



Contemplation of Infinite Life Sutra, as Spoken by the Buddha

*Chinese translation by Kalayashas, Tripitaka Master
from the Western Regions of the Liu-Song Dynasty*

English translation by Householder Foqing,
edited by Householder Jingtu



**Contemplation of Infinite Life Sutra,
as Spoken by the Buddha**

*Chinese translation by Kalayashas, Tripitaka Master
from the Western Regions of the Liu-Song Dynasty*

English translation by Householder Foqing,
edited by Householder Jingtū

Published by Pure Land Buddhism Publishing Co.
41, Alley 22, Lane 150, Sec 5, Shin-Yi Road, Taipei 110049, Taiwan
Tel: 886-2-87894818
Fax: 886-2-87807050
E-mail: amt@plb.tw
Website: www.purelandbuddhism.org

Printed February 2025

(c) 2025 by Pure Land Buddhism Publishing Co.
This book is for free distribution; it is not for sale
Printed in Taiwan

Thus I have heard. At one time, the Buddha stayed at Mt. Gridhrakuta (Vulture Peak) in Rajgir. He gathered with an assembly of 1,250 great *bhikkus*, along with 32,000 Bodhisattvas with Dharma Prince Mañjuśrī as the leader.

At that time, in the great city of Rajgir, there was a prince named Ajatasatru. Following the incitement of Devadatta, a treacherous companion, he seized and detained his father, King Bimbisara, in a chamber with seven layers of guards. All ministers were forbidden from visiting.

The queen mother, named Vaidehi, was devoted to the king. After bathing and cleansing herself, she applied a mixture of ghee, honey and fried flour onto her body and filled her ornaments with grape pulp, secretly offering them to the king.

The king ate the fried flour and drank the grape pulp, then requested water to rinse his mouth. Afterwards, he joined his palms in reverence, turned towards Gridhrakuta and from afar paid homage to the World-Honored One, saying: “Mahāmoggallana is my relative and friend. I pray for his compassion to bestow upon me the Eight Precepts.”

Moggallana swiftly reached the king’s side, like a falcon in flight. Day after day, he appeared in this manner to confer the Eight Precepts upon the king. The World-Honored One also sent the Venerable Purna to expound the Dharma to him.

Three weeks passed in this way. As the king ate fried flour and honey and listened to the Dharma, his complexion became serene and content.

Then, Ajatasatru asked the security guard: “Is my father still alive?”

The guard reported: “Sire, the Queen has smeared fried flour and honey on her body, filled her ornaments with grape pulp and brought them to the king. *Bhikkus* Moggallana and Purna descended from the air to teach him the Dharma. They cannot be stopped.”

Hearing this, Ajatasatru became enraged with his mother: “She is a traitor, siding with the enemy. These *bhikkus* are evildoers, conjuring deceptive illusions, allowing this wicked king to survive for so many days.” Grabbing a sharp sword, he was about to kill his mother.

At that time, there was a minister named Moonlight, who was both intelligent and knowledgeable. He and Jivaka bowed before the king and said: “Sire, your humble servants have learned from the Vedas that since the beginning of

this *kalpa*, there have been 18,000 wicked kings who coveted the throne and killed their fathers. But no one has ever heard of the atrocity of killing one's mother. Sire, if you commit this heinous act and defile the Ksatriya caste, we cannot bear to witness it! Such a deed would befit a *chandala* (butcher, outcaste), who wouldn't be fit to live here." Having said this, the two ministers placed their hands on their swords, stepped back and began to withdraw.

Ajatasatru, shocked and fearful, cried out to Jivaka: "Are you not on my side?"

Jivaka pleaded: "Sire, please do not kill your mother!"

Hearing this, Ajatasatru repented and called for help. He dropped his sword and refrained from harming his mother.

He then ordered the palace officials to confine her in the depths of the palace, forbidding her from ever leaving again.

Imprisoned and haggard, Vaidehi was consumed with distress.

Facing the direction of Mt. Gridhrakuta, she bowed to the Buddha from afar and said: "Tathagata, World-Honored One, in the past, you often sent Ananda to comfort me. Now I am overwhelmed with sorrow and grief. But because of your awe-inspiring majesty, World-Honored One, I cannot hope to see you. I earnestly wish you can send Moggallana and Ven. Ananda to meet with me."

After speaking, she wept with grief, her tears falling like rain. She bowed again to the Buddha from afar. Before she could lift her head, the World-

Honored One at Mt. Gridhrakuta perceived her thoughts. He immediately instructed Moggallana and Ananda to reach her through the air. The Buddha himself vanished from Mt. Gridhrakuta and appeared in the royal palace.

As Vaidehi raised her head, she beheld the World-Honored One, Shakyamuni Buddha, his body radiant with a purple-golden color, seated on a lotus made of hundreds of jewels. Moggallana attended on his left, and Ananda on his right. In the air, devas such as Sakra, Brahma and the World Protectors (Four Heavenly Kings) were present, showering celestial flowers all around as offerings.

Seeing the World-Honored One, Vaidehi tore off her ornaments and prostrated herself on the ground, wailing to the Buddha: “World-Honored One, what karmic offenses did I commit in past lives to give

birth to such an evil son? And what causes and conditions have linked you, World-Honored One, to Devadatta as a relation?

“I humbly beseech you, World-Honored One, to expound in detail on places free from sorrow and distress, where I may be reborn. I find no joy in Jambudvipa, this turbid and iniquitous world. It is mired in defilement and evil, filled with hell-beings, hungry ghosts and animals, and crowded with unwholesome gatherings. I pray that in the future, I will neither hear evil sounds nor see wicked people. Now, I prostrate myself before you, World-Honored One, with my five limbs touching the ground, imploring your compassion and seeking repentance. I entreat you, sun-like Buddha, to teach me how to contemplate the realm of pure karma.”

At that moment, the World-Honored One emitted a light from between his eyebrows. Golden in hue, it illuminated innumerable worlds throughout the ten directions. Returning to rest upon the Buddha's crown, the light transformed into a golden platform, majestic like Mt. Sumeru. Within it appeared the pure, wondrous Buddha Lands of the ten directions: some formed from the seven treasures, others composed entirely of lotus flowers, some resembling the palaces of Ishvaradeva, and others like crystal mirrors, reflecting worlds in all directions. Countless Buddha Lands such as these, resplendent and vividly clear, were revealed to Vaidehi's sight.

Then Vaidehi said to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, though these Buddha Lands are pure, immaculate and radiant, my wish now is to be reborn in the Land of Bliss, where Amitabha Buddha resides. I earnestly beseech you, World-Honored

One, to teach me the practices of contemplative reflection and correct meditative absorption."

The World-Honored One smiled. Rays of five-colored light emanated from his mouth, each illuminating the crown of King Bimbisara.

Though the king was confined at the time, his mind's eye was unobstructed. From afar, he beheld the World-Honored One, bowed with his forehead to the ground and, progressing spontaneously, attained the stage of Anagami (Non-Returner).

Then the World-Honored One said to Vaidehi: "Do you now understand? Amitabha Buddha is not far from here. You should focus your mind and meticulously contemplate that land to accomplish pure karma. I will now explain this in detail for you, using various analogies. It will also enable future generations of ordinary beings who wish to cultivate

pure karma to attain rebirth in the Western Land of Bliss.

“Those who wish to be reborn in that land should cultivate three kinds of meritorious actions:

1. Be filial to parents, respect and serve teachers and elders, maintain kindheartedness, refrain from killing, and cultivate the Ten Good Actions.

2. Undertake and uphold the Three Refuges, fully observe the myriad precepts and avoid undignified comportment.

3. Awaken the Bodhi-mind, believe deeply in cause and effect, read and chant Mahayana scriptures, and encourage others to practice.

These three kinds of deeds are called pure karma.”

The Buddha said to Vaidehi: “Do you now understand? These three types of karma are the primary causes of the pure karma of all Buddhas, past, present and future.”

The Buddha addressed Ananda and Vaidehi: “Listen carefully, listen carefully! Reflect on this properly. Now, the Tathagata will teach about pristine, pure karma for all beings of future generations, those afflicted by vexatious thieves.

“Well done, Vaidehi! It is an excellent question. Ananda, you must uphold this teaching and proclaim the Buddha’s words widely to all multitudes.

“Today, the Tathagata will instruct Vaidehi and all future beings to contemplate the Western Land of Bliss. Through the Buddha’s power, you will behold that pure realm as clearly as seeing your own face

reflected in a bright mirror. Upon witnessing the extraordinarily wondrous and blissful phenomena of that land, your hearts will be filled with joy, and you will immediately attain the Endurance for the Non-Arising of Dharmas.”

The Buddha told Vaidehi: “You are an ordinary being with limited mental perception. Lacking divine sight, you are unable to see far. Yet the Tathagatas possess extraordinary skillful means to enable you to attain this vision.”

At that time, Vaidehi said to the Buddha: “World-Honored One, through the Buddha’s power, someone like me is able to behold that land today. Yet, after the Buddha’s Parinirvana, sentient beings will become turbid, wicked and devoid of virtue, burdened by the five sufferings. How will they be able to see the Land of Bliss?”

The Buddha told Vaidehi: “You and sentient beings should focus your minds and direct your thoughts towards contemplating the Western Pure Land. How should this contemplation be practiced? Contemplate in this way: all sentient beings who have eyes, except those born blind, can see the setting sun. Begin by visualizing it. Sit upright facing west and carefully reflect on the place where the sun is about to set. Keep your mind firm and steady, visualizing attentively without distraction. See the sun, shaped like a suspended drum, as it prepares to set. Once seen, ensure the vision remains clear and distinct, whether your eyes are closed or open.

“This is the Visualization of the Sun, called the First Contemplation.

“Next, visualize water. See the water as clean and pure, ensuring the vision is clear and distinct, with

the mind free from distraction. After perceiving the water, visualize it as turning into ice. Once the ice appears crystal-clear, visualize it as vaidurya. That completed, envisage the vaidurya ground, glittering and translucent inside and out.

“Beneath the ground are golden banners made of diamond and seven treasures, supporting the vaidurya ground. Each banner has eight sides and facets, perfectly formed, and each side is composed of hundreds of precious jewels. From each jewel, thousands of luminous rays shine forth, each ray displaying 84,000 colors, illuminating the vaidurya ground like trillions of suns, too numerous to distinguish.

“Upon the vaidurya ground, golden cord-like pathways crisscross. Boundaries made of the seven treasures clearly divide the land into distinct sections.

“From within each treasure, 500 hues of light radiate, like flowers, stars and moons suspended in the sky. These lights form brilliant platforms, along with millions of mansions and pavilions crafted from hundreds of treasures. On each side of the platforms, billions of flowered banners and countless musical instruments serve as adornments.

“Eight kinds of pure breezes emanate from the light, playing the instruments and echoing sounds that expound on suffering, emptiness, impermanence and egolessness.

“This is the Visualization of the Water, called the Second Contemplation.

“When this visualization is completed, contemplate one aspect after another, ensuring the vision is perfectly clear and distinct. Whether your eyes are closed or open, never allow the vision

to fade or dissipate. Except during sleep, keep it constantly in mind. Visualizing in this way is called roughly seeing the ground of the Land of Bliss. Those who attain samadhi will perceive the ground of that land with clear and distinct vision, its details beyond full description.

“This is the Visualization of the Ground, called the Third Contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda: “You should preserve my words and expound this method of contemplating the ground to all multitudes of future generations who seek liberation from suffering. Those who contemplate the ground this way eliminate their reincarnation-fated negative karma accumulated over 8 billion *kalpas*. Upon leaving this life and in future lifetimes, they will surely be reborn in the Pure Land. Do not doubt this.

“Contemplating this way is called correct contemplation; contemplating otherwise is called incorrect contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “After completing the visualization of the ground, proceed to contemplate the jeweled trees. As you do, reflect on each detail, envisioning seven tiers of arrayed trees. Each tree stands 8,000 *yojanas* tall, with leaves and flowers made of the seven treasures, lacking nothing. Each leaf and flower radiates the colors of precious jewels: from the color of vaidurya shines golden light, from crystal, red light, from agate, the light of tridacna, and from tridacna, green pearl light. Coral, amber and all other precious gems embellish the trees.

“Wondrous pearly nets fully cover the trees, with each tree veiled in seven layers of netting.

Between each layer are 50 billion exquisite floral palaces, resembling those of Lord Brahma. Celestial children naturally dwell there. These children are adorned with necklaces made of 50 billion radiant sakrabhilagna Muni-gems, whose light illuminates 100 *yojanas*, like the combined brilliance of billions of suns and moons, their details indescribable. Myriad jewels intermingle, shining with the most sublime colors, surpassing all others.

“These jeweled trees stand in perfect alignment, their leaves spreading in orderly patterns. Among the leaves, exquisite flowers bloom, naturally bearing seven-jeweled fruits. Each leaf extends 25 *yojanas* in length and width, displaying thousands of colors and hundreds of patterns, resembling celestial ornaments. Some wondrous flowers radiate the hue of Jambunada gold, like spinning fire wheels revolving amid the leaves. From them emerge various fruits,

like Indra’s vases, emitting brilliant light. These rays transform into banners and countless jeweled canopies, within which the activities of all Buddhas throughout the three-thousand-fold great chiliocosm are reflected. Buddha Lands of the ten directions also manifest within.

“After visualizing these trees, contemplate each detail in sequence: reflect on the tree trunks, stems, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, ensuring each image is clear and distinct.

“This is the Visualization of the Trees, called the Fourth Contemplation.

“Next, envision the water. In the Land of Bliss, there are eight ponds. The water in each pond, formed from the seven treasures, is soft and yielding, originating from the king wish-fulfilling gem. This water flows into fourteen streams, each reflecting the

wondrous colors of the seven treasures. The channels are lined with gold, and their beds are composed of multicolored *vajra* sand.

“In each stream, there are 6 billion seven-jeweled lotuses. Each lotus is perfectly round, uniform in size, and spans 12 *yojanas*. The *muni* water flows among the flowers, moving along the trees upwards and downwards. Its subtle and exquisite sound expounds the teachings on suffering, emptiness, impermanence, egolessness and the Paramitas, while also praising the marks and physical characteristics of the Buddhas.

“The king wish-fulfilling gem emits a subtle, wondrous golden radiance that transforms into birds of hundreds of bejeweled colors. These birds sing in elegant, harmonious tones, constantly praising the practice of invoking the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

“This is the Visualization of the Water of Eight Meritorious Virtues, called the Fifth Contemplation.

“In this land of myriad treasures, every region contains 50 billion jeweled mansions. Inside these mansions, countless celestial beings perform heavenly music. There are also musical instruments suspended in the sky, like those of the deity Ratnadhvaja (Jeweled Banners), which emit melodies without being played. These various sounds resonate with teachings on the invocation of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

“Accomplishing this visualization is referred to as roughly seeing the jeweled trees, jeweled ground and jeweled ponds of the Land of Bliss. This is the General Contemplation, called the Sixth Contemplation.

“Those who attain this vision eliminate their reincarnation-destined negative karma of countless billion *kalpas* and after death will surely be reborn in the Pure Land.

“Contemplating this way is called correct contemplation; contemplating otherwise is called incorrect contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Listen carefully, listen carefully! Reflect on this properly. I will teach you in detail the methods to eliminate suffering and distress. You should remember and preserve my teaching and expound it widely to the multitudes.”

As these words were spoken, the Buddha of Infinite Life appeared, standing in the air, along with Mahasattvas Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta attending him by his sides. Their radiance was so

brilliant that it could not be fully perceived, and even 100,000 times the luster of Jambunada gold could not compare.

Upon seeing the Buddha of Infinite Life, Vaidehi bowed in veneration with her head touching the feet of Shakyamuni Buddha and said: “World-Honored One, now, through the Buddha’s power, I have seen the Buddha of Infinite Life and the two Bodhisattvas. How can sentient beings of future generations contemplate them?”

The Buddha said to Vaidehi: “Those who wish to contemplate that Buddha should begin by envisioning a lotus flower on the seven-jeweled ground. Each petal of the lotus flashes hundreds of jeweled colors and displays 84,000 veins, as resplendent as celestial paintings. Every vein emits 84,000 rays of light. Envision all of them clearly and

distinctly. Small petals extend 250 *yojanas* in length and width.

“Each lotus encompasses 84,000 petals. Between the petals are billions of ornamental king Muni-gems. Each Muni-gem issues thousands of radiant beams. The radiance spreads out like canopies made of seven jewels, thoroughly covering the ground. The podium is made of sakrabhilagna gems.

“This lotus-podium is decorated with 80,000 vajra-kimsuka gems, brahma Muni-gems, and exquisite pearly nets. On that podium stand spontaneously four pillars of treasured banners. Each banner resembles 100 quadrillion Mt. Sumerus. Treasured valances drape the pillars, similar to those in Yama Heaven.

“They are adorned with 5 billion exquisite gems, each releasing 84,000 rays of light. Each ray

glows with 84,000 different hues of golden color. The golden color suffuses the treasured land and transforms into various objects everywhere, such as vajra seats, pearly nets, and multicolored flowery clouds. Throughout the ten directions, the golden color mutates and manifests as wished, and performs the Buddha’s work.

“This is the Visualization of the Lotus Throne, called the Seventh Contemplation.”

The Buddha told Ananda: “This wondrous flower was originally created through the power of Bhikku Dharmakara’s vows. Those who wish to invoke Amitabha Buddha should first envision this lotus throne. In performing this, refrain from mixed visualizations. Contemplate every aspect: each petal, each jewel, each ray of light, each platform and each banner. Ensure their images are perfectly clear and

distinct, as if seeing your own reflection in a mirror. Once this contemplation succeeds, practitioners will eliminate their reincarnation-fated negative karma accumulated over five trillion *kalpas* and will certainly be reborn in the Land of Bliss.

“Contemplating this way is called correct contemplation; contemplating otherwise is called incorrect contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Having seen this phenomenon, proceed to envisage the Buddha. Why? Tathagatas are bodies of the Dharma Realm, and enter the mind of each sentient being. For this reason, when thinking of a Buddha, your minds become the [Buddha’s] 32 marks and 80 physical characteristics. It is the mind that creates Buddha, the mind that is Buddha. The ‘ocean’ of the Buddhas’ perfect universal knowledge arises from the thinking

mind. Therefore, you should focus single-mindedly on contemplating that Buddha, Tathagata, Arhat (One Worthy of Offerings) and Samyak-samuddha (One With Correct Universal Knowledge).

“To contemplate that Buddha, begin by envisioning his image. With eyes closed or open, picture a majestic image in the hue of Jambunada gold, seated on that lotus. Once this image is perceived, the mind’s eye will open with clear and distinct sight, allowing a vision of the seven-jeweled adornments of the Land of Bliss: jeweled ground, jeweled ponds, and rows of jeweled trees. Heavenly jeweled canopies cover them entirely, and nets of myriad treasures fill the sky. After these sights appear, ensure the vision is clear and distinct, as if viewing them in your palms.

“Having seen this phenomenon, envision another large lotus to the left of Amitabha, identical to the previous flower with no difference. Then, imagine one more large lotus to the right of the Buddha. Visualize an image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara seated on the left lotus throne, shining with the same golden hue as before. Then, picture an image of Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta seated on the right lotus throne.

“When this visualization is accomplished, the images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas will all emit light. Shining with a golden hue, the rays illuminate the jeweled trees. Beneath each tree are also three lotuses, supporting an image of Amitabha Buddha and the two Bodhisattvas respectively, filling the entire land.

“When this visualization is accomplished, practitioners will be able to hear the flowing water, radiance, jeweled trees, geese and ducks expounding the wondrous Dharma. Whether entering or exiting samadhi, practitioners will continually hear the wondrous Dharma.

“Upon exiting samadhi, practitioners should remember and uphold what they have heard without forgetting, ensuring it aligns with the sutras. If it does not, it is delusional thinking; if it does, it is called the rough visualization of the Land of Bliss.

“This is the Visualization of the Images, called the Eighth Contemplation.

“Contemplating in this way eliminates reincarnation-fated negative karma of innumerable billions of *kalpas* and leads to attainment of Buddha-invocation samadhi in this present life.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “When this visualization is accomplished, proceed to contemplate the physical characteristics and radiance of the Buddha of Infinite Life. Ananda, you should know that the body of that Buddha is 10 trillion times more brilliant than Jambunada gold from Yama Heaven. His height spans as many *yojanas* as 60 trillion *nayutas* of sand grains in the Ganges River. The white tuft between his eyebrows spirals to the right and equals the size of five Mt. Sumerus. The Buddha’s eyes resemble the waters of the Four Great Oceans, with a striking contrast between black and white. From each pore of his body, light shines forth as immense as Mt. Sumeru.

That Buddha’s halo extends as vast as 10 billion three-thousand-fold great chiliocosms. Within this halo are emanated Buddhas — numerous as 100 trillion *nayutas* of sand grains in the Ganges River —

each attended by countless emanated Bodhisattvas.

The Buddha of Infinite Life bears 84,000 marks, and each mark contains 84,000 physical characteristics. Within each characteristic are 84,000 beams of radiance. Each beam permeates all worlds in the ten directions, embracing and never abandoning sentient beings who invoke that Buddha.

“His radiance, marks, physical characteristics and emanated Buddhas defy full description. Simply recall and visualize. Let the mind’s eye see. Those who behold this phenomenon will immediately perceive all Buddhas of the ten directions. Because this vision reveals the Buddhas, it is called Buddha-invocation samadhi.”

“Contemplating in this way is termed contemplating the body of all Buddhas. By contemplating the Buddhas’ body, one also perceives

the Buddhas' mind. The Buddhas' mind is none other than Great Compassion, embracing sentient beings with unconditional kindness.

“Those who contemplate this way will, upon leaving this life and in future lifetimes, be reborn before Buddhas and attain the Endurance for the Non-Arising of Dharmas. Therefore, the wise should single-mindedly contemplate the Buddha of Infinite Life.

“To contemplate the Buddha of Infinite Life, begin with one of his marks and physical characteristics. Simply contemplate the white tuft between his eyebrows and ensure the vision is perfectly clear and distinct. Upon seeing the white tuft, his 84,000 marks and physical characteristics will naturally come into view.

“Those who see the Buddha of Infinite Life will immediately behold countless Buddhas of the ten directions. Upon seeing them, these Buddhas will come forth to bestow upon the contemplators predictions of Buddhahood.

“This is the universal contemplation of all the form bodies and physical marks, called the Ninth Contemplation.

“Contemplating this way is called correct contemplation; contemplating otherwise is called incorrect contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “After beholding the Buddha of Infinite Life with clear, distinct vision, proceed to contemplate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. His height reaches 80 trillion *nayuta yojanas*, and his body shines with a purple-golden

color. Atop this head is a flesh ushnisha, and behind his nape, a radiant halo extends 100,000 *yojanas* in all directions.

“In his halo reside 500 emanated Buddhas, each resembling Shakyamuni. Every emanated Buddha is accompanied by 500 emanated Bodhisattvas and countless celestial beings as attendants. The whole-body radiance of Avalokitesvara reflects all the forms and features of sentient beings from the Five Realms. Crowning his head is a heavenly diadem made of bhilagna Muni-gems, within which stands an emanated Buddha, towering 25 *yojanas* tall.

“Avalokitesvara’s countenance glows with the color of Jambunada gold. The tuft between his eyebrows shimmers in the hue of the seven treasures, emitting 84,000 kinds of radiance. Within each beam appear innumerable hundreds of thousands

of emanated Buddhas, each accompanied by countless emanated Bodhisattvas as attendants. All manifestations, freely transforming as wished, fill the worlds of the ten directions, shining like red lotuses. Eight billion wondrous streams of brilliance adorn his body as ornaments, within which all splendors are fully revealed.

“His palms radiate the colors of 50 billion diverse lotuses, and each fingertip bears 84,000 intricate patterns resembling seal imprints. Each pattern contains 84,000 colors, and each color emits 84,000 rays of light, which are soft and delicate, universally illuminating all. With his divine hands, he receives and guides sentient beings.

“When he lifts his foot, a thousand-spoked wheel mark appears on his sole, spontaneously transforming into 50 billion radiant platforms. When

he sets his foot down, *vajra muni* flowers scatter all over, filling all of space. He possesses all other physical marks and characteristics identical to those of a Buddha, with only two exceptions: the fleshy ushnisha atop his head and the invisible vertex mark, which are not equal to those of the World-Honored One.

“This is the contemplation of the true form body and physical marks of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, called the Tenth Contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda: “Those who wish to contemplate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara should do so in the manner described. Through this contemplation, practitioners will avoid all calamities, completely purify karmic obstacles and eliminate their reincarnation-fated negative karma accumulated over countless *kalpas*. Simply hearing his name

brings immeasurable blessings, how much more so contemplating him? Those who intend to engage in this contemplation should begin with the fleshy ushnisha atop his head, followed by the heavenly diadem and then proceed to the other marks. Contemplate them in sequence, ensuring the vision is clear and distinct, as if viewing them in your palms.

“Contemplating this way is called correct contemplation; contemplating otherwise is called incorrect contemplation.

“Next, contemplate Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta. His body equals Avalokitesvara in size, and his halo, with a radius of 125 *yojanas*, illuminates an area of 250 *yojanas*. His whole-body radiance shines throughout the ten directions, glowing with a purple-golden color. Sentient beings with karmic connections can all behold him.

“By seeing the light from even a single pore of this Bodhisattva, one sees the pure and wondrous brilliance of innumerable Buddhas in the ten directions. For this reason, he is also named ‘Boundless Light.’ His light of wisdom universally illuminates all beings, enabling them to escape the Three Wretched Realms. Having attained such supreme power, he is thus named Mahasthamaprapta, meaning ‘Great Strength Arrived.’

“The heavenly diadem of this Bodhisattva has 500 jeweled flowers, each displaying 500 jeweled platforms. Within each platform, the vast and magnificent features of pure, wondrous Buddha Lands in the ten directions are revealed. The fleshy ushnisha atop his head resembles a *padma* flower, upon which rests a jeweled vase filled with abundant radiance, manifesting the Buddhas’ deeds

universally. His other physical marks are identical to those of Avalokitesvara, with no difference.

“When this Bodhisattva moves, all worlds in the ten directions experience convulsion. Wherever the ground trembles, 50 billion jeweled flowers bloom, each one majestic and resplendent, like those in the Land of Bliss.

“When this Bodhisattva takes his seat, the seven-jeweled [Pure] Land quakes instantly, along with countless Buddha Lands between the Land of Golden Light below and the Land of the King of Radiance above, as numerous as dust particles. From these lands, countless emanations of the Buddha of Infinite Life, Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta gather like clouds in the Land of Bliss, filling the entire sky. Seated upon lotus thrones, they expound the wondrous Dharma, delivering beings from suffering.

“Contemplating this way is called correct contemplation; contemplating otherwise is called incorrect contemplation.”

“Visualizing Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta in this way constitutes the contemplation of his form body and physical marks, called the Eleventh Contemplation.

“Through contemplation of this Bodhisattva, practitioners eradicate *asamkhyeya* reincarnation-fated negative karma of countless *kalpas*. Those who practice this contemplation will never again be reborn through the womb, but will instead always freely roam in the pure and wondrous Buddha Lands.

“The accomplishment of this contemplation is called the complete contemplation of Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta.

“When seeing this phenomenon, initiate the mind to visualize being reborn in the Western Land of Bliss, seated in the full-lotus posture within a lotus flower. Envision the lotus closing and then opening. As it opens, picture the radiance of 500 colors illuminating your body. Imagine your eyes opening to behold Buddhas and Bodhisattvas filling the sky. The sounds from the water, birds, trees and Buddhas all expound the wondrous Dharma. Such teachings are perfectly aligned with the twelve divisions of the scriptures. Upon exiting samadhi, remember and retain [the vision] without losing it.

“Having visualized this phenomenon, it is called seeing the Land of Bliss of the Buddha of Infinite Life. It is the Overall Contemplation, called the Twelfth Contemplation.

“The Buddha of Infinite Life manifests countless emanations. Together with Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta, they constantly appear at places where people practice.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Those who sincerely wish to be reborn in the Western Pure Land should first contemplate the image of Amitabha Buddha, appearing 16 feet tall above the waters of the ponds. As mentioned earlier, the physical size of that Buddha is boundless, beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds. However, through the power of his past vows, those who recall and envision his form will certainly succeed. Simply contemplating the Buddha’s image brings immeasurable blessings — how much more so when contemplating his complete physical form and marks!

“Amitabha Buddha, with supernatural powers wielded at will, manifests freely throughout the ten directions. He may appear in a vast form, filling the sky, or in a smaller form, measuring sixteen or eight feet. All his manifestations shine in the hue of genuine gold, with halos, emanated Buddhas and jeweled lotuses as previously described.

“Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta appear in identical forms everywhere. Sentient beings distinguish between them simply by contemplating the marks on their diadems. These two Bodhisattvas assist Amitabha Buddha in guiding all beings.

“This is the Miscellaneous Contemplation, called the Thirteenth Contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Those reborn [in the Pure Land] at the upper level of the upper grade are sentient beings who, aspiring to such rebirth, cultivate the Three States of Mind, through which they instantly secure their rebirth. What are these three? They are the Sincere Mind, the Deep Mind and the Mind of Merit-Dedication and Aspiration. Those who fully possess the Three States of Mind will certainly be reborn in that land.

“There are also three kinds of beings who will attain rebirth. What are these three?

1. Those who are kindhearted, abstain from killing, and observe all precepts;
2. Those who read and chant the Mahayana scriptures that expound universal equality;
3. Those who practice the Six Invocations.

In addition, they dedicate their merit and aspire to rebirth in that land. Those who maintain such merit and virtue for one to seven days will be reborn in the Pure Land.

“Through their diligent and vigorous practice, when they are about to be reborn in that land, Amitabha Tathagata appears, accompanied by Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta, countless emanated Buddhas, a multitude of hundreds of thousands of *bhikkus* and sravakas, innumerable celestial beings and seven-jeweled palaces. Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara holds a *vajra* pedestal and, together with Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta, approaches the practitioners.

“Amitabha Buddha radiates great light, illuminating their bodies and, together with the Bodhisattvas, extends his hands in welcome.

Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta and countless other Bodhisattvas praise the practitioners and encourage their resolve to advance. Seeing this, the practitioners rejoice with excitement and find themselves seated on the *vajra* throne. Following behind the Buddha, they are reborn in that land as quickly as a finger snap.

“After being reborn in that land, they see the Buddha’s form body complete with all the marks, and the perfected forms of Bodhisattvas likewise. The brilliant jeweled forests expound the wondrous Dharma. Upon hearing it, they immediately attain the Endurance for the Non-Arising of Dharmas. In an instant, they visit and make offerings to all Buddhas throughout the ten directions and, in the presence of each Buddha, receive predictions of Buddhahood in succession. Returning to the Pure Land, they attain countless hundreds of thousands of dharani gates.

“Such is a person reborn at the upper level of the upper grade.

“Those reborn in the middle level of the upper grade are sentient beings who, without needing to memorize or chant the Mahayana scriptures, properly understand the meaning and intent of the teachings. They remain unperturbed when encountering the tenets of the supreme truth, have deep faith in cause and effect, and refrain from slandering the Mahayana. They dedicate these merits in aspiration to rebirth in the Land of Bliss.

“As these practitioners approach death, Amitabha Buddha, surrounded by Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta and a retinue of countless sacred beings holding a purple-gold pedestal, appears before them, offering praise: ‘Child of the Dharma, you have practiced the Mahayana and understand

the supreme truth, so I have come to welcome you today.’

“Together with 1,000 emanated Buddhas, they extend their hands in unison. The practitioners find themselves seated on the purple-gold pedestal. With hands joined in praise of the Buddhas, they are instantly reborn in the Pure Land within a seven-jeweled pond.

“The purple-gold pedestal, resembling a great jeweled lotus, opens after one night. The practitioners’ bodies shine with a purple-golden color. Seven-jeweled lotuses bloom beneath their feet.

“Amitabha Buddha and the Bodhisattvas simultaneously emit light that illuminates the practitioners’ bodies, instantly opening their eyes to clear vision. Due to past practices, they hear all

sounds expounding the most profound supreme truth. Descending from the purple-gold pedestal, they bow to the Buddha with joined palms and offer praise to the World-Honored One. After seven days, they immediately attain Non-retrogression on the path towards *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* (supreme, perfect enlightenment).

“From that very moment, they are able to fly and travel throughout the ten directions, visiting and making offerings to all Buddhas, and practicing various samadhis under their guidance. After a small *kalpa*, they attain the Endurance for the Non-Arising of Dharmas and receive predictions of Buddhahood in the presence of the Buddhas.

“Such is a person reborn in the middle level of the upper grade.

“Those reborn in the lower level of the upper grade are sentient beings who, also having faith in cause and effect, refrain from slandering the Mahayana and simply develop the resolve for supreme enlightenment. They dedicate these merits in aspiration to be reborn in the Land of Bliss.

As these practitioners approach death, Amitabha Buddha, accompanied by Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta and other Bodhisattvas holding a golden lotus flower, manifests 500 emanated Buddhas, all appearing to welcome them. Together, the 500 emanated Buddhas extend their hands and offer praise: ‘Child of the Dharma, you have attained purity and resolved to achieve supreme enlightenment. We are here to welcome you.’

Upon seeing this, the practitioners immediately find themselves seated within the golden lotus.

Once seated, the lotus closes and follows Amitabha Buddha, and the practitioners are immediately reborn in the seven-jeweled pond. After one day and night, the lotus blooms. Within seven days, they are able to see the Buddha, though their minds are not yet clear regarding his myriad marks and physical characteristics. After twenty-one days, the vision becomes perfectly clear. They hear all sounds expounding the wondrous Dharma and travel through the ten directions, making offerings to Buddhas and receiving the most profound teachings from them. After three small *kalpas*, they master the Illumination Gateways of the Hundred Dharmas and abide in the Stage of Joy.

“Such is a person reborn in the lower level of the upper grade.

“This is the Visualization of Upper-Tier Rebirth, called the Fourteenth Contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Those reborn in the upper level of the middle grade are sentient beings who receive and keep the Five Precepts, observe the Eight Precepts and uphold various other Buddhist disciplines. They do not commit the Five Gravest Transgressions and remain free of various faults. They dedicate these virtuous roots in aspiration to rebirth in the Western Land of Bliss.

As they approach death, Amitabha Buddha, surrounded by a retinue of *bhikkus*, radiates golden light and appears before them. The Buddha expounds on suffering, emptiness, impermanence and egolessness, and praises their renunciation of worldly life and detachment from myriad forms of suffering.

Upon seeing this, the practitioners rejoice greatly. Perceiving themselves seated on the lotus pedestal, they prostrate with joined palms in homage to Amitabha Buddha and, before lifting their heads, are instantly reborn in the Land of Bliss. The lotus then blooms, and as it opens, they hear sounds extolling the Four Noble Truths and immediately attain Arhat status, possessing the Three Insights, Six Supernatural Powers and Eight Liberations.

“Such is a person reborn in the upper level of the middle grade.

“Those reborn in the middle level of the middle grade are sentient beings who, for one day and night, observe the Eight Precepts, the Novice Precepts or the Full Precepts, without defect in their comportment. They dedicate these merits in aspiration to rebirth in the Western Land of Bliss.

“As these practitioners, having upheld the precepts and immersed themselves in their fragrance, approach death, they see Amitabha Buddha and a retinue emitting golden light, holding a seven-jeweled lotus, appear before them. They then hear a voice of praise in the sky: ‘Good man, because you are virtuous and have followed the teachings of the Buddhas of the three time frames, I have come to welcome you.’

“The practitioners perceive themselves seated upon the lotus, which immediately closes, and are reborn in the Western Land of Bliss within a jeweled pond. After seven days, the lotus blooms, upon which their eyes open. Joining palms in reverence, they offer praises to the World-Honored One. Upon hearing the Dharma, they rejoice, attain the stage of Srotapanna (Stream-Enterer) and after half a *kalpa*, reach Arhathood.

“Such is a person reborn in the middle level of the middle grade.

“Those reborn in the lower level of the middle grade are good men and women who are filial to their parents and display worldly benevolence and kindness. When approaching death, they encounter a Dharma friend who recounts in detail the blissful phenomena of Amitabha Buddha’s land and the 48 Vows of Bhikku Dharmakara. After hearing this, they pass away in due course and are immediately reborn in the Western Land of Bliss, as quickly as a strong man bends and stretches his arm.

“After seven days, they meet Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta. Upon hearing the Dharma, they rejoice, attain the stage of Srotapanna and after one small *kalpa*, realize Arhathood.

“Such is a person reborn in the lower level of the middle grade.

“This is the Visualization of Middle-Tier Rebirth, called the Fifteenth Contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Those reborn in the higher level of the lower grade are sentient beings who create various negative karma. Although they do not slander the Mahayana sutras, these ignorant beings lack a sense of shame or remorse for committing numerous evil deeds. When approaching death, they encounter a Dharma friend who enumerates the titles of the twelve divisions of Mahayana sutras. By reason of hearing these titles, their extremely heavy negative karma accumulated over 1,000 *kalpas* is eradicated. The Dharma friend then instructs them to join palms and recite ‘Namo Amitabha Buddha.’ Through reciting the Buddha’s

name, their reincarnation-fated negative karma of 5 billion *kalpas* is eliminated.

“At that moment, Amitabha Buddha sends an emanated Buddha, along with emanations of Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta, to appear before the practitioners, praising: ‘Good man, because you have recited Amitabha’s name, all your negative karma has been eradicated, and I am here to welcome you.’ After these words are spoken, the practitioners immediately perceive the light of the emanated Buddha filling the room. Upon seeing this, they rejoice and pass away. Ascending a jeweled lotus, they follow the emanated Buddha to be reborn in the Pure Land within a jeweled pond.

“After forty-nine days, the lotus blooms. At that time, the greatly compassionate Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta appear before

them, radiating great light, and expound the most profound teachings of the twelve divisions of the scriptures.

“Upon hearing these teachings, they develop faith and understanding and awaken the mind resolved on supreme enlightenment. After ten small *kalpas*, they master the Illumination Gateways of the Hundred Dharmas and enter the first Bodhisattva stage.

“Such is a person reborn in the higher level of the lower grade.

“By hearing the names of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha — the names of the Three Gems — one attains rebirth (in the Pure Land).”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Those reborn in the middle level of the lower grade are sentient beings who violate the Five Precepts, Eight

Precepts or Full Precepts. These ignorant beings steal the communal property of the Sangha, plunder the personal possessions of resident monastics, or teach the Dharma with impure motives without shame or remorse, defiling themselves with various evil karma. Because of their misdeeds, these offenders are destined to fall into hell.

“As they approach death, all the flames of hell rise at the same time. Then they encounter a Dharma friend who, with great compassion, praises and expounds the ten powers and majestic virtues of Amitabha Buddha, extensively commends his radiant light and supernatural powers, and extols precepts, meditative concentration, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge and vision of liberation (the five attributes of the Dharma Body).

“Hearing this, the beings’ reincarnation-fated negative karma of 8 billion *kalpas* is eliminated. The fierce fires of hell transform into cool breezes that carry numerous heavenly flowers. On each flower are emanated Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, arriving to welcome the dying. In an instant, they are reborn in the Pure Land and remain within a lotus in the seven-jeweled pond for 6 *kalpas*, after which the lotus blooms. At that time, Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta console them with their Brahma voices and expound the most profound Mahayana scriptures. Upon hearing these teachings, they immediately awaken the resolve to achieve supreme enlightenment.

“Such is a person reborn in the middle level of the lower grade.”

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi: “Those reborn in the lower level of the lower grade are sentient beings who commit unwholesome karmic deeds, the Five Gravest Transgressions, the Ten Evil Actions and various other offenses. Due to their negative karma, these ignorant beings are fated to fall into the Wretched Realms to undergo many *kalpas* of endless suffering.

“As these ignorant beings approach death, they encounter a Dharma friend who consoles them in every way, speaks the wondrous Dharma and teaches them to invoke [Amitabha] Buddha. Yet their agony makes invocation difficult. Then the Dharma friend tells them: ‘If you cannot invoke him mentally, you should call out the name of the Infinite Life Buddha.’ These words touch their hearts. With unbroken voice, they call ‘Namo Amitabha Buddha’ ten times. Since they recite the Buddha’s name, thought by

thought, their reincarnation-fated negative karma accumulated over 8 billion *kalpas* is eradicated.

“At the point of death, they see a golden, sun-like lotus appear before them. In a flash, they are reborn in the Land of Bliss. [They stay] in the lotus for 12 great *kalpas*, after which it blooms. Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta, with voices of great compassion, teach them about the absolute reality behind all dharmas and methods to eliminate negative karma. Upon hearing these teachings, they rejoice and immediately awaken the Bodhi-mind.

“Such is a person reborn in the lower level of the lower grade.

“This is the Visualization of Lower-Tier Rebirth, called the Sixteenth Contemplation.”

As the Buddha delivered these teachings, Vaidehi, along with her 500 maidservants heard his words. Instantly, they beheld broad and boundless views of the Land of Bliss. They also saw the Buddha’s form and the two Bodhisattvas. Filled with joy, they marveled at this unprecedented experience. They attained a sudden great awakening and realized the Endurance for the Non-Arising of Dharmas.

The 500 maidservants developed the resolve for *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* and aspired to be reborn in the Pure Land. The World-Honored One, Shakyamuni Buddha, prophesied that they would all be reborn there and, after rebirth, they would attain the all-Buddhas-presence samadhi. Countless celestial beings also awakened the resolve for supreme enlightenment.

At that time, Ananda rose from his seat and said to the Buddha: “World-Honored One, what name should be given to this sutra? How should the essence of this teaching be accepted and retained?”

The Buddha said to Ananda: “This sutra is named *Contemplation of the Land of Bliss, the Buddha of Infinite Life, Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta*. It is also named *Purification and Elimination of Karmic Obstructions and Rebirth in the Presence of All Buddhas*. You should accept and retain it, never forgetting or discarding it. Those who practice this samadhi will see the Buddha of Infinite Life and the two Mahasattvas in their present lives.

“If good men and women merely hear the name of that Buddha or the names of the two Bodhisattvas, they will eliminate their reincarnation-fated negative

karma accumulated over countless *kalpas*. How much more so if they recollect and invoke them!

“You should know that those who invoke that Buddha are like *pundarika* (white lotuses) among humans. Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta become their sacred friends. They will be seated in the *Bodhimandala* (site of enlightenment) and be reborn into the Buddhas’ family.”

The Buddha said to Ananda: “Bear these words well in mind. To bear these words in mind means to recite the name of the Buddha of Infinite Life.”

When the Buddha spoke these words, Venerables Moggallana and Ananda, along with Vaidehi and others, upon hearing the Buddha’s teachings, were all filled with great joy.

Then, the World-Honored One ascended through the air and returned to Mt. Gridhrakuta.

At that time, Ananda recounted the entire event in detail to the great assembly. Countless devas, nagas and yakshas, upon hearing the Buddha's words, were all filled with immense joy. They paid homage to the Buddha and departed.

