

The Noble Mahayana Discourse: "Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions"

In Indian language: Ārya dasha digandha kāraavidhvaṃsana nāma mahāyāna sūtra

In Tibetan: 'phags pa phyogs bcu'i mun pa rnam par sel ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

In German: The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra "Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions"

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

Thus I heard at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling among the Shākya in Nyagrodha Park in Kapilavastu, together with a large assembly of 1,250 monks and a large retinue of bodhisattvas, including Maitreya and Mañjuśrī.

In the morning, the Blessed One put on his lower robe, took his alms bowl and his upper Dharma robe, surrounded and accompanied by an assembly of monks, and traveled to the great city of Kapilavastu to receive alms.

At that time, a Shākya youth known as the Radiant Face was traveling in a chariot away from the great city of Kapilavastu on some business. From a great distance, the Shākya youth Radiant Countenance saw the Blessed One approaching. When he saw him, he got down from the chariot and walked to where the Blessed One was, bowed towards the Blessed One with his palms together and bowed his head at the Blessed One's feet. Then he circled the blessed one three times and sat in front of the blessed one with his palms together.

The Shākya boy with the Shining Face then made the following request to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, here in this city, both my father and mother, while asleep or awake, could be harmed by non-human beings. Blessed One, I too could be harmed by robbers or wild animals when I travel to other countries. Therefore, may the Blessed One, Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha protect me out of compassion and by all means so that human and non-human beings and those in the animal realm do not harm me. Please teach a rite of protection."

The Blessed One replied to the Shākya youth with the Shining Face, "Young man, then listen carefully and keep this in mind. I will teach you."

"Blessed One, please do so," the Shākya youth Shining Face requested, and he listened to the Blessed One.

[EAST]

The Blessed One said, "Young man, in the eastern direction, eighty thousand buddha-fields beyond this buddha-field, there is a world system known as Shaking Off All Defilements. There resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, who is known as the Successor, alive and well. Young man, when you set out in the eastern direction to attend to some matters,

pay homage to this Thus Gone Buddha by remembering and honoring him. If you keep this clearly in mind and then set out, you will have no fear. [If you keep this in mind during this time without distraction, you will reach the goal you set out for]."

At this time, the Blessed One spoke the following verse:

"Worship the Lord thoroughly,
the perfectly accomplished Buddha, the great sage,
If you keep this clear and then depart for the east,
you will have no fear."

[SOUTH]

"Young man, in the southern direction, ninety thousand Buddha-fields beyond this Buddha-field, there is a world system known as the Dispelling of the Mass of Dense Darkness. There currently resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, who is known as "the King who is superior in every activity due to freedom from fear and timidity since the first generation of the mind of Awakening," alive and well. Young man, when you set out in the southern direction to attend to some business, pay homage to this Thusly Gone One by remembering and honoring him. If you keep this clearly in mind and then set out while remaining undistracted, free from thoughts of home and so forth, you will fulfill the purpose for which you set out and you will have nothing to fear."

At that time, the Blessed One then spoke the following verse:

"Freed from obsession
With thoughts of home,
When you travel south
You will experience no fear."

[WEST]

"Young man, in the western direction, as many Buddha-fields beyond this Buddha-field as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, there is a world system known as The Attainment of the Goal. There currently resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, known as the "Controller of Resentment and Conceit," alive and well. Young man, when you set out in the western direction to attend to some business, pay homage, remember and honor this Thus Gone One. If you keep this clearly in mind and then set out without defilement, undistracted and with mindfulness, you will have nothing to fear."

Then, at that time, the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"There are no phenomena that arise,
nor are there any that pass away.

Those who understand phenomena thus [and travel to the West],
have no fear at all."

[NORTH]

Young man, in the northern direction, ten billion Buddha-fields beyond this Buddha-field, there is a world system known as Possessing the Eloquence of a Buddha. There dwells the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, who is known as "Overwhelming with the light of a series of reflections of jewels," present, alive and well. Young man, when you set out in the northern direction to attend to some business, pay homage to this Thus Gone Buddha by remembering and honoring him. If you keep this clearly in mind and then set out without being distracted, you will reach the destination for which you set out and you will have nothing to fear."

Then, at that time, the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"Always make the mind equal
towards all sentient beings.

If you do not disrespect a single sentient being, and [thus travel north],
you will not experience fear.

[NORTHEAST]

Young man, in the northeastern direction, eighty thousand Buddha-fields beyond this Buddha-field, there is a world system known as the Conquered Legions of Māra. There currently resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, known as "Māras and doubts vanquished and subdued", alive and well. This Thus Gone One, by merely sitting under the Bodhi Tree, has made it impossible to fall back from unsurpassed Perfect Awakening caused by the Māra-class gods existing in this trichiliocosm. Young man, this was the heroic effort of that Thus Gone One when he sat under the bodhi tree. Young man, when you set out in a northeasterly direction to attend to some business, pay homage to that Thus Gone One by remembering and honoring him. If you keep this clearly in mind and then set out without distraction, you will fulfill the purpose for which you set out and have nothing to fear."

Then, at that time, the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"If you travel [to the northeast] while remembering the Buddha.

To the Buddha who conquered the Māras

With his very first thought,
then you will have no fear."

[SOUTHEAST]

Young man, to the southeast, twenty thousand buddha-fields beyond this buddha-field, there is a world system known as Ever Radiant. There currently resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, who is known as the "Glory of the Arising of the Irreversible Wheel since the first generation of the mind of Awakening," alive and well. Young man, this Thus Gone One, from the moment of the generation of the first thought of Awakening until the attainment of Buddhahood, continually performed acts of generosity, maintained his moral discipline, diligently practiced patience, exerted himself in diligence, built up concentration, and practiced wisdom. Young man, that was the heroic effort of this Thus Gone One. Young man, when you set out in a southeasterly direction to attend to some business, prostrate yourself with your five limbs and then leave your house. Later you will have no regrets and fear nothing. If you remain undistracted, you will reach the destination to which you set out."

At that time, the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"Prostrate yourself with the five limbs,

Then depart from home.

You will travel [to the southeast]

Without being overpowered by robbers."

[SOUTHWEST]

"Young man, in the southwestern direction, thirty thousand Buddha-fields beyond this Buddha-field, there is a world system known as 'Covered by a Golden Net'. There currently resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, known as the "Superior Enlightenment of a Jeweled Sky," alive and well. Young man, when you set out for the southwest to attend to some business, pay homage to this Thus Gone Buddha by remembering and honoring him. If you keep this clearly in mind and then set out without being distracted, you will have nothing to fear and you will reach the destination for which you set out.

At that time the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"After paying homage to the Perfect Buddha,

scatter a few petals.

Then when you travel to the southwest,

you will experience no fear."

[NORTHWEST]

"Young man, in the northwestern direction, as many Buddha-fields beyond this Buddha-field as there are grains of sand in six Ganges rivers, there is a world system known as Purified, Unshaken and Exalted. There currently resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, known as the "Tamer of Bodhisattvas", alive and well. Young man, the Buddha-field of this Thusly Gone One is without defilement, without sexual intercourse, without women, without thorns, pebbles and gravel, and without the five degenerations. Young man, when you set out in the northwestern direction to attend to some matters, leave home with an undistracted mind, having first observed correct pure conduct. Young man, you will reach the destination for which you set out, and you will have nothing to fear."

At that time the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"After you have first observed right pure behavior,

Go away from home.

Then when you travel to the northwest,

you will not be overpowered by robbers."

[ZENIT]

"Young man, toward the zenith, as many buddha-fields beyond this buddha-field as there are grains of sand in sixty Ganges rivers, there is a world system known as the Possession of Non-Referral Application of Mind. There resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha known as the "Sublime King of Meditative Concentration Fearless and Free from Darkness," present, alive and well. Young man, pay homage to this Thus Gone Buddha by remembering and honoring him. If, whether sitting or standing, you pervade all beings with loving-kindness and then thus perfect and preserve them, you will have nothing to fear."

At that time the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"Keep the mind undistracted,

Always remember the Victorious One;

Always develop the spirit of loving-kindness,

and you will experience no fear."

[NADIR]

"Young man, in the direction of the Nadir, ninety-two thousand Buddha-fields beyond this Buddha-field, there is a world system known as Adorned with All Qualities. There resides the Thus Gone, Worthy, Fully Accomplished Buddha, known as "Cutting through doubts and shaking

off defilements since he first generated the mind of Awakening," alive and well. Young man, at the beginning of all actions and during all activities, whether you are standing, sitting, or moving, pay homage to this Thus Gone One, keep him in mind, and establish the mind of loving-kindness for beings and the beneficent mind. Young man, you will experience no fear, and all your needs will be effortlessly fulfilled."

At that time the Blessed One spoke this verse:

"In every activity, day and night,

Remember this Buddha

And do not give up the 'mind of awakening',

And you will experience no fear."

"Young man, take well the names of the Thus Gone, Worthy, Fully Accomplished Buddhas. Keep them well and understand them well, and you will experience none of these fears, anxieties and terrors." Thus spoke the Blessed One to the youth.

The Shākya, the Youth with the Luminous Countenance, then said to the Blessed One, "Blessed One, I will grasp the names of these Thusly Gone, Worthy, Fully Accomplished Buddhas. For me, Blessed One, there is no darkness at all in these world systems. Blessed One, I see these world-systems and these Thusly Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddhas, just as I now see the Thusly Gone teaching the Dharma to those assembled."

Then from that assembly the Shākya, the youth with the luminous countenance, and the others, the great multitude of beings, gazed at the Blessed One, paid homage to him, made offerings to him, and paid tribute to him. Each of the thousands of beings who had gathered there to listen to this Dharma discourse then rose from their seats, placed their upper robe over one shoulder, knelt on their right knee, bowed to the Blessed One with palms together, and spoke these words to the Blessed One:

"Blessed One, because the Thusly Gone One has taught this Dharma Discourse for our benefit, those directions and those world systems appear to us, Blessed One, without darkness. Blessed One, those world systems and those blessed Buddhas appear just like the Thusly Gone One who now teaches the Dharma."

Then the venerable Shāriputra rose from his seat by the power of the Buddha, threw his upper robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, bowed down to the Blessed One with palms together, and spoke these words to him:

"Blessed One, when you taught this Dharma Discourse to these noble sons and daughters and they heard the names of these Blessed Buddhas, their eyes were purified and they saw all the world systems in the ten directions and all these Blessed Buddhas. Blessed One, what is the

merit by which they saw this and by which their eyes were purified? Will there still be fruits when they transmigrate to another life? Or will there not be?"

"Shāriputra," replied the Blessed One, "noble sons and daughters who have correctly entered the bodhisattva vehicle and whose eyes have been purified in this way become exceedingly pure according to their lack of obscurations. Śāriputra, do you see all one thousand of these living beings? Each one of them, Śāriputra, will attain the life of a universal ruler as many times as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River due to the root of the virtue of recognizing the names of these Buddhas. In their final lives and final bodies, all these beings will perfect all the aggregates of awakening. In a single eon, each of them will truly and fully awaken to unsurpassed, perfect Awakening, all with the name of the Thusly Gone, Worthy, Perfect, Pure-Eyed Buddha."

As soon as the Blessed One had given his prophecy to these noble sons and daughters, the trichiliocosm trembled in six ways: it trembled, trembled deeply, and trembled violently; it trembled, trembled deeply, and trembled violently.

Even the gods moving above the earth exclaimed, "Friends! It is amazing that these noble sons and daughters, by merely grasping the names of these Thusly Gone Ones, have attained unsurpassed, perfect awakening and become Thusly Gone Ones who have understood everything because they know all phenomena as they are. Who would not then develop faith in the Buddha?"

Having heard the cry of the gods moving above the earth, the gods belonging to the class of the Four Great Kings, the gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three, the gods of the heaven free from strife, the gods of the heaven of joy, were also, those of the Heaven of Delight in Emanations, those of the Māra class dwelling in the Heaven of Utilizing the Emanations of Others, those of the Brahmā Heaven, those of the Brahmā High Priest Heaven, and those of the Great Brahmā Heaven, up to the gods of the Unattained Heaven, delighted and overjoyed. Becoming joyful and happy, they exclaimed, "Friends! It is amazing that in this way these noble sons and daughters, by grasping only the names of these Thusly Gone Ones, have attained unsurpassed, perfect awakening and become Thusly Gone Ones who have understood everything, knowing all phenomena as they are. Who then would not develop faith in the Buddha?"

Then the Blessed One said to the Venerable Ānanda: "Ānanda, all noble sons or daughters who have correctly entered the Bodhisattva Vehicle, who hear this Dharma talk and then remember it, uphold it, read it, master it, teach it correctly to others, or even just write it down and keep it with them - these noble sons or daughters are blessed by the Buddha. Think of them as those who have served previous victors. Think of them as those who do not fear death. They will not die in a state of affliction. They will not die through the suffering of others. Trust that they will not be afraid of water, robbers, poison or weapons."

Then Shakra, the lord of the gods, the protector of the great bodhisattva beings, having heard such a prophecy, in order to uphold this Dharma discourse, went to where the Blessed One was,

surrounded and accompanied by a thousand gods. After bowing his head at the Blessed One's feet and circumambulating the Blessed One three times, he scattered divine sandalwood powder, divine mandāra flowers, and great mandāra flowers towards the Blessed One and all the thousand living beings who had been prophesied by the Blessed One to attain unsurpassed perfect awakening in the future. Then he sat to one side with his palms together and spoke these words:

"Blessed One, I will protect all noble sons and daughters who remember and uphold, read and master this Dharma discussion. Blessed One, whether these noble sons and daughters are in a house, in a monastery, under a tree, in an empty house, in the remote wilderness, on a path or a wrong path, whether they are asleep or awakening from sleep, I will protect them so that they do not perish through the mischief of others."

Then the Blessed One said to the Venerable Ānanda: "Ānanda, even if some noble sons and daughters were to offer robes, alms, shelter, medicine for sickness, and other necessities to the Thusly Gone, Worthy, Perfectly Consummate Buddha, who is presently living and well here, throughout his life, that alone, Ānanda, would not be paying homage to the Thusly Gone. It would not be honoring him, and it would not be making offerings to him. If any noble sons and daughters who have correctly entered the bodhisattva vehicle hear this Dharma discussion and then remember it, uphold it, read it, master it, pass it on correctly to others, or even just write it down and keep it with them, by this alone, Ānanda, supreme reverence is paid to the Thus Gone One, supreme reverence is paid to him, and this is the supreme offering to him."

Then the venerable Ānanda rose from his seat, threw his upper robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, bowed to the Blessed One with palms together, and spoke these words to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma Discourse? How should we remember him?"

Thereupon the Blessed One replied to the Venerable Ānanda: "In that case, Ānanda, remember this Dharma-discussion as 'Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions'. Remember it also as the recitation of the names of the Thusly Gone Ones, the realization of insubstantiality, and the realization of insubstantiality."

After the Blessed One had thus spoken, the Venerable Ānanda, the Venerable Śāriputra, the Śākya youth with the Luminous Countenance, all the thousands of living beings, the Lord of the Gods Śakra, those monks and bodhisattvas, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the Blessed One's words.

This completes the Noble Mahāyāna discourse "Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions".

Colophon:

Originally translated into Tibetan by the Indian preceptor Viśuddhasiṃha and the translator Bandé Tsang Devendrarakṣita. Edited and revised by the chief editor and translator Bandé Lui Gyaltsen.

This was then translated from Tibetan into English by Venerable Khenpo Kalsang Gyaltsen and Ani Kunga Chodron of the Sakya Pandita Translation Group, Tsechen Kunchab Ling Division. This translation was completed under the auspices and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha and first published in 2023.

A German version has been created by Shenpen Dong Druk (Marcus Dannfeld M.A.). May we be safe on our journeys - from departure to return and may we always be in and hold our place, the place where there is neither coming nor going. - Sarva Mangalam -