

## 18. Chapter 18

### Ratnacuda

18. 1 Sudhana, the head merchant's son, had conviction in that river of merit. He viewed that field of merit. He purified that mountain of merit. He climbed down that stairway to the bathing place of merit. He opened that treasury of merit. He viewed that treasure of merit. He purified that domain of merit. He carried away that heap of merit. He developed that strength of merit. He increased that power of merit.<sup>984</sup>

18. 2 Sudhana eventually arrived at the town of Simhapota. He searched for Ratnacuda, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma. He saw him in the middle of a market. Sudhana bowed his head to Ratnacuda's feet, circumambulated Ratnacuda, keeping him to his right, many hundreds of thousands of times, [F.16.b] and sat down before him. With his hands together in homage, he said, 'Arya, I have developed the aspiration for the highest, complete enlightenment, but I do not know how Bodhisattvas should train in Bodhisattva conduct and in what way they should practice it.'<sup>985</sup>

18. 3 'Arya, will you not bestow on me the instruction for the Bodhisattva path, which is the path by which I will become omniscient?'

Ratnacuda, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma, grasped the hands of Sudhana, the head merchant's son, led him to his home and, showing Sudhana his home, said, 'Noble one, look at my home!'

18. 4 Sudhana looked at it. The house was made of pure, bright Jambu River gold. It was vast and tall and encircled by a wall of silver. It was beautified by arrangements of bright crystals. It was adorned by a hundred thousand clusters of beryls. There was an array of pillars of white coral. A lion throne made of red pearls had been erected. Lion banners made of asteria jewels

were displayed. Overhead there was a shining canopy of jewels. It was draped in nets of gold adorned with wish-fulfilling jewels. There was an array of countless varieties of precious jewels. It was furnished with ponds made of emerald and filled with cool water. It was encircled by trees made of precious materials. It was massive. It was vast. It had ten stories. It was very tall. It had eight doors.

18. 5 Sudhana went inside and looked around.

On the first floor he saw food and drink being distributed.

On the second floor he saw clothing being given away. [F.17.a]

18. 6 On the third floor he saw jewelry and adornments being given away.

On the fourth floor he saw being given away the most precious, excellent maidens on the great earth who are the pleasures enjoyed in harems.

18. 7 On the fifth floor he saw an assembly of Bodhisattvas on the fifth bhumi who were dedicated to the pleasure of talking together about the Dharma, whose thoughts were concerned with the benefit and happiness of the world, who were accomplished in all treatises, who had the power of retention, who had the seal of samadhi, who rose from samadhi, who analyzed samadhi, and who had attained the light of wisdom.<sup>986</sup>

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18. 8 On the sixth floor he saw Bodhisattvas who had attained the state of the perfection of wisdom, who had profound wisdom, who had clairvoyantly perceived the pacification of all phenomena, who came forth from all the gateways that were the essences and gateways of the samadhis and retentions, whose range of activity was free of obscuration, who practiced nonduality, who manifested discussions of the Dharma, and who followed the way of the perfection of wisdom, analyzed it, elucidated it, and discussed

the many gateways to the perfection of wisdom. These included the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the essence of peace, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the categories of wisdom for all beings, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the unwavering turning, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the dust-free light, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the essence of invincibility, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the illumination of beings, [F.17.b] the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the field of the way that is followed, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the essence of the ocean, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the attainment of all-seeing equanimity, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the possession of inexhaustible treasure, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called the ocean of the ways of the Dharma, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called following the ocean of beings, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called unimpeded eloquence, and the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called resting in objectlessness after focusing on the clouds of the Dharma. They discussed the perfection of wisdom through countless millions of such gateways to the perfection of wisdom in a countless array of separate gatherings of assemblies of Bodhisattvas.<sup>988</sup>

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18. 9 On the seventh floor he saw an assembly of Bodhisattvas who had all attained the patience of perceiving everything as echoes, who had given rise to infallible wisdom and method, and who had received the clouds of the Dharma from all Tathagatas.

18. 10 On the eighth floor he saw an assembly of Bodhisattvas who had all

attained clairvoyance that would never diminish, who moved within all world realms, whose images appeared within all the gathered assemblies, whose bodies were distributed throughout the entire realm of phenomena, whose field of experience never departed from being at the feet of all the Tathagatas, who encountered the bodies of all the Budas, and who were the first individuals to speak within the assemblies of the followers of all the Tathagatas. [F.18.a]

18. 11 On the ninth floor he saw an assembly of Bodhisattvas who were all in their final lifetime.

18. 12 On the tenth floor he saw when all the Tathagatas first developed the aspiration for enlightenment, their conduct, their setting forth, their oceans of prayers, the range of their Buda miracles, their Buda realms, all their circles of followers, their teaching the wheel of the Dharma, and their power to guide beings.

18. 13 When he had seen this, he asked Ratnacuda, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma, "Arya, how did you gain this pure good fortune? How did you plant the roots of merit that have ripened in this way?"

18. 14 Ratnacuda answered, "Noble one, I remember that in the past, more kalpas ago than there are atoms in a Buda realm, there was a world realm called Cakravacitra, and in that world appeared a Tathagata, an arhat, a samyak sambuddha, one with wisdom and conduct, a sugata, one who knows the world's beings, an unsurpassable guide who tames beings, a teacher of devas and humans, a Buda, a bhagavat named Ananta rashmi-Dharma dhatu samalamkrita Dharma raja. That Tathagata, together with a billion Shravakas, such as Jnanavairocana, and a trillion Bodhisattvas, such as jnanasurya tejas, having been invited by King Dharmeshvara raja, went to the great

park called Mani dhvaja vyuha raja.993

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18. 15 ?When the Tathagata had entered the town [F.18.b] and was passing through the market, in order to make an offering to the Tathagata and his sangha of Bodhisattvas and Shravakas, I played music and burned a pellet of incense to spread the aroma. By burning that pellet of incense, the entirety of Jambudvipa was covered for seven days with multicolored clouds of perfume that took on the forms of all beings.995

18. 16 ?From those clouds of perfume came these words: ?The Tathagatas have an inconceivable accumulation of the stainless knowledge of the three times. That omniscience is free of all obscuration. They have eliminated all the propensities for kleshas. All that is offered to the Tathagatas will bring the immeasurable great result of omniscience. It will unite you with omniscience.?

18. 17 ?Those words were emitted from those masses of clouds of incense through the blessing of the Buda in order to ripen my roots of merit and increase the power of the roots of merit of countless beings.996

18. 18 ?Noble one, I dedicated the roots of merit from the manifestation of that miracle to three objectives through the blessing of the Tathagata. What are those three? I made the dedication so that I would have the complete vision of all kalyanamitras, of all Budas, and of all Bodhisattvas.

18. 19 ?Noble one, I know only this Bodhisattva liberation called the unimpeded display of the field of prayer. [F.19.a] How could I know the conduct or describe the qualities of the Bodhisattvas who are the source of limitless good qualities, who have entered an unalloyed ocean of Buda bodies, who have received the rain from unalloyed Dharma clouds, who have entered an ocean

of unalloyed qualities, who have extended the net of completely good conduct, who have entered the range of unalloyed samadhis, who have the unalloyed continuous roots of merit of all Bodhisattvas, who have the unalloyed nonconceptual conduct of all the Tathagatas, who have entered the unalloyed equality of the three times, who have the unalloyed ability to dwell tirelessly in all kalpas, and who reside on the level of an unalloyed complete range of vision?

18. 20 ?Depart, noble one. In this southern region there is a land called Vetramulaka. There, in a town called Samanta mukha, dwells a perfume-seller head merchant by the name of Samanta netra. Go to him and ask him, ?How should a Bodhisattva train in Bodhisattva conduct? How should a Bodhisattva practice it?? ?

18. 21 Sudhana bowed his head to the feet of Ratnacuda, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma, circumambulated Ratnacuda, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma, many hundreds of thousands of times, keeping him to his right, and, looking back again and again, departed from Ratnacuda, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma. [B2]