liəm-˩lâ).²⁸
- 11 Suppose there is a great minister who in a dream sees people all holding water bottles and washing their bodies, rubbing on various kinds of incense and wearing clean and pure robes; the one who is seen in this way is “Ch’iung-chia-lin-lo” 窮伽林羅 (K. ˩gʻiung-˩gʻia-˩liəm-˩lâ).²⁹
- 12 Suppose there is a woman who in a dream [sees a figure who] rides on a sheep-cart and enters into deep water, and in that body of water there are many poisonous snakes; the one who is seen is “Po-lin-lo” 波林羅 (K. ˩puâ-˩liəm-˩lâ).³⁰

If [those who seek the dhāraṇī teachings] see these things [in a dream], you may teach them. Good sons and good daughters who see one or another of these should be taught the “seven-day method of practice.”

THE SEVEN DAYS [652B8–653C13]

Then Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, what is ‘the teaching of the seven-day practice’? What does one receive and uphold, and what does one cultivate in such a practice?”

FIRST DAY [652B11–28]

Then the Buddha said to Mañjuśrī, the Dharma-prince, “If there are good sons or good daughters [who are to practice this method], on the first day they should go to a practice site 道場, should use **rubbing incense**, powdered incense, sandalwood (*candana*), sandalwood incense [or “*agaru* incense” (lign aloes)], fragrant herbs, and **incense**

²⁸ Note that many of the dreams have no explicitly Buddhist content. I invite those who are trained in the interpretation of dreams to speculate on the possible meaning of these dreams.

²⁹ A repeat of the name for number 9.

³⁰ The same name as for dream number 6. Since two of these overlap, there are actually a total of only ten different dream-kings.

from the seashore, and make an offering to the *Mahā t'an-chih dhāraṇī-sūtra*.

“At that time the bodhisattvas Flower Cluster (*Puṣpakūta) and Avalokiteśvara will come and dwell in that practice site. Then these two gentlemen will, in unison, praise the practicers in the practice site, saying, ‘Excellent, excellent, oh good sons 善男子 and good daughters 善女子. You are able, in the Dharma of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni, to cultivate this *Mahā t'an-chih dhāraṇī sūtra*. Then the bodhisattvas Flower Cluster and Avalokiteśvara will be suspended in space and mounted on jeweled lotuses, surrounded on all sides by a great immeasurable assembly.

“Mañjuśrī, I now say to you, tell all sentient beings to cultivate, accept and uphold the *Mahā t'an-chih dhāraṇī sūtra*, and pass it on in turn, so that [beings] transcend the triple world and attain that which they wish according to their intent. If there are lay men 信士 or lay women 信女, on the first day they should encourage living beings to come to the practice site. They should burn various kinds of incense and hang silk banners and parasols. If there are good men and good women who seek to make a wish concerning the present and the future, they may seek it. At that time the two figures [of Flower Cluster and Avalokiteśvara] will, in accordance to the capacities of these people, grant their wishes for the present and the future.

“Mañjuśrī, such practicers, if they are sincere, will see these two gentlemen dancing in the air. If they are not sincere, they will not see anything. Mañjuśrī, those who do not see anything are those who are not sincere. This is the practice of the *dhāraṇī sūtra* for the first day.

SECOND DAY [652B29–C13]

“Next, Mañjuśrī, if there are good sons and good daughters at the practice site for the second day, they should burn various kinds of incense, such as rubbing incense and powdered incense, and hang silk banners and parasols, and make offerings to the *Mahā t'an-chih dhāraṇī sūtra*.

“At that time the Tathāgata *Ratnarāja 寶王 and I myself [Śākyamuni] will come to the practice site from the Vulture Peak, surrounded on all sides by immeasurable nayutas of great assemblies. Each and every one of these great assemblies will be mounted on a seven-jewelled lotus, and, each will sing the praises of those practicing in the practice site saying, ‘Excellent, excellent, good sons and good daughters. You will be able to receive and uphold and read and chant this *dhāraṇī*

sūtra after I have left this world. You should ponder it and commit yourself to cultivate, receive, and uphold this sūtra, and reflect on it well. You should also ponder the Buddhas and Tathāgatas of the ten directions three times, and think that by receiving and and upholding this sūtra, I am training under them.’

“Mañjuśrī, after I leave this world, as for those practicers who come to the practice site in this way, I should preach the Dharma to them in accordance with the differences in their capacities. Again, there will be those who hear and those who do not hear, those who see my form and those who do not see my form. Those who do not see or hear are those without sincerity, except for those who just do not see. This is the practice of the dhāraṇī sūtra for the second day.”

THIRD DAY [652C14–27]

“Next, Mañjuśrī, if there are good sons and good daughters, who on the third day hang silk banners and parasols at the practice site, and use rubbing incense, powdered incense, sandalwood (*candana*), *agaru* incense (lign aloes), fragrant herbs, and incense from the seashore, and pay homage to the *Mahā-t’an-chih-dhāraṇī-sūtra*, then the Buddha Vipāśyin and the bodhisattva-mahāsattva Ākāśagarbha will come to the practice site, and will appear in space surrounded on all sides by an immeasurable great assembly. Each will be mounted on a jeweled lotus flower and floating in space at the height of seven *tāla* trees,³¹ emitting a great ray of light that illumines the Buddha lands in the ten directions. Among them, the practicers who have seen this light will all arouse the aspiration for complete supreme enlightenment (*anuttara-samyaksambodhi-citta*). Sagely people from all directions will come to the practice site to inquire after this light. At that time, among the practicers at the practice site, there will be those who, in accordance with their capacities, either see [all of this], or do not see. Some will see the forms, and some will not. Their powers of practicing will be differentiated in accordance with their capacities. At that time these people will hear the preaching of the Buddha in this way. The practicers will dance for joy, and will attain what is unprecedented. Mañjuśrī, this is the practice of the dhāraṇī sūtra for the third day.”

FOURTH DAY [652C28–653A13]

“Next, Mañjuśrī, if the good sons and good daughters are in the practice

³¹ A *tāla* tree can grow to the height of twenty-five meters.

site on the fourth day, chanting and cultivating, the practice of the *Mahā t'an-chih dhāraṇī sūtra*, hanging silk banners and parasols, and all, with various colors, adorning this practice site, burning various kinds of incense, such as rubbing incense, powdered incense, sandalwood (*candana*), *agaru* incense, fragrant herbs, and incense from the seashore, and making offerings to the *Mahā t'an-chih dhāraṇī-sūtra*, then the Buddha Śikhin will come to the practice site with an immeasurable assembly in front and back and around, and be suspended in space ... [and so forth as above].

[653a9] “At that time, after the practicers finish gazing on the Buddha Śikhin, they bow their heads at his feet. Then the Buddha Śikhin will put forth his right hand and rub the top of the people’s heads and say, ‘Good sons and good daughters, soon you will proceed toward the Bodhi tree, destroy vengeful Mara, overcome the heretics, and attain dhāraṇī, just as I have,’ Mañjuśrī, this is the practice of the dhāraṇī sūtra for the fourth day.”

FIFTH DAY [653A14–29]

“Next, Mañjuśrī, if the good sons and good daughters are in the practice site on the fifth day, [and so forth as above, and the practicers will be mindful of severing various defilements,] then the Buddha Viśvabhu will appear in space mounted on a jeweled lotus, and will preach the essentials of the Dharma for the sake of the immeasurable great assembly.

“At that time, those practicing in the practice site will fully hear the verses preached by the Buddha, and take all of it to heart, clearly understanding it, and not forget it.

“At that time, of those practicing in the practice site, some will see and some will not see [these things]; there will be those who see after a week, or do not see after two weeks, or see or do not see after three weeks.³² As for sentient beings, because their karma is not fixed, all this is due to the depth of their evil deeds in previous lives. Mañjuśrī, this is the practice of the dhāraṇī sūtra for the fifth day.”

SIXTH DAY [653B1–17]

“Next, Mañjuśrī, if the good sons and good daughters are in the practice site on the sixth day, [and so forth as above,] then the Buddha

³² That is, different people take a different amount of time, some more, some less.

Kanakamuni, surrounded on all sides by an immeasurable great assembly, will come from the other four continents to the practice site. At that time the practitioners will fully see the Buddha Kanakamuni. The seven Buddhas [of the past] will be floating in the sky, and [the practitioner will] see each of the Buddhas sitting on an individual seven-jeweled lotus flower seat. Each of these lotus seats will have a diameter of 84,000 *yojana*, and each lotus will be separated from the earth by 84,000 *yojana*.

“When the practitioners have seen this, they will attain what was unprecedented, and they will dance with joy. Then the Buddhas will in unison praise the practitioners, saying, “Excellent, excellent! Disciples of the Tathāgata Śākya[muni]. If you are able, with respect to this bequeathed Dharma 遺法, to receive and uphold and read and chant the *Mahā t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī sūtra*, and come to the practice site, soon you will be free from the three evil destinies, work to save sentient beings, dwell in the human and divine realms, and ultimately [attain] joyful bliss.

“Mañjuśrī, after I leave this world, this *Mahā t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī sūtra* will comfort and benefit sentient beings in Jambudvīpa. Mañjuśrī, this is the practice of the *Mahā t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī sūtra* for the sixth day.”

SEVENTH DAY [653B18–C13]

“Next, Mañjuśrī, if there are good sons and good daughters who are in the practice site for the seventh day, sincerely paying homage and respect to the *Mahā t’an-ch’ih dhāraṇī sūtra*, they should not produce extraneous thoughts, but only with a sincere mind truly hear and truly receive [this sūtra], not thinking of wives or children, elephants and horses, or the seven treasures. They should not disturb their good thoughts with deluded conceptions, passing through their lives in vain and without benefit, losing their merits and not becoming free of various evils [or sufferings].

“Mañjuśrī, these practitioners should then sincerely concentrate on the above thoughts. Then all Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, of the ten directions will appear in space, each and every one of these Buddhas coming to the practice site leading an assembly numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, or the sands of two Ganges Rivers, or the sands of three Ganges Rivers, or the sands of ten thousand Ganges Rivers, or twenty thousand, or sixty, seventy, eighty, or ninety [thousand], or a hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, six hundred, [653c1] seven hundred, eight hundred, nine

hundred [thousand of the sands of the Ganges River]; and soon up to an incalculable number.

“At this time these great assemblies will mutually see one other, and all will have the thirty-two marks [of a Buddha], and a body shining like *jambūnada* gold. Each and every Buddha land will appear before them, adorned with various kinds of jewels that have not been attained yet by [other] lands. Like Mañjuśrī, the Dharma prince, they will be floating in space, and all will be surprised and have doubts, and they will think to themselves, ‘For what reason have these Buddhas all manifested these pure lands?’ When they think in this way, I and Mañjuśrī, surrounded on all sides by the great assembly, will come to the practice site. In accordance with the capacities [of the practitioners], I will preach the Dharma, lead the practitioners to see my forms with perfect clarity, empower them with spiritual power (*adhiṣṭhāna*), and allow them to see us seated in space and in the [various] pure lands. **When they have seen the pure lands, they will rejoice and dance with joy, attaining what was unprecedented, and will arouse the mind of [aspiration for] *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, and never backslide.** On the seventh day they will attain [the ability to choose] rebirth according to their own intention. Mañjuśrī, this is called the practice of the *Mahā t’an-chih-dhāraṇī sūtra* for the seventh day.”

[653c14–656a22: Flower Cluster arises from his seat and asks the Buddha’s permission to make a vow. He then makes a vow expressing the benefits of upholding this *Great Vaiṣṭhavya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* and his desire to attain enlightenment. The Buddha praises him for this vow. Then Vaiśravaṇa appears and expresses his wish to uphold the sūtra, and so forth to the end of the third fascicle.]

4. *Keeping the Precepts* [656a29–658a8]

[656a29] At that time Mañjuśrī arose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, pressed his right knee to the ground, and said to the Buddha, “**World Honored One, after the World Honored One has left the world, if a bhikṣu breaks the four major precepts, or if a bhikṣuṇī breaks and offends against the eight major precepts, or if a bodhisattva or śramaṇa or śramaṇera or upāsaka or upāsikā breaks each of the precepts, how can the heavy offenses from having transgressed against the precepts be extinguished?**”

The Buddha said, “This is good, oh Mañjuśrī, that you ask me concerning these matters! It is because your love and compassion are

superior that you can ask these questions. If you had not asked these questions, I never would have taught the bhikṣus of this evil generation about these faults. Excellent, excellent, Mañjuśrī! Now you should listen carefully and I will teach you. After I leave this world, if there are immoral bhikṣus who break the four major prohibitions, and silently keep receiving offerings from patrons (*dānapati*) and don't repent, you should know that these bhikṣus will undoubtedly experience the sufferings of hell. I should now offer good medicine to save such bhikṣus from this serious disease. If you break the four major prohibitions after I leave this world, and do not shamefully repent, you should now listen carefully, and I will teach [about the precepts] for you.

[656b13; dhāraṇī to be recited one thousand four hundred times per repentance for eighty-seven days 八十七日 (or eighty weeks?) by bhikṣu who break the four major prohibitions (*pārājika*).]

[656c8; dhāraṇī to be recited forty-nine times per repentance for ninety-seven days (or ninety weeks?) by bhikṣuṇī who offend against the eight serious prohibitions.]

[657a8; dhāraṇī to be recited six hundred times per repentance for sixty-seven days (or sixty weeks?) by bodhisattvas, novices, or laypeople who have offended against the precepts.]

[657b4; dhāraṇī to be recited four hundred times per repentance for forty-seven days (or forty weeks?) by novices and laypeople who have offended against the precepts.]

[657b26; explanation of five matters with regard to keeping the precepts, and the explanation of the worldly and transworldly aspects of keeping the precepts].

5. *On the Inconceivable Lotus* [658a9–661a6]

[The sūtra closes with further dhāraṇī (658b24–29), with praises and exhortations for disseminating and upholding these dhāraṇī, and a standard ending with the great assembly paying homage to the Buddha.]

REFERENCES CITED

DEMIÉVILLE, Paul, et al., eds. *Répertoire du Canon Bouddhique Sino-Japonais Édition de Taishō*. Paris: L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Institute de France, 1978.

- ENDŌ Yūjun 遠藤祐純, Fukuda Ryōsei 福田亮成, and Mizukami Fumiyoishi 水上文義, ed. and transl. *Shin Kokuyaku Daizōkyō* 新国訳大蔵経 12, *Mikkyō-bu* 密教部 6. Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1994.
- HIRAKAWA, Akira, et al., eds. *The Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, part two (Chinese–Sanskrit), Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1977.
- HURVITZ, Leon. *Chih-i (538–597). An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques XII, 1980.
- MAGNIN, Paul. *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi (Les origines de la secte bouddhique chinoise du Tiantai)*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1979.
- KARLGRÉN, Bernhard. *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese*. New York: Dover Publications (reprint), 1974.
- MOCHIZUKI Shinkō 望月信亨, ed. *Bukkyō daijiten* 仏教大辞典. Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai, 10 vols. (revised edition) 1954.
- MONIER-WILLIAMS, Monier, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899.
- NAKAMURA Hajime 中村元, ed. *Bukkyōgo daijiten* 仏教語大辞典. Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1981.
- SATŌ Tetsuei 佐藤哲英. *Tendai daishi no kenkyū* 天台大師の研究. Kyoto: Hyakka'en, 1961.
- SOOTHILL, William Edward, and Lewis Hodous. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (reprint), 1977.
- STEVENSON, Daniel B. "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism." In *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, Peter N. Gregory, ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986, pp. 45–97.
- SWANSON, Paul L. "Report on the 10-Year Project to Translate the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* into Western Languages." *Bulletin of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* 15 (1991), pp. 13–20.
- WOGIHARA, Unrai, ed. *Sphuṭarthā Abhidharmakośvyākhyā, The Work of Yaśo-mitra*. Tokyo: The Publishing Association of Abhidharmakośavyākhyā, 1932–1936 (reprinted in two parts, Sankibo Buddhist Book Store, 1971).