Seven Buddhas

Written by Puji of the Song Dynasty

Contents

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The ancient Buddhas appeared in the world through an endless succession of kalpas; they cannot all be fully known or counted. More recently, it is said that the Auspicious Kalpa has a thousand Tathāgatas. Up to Śākyamuni, however, only the Seven Buddhas are recorded. The Dīrgha Āgama says: “By the diligent power of the Seven Buddhas, light shines forth and dispels the darkness. Each sits beneath a tree and there attains perfect enlightenment.” Mañjuśrī is the patriarch of the Seven Buddhas. When the great bodhisattva Good Wisdom of Golden Flower practiced the Way atop Mount Song, he was moved by the Seven Buddhas leading before him and Vimalakīrti receiving him from behind. The present account begins with the Seven Buddhas.

Vipassī Buddha

Vipassī Buddha. [The 998th Buddha of the past Adornment Kalpa.] His verse says: “The body is born from within the signless, like the many forms conjured in an illusion. The mind-consciousness of an illusory person has never existed; sin and merit are both empty, with nowhere to abide.” The Dīrgha Āgama says: “When human life spans were eighty thousand years, this Buddha appeared in the world. He was of the kṣatriya caste and bore the family name Koṇḍañña. His father was Bandhuma, and his mother was Bandhumatī. He dwelt in the city of Bandhumatī. Sitting beneath a pāṭali tree, he taught the Dharma in three assemblies and liberated 348,000 people. He had two disciples of spiritual powers: one named Khaṇḍa and the other Tissa. His attendant was the son of Anupama, named Asoka.”

Sikhī Buddha

Sikhī Buddha. [The 999th Buddha of the Adornment Kalpa.] His verse says: “The arising of all wholesome dharmas is inherently illusory; the creation of all evil karma is likewise illusory. The body is like gathered foam, the mind like wind; what illusion produces has no root and no real nature.” The Dīrgha Āgama says: “When human life spans were seventy thousand years, this Buddha appeared in the world.” He was

of the kṣatriya caste and bore the family name Koṇḍañña. His father was Bright Appearance, and his mother was Radiant Splendor. He dwelt in the city of Luminous Appearance. Sitting beneath a puṇḍarīka tree, he taught the Dharma in three assemblies and liberated 250,000 people. He had two disciples of spiritual powers: one named Abhibhū and the other Bhava. His attendant was the son of Forbearance in Practice, named Immeasurable.

Vessabhū Buddha

Vessabhū Buddha. [The thousandth Buddha of the Adornment Kalpa.] His verse says: “Borrowing the four great elements, one takes them as the body; the mind is originally unborn and arises because of objects. If the objects before it are absent, the mind too is absent; sin and merit arise and perish like illusions.” The Dīrgha Āgama says: “When human life spans were sixty thousand years, this Buddha appeared in the world.” He was of the kṣatriya caste and bore the family name Koṇḍañña. His father was Good Lamp, and his mother was Renowned in Precepts. He dwelt in the city of Incomparable. Sitting beneath a śāla tree, he taught the Dharma in two assemblies and liberated 130,000 people. He had two disciples of spiritual powers: one named Fuyu and the other Uttama. His attendant was the son of Quiescence, named Wonderful Awakening.

Krakucchanda Buddha

Krakucchanda Buddha. [The first Buddha of the present Fortunate Kalpa.] His verse says: “To see that the body has no reality is to see the Buddha-body; to understand that the mind is like an illusion is to understand the Buddha as an illusion. When one realizes that the original nature of body and mind is empty, how does such a person differ from a Buddha?” The Dīrgha Āgama says: “When human life spans were forty thousand years, this Buddha appeared in the world.” He was of the brahman caste and bore the family name Kāśyapa. His father was Ritual Attainment, and his mother was Good Branch. He dwelt in the city of Peace and Harmony. Sitting beneath a śirīṣa tree, he taught the Dharma in one assembly and liberated 40,000 people. He had two disciples of spiritual powers: one named Sāni and the other Vilū. His attendant was the son of Good Awakening, named Supreme Victory.

Kanakamuni Buddha

Kanakamuni Buddha. [The second Buddha of the Fortunate Kalpa.] His verse says: “The Buddha does not see a body and know it to be Buddha. If there is truly something known, there is no other Buddha. The wise can know that the nature of sin is empty and calmly fear neither birth nor death.” The Dīrgha Āgama says: “When human life spans were thirty thousand years, this Buddha appeared in the world.” He was of the brahman caste and bore the family name Kāśyapa. His father was Great Virtue, and his mother was Good Victory. He dwelt in the city of Purity. Sitting

beneath an udumbara tree, he taught the Dharma in one assembly and liberated 30,000 people. He had two disciples of spiritual powers: one named Śubhaṇa and the other Uttara. His attendant was the son of Peace and Harmony, named Guide.

Kāśyapa Buddha

Kāśyapa Buddha. [The third Buddha of the Fortunate Kalpa.] His verse says: “The nature of all sentient beings is pure; from the beginning, there has been no arising and nothing to cease. This very body and mind arise as an illusion; within illusory transformations, there is neither sin nor merit.” The Dīrgha Āgama says: “When human life spans were twenty thousand years, this Buddha appeared in the world.” He was of the brahman caste and bore the family name Kāśyapa. His father was Brahman Virtue, and his mother was Wealthy Mistress. He dwelt in the city of Vārāṇasī. Sitting beneath a banyan tree, he taught the Dharma in one assembly and liberated 20,000 people. He had two disciples of spiritual powers: one named Tissa and the other Bhāradvāja. His attendant was the son of Good Friend, named Jūnjūn.

Śākyamuni Buddha

Śākyamuni Buddha. [The fourth Buddha of the Fortunate Kalpa.] He was of the kṣatriya caste. His father was King Śuddhodana, and his mother was the Great Pure and Wondrous Lady. Having ascended to the rank of one awaiting Buddhahood, he was born in Tuṣita Heaven, where he was called the celestial being Supreme Goodness and also the bodhisattva Protector of Light. He taught the hosts of devas, expounded the conduct of one awaiting Buddhahood, and manifested bodies throughout the worlds of the ten directions to teach the Dharma.

The Universal Radiance Sūtra says: “When the Buddha was first born into the royal kṣatriya family, he emitted the great light of wisdom, illuminating the worlds of the ten directions. Golden lotus flowers sprang from the earth and naturally supported his two feet. He took seven steps each toward the east, west, south, and north. Pointing one hand toward heaven and the other toward earth, he uttered the lion’s roar: ‘Above and below, throughout the four quarters, none can surpass me.’” This was the eighth day of the fourth month in the jia-yin year, the twenty-fourth year of King Zhao of Zhou.

By the eighth day of the second month in the forty-second year, at the age of nineteen, he wished to leave home. Reflecting, he said, “What encounters might yet await me?” He then toured the four gates and saw the four kinds of sights. With sorrow and joy in his heart, he reflected that old age, illness, and death were ultimately to be renounced. Then, at midnight, a celestial being named Pure Abode joined his palms at the window and said: “The time for leaving home has come. You may go.”

On hearing this, the prince rejoiced. He crossed the city wall and departed, practicing the Way in the Dāntè Mountains. He first spent three years with Ārāḍa Kālāma, learning the concentration of the sphere of nothingness; knowing it was not the way, he abandoned it. He then spent three years with Udraka Rāmaputra, learning the concentration of neither perception nor nonperception; knowing that this too was not the way, he abandoned it. He next went to Elephant-Head Mountain, where he lived with various non-Buddhist ascetics, eating sesame and wheat each day for six years.

Thus the sūtra says: “With no mind-intention and no reception or action, he completely subdued all non-Buddhist paths.” He first underwent and tested the mistaken teachings, displaying all expedient means and bringing forth various views, in order to lead beings to bodhi. Therefore, the Universal Collection Sūtra says: “On the eighth day of the second month, when the morning star appeared, the bodhisattva attained the Way and was named Teacher of Humans and Devas. He was then thirty years old.” This was the gui-wei year, the third year of King Mu.

Thereafter, in Deer Park, he turned the Dharma wheel of the Four Truths for Kauṇḍinya and the other four, and they realized the fruits of the Way. He taught the Dharma and remained in the world for forty-nine years. Later, he told his disciple Mahākāśyapa: “I now entrust to you the pure Dharma eye, the wondrous mind of nirvāṇa, the reality-mark that is markless, and the subtle right Dharma. You should protect and uphold them.” He also instructed Ānanda: “Assist in transmitting and transforming the teaching; do not let it be cut off.”

He then spoke this verse: “The Dharma that is originally Dharma is not Dharma; the non-Dharma Dharma is also Dharma. Now, when I entrust the time of non-Dharma, when have dharmas ever been dharmas?” After the World-Honored One had spoken this verse, he again told Kāśyapa: “I shall transmit to you my gold-threaded saṅghāṭī robe. Pass it on in turn to the one awaiting Buddhahood, until Maitreya Buddha appears in the world. Do not let it decay.”

Having heard the verse, Kāśyapa bowed with his head at the Buddha’s feet and said: “Excellent! Excellent! I shall follow your instruction and respectfully comply, out of reverence for the Buddha.” Then the World-Honored One arrived at the city of Kuśinagara and told the assembly: “My back now pains me; I wish to enter parinirvāṇa.” He then went to the bank of the Hiraṇyavatī River, beneath the twin śāla trees, and lay on his right side with his feet placed one upon the other, peacefully entering serene quiescence. He later rose from the coffin and taught the Dharma to his mother.

He specially revealed his two feet to convert Bhajī, and spoke the verse on impermanence: “All conditioned phenomena are impermanent; they are dharmas of

arising and ceasing. When arising and ceasing have ceased, quiescence is bliss." The disciples then competed to cremate him with fragrant firewood, but after the fire was extinguished, the golden coffin remained as before. The assembly then praised the Buddha in verse: "How could the fierce flames of ordinary people set the fire ablaze? We request, Honored One, the fire of samādhi to cremate the golden-colored body."

Then the golden coffin rose from its place to the height of seven tāla trees, moved back and forth through the air, and transformed into the fire of samādhi. Before long, ashes appeared, and eight hu and four dou of relics were obtained. This was the fifteenth day of the second month in the ren-shen year, the fifty-second year of King Mu. One thousand and seventeen years after the World-Honored One's passing, the teaching reached China, in the wu-chen year, the tenth year of the Yongping era of the Later Han dynasty.

As soon as the World-Honored One was born, he pointed one hand toward heaven and the other toward earth, walked seven steps in a circle, looked in the four directions, and said: "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the World-Honored One." One day, the World-Honored One ascended the teaching seat, and the assembly gathered in stillness. Mañjuśrī struck the gavel and said: "Contemplate well the Dharma of the Dharma King: the Dharma of the Dharma King is thus." The World-Honored One then descended from the seat. One day, the World-Honored One again ascended the teaching seat and sat silently.

Ānanda struck the gavel and said: "We request the World-Honored One to teach the Dharma." The World-Honored One said: "Two bhikṣus in this assembly have violated the monastic discipline. For this reason, I will not teach the Dharma." Ānanda used his spiritual power of knowing others' minds to identify the bhikṣus and had them sent out. The World-Honored One again remained silent.

Ānanda again said: "Just now, it was because two bhikṣus had violated the discipline that you would not teach the Dharma. Those two bhikṣus have now been sent out. Why will the World-Honored One not teach the Dharma?" The World-Honored One said: "I have vowed not to teach the Dharma for śrāvakas of the two vehicles." He then descended from the seat. One day, the World-Honored One ascended the teaching seat, and the assembly gathered in stillness. Kāśyapa struck the gavel and said: "The World-Honored One has finished teaching the Dharma." The World-Honored One then descended from the seat.

For ninety days, the World-Honored One taught the Dharma for his mother in Trāyastriṃśa Heaven. When he bade farewell to the heavenly realm and descended, the fourfold assembly and the eight classes of beings all went into the sky to welcome him. The bhikṣuṇī Lotus-Color thought: "As I have a nun's body, I will surely

see the Buddha only after the senior monastics. It would be better to use spiritual powers to transform myself into a wheel-turning sage king, surrounded by a thousand sons." She was the first to see the Buddha, and her wish was indeed fulfilled.

As soon as the World-Honored One saw her, he rebuked her: "Bhikṣuṇī Lotus-Color, how dare you surpass the senior monastics in seeing me? Though you see my physical body, you do not yet see my Dharma body. Subhūti, sitting peacefully in the mountains, instead sees my Dharma body." Formerly, when the World-Honored One went with Mañjuśrī to an assembly of Buddhas, he found that the Buddhas had each returned to their own places. Only a woman remained, sitting close to that Buddha and absorbed in samādhi.

Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha: "Why is this person permitted to sit near the Buddha, while I am not?" The Buddha told Mañjuśrī: "You need only awaken this woman from samādhi and ask her yourself." Mañjuśrī circumambulated the woman three times, snapped his fingers once, and even transported her to Brahmā Heaven, yet exerting all his spiritual power, he could not bring her out. The World-Honored One said: "Even if there were hundreds of thousands of millions of Mañjuśrīs, they could not bring this woman out of samādhi."

"Below, beyond forty-two Ganges sands of lands, there is a bodhisattva named Wǎngmíng who can bring this woman out of samādhi." Before long, the great bodhisattva Wǎngmíng emerged from the earth and paid homage to the World-Honored One. The World-Honored One instructed Wǎngmíng to bring her out. Wǎngmíng went before the woman, snapped his fingers once, and the woman then emerged from samādhi.

King Prasenajit asked the World-Honored One: "Within the ultimate truth, is there conventional truth? If one says there is not, wisdom should not be twofold. If one says there is, wisdom should not be one. What is the meaning of one and two?" The Buddha said: "Great King, in the Dharma of the past Buddha Dragon-Light, you once asked this question. I now do not speak, and you now do not hear. No speaking and no hearing are what are called the meaning of one and the meaning of two."

One day, the World-Honored One saw Mañjuśrī standing outside the gate and said: "Mañjuśrī, Mañjuśrī, why do you not enter through the gate?" Mañjuśrī replied: "I do not see a single dharma outside the gate. How, then, can you tell me to enter through the gate?"

One day, as the World-Honored One was seated, he saw two people carrying a pig past and asked: "What is this?" They said: "The Buddha possesses all knowledge, yet does not even recognize a piglet!" The World-Honored One said: "One must still ask." On another occasion, a non-Buddhist inquirer asked: "Are all dharmas permanent?"

The World-Honored One did not answer. The inquirer again asked: “Are all dharmas impermanent?” He likewise did not answer.

A follower of another teaching said, “The World-Honored One possesses all-knowing wisdom; why will you not answer me?” The World-Honored One said, “All that you ask is mere idle speculation.” One day, the World-Honored One displayed a wish-fulfilling jewel that assumed different colors and asked the heavenly kings of the five directions, “What color is this jewel?” The heavenly kings of the five directions each gave a different color.

The World-Honored One then concealed the jewel in his sleeve, raised his hand, and asked, “What color is this jewel?” The heavenly kings said, “There is no jewel in the Buddha’s hand. Where could there be any color?” The World-Honored One sighed and said, “How profoundly deluded you are! When I showed you a worldly jewel, each of you insisted that it had blue, yellow, red, or white colors. When I showed you the true jewel, none of you knew it.” At that time, all the heavenly kings of the five directions attained understanding.

When the King of the Gandharvas offered music to the World-Honored One, the mountains, rivers, great earth, trees, and stones all became the sound of a lute. Kāśyapa rose and danced. The king asked Kāśyapa, “Are not an arhat’s outflows entirely exhausted? Why, then, do you still have residual habitual tendencies?” The Buddha said, “There are truly no residual habitual tendencies. Do not slander the Dharma.” The king played the lute three more times, and Kāśyapa again danced three times.

The king said, “Was Kāśyapa’s dancing not real?” The Buddha said, “He never truly danced.” The king said, “How can the World-Honored One speak falsely?” The Buddha said, “I do not speak falsely. When you played the lute, the mountains, rivers, great earth, trees, and stones all became the sound of a lute. Was this not so?” The king said, “It was.” The Buddha said, “Kāśyapa was likewise. Therefore, he never truly danced.” The king then accepted this in faith.

An adherent of another teaching asked the World-Honored One, “What Dharma did you teach yesterday?” He replied, “A fixed Dharma.” The man asked, “What Dharma do you teach today?” He replied, “A nonfixed Dharma.” The man said, “Yesterday you taught a fixed Dharma; why do you teach a nonfixed Dharma today?” The World-Honored One said, “Yesterday was fixed; today is nonfixed.” A five-power immortal then asked the World-Honored One, “World-Honored One, you have six spiritual powers, while I have five.

What is the remaining one power?” The Buddha called to the five-power immortal, who answered. The Buddha said, “That one power—you are asking me about it?” Puyan Bodhisattva wished to see Samantabhadra but could not. He entered samādhi

three times and searched throughout the three-thousand-great-thousand world system, yet could not find Samantabhadra. He then came and reported this to the Buddha. The Buddha said, “You need only give rise to a single thought in tranquil samādhi, and you will see Samantabhadra.

Pu-yan then gave rise to a single thought and immediately saw Samantabhadra riding through the sky on a six-tusked white elephant. On the day of self-confession, Mañjuśrī spent the summer retreat in three places. Kāśyapa wished to strike the wooden mallet and expel him from the community. But as soon as he picked up the mallet, he saw hundreds of thousands of millions of Mañjuśrīs. Kāśyapa exhausted his spiritual powers, yet could not raise the mallet. The World-Honored One then asked Kāśyapa, “Which Mañjuśrī do you intend to expel?” Kāśyapa had no answer.

A Long-Claw Brahmin sought a doctrinal debate with the World-Honored One and stipulated, “If my thesis is defeated, I shall cut off my own head.” The World-Honored One said, “What do you take as the central principle of your thesis?” The Brahmin said, “I take acceptance of nothing whatsoever as its principle.” The World-Honored One said, “Do you accept this view?” The Brahmin brushed his sleeves and left. When he had reached the middle of the road, he came to his senses. He said to his disciples, “I must go back and cut off my head to repay the World-Honored One.

The disciples said, “Before the assemblies of humans and devas, you might well prevail. Why cut off your head?” The Brahmin said, “I would rather cut off my head before a wise person than prevail before those without wisdom.” He then sighed, “My thesis is defeated in two respects. If I accept this view, the point of defeat is obvious; if I do not accept this view, the point of defeat is subtle.

No humans, devas, or followers of the two vehicles know where my thesis fails; only the World-Honored One and the great bodhisattvas know where it fails.” He returned before the World-Honored One and said, “My thesis is defeated in two respects, so I should cut off my head to repay you.” The World-Honored One said, “There is no such thing in my Dharma. You should turn your mind toward the Way.” Thereupon, he and his five hundred followers all took refuge in the Buddha, left home, and attained arhatship.

Once, the World-Honored One wished to lead the assembly of noble beings to the sixth heaven to teach the Mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra. He ordered all fierce ghosts and spirits in other lands, this land, the human realm, and the heavens to gather, receive the Buddha’s charge, and protect the true Dharma. If any failed to come, the kings of the four heavenly gates would fly after them with blazing iron wheels and compel them to assemble. Once they had gathered, none disobeyed the Buddha’s command. Each made great vows to protect the true Dharma.

Only one Māra king said to the World-Honored One, “Gautama! When all sentient beings have become Buddhas, the realm of sentient beings is empty, and even the name ‘sentient being’ no longer exists, then I shall arouse bodhicitta.” Once, while walking with Ānanda, the World-Honored One saw an ancient Buddha stūpa and paid homage to it. Ānanda said, “Whose stūpa is this?” The World-Honored One said, “This is the stūpa of the Buddhas of the past.

Ānanda said, “Whose disciples were the Buddhas of the past?” The World-Honored One said, “They were my disciples.” Ānanda said, “It should indeed be so.” An adherent of another teaching then asked, “I do not ask with words, nor do I ask without words.” The World-Honored One remained silent for a long while. The man praised him, saying, “The World-Honored One is greatly compassionate and greatly merciful. You have dispelled the clouds of my delusion and enabled me to enter.” He bowed and departed. Ānanda asked the Buddha, “What principle did this adherent of another teaching attain, that he praised you and left?” The World-Honored One said, “He was like a fine horse that moves at the mere sight of a whip’s shadow.”

One day, the World-Honored One instructed Ānanda, “The time for food is approaching. You should enter the city carrying the bowl.” Ānanda assented. The World-Honored One said, “Since you are carrying the bowl, you must follow the ritual of the seven Buddhas of the past.” Ānanda asked, “What is the ritual of the seven Buddhas of the past?” The World-Honored One called Ānanda, and Ānanda answered. The World-Honored One said, “Carry the bowl and go!” A bhikshu then asked, “Within the World-Honored One’s Dharma, I have understanding, but I have not yet realized it. What should the World-Honored One show me?” The World-Honored One said, “Bhikshu so-and-so, what should be shown? Is this your question?”

After attaining the Way, the World-Honored One sat cross-legged beneath a tree in Jeta Grove. Two merchants passed by the edge of the grove with five hundred carts, but the oxen of two carts refused to move forward. The merchants were puzzled and saw a mountain deity, who told them, “A sage in the grove has attained the Way and has gone more than forty-nine days without food. You should make an offering to him.” The merchants entered the grove and indeed saw a man sitting upright and unmoving.

They asked, “Are you Brahmā? Śakra? A mountain deity? A river deity?” The World-Honored One smiled slightly and raised a corner of his robe to show them. The merchants bowed at his feet and presented offerings. Because Jīvaka was skilled at distinguishing sounds, the World-Honored One went with him to a burial mound, where they saw five skulls. He knocked on one skull and asked Jīvaka, “Where was this one reborn?” Jīvaka replied, “It was reborn in the human realm.

The World-Honored One knocked on another and asked, “Where was this one reborn?” Jīvaka replied, “It was reborn in the heavenly realm.” The World-Honored One knocked on yet another and asked, “Where was this one reborn?” Jīvaka had no idea where it had been reborn. A Brahmin of the Dark Clan came to offer the Buddha two flowering branches, one of albizia and one of paulownia, holding them up in his left and right hands by means of spiritual powers. The Buddha called to the ascetic, and the Brahmin answered. The Buddha said, “Put it down.

The Brahmin then put down the flower in his left hand. The Buddha again called to the ascetic, “Put it down.” The Brahmin then put down the flower in his right hand. The Buddha again called to the ascetic, “Put it down.” The Brahmin said, “World-Honored One, both my hands are now empty. What else do you tell me to put down?” The Buddha said, “I am not telling you to put down the flowers. You should put down the external six sense objects, the internal six sense faculties, and the intermediate six consciousnesses. Let them all go at once. Where there is nothing left to put down is where you are freed from birth and death.” At these words, the Brahmin awakened to the patience of the unborn.

At an assembly on Vulture Peak, five hundred bhikshus attained the four dhyānas and possessed the five spiritual powers, but had not attained dharma-patience. Through the spiritual power of knowledge of former lives, each saw that in the past he had killed his father, harmed his mother, and committed other grave offenses. Each harbored doubts in his own mind and could not enter into realization of the profound Dharma. Thereupon, Mañjuśrī, supported by the Buddha’s spiritual power, grasped a sharp sword in his hand and held it threateningly before the Tathāgata.

The World-Honored One then said to Mañjuśrī, “Stop! Stop! You should not commit such an offense. Do not harm me. If I am harmed, I am harmed as one who does good. Mañjuśrī, from the very beginning there has been no self and no person; it is only that the inner mind sees self and person. When the inner mind arises, I am necessarily harmed; this is called harming.

At that time, the five hundred bhikshus awakened on their own to the original mind: it is like a dream, like an illusion. Within dream and illusion, there is no self or person, nor even parents who give birth or are born. The five hundred bhikshus then praised together: “Mañjuśrī, great person of wisdom, deeply penetrates the source of the Dharma. With his own hand he grasps a sharp sword and threatens the body of the Tathāgata. The sword and the Buddha are likewise: one characteristic, without a second.

Without characteristics and without arising, how could there be killing here?” In a former life, the World-Honored One spread out his hair to cover mud and offered flowers to Dīpaṃkara Buddha. Seeing where the hair had been spread, Dīpaṃkara

made a prediction to the assembly and pointed to the ground, saying, “A Brahmā shrine should be built on this plot of land.” At that time, an elder named Xianyu drove a marker into the place indicated and said, “The Brahmā shrine is now built.” The devas scattered flowers and praised him, saying, “This young man has great wisdom!”

Once, seven wise women were wandering in a charnel ground. One woman pointed to a corpse and said, “The corpse is here; where has the person gone?” Another woman said, “What? What?” The sisters contemplated this intently, and each attained realization. Śakra was moved to scatter flowers and said, “Venerable sisters, whatever you require, may you ask for it; I shall provide for you throughout my life.

The women said, “Our household possesses in full the four requisites and the seven treasures. We require only three things: first, a rootless tree; second, a piece of land without yin and yang; third, a valley that cannot be made to echo.” Śakra said, “I possess all other things that may be needed. But these three things I truly do not possess.

The woman said, “If you do not possess these, how can you save others?” Śakra was at a loss, so they went together to ask the Buddha. The Buddha said, “Kauśika, even the great arhats among my disciples do not understand this principle. Only the great bodhisattvas understand it.

Because Devadatta slandered the Buddha, he entered hell alive. The Buddha had Ānanda ask him, “Are you at peace in hell?” Devadatta replied, “Although I am in hell, it is as joyful as the third dhyāna heaven.” The Buddha again had him asked, “Do you still seek to leave?” He replied, “I shall leave when the World-Honored One comes.” Ānanda said, “The Buddha is the teacher of the three realms. How could he be destined to enter hell?” Devadatta replied, “If the Buddha is not destined to enter hell, how could I be destined to leave hell?”

Because Mañjuśrī suddenly gave rise to views of Buddha and Dharma, he was taken by the World-Honored One’s spiritual power to the space between the two Iron Encircling Mountains. East of the city was an old woman who had been born at the same time as the Buddha but did not wish to see him. Whenever she saw the Buddha approaching, she turned away. Yet when she looked back in any direction, all was Buddha. She then covered her face with her hands, but in the palms and between the fingers there too was Buddha everywhere.

Aṅgulimāla went with his bowl to the gate of an elder’s house. The woman of the household was in difficult labor, and mother and child had not yet been delivered. The elder said, “Disciple of Gautama, you are a most holy one. Is there any Dharma that can relieve this difficulty?” Aṅgulimāla said to the elder, “I have only newly entered the Way and do not know this Dharma. Wait while I return and ask the

World-Honored One; then I shall come back and tell you." On returning, he reported the matter in full to the Buddha. The Buddha told Aṅgulimāla, "Go quickly and tell her: 'Ever since I entered the Dharma of the noble ones, I have never killed a living being.'" Aṅgulimāla obeyed the Buddha's words and hurried to tell her. When the woman heard them, she was immediately delivered safely.

Once, as the World-Honored One was seated beneath a banyan tree, two merchants asked, "World-Honored One, did you see a cart pass by?" He replied, "I did not see it." The merchants asked, "Did you hear it?" He replied, "I did not hear it." They asked, "Were you perhaps in samādhi?" He replied, "I was not in samādhi." They asked, "Were you perhaps asleep?" He replied, "I was not asleep." The merchants then exclaimed, "Excellent! Excellent!" The World-Honored One was awake, yet did not see. They accordingly offered him two pieces of white felt.

At the assembly on Vulture Peak, the World-Honored One held up a flower to show the congregation. At that time, all remained silent; only Venerable Kāśyapa broke into a slight smile. The World-Honored One said, "I have the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye, the wondrous mind of nirvāṇa, the formlessness of true reality, and the subtle Dharma gate—a special transmission outside the teachings, not established in words and letters—which I entrust to Mahākāśyapa." When the World-Honored One arrived before the Many Sons Stūpa, he instructed Mahākāśyapa to divide his seat and invited him to sit, enclosing him with his saṅghāṭī robe.

He then told him, "I secretly entrust to you the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye. You should preserve and uphold it, and transmit it to future generations." As the World-Honored One was about to enter nirvāṇa, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva requested that the Buddha turn the Dharma wheel once more.

The World-Honored One rebuked him: "Mañjuśrī! During my forty-nine years in this world, I have never spoken a single word. You ask me to turn the Dharma wheel again—have I ever turned the Dharma wheel?" At the nirvāṇa assembly, the World-Honored One stroked his chest with his hand and told the congregation, "You should carefully behold my body of purple-golden radiance. Look upon it until you are satisfied, lest you later regret it. If you say that I shall pass into extinction, you are not my disciple. If you say that I shall not pass into extinction, you are likewise not my disciple." At that time, the hundreds of billions of beings present all attained realization.