

BHĪṢMOTTARANIRGHOṢA

- 11.1 Then Sudhana, the head merchant's son, thinking of following the bodhisattva instructions, thinking of following the pure conduct of bodhisattvas, thinking of increasing the strength of the merit of bodhisattvas, thinking of the illumination of the power of seeing the buddhas, thinking of developing the power to attain the treasure of the Dharma, [F.376.a] thinking of increasing the power of accomplishing the great prayers, thinking of facing every direction in the realm of the Dharma, thinking of the illumination of the nature of the Dharma, thinking of the dispersal of all obscurations, thinking of looking at the realm of Dharma free of darkness, thinking of the motivation⁷⁰³ that is stainless and unbreakable like Nārāyaṇa's⁷⁰⁴ precious vajra, and thinking of invincibility and unassailability in the face of all the māra armies, eventually arrived in the land of Nālayu.
- 11.2 He searched and searched for the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa. At that time, the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa was dwelling in an ashram in a delightful forest of countless different kinds of trees and creepers. In that forest there was a canopy of the leaves of various trees, there were always flowers blossoming on trees of various kinds, and there were fruit trees always laden with fruit. Platforms of precious fruit had formed at the feet of trees that were made of the various kinds of precious materials. There were beautifully proportioned⁷⁰⁵ tall sandalwood trees. The forest was made pleasant by the aroma that constantly came from beautiful agarwood trees. It was beautified by scents in all four directions. It was adorned by perfectly proportioned bignonia trees.⁷⁰⁶ There were beautifully formed banyan trees. Ripened fruits were constantly falling from jambul trees. It was beautified by fresh red lotuses, blue lotuses, and night lotuses.⁷⁰⁷
- 11.3 Sudhana saw the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa and circumambulated the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa a hundred thousand times, keeping him to his right.

11.4 The ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa was seated under a canopy of interlaced sandalwood branches. [F.376.b] His hair was bound into a topknot of matted locks, he wore clothing made of skins and grass, with a skirt of bark, and he was seated on a cushion of grass.

Sudhana approached the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa.

11.5 When he had approached him, seeing that omniscience arises from the gateway of the kalyāṇamitra, the genuine kalyāṇamitra that one wishes to find, because the kalyāṇamitra teaches the true path; seeing that omniscience is dependent on the instructions of the kalyāṇamitra because they lead one to the level of omniscience; seeing that omniscience is dependent on the friendship of the kalyāṇamitra because they lead one to the island of the jewels of the wisdom of the ten strengths; seeing that omniscience is the illumination from the lamp of the kalyāṇamitra because they create the light of the wisdom of the ten strengths; seeing that the kalyāṇamitra is the road to omniscience because they lead one to the city of unimpaired omniscience, seeing that omniscience is the lamp of the kalyāṇamitra because they reveal that which is equal and unequal; seeing that the kalyāṇamitra is the bridge⁷⁰⁸ of omniscience because they eliminate all the fear of falling into crevasses; seeing that the kalyāṇamitra is the parasol of omniscience because they cool through the power of great benevolence; seeing that the kalyāṇamitra is the power of omniscience because they create great compassion; and seeing that reliance on the kalyāṇamitra is the clear vision of omniscience because they illuminate the way of the nature of phenomena, [F.377.a] Sudhana threw his body onto the ground before him, prostrating to him. He then rose, circumambulated the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa many hundreds of thousands of times, keeping him to his right, and then sat down before him. With his hands together in homage in a pleasing way with pleasing words, he said, “Ārya, I have developed the aspiration for the highest, complete enlightenment. How does a bodhisattva train in bodhisattva conduct? How does a bodhisattva practice it?

11.6 “Ārya, I have heard that you teach and give instructions to bodhisattvas. Therefore, Ārya, teach me how bodhisattvas train in bodhisattva conduct and in what way they practice it!”

11.7 The ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa looked at the ten thousand brahmin⁷⁰⁹ youths who were there and said, “Young men, this noble one has developed the aspiration for the highest, complete enlightenment. He has invited all beings to become free of fear. This noble one is prepared to bring happiness and benefit to all beings. He is facing an ocean of wisdom. He longs to drink the rain of the clouds of Dharma of all the tathāgatas. He longs to enter the ocean of all the ways of the Dharma. He longs to be in the great light of

wisdom. He longs for the great rain of the Dharma to fall. He longs for the moon of great wisdom to rise over the world and extinguish all the torment of the kleśas. He longs to increase the roots of merit of all beings.”

11.8 Then the ten thousand brahmin youths scattered beautiful flowers with lovely aromas and in various colors over Sudhana, the head merchant’s son, [F.377.b] strewed them over him, covered him with them, paid homage to him, bowed down to him, circumambulated him, keeping him to their right, and then said these words to him: “This one will become a protector of all beings; he will end all the sufferings in the hells, he will block all the pathways to rebirth as animals, he will turn beings away from the path that leads to the world of Yama, he will close the doors to the unfortunate existences, he will dry up the ocean of existences, he will cut through the bondage of existences, he will repel the mass of suffering, he will dispel the darkness of ignorance, he will establish a Cakravāla mountain range of merit around the world, he will reveal the source of the jewels of wisdom, he will cause the sun of wisdom to rise, he will purify the eyes of Dharma, and he will reveal that which is equal and unequal in all the worlds.”

11.9 Then the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa said to those youths, “Young men, when someone has developed the aspiration for the highest, complete enlightenment and practices bodhisattva conduct, they create happiness for all beings and will eventually attain omniscience. Young men, this noble one has developed the aspiration for the highest, complete enlightenment, and therefore he will bring to completeness all the qualities of buddhahood. [F.378.a]

11.10 Then the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa said to Sudhana, the head merchant’s son, “Noble one, I have attained the bodhisattva liberation called *the banner of being invincible to others*.”

11.11 Sudhana asked, “What is the scope of this bodhisattva liberation called *the banner of being invincible to others*?”

The ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa extended his right hand and with it stroked and held the head of Sudhana, the head merchant’s son.

11.12 As soon as the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa held the head of Sudhana, the head merchant’s son, with his right hand, Sudhana, the head merchant’s son, saw in the ten directions buddha realms as numerous as the atoms in a million buddha realms; he perceived himself to be sitting at the feet of buddhas as numerous as the atoms in a million buddha realms; he saw the countless pure displays of forms within those buddha realms; he saw the ocean of the multicolored display of the circles of followers of those tathāgatas; he saw in the midst of those oceans of the circles of followers the bodies of the tathāgatas, which were adorned with the shining signs and features of a great being; he listened to their Dharma teachings without

missing a single word or term; he obtained those Dharma wheels of the tathāgatas, each distinct from the other; he received the rain of Dharma that fell according to the various aspirations of beings; and he comprehended an ocean of the past prayers of those tathāgatas, which were purified by the power of various aspirations; [F.378.b] he also comprehended those pure oceans of various prayers, which were oceans that had been accumulated by the buddhas; he also saw the perception of the colors of the bodies of the buddhas that satisfied beings in accordance with their wishes; he also saw the network of light rays from the buddhas as various passionless, pure displays of halos; and he also perceived the strengths of those buddhas that possessed the unobscured radiance of wisdom.

11.13 In that way, he was illuminated by the light of wisdom from the bodhisattva liberation called *the banner of being invincible to others*; he attained the illumination of the samādhi called *the essence of the sun*; he possessed the samādhi called *the liberation of unceasing wisdom*; he obtained the sight of the gateway of retention called *the network in all directions*; he attained the samādhi called *the range of the summit of well-ordered knowledge*;⁷¹⁰ he had the range of dwelling in the perfection of wisdom, which is the path⁷¹¹ with the complete array of foundations; he gained the light of the samādhi called *the buddhas' domain of the essence of space*; his mind was illuminated by the samādhi called *the rim of the Dharma wheel of all the buddhas*; and he attained the light of the samādhi called *the domain of the unceasing precious knowledge of the three times*.⁷¹²

11.14 He perceived sitting at the feet of some tathāgatas for one day and night, at the feet of some for seven days, at the feet of some for half a month, at the feet of some for one month, at the feet of some for one year, at the feet of some for a hundred years, at the feet of some for a thousand years, at the feet of some for a hundred thousand years,⁷¹³ at the feet of some for ten million years, [F.379.a] at the feet of some for a billion years, at the feet of some for ten billion years, at the feet of some for a trillion years, at the feet of some for a quintillion years, at the feet of some for half a kalpa, at the feet of some for one kalpa, at the feet of some for a hundred kalpas, at the feet of some for a thousand kalpas, at the feet of some for a hundred thousand kalpas, at the feet of some for ten million kalpas, at the feet of some for a billion kalpas, at the feet of some for ten billion kalpas, at the feet of some for a trillion kalpas, at the feet of some for a quintillion kalpas, at the feet of some for an *anabhilāpyānabhilāpyaparivarta* of kalpas, at the feet of some tathāgatas for as many kalpas as there are atoms in Jambudvīpa, and so on up to at the feet of some tathāgatas for as many kalpas as there are atoms in an *anabhilāpyānabhilāpyaparivarta* of buddha realms.

- 11.15 Then the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa released Sudhana, the head merchant's son, and Sudhana perceived again that he was sitting at the feet of the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa.
- 11.16 The ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa asked him, "Noble one, do you remember?" Sudhana replied, "Ārya, I remember the blessing of the kalyāṇamitra."
- 11.17 The ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa said, "Noble one, I know only this bodhisattva liberation called *the banner of being invincible to others*. How could I know or describe the qualities, indicate the different prayers, know the formation of realms, comprehend the scope of the wisdom, follow the range of the samādhis, comprehend the miracles and emanations that follow the arising of the might and display of the powerful liberations, grasp the characteristics of the different bodies, describe the pure domain of the voices, or teach the radiance of the wisdom of the bodhisattvas who have attained the samādhis that have the clairvoyant knowledge that is superior to all beings, who have power over the wheel of time,⁷¹⁴ who are skilled in the accomplishment of the knowledge of the signs of buddhahood,⁷¹⁵ who perceive the display of the rising of the sun of the tathāgatas, [F.379.b] who have accumulated the knowledge of the single characteristic of the range of the three times,⁷¹⁶ who have bodies that are distributed through all world realms, who have bodies⁷¹⁷ of wisdom that illuminate the entire realm of phenomena, who appear in accordance with the wishes of all beings, who practice an appropriate conduct in a way that is in accordance with the aspirations of beings, who shine in a way that delights, and who have the pure domain of stainless radiant wisdom?
- 11.18 "Depart, noble one. In this southern region, in the land called Īṣāṇa, there dwells a brahmin by the name of Jayoṣmāyatana. Go to him and ask him, 'How should a bodhisattva train in bodhisattva conduct? How should a bodhisattva practice it?' "
- 11.19 Then Sudhana, the head merchant's son, was overjoyed, pleased, happy, and content. He bowed his head to the feet of the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa, circumambulated the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa, keeping him to his right, many hundreds of thousands of times, and, looking back again and again, departed from the ṛṣi Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa. [F.380.a] [B32]