

RATNACŪḌA

- 18.1 Sudhana, the head merchant's son, had conviction in that river of merit. He viewed that field of merit. He purified that mountain⁹⁸⁴ 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.
- 18.2 Sudhana eventually arrived at the town of Simhapota. He searched for Ratnacūḍa, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma. He saw him in the middle of a market.⁹⁸⁵ Sudhana bowed his head to Ratnacūḍa's feet, circumambulated Ratnacūḍa, 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, "Ārya, 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.
- 18.3 "Ārya, will you not bestow on me the instruction for the bodhisattva path, which is the path by which I will become omniscient?"
- Ratnacūḍa, 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 bhūmi who were dedicated to the pleasure of talking together⁹⁸⁶ 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 seal⁹⁸⁷ of samādhi, who rose from samādhi, who analyzed samādhi, and who had attained the light of wisdom.

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 samādhis and retentions,⁹⁸⁸ 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 essence⁹⁸⁹ of invincibility*, the gateway to the perfection of wisdom called *the illumination of beings⁹⁹⁰* [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 ocean⁹⁹¹* 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.

- 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 tathāgatas.
- 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 tathāgatas, who encountered the bodies of all the buddhas, and who were the first individuals to speak within the assemblies of the followers of all the tathāgatas. [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 tathāgatas first developed the aspiration for enlightenment, their conduct, their setting forth, their oceans of prayers, the range of their buddha miracles, their buddha 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 Ratnacūḍa, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma, “Ārya, how did you gain this pure good fortune? How did you plant the roots of merit that have ripened in this way?”⁹⁹²
- 18.14 Ratnacūḍa answered, “Noble one, I remember that in the past, more kalpas ago than there are atoms in a buddha realm, there was a world realm called Cakravacitra, and in that world appeared a tathāgata, an arhat, a samyaksaṃbuddha, one with wisdom and conduct,⁹⁹³ a sugata, one who knows the world’s beings, an unsurpassable guide who tames beings, a teacher of devas and humans, a buddha, a bhagavat named Anantaraśmi-dharmadhātusamalaṃkṛtadharṃarāja. That tathāgata, together with a billion śrāvakas, such as Jñānavairocana, and a trillion bodhisattvas, such as Jñāna-sūryatejas, having been invited by King Dharmēśvararāja, went to the great park called Maṇidhvajavyūharāja.⁹⁹⁴
- 18.15 “When the Tathāgata had entered the town [F.18.b] and was passing through the market, in order to make an offering to the Tathāgata and his saṅgha of bodhisattvas and śrāvakas, I played music and burned a pellet of incense to spread the aroma. By burning that pellet of incense, the entirety of Jambudvīpa was covered for seven days with multicolored clouds⁹⁹⁵ of perfume that took on the forms of all beings.
- 18.16 “From those clouds of perfume came these words: ‘The tathāgatas have an inconceivable accumulation of the stainless knowledge of the three times. That omniscience is free of all obscurations. They have eliminated all the

propensities for kleśas. All that is offered to the tathāgatas 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 Buddha in order to ripen my roots of merit and increase the power of the roots of merit of countless⁹⁹⁶ beings.

18.18 "Noble one, I dedicated the roots of merit from the manifestation of that miracle to three objectives through the blessing of the Tathāgata. What are those three? I made the dedication so that I would have the complete vision of all kalyāṇamitras, of all buddhas, 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 buddha 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 samādhis, who have the unalloyed continuous roots of merit of all bodhisattvas, who have the unalloyed nonconceptual conduct of all the tathāgatas, 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 Vetramūlaka. There, in a town called Samantamukha, dwells a perfume-seller head merchant by the name of Samantanetra. 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 Ratnacūḍa, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma, circumambulated Ratnacūḍa, 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 Ratnacūḍa, the head-merchant patron of the Dharma. [B2]