

11. Chapter 11

BHISHMOTTARA NIRGHOSHĀ

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 Budas, 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 motivation that is stainless and unbreakable like Narayana's precious vajra, and thinking of invincibility and unassailability in the face of all the mara armies, eventually arrived in the land of Nalayu.⁷⁰³

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11. 2 He searched and searched for the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha. At that time, the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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 proportioned 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. 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.705

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11. 3 Sudhana saw the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha and circumambulated the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha a hundred thousand times, keeping him to his right.

11. 4 The Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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 Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha.

11. 5 When he had approached him, seeing that omniscience arises from the gateway of the kalyanamitra, the genuine kalyanamitra that one wishes to find, because the kalyanamitra teaches the true path; seeing that omniscience is dependent on the instructions of the kalyanamitra because they lead one to the level of omniscience; seeing that omniscience is dependent on the friendship of the kalyanamitra 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 kalyanamitra because they create the light of the wisdom of the ten strengths; seeing that the kalyanamitra is the road to omniscience because they lead one to the city of unimpaired omniscience, seeing that omniscience is the lamp of the kalyanamitra because they reveal that which is equal and unequal; seeing that the kalyanamitra is the bridge of omniscience because they eliminate all the fear of falling into crevasses; seeing that the kalyanamitra is the

parasol of omniscience because they cool through the power of great benevolence; seeing that the kalyanamitra is the power of omniscience because they create great compassion; and seeing that reliance on the kalyanamitra 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 Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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, "Arya, I have developed the aspiration for the highest, complete enlightenment. How does a Bodhisattva train in Bodhisattva conduct? How does a Bodhisattva practice it?"⁷⁰⁸

11. 6 "Arya, I have heard that you teach and give instructions to Bodhisattvas. Therefore, Arya, teach me how Bodhisattvas train in Bodhisattva conduct and in what way they practice it!"

11. 7 The Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha looked at the ten thousand brahmin 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 Tathagatas. He longs to enter the ocean of all the ways of the Dharma. He longs to be in the great light of⁷⁰⁹ 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 kleshas. 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 Cakravala 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 Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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 Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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 Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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 Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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 Buda realms as numerous as the atoms in a million Buda realms; he perceived himself to be sitting at the feet of Budas as numerous as the atoms in a million Buda realms; he saw the countless pure displays of forms within those Buda realms; he saw the ocean of the multicolored display of the circles of followers of those Tathagatas; he saw in the midst of those oceans of the circles of followers the bodies of the Tathagatas, 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 Tathagatas, 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 Tathagatas, 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 Budas; he also saw the perception of the colors of the bodies of the Budas that satisfied beings in accordance with their wishes; he also saw the network of light rays from the Budas as various passionless, pure displays of halos; and he also perceived the strengths of those Budas 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 samadhi called the essence of the sun; he possessed the samadhi called the liberation of unceasing wisdom; he obtained the sight of the gateway of retention called the network in all directions; he attained the

samadhi called the range of the summit of well-ordered knowledge; he had the range of dwelling in the perfection of wisdom, which is the path with the complete array of foundations; he gained the light of the samadhi called the Budas? domain of the essence of space; his mind was illuminated by the samadhi called the rim of the Dharma wheel of all the Budas; and he attained the light of the samadhi called the domain of the unceasing precious knowledge of the three times.710

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11. 14 He perceived sitting at the feet of some Tathagatas 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, 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 anabhilapyanabhilapya parivarta of kalpas, at the feet of some Tathagatas for as many kalpas as there are atoms in Jambudvipa, and so on up to at the feet of some Tathagatas for as many kalpas as there are atoms in an anabhilapyanabhilapya parivarta of Buda realms.713

11. 15 Then the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha released Sudhana, the head merchant's son, and Sudhana perceived again that he was sitting at the feet of the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha.

11. 16 The Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha asked him, "Noble one, do you remember?" Sudhana replied, "Arya, I remember the blessing of the kalyanamitra."

11. 17 The Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha 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 samadhis, 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 samadhis that have the clairvoyant knowledge that is superior to all beings, who have power over the wheel of time, who are skilled in the accomplishment of the knowledge of the signs of buddhahood, who perceive the display of the rising of the sun of the Tathagatas, [F.379.b] who have accumulated the knowledge of the single characteristic of the range of the three times, who have bodies that are distributed through all world realms, who have bodies 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?"⁷¹⁴

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11. 18 ?Depart, noble one. In this southern region, in the land called Ishana, there dwells a brahmin by the name of Jayoshmayatana. 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 Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha, circumambulated the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha, keeping him to his right, many hundreds of thousands of times, and, looking back again and again, departed from the Rishi Bhishmottara nirghosha. [F.380.a] [B32]