

bhūtā in accord with her previous vow. In the same way by the south, by the west, by the north gate to the estate countless beings enter specifically; they had been invited by the lay disciple Prabhūtā in accord with her previous vow. Prabhūtā, the lay disciple, has them sit down, and with the food each desires, prepared by diverse cooks using diverse seasonings, colors, and aromatics, she restores them. She restores, refreshes, satisfies, cheers, elates, fills with delight, and makes glad of heart. As with the varying food, so with varying liquid refreshments, with diverse exquisite elixirs, with varying seats, with varying couches, with varying vehicles, with varying clothes, with varying flowers, with varying garlands, with varying perfumes, with varying incense, with varying unguents, with varying powders, with varying ornaments, with varying jewel chariots, with varying umbrellas, with varying flags, with varying banners, with varying special foods she restores them until they are glad of heart. She restores the gods with divine food, the Nāgas, spirits, Gandharvas, antigods, birdlike spirits, semihumans, great serpents, the humans and the nonhumans. She restores each with suitable food. She restores them until they are glad at heart. And the bowl is not emptied, nor bare, nor insufficient, nor diminished, nor exhausted, nor reached an end, nor reached the bottom, nor been completely finished, nor been scraped clean.

Then, the lay disciple Prabhūtā said to Sudhana, the merchant's son: "I know the Bodhisattva salvation which is a storehouse of merit and an indestructible harmony. How can I know the conduct of the Bodhisattvas? Their merit is indestructible by the indestructibility of their sea of merit. They are fashioned like the firmament with the magnitude of their extensive and well-produced merit. They are like the jewel which is the king of wish gems in the completeness of their vow for the welfare of the whole world. They are like the Cakravāḍa mountain range sur-

rounding the earth by their protection of the root of welfare for the whole world. They are like a great cloud of merit because they provide rains like those of the Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi for the whole world. They superintend the great storehouse of merit by their guardianship of the door to the city of the Dharma. They illumine great merits with light for the darkness and poverty of the whole world. How can I know the Bodhisattva conduct? How can I tell its qualities?

"Go, good son. Right here in South India is a city by the name of Mahāsambhava. There a householder by the name of Vidvān lives. Go to him and ask: "How is a Bodhisattva trained in the Bodhisattva conduct? How does he practice and acquire it?" "

Then, Sudhana, the merchant's son, bowed his head to the feet of the lay disciple Prabhūtā, and afterward, with his right side toward her, walked around her several hundred thousand times. After looking back again and again, he set forth from her presence although he was still unsated with the sacred vision of the lay disciple Prabhūtā.

E. Introduction to "Vasumitrā" ("Excellent Friend"), the twenty-sixth good friend whom Sudhana encounters

The author of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* refers to Vasumitrā as a *Bhāgavatī*. The meaning of this term is not clear. Edgerton notes that it might mean a female follower of Śiva, its usual meaning being "a female follower of Viṣṇu."³⁹ The only reference to Śiva is the mention of a Saivite incense. The Chinese *Gaṇḍavyūha* is said to describe Vasumitrā as a prostitute. The account in the Sanskrit version does not state this, but it describes her thus:

She teaches the Dharma through a glance, an embrace, a kiss. Altogether the chapter devoted to the Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā is brief. Without internal evidence or a good commentary, nothing can be said about Vasumitrā as a courtesan or a female religious aspirant. She is associated with a nun called Lion-yawn who had directed the pilgrim-hero to see her. Chapter 3 has a brief statement about the possible association of the nun with the prostitute in which the latter may be a female religious aspirant and nonfamily woman, as is a nun.

"Vasumitrā"* from *The Harmony of the Young Sapling Sutra (Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtram)*.
Sanskrit text in Vaidya.

[P. 154, line 8, to p. 156, line 10:]

Then, Sudhana, the merchant's son, his mind illuminated with the light of great wisdom, meditating on the insightful knowledge of all knowing [sarvajñānāloka], confirming himself in the way of formulae, a way which is a treasury of the signals and calls of all beings, extending the way of formulae thus maintaining the Dharma wheel of all the Tathāgatas, protecting the whole world, upholding the power of great compassion, conforming to purity of vows pervading the circle of the Dharma realm, . . . in due course came to the city of Jewel harmony (Ratnavyūha) in Durga country, seeking out the Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā.

The men there, who did not recognize her good qualities and did not know the method and range of her knowledge, were surprised and thought of Sudhana: "This is a

*This first English translation is by Frances Wilson.

person of tranquil and restrained senses. He is self-possessed, fully aware, unflurried, and his mind is undistracted. He looks ahead only the length of a yoke. His mind is not given over to feelings and sensations. He does not respond to superficial appearances in any form. His eyes gaze upward. His mind does not wander. His gestures are majestic and grand like the sea. His mind is independent and unruffled. What can Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā do for this person? Men like him are not those given to passion; their minds are not perverted. They are not those obsessed with foul ideas. They are not those who are slaves of lust. They are not those who are dependent on women. They are not those who move in the province of Māra. They are not those who frequent the realm of Māra. They are not those sunk in the mud of lust. They are not those bound by the snares of Māra. . . ."

But there were other men there who recognized the preeminent qualities of Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā and had witnessed in person the range of her knowledge. They said to Sudhana: "Wonderful, wonderful, good son! What you seek is easy to obtain. If you understand that Bhāgavatī is the right person to question, then for a certainty you seek enlightenment. For a certainty you desire to make yourself a refuge for all beings. For a certainty, you desire to pull out the thorn of passion in all beings. For a certainty you desire to establish wholesome perceptions and thinking. Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā remains at home in her estate just to the north of the central intersection of the city."

Then, Sudhana, the merchant's son, heard these words and became happy, delighted, glad of heart, and joyous, and his mind became filled with bliss. He viewed her estate. It spread out long and wide, enclosed by ten walls made of the precious metals and gems and ten rows of palm trees made of the precious metals and gems. There were ten moats with water delicately scented and covered with white day-blooming lotuses, white night-blooming lo-

tuses, white night-blooming water lilies, red day-blooming lotuses, and blue night-blooming water lilies, all made of the celestial precious metals and gems. The water had the eight excellent qualities [limpidity and purity, refreshing coolness, sweetness, softness, fertilizing qualities, calmness, power of preventing famine, and productiveness]. The bottom of the moats was covered with gold sand. Stirred by gently scented breezes, the water was fragrant. The moats surrounded the estate on all sides and were adorned with several walls made of the precious metals and gems. Light shimmered in the jewels and gems of the banners, reflecting the multifaceted brilliance of the lion's cages, the half moons, and the cow-eyed lattices of the arches, turrets, and the well-proportioned heights of the towers on the mansions and palaces made of all the precious gems and metals.

The surface of the grounds was finished with necklaces of precious metals and gems in a mosaic with lapis lazuli. The grounds were adorned with innumerable walls made of the various precious gems and metals. The surroundings were scented with all wholesome celestial fragrances, especially the fragrance from the burning incense of Śiva's aloe wood. The surroundings were anointed with all appropriate unguents. The walls were topped with copings made of all the precious gems and metals. The turrets were covered with nets of Jambunada gold strung with the various precious gems and metals. From one hundred thousand nets of golden bells, sweet charming sounds were sent forth by the wind. There were adornments of flowers, made of the precious gems and metals, strewn about as if sent forth from a cloud of flowers made from all the precious gems and metals. The gatehouses were adorned with brilliant banners made from all the precious gems and metals. All the surrounding countryside was illuminated by the shimmering lights of all the many different jewels. Ten great parks were adorned with an in-

destructible treasure of one hundred thousand collections of treasure, brilliant with crystal and diamonds: These collections were the branches of trees alight with an abundance of jewels.

There he saw Vasumitrā, beautiful, serene, and fair to behold—appropriately garlanded with a superb garland of the ever-fresh globe amaranth. Her hair was very black and her complexion golden. Her form in every limb and all limbs together were well proportioned. The glorious beauty of her features, form, complexion, and color exceeded that of celestial and human beauty in all the realms of desire. The quality of her voice was superior to that of Brahmā. She knew the many mantras uttered by all beings. She was endowed with the skill in salvation named "Harmonic Circle of Words" [Cakrākṣaravyūha]. She was adept in the skills of all the arts. Her body was charming, covered with a translucent net of all the precious gems and metals. It shimmered, decorated with a harmony of ornaments made from uncounted celestial jewels. In her tiara was a wish gem, a great king of jewels. At her throat was a necklace of lapis lazuli strung with lion's [mystical] gems and diamonds. Her attendants were charming with vows identical with hers and conduct based on the same roots of virtue. She possessed a great treasure of stores, the indestructible equipment of merit and knowledge. He saw that whole estate, a harmony of palaces and mansions made of all the precious gems and metals. Vasumitrā illuminated it with an exalted light, lovely and producing happiness and refreshment to the body and zest and joy to the mind. The light originated from the very body of Vasumitrā.

Then, Sudhana, the merchant's son, bowed his head to the feet of Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā, prayerfully folded his hands and said: "I have produced a resolution to the Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment. Yet I do not know how a Bodhisattva trains in the course of Bodhisattva conduct,

nor how he practices and acquires it. And I have heard that your reverend ladyship gives instructions and the guidance of the Bodhisattvas. Therefore, would your ladyship tell me: How does a Bodhisattva train in the coursing of an enlightenment being, how does he practice and acquire it?"

She replied: "I, good son, have obtained the Bodhisattva salvation named 'Limit of renunciation.' Because of the purity of my voice and complexion, I exceed the beauty of the celestial women [Apsaras]: their complexion, their shapeliness, and their perfect size. With this beauty I appear before the gods, who are resolute believers, according to their disposition. Thus for the Nāgas, spirits, Gandharvas, antigods, birdlike beings, semihumans, great serpents, humans, and nonhumans I appear before those who are resolute believers, according to their disposition with translucent purity of my voice and complexion which exceeds the beauty of a virgin: her complexion, her shapeliness, and her perfect size.

"And to the beings who come to me, their minds obsessed with passion, I teach the Dharma, good son, for the renunciation of passion. And after they have heard that Dharma, they accordingly obtain the state wherein passion is renounced, and they receive the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Unattached Sense Spheres' [Asaṅgaviṣaya]. Some, when they see me, attain renunciation of passion and receive the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Joy and Delight' [Pramodyarati]. And some, just by talking to me, attain the removal of passion and attain the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Treasury of the Unobstructed Melodious Voices' [Asaṅgasvarakośa]. Some just by taking my hand obtain the state wherein passion is removed and receive the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Firm Grounding in All the Buddha Lands' [Sarvabuddhakṣetrānugamanapratisthāna]. Some, just by dwelling in the same estate, obtain removal of passion and

receive the Bodhisattva meditation 'Light of Renunciation' [Viśaṃyogāloka]. Some, with only a look, obtain renunciation of passion and receive the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Harmony of Calm Attitude' [Prašāntākāravayūha]. Some, just by my yawn, obtain removal of passion and receive the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Dispelling False Teachings' [Parapravādivikṣobhaṇa]. Some, with only a blink, obtain a renunciation of passion and the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Light of Buddha Sense Spheres' [Buddhaviṣayāloka]. Some, with only an embrace, obtain renunciation of passion and attain the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Womb of Renunciation and Conversion of the Whole World' [Sarvajagatsaṃgrahaparityāgarbha]. Some, with only a kiss, obtain renunciation of passion and attain the Bodhisattva meditation by the name of 'Contact with the Treasury of the Merit of the Whole World' [Sarvajagatpuṇyakośasaṃsparśana]. I establish all those beings who come to me in the Bodhisattva salvation by the name of 'Facing the Unattached All-Knowing Stage which Attains the Limit of Dispassion' [Virāgakoṭigata Asaṅgasarvajñatabhūmyabhimukha]."

He said: "Where, reverend lady, did you plant your roots of virtue? And what sort of deeds and results did you accumulate—you who have such wealth."

She said: "I remember, good son, in times past there was a Tathāgata by the name of Atyuccagamī. As a completely enlightened Arhat, he was born into this world, perfect in knowledge and conduct. He was a Sugata; no one surpassed him in worldknowing. He was a teacher of gods and men, a Buddha. Good son, the Tathāgata, while he was entering the capital city of Sumukhā [because he was compassionately moved for the plight of beings] and as he was approaching the gate, the whole city moved and quaked. A harmony of light was established. It was made from several of the precious gems and metals. It spread

out long and wide and was strewn with flowers made of various types of the precious gems and metals. Melodies were played by many different celestial instruments. In the sky were clouds of the exalted bodies of countless gods. And I, good son, at this time was the wife of a merchant by the name of Sumati. At that time, I, impelled by this Buddha miracle, ran forth with my husband, and, as the Tathāgata approached the gate, I, overflowing with exalted serenity, gave the Tathāgata a jewel cownie. Also, at that time Mañjuśrī, the youth, was serving upon the Tathāgata Atyuccagāmi. Through him I produced a resolution to Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment. I know this Bodhisattva salvation 'Limit of Renunciation.' How is it possible for me to know the coursing of Bodhisattvas who are established in infinite skillfulness in knowledge and means, whose extensive storehouse of merit is indestructible, whose sphere of knowledge is unassailable? How can I describe their qualities?

"Go, good son, right here in South India is a city by the name of Śubhapāraṃgama. In that city a householder by the name of Veṣṭhila performs acts of worship at a Tathāgata shrine [caitya] with a sandalwood throne. Go to him and ask: 'How does a Bodhisattva train in the life of a Bodhisattva? How does he practice and acquire it?'"

Then, Sudhana, the merchant's son, bowed his head to the feet of the Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā, did several hundred thousand circumambulations, and looked back again and again as he set forth from the presence of the Bhāgavatī Vasumitrā.

Notes

1. Early Buddhist literature also recognized that women were capable of being good friends. See the story of Mālinī, in *Mahāvastu*, tr. J. J. Jones (London: Luzac, 1949), I, 249–65.
2. An epithet for a Buddha, literally meaning "conqueror."
3. *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, tr. Edward Conze (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), p. 318.
4. Emptiness.
5. *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, p. 14.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 439–40.
9. Awakening to the thought of enlightenment precedes the reception of a prediction to future Buddhahood. Prediction to future enlightenment is verification for entering the path to Bodhisattvahood. The profession of vows and instructing others in the Dharma immediately follow the prediction. See Chapter 5 for a more detailed account of the stages in a Bodhisattva's career.
10. See Chapter 6 for an explanation of the teaching of Emptiness.
11. Other texts mention Ekayāna (universal salvation): *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtram*, *Śrīmālādevīsīmhanāda-sūtram* (*The Sutra of Queen Śrīmālā Who Had the Lion's Roar*), and the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*Entering the Path to Enlightenment*).
12. See Chapter 3, text a: "Nuns: The Stating of the Matter."
13. The story of a young princess who becomes a Bodhisattva, described in the *Lotus Sutra*, is translated in Chapter 5, text b: "The Nāga Princess."
14. Sanskrit: *Bhaiṣajyārāja*, the name of a Bodhisattva.
15. Kumārajīva's translation mentions good sons and good daughters instead of only women (T. v. 9, n. 262, p. 61 a 28). Dharmarakṣa mentions women (fu-je), not good daughters (T. v. 9, n. 263, p. 233 a 26).
16. Kumārajīva: "She will be protectively mindful to the Buddhas." Dharmarakṣa: "She will be protected by all the Buddhas who see her."
17. The Saṃgha or Buddhist community is implied here.

18. For a detailed study and concordance of the age of the various layers of textual passages from the time of Lokakṣema's recension through the middle period of the Chinese texts and the late period in the Sanskrit and Chinese, see Lewis R. Lancaster, "An Analysis of the Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra from the Chinese Translations," unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1968. Also see Lewis R. Lancaster, "The Story of a Buddhist Hero," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, X(2) (July 1974), 83–89.
19. These chapters on Sadāprarudita from the Chinese correspond to Chapters 30–32 of the Sanskrit recension.
20. Portions of the chapter with long lists of states of concentration (samādhi), descriptions of the Perfection of Wisdom, or events of Sadāprarudita without mentioning the merchant's daughter have been omitted for the sake of brevity. These omissions are indicated in the text.
21. This list delineates the technical attributes of a Buddha.
22. In the Sanskrit recensions, the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita wishes to have the supreme qualities of a Buddha instead. Edward Conze, tr., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* (Bollinas, Ca.: Four Seasons, 1973), p. 286.
23. Chinese: *hsi-lu*. This compound could suggest a brothel.
24. Chinese: *yü-le*. Sexual overtones to "played" may be implied.
25. Sanskrit: *Mandārapuṣpa*, i.e., flowers from the coral or thorn-apple tree believed to be one of the five kind of flowers present in heaven.
26. The same statement is made regarding the placeless, formless, illusory, mirage, the person one dreams about, Nirvana, and imagination. A somewhat different statement is made regarding the unproduced, the nonadvancing (ungrown), the absence of a place to go, space, the conclusions in the sutra, and the fundamental causes. All of these are said to be similar to the desire to know the Buddha.
27. The women have a private lesson with the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. Although such a favor would be highly treasured by the faithful Buddhist, it is not clear whether or not the "suitable doctrine" is the same Perfection of Wisdom which Sadāprarudita so intensely and passionately desires to learn or a different variation of the text. The separation of women from men for purposes of instruction was a common practice in the Buddhist community of monks and nuns.
28. *Tan* is a Chinese measure approximately equivalent to 133

- pounds. The statement "over four thousand times one hundred pounds" is an approximation of 4,000 *tan*.
29. After a list of twenty-four states of meditation are enumerated, Dharmodgata compares the voice and body of the Buddha to a lute, a pipe, an image, a drum, a painting, a celestial palace, an echo, and a magically created man. All of these metaphors illustrate the complex constituents of the Buddha's body, which is manifested under many conditions and causes but which is ultimately empty, like a magically created man.
30. The name of the Buddha is transliterated *Chia-mo-chia-t'i-t'o-p'o-lo-yeh-heng*, but no Sanskrit equivalent corresponding to the transliteration is found in the Sanskrit edition which omits the name of this Buddha.
31. Sexual changes are discussed below in Chapter 5.
32. Variation in the manuscripts. One manuscript reads women (nū); two others read human (jen). See T. v. 8, n. 224, p. 477, footnote 17.
33. Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1959), p. 157.
34. *The Sutra of Golden Light*, tr. R. E. Emmerick (London: Luzac, 1970), pp. 51–55.
35. According to the *Laws of Mānu* the ur-progenitors were seers (ṛṣi) (*Manavadharmaśāstra*, no. 1.34–41 (George Bühler, tr., *The Laws of Mānu* [Oxford University Press, 1886], reprinted in Delhi by Motilal Banarsidass, 1964, pp. 14–15), Āśā is a mother figure, and Bhiṣmottaranirghoṣa, the seer, is the father figure. Specifically, in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, Āśā is married to the prince Suprabha, not to a seer.
36. *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, ed. V. N. Mandlik (Bombay: 1886), p. 1229 (9.26).
37. R. E. Emmerick, tr., *The Sutra of Golden Light* (London: Luzac, 1970), pp. 48–51.
38. Prabhūtā and Vidvān are human householders just as Śiva and the devatās are deities. A specific relationship between Prabhūtā and Vidvān is not asserted.
39. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), p. 408.