

# Buddhist Scriptures

*Edited by* DONALD S. LOPEZ, JR.

PENGUIN BOOKS

renunciation and the recollection of past lives, that I may reach the first stage, the stage of Joy. (51)

May I bring to all my enterprises effort and vigour, and obtain the conditions necessary to lead a life of solitude in all my rebirths. (52)

May I be able to see and speak to the protector Mañjuḥoṣa whenever I wish to do so. (53)

May I be able to follow by myself the conduct practised by Mañjuśrī, which effects the goals of all sentient beings in the ten directions, to the very end of space. (54)

For as long as the vastness of space remains, and as long as the world exists, may I too subsist that long, destroying the suffering of the whole world. (55)

Let all the sufferings of the world come to an end in me; and let the whole world achieve happiness through the virtues of the *bodhisattvas*. (56)

May the teachings of *dharma*, the only medicine for the world's ills, the cause of all perfection and happiness, long endure in this world, worshipped with offerings and honours. (57)

I pay homage to Mañjuḥoṣa, by whose grace my mind has come to settle on the good. I salute this friend in the path, whose grace increases this thought of the good. (58)

Translated from the Sanskrit by Luis. O. Gómez, based on the edition of Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya [et al.], *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Bibliotheca Indica, no. 280 (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1960), pp. 229–44.

## Glossary

**Abhidharma** (Sanskrit; Pali: *abhidhamma*): literally, the 'higher teaching', a category of scriptures that provide systematic analyses of the constituents of the person, the process of perception, the nature of enlightenment, and other issues of a scholastic nature.

**aggregates**: see *skandhas*.

**Amitābha** (Sanskrit; Japanese: Amida): literally, 'Infinite Light', the buddha who presides over the western pure land of Sukhāvātī, the Land of Bliss. Amitābha's vow to deliver the faithful to his pure land serves as the foundation of much Mahāyāna practice, especially in East Asia.

**arhat** (Sanskrit; Pali: *arahant*): literally, 'one who is worthy', one who has followed the path and destroyed all causes for future rebirth, and will enter *nirvāṇa* upon death. Regarded as the ideal in the mainstream traditions, where the Buddha is also described as an *arhat*, in the Mahāyāna the attainment of an *arhat* is negatively compared to that of a buddha. Certain *arhats* were selected by the Buddha to remain in the world until the coming of Maitreya. These *arhats* (called *lohans* in Chinese) were objects of particular devotion in East Asian Buddhism.

**Avalokiteśvara** (Sanskrit): literally, 'the lord who looks down', the *bodhisattva* of compassion, often called upon for salvation in times of danger. A male *bodhisattva* in India and Tibet, Avalokiteśvara (known as Guanyin in Chinese and Kannon in Japanese) assumed a female form in East Asia. The Dalai Lamas of Tibet are considered human embodiments of Avalokiteśvara.

**bhikṣu** (Sanskrit; Pali: *bhikkhu*): literally, 'beggar', the term is generally translated as 'monk'. It refers to a male follower of the Buddha who has received ordination, served as a novice, and holds all of the approximately 250 vows. The female counterpart is *bhikṣuṇī* (Pali: *bhikkhunī*), generally translated as 'nun'.

- bhūmi** (Sanskrit): literally, 'ground', the levels or stages of the *bodhisattva* path. Ten levels are usually enumerated, extending over millions of lifetimes.
- bodhi** (Sanskrit): literally, 'awakening', commonly translated as 'enlightenment'. The term is employed most commonly to refer to the state achieved by the Buddha and aspired to by the *bodhisattva*.
- bodhicitta** (Sanskrit): literally, 'mind of enlightenment'; it is the compassionate aspiration to achieve buddhahood in order to liberate all beings in the universe from suffering. The development of *bodhicitta* makes one a *bodhisattva*.
- bodhisattva** (Sanskrit; Pali: *bodhisatta*): often glossed as 'one who has the intention to achieve enlightenment', a *bodhisattva* is a person who has compassionately vowed to achieve buddhahood but has not yet done so. All forms of Buddhism set forth the path of the *bodhisattva*, who works for the welfare of others. In the Mahāyāna, the *bodhisattva* path is presented as the ideal to which all should aspire. The term often appears in conjunction with the epithet *mahāsattva*, meaning 'great being'.
- cakravartin** (Sanskrit): literally, 'wheel turner', an ideal monarch who rules according to the teachings of the Buddha. The Indian emperor Aśoka is often described as a *cakravartin*.
- Chan** (Chinese): the 'meditation' school of Chinese Buddhism that traces its lineage back to the Indian master Bodhidharma (who is said to have come to China in the late fifth century) and back to the Buddha himself. The school's name is pronounced 'Zen' in Japanese.
- Desire Realm** (Sanskrit: *kāmadhātu*): the lowest of the three realms (the others being the Form Realm and the Formless Realm) in Buddhist cosmology, populated (in ascending order) by hell beings, ghosts, animals, humans, demigods and gods. The hells are divided into hot hells, cold hells and neighbouring hells. The realm of gods has several levels, both on the surface of Mount Meru and floating above it.
- dhāraṇī** (Sanskrit): often translated as 'spell', a kind of long *mantra* said to bestow extraordinary powers on those who know it and recite it. Such formulae sometimes occur at the end of *sūtras* where they are praised as potent condensations of the *sūtra* itself.
- dharma** (Sanskrit; Pali: *dhamma*): although difficult to translate, the term has two general meanings in Buddhism. The first is the teaching or doctrine of the Buddha, both as expounded and as manifested in practice. The second (in the plural), perhaps rendered as 'phenomena', refers to the basic constituents of mind and matter.
- dharmadhātu** (Sanskrit): literally, *dharma*-sphere, one of the terms for the ultimate nature of reality.

- dharmakāya** (Sanskrit): literally, *dharma*-body, the term used to refer to the transcendent qualities of the Buddha. In the Mahāyāna doctrine of the three bodies of the Buddha, the *dharmakāya* is sometimes presented as the ultimate reality from which the other forms of the Buddha (the 'enjoyment body' and the 'emanation body') derive.
- dhyāna** (Sanskrit; Pali: *jhāna*): generally translated as 'concentration' or 'meditation', the term has two primary meanings. The first is any of several levels of single-pointed concentration achieved through the practice of meditation. The second is one of the four abodes of the Form Realm, where those who have achieved the requisite levels of concentration are reborn in their next lifetime.
- Form Realm** (Sanskrit: *rūpadhātū*): in Buddhist cosmology a realm of heavens above the Desire Realm reserved for those who attain certain states of deep concentration in their previous life.
- Formless Realm** (Sanskrit: *ārūpyadhātu*): in Buddhist cosmology, the highest realm within the cycle of rebirth where beings exist as deep states of concentration. Like the Form Realm, it is reserved for those who achieve those states in their previous life.
- Gautama** (Sanskrit; Pali: Gotama): the clan name of the historical Buddha. His given name was Siddhārtha, 'he who achieves his goal'.
- Hīnayāna** (Sanskrit): literally, 'low vehicle', a pejorative term used by proponents of the Mahāyāna to describe those who do not accept the Mahāyāna *sūtras* as authentic words of the Buddha. In Mahāyāna texts, those who follow the Hīnayāna seek to become *arhats* by following the path of the *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*, rather than following the superior path of the *bodhisattva* to buddhahood. In modern scholarship, Hīnayāna is also sometimes used in a non-pejorative sense to refer to the many non-Mahāyāna schools of Indian Buddhism.
- Jambudvīpa** (Sanskrit): literally, 'Rose Apple Island', the southern continent in traditional Buddhist cosmology. It is regarded as the world that we inhabit.
- jātaka** (Sanskrit): literally, 'birth', a story of one of the Buddha's previous lives as a *bodhisattva*. Among the most popular of Buddhist stories, the tales relate the virtuous deeds of the *bodhisattva*, often when he was an animal.
- jhāna**: see *dhyāna*.
- karma** (Sanskrit; Pali: *kamma*): literally, 'action', the law of the cause and effect of actions, according to which virtuous deeds result in happiness in the future and non-virtuous deeds result in suffering. *Karma* is accumulated over many lifetimes and fructifies to create present experience.

**lama** (Tibetan, *bla ma*): a religious teacher. The term is often used to denote an 'incarnate lama', that is, a teacher who has been identified as the present incarnation of a great teacher of the past.

**Madhyamaka** (Sanskrit): literally, 'middle way', a philosophical school associated with Nāgārjuna that set forth a middle way between the extremes of existence and non-existence. The ultimate reality is emptiness (*sūnyatā*).

**Mahākāśyapa** (Sanskrit; Pali: *Mahākassapa*): one of the disciples of the Buddha, Mahākāśyapa is said to have called the *saṅgha* together after the Buddha's death in order to compile his teachings. He is said to remain in *samādhi* inside a mountain, awaiting the coming of Maitreya.

**mahāsattva**: see **bodhisattva**.

**Mahāyāna** (Sanskrit): literally, 'great vehicle', a term used by proponents of *sūtras* that began to appear some four centuries after the death of the Buddha and which were regarded by them as the word of the Buddha. The term has come to mean by extension those forms of Buddhism (today located for the most part in Tibet, China, Korea and Japan) that base their practice on these *sūtras*.

**Maitreya** (Sanskrit; Pali: *Metteyya*): literally, 'Kindness', the next buddha to appear in the world after Śākyamuni. Maitreya is currently a *bodhisattva* residing in a heaven, awaiting the appropriate time to appear.

**maṇḍala** (Sanskrit): literally, 'circle', in tantric Buddhism a representation (in both two- and three-dimensional forms) of the palace of a buddha. Such representations are particularly important in initiation rites, in which the initiate is said to 'enter the *maṇḍala*'.

**Mañjuśrī** (Sanskrit): literally, 'Gentle Glory', the *bodhisattva* of wisdom, often depicted holding aloft a sword, with which he cuts through the webs of ignorance.

**mantra** (Sanskrit): a verbal formula of one or more Sanskrit syllables, the repetition of which bestows certain powers. The recitation of *mantra* is a central element of tantric practice.

**Māra** (Sanskrit): often called 'the Buddhist devil', the god of death and desire and chief divine antagonist of the Buddha and his followers. Māra sought to obstruct the Buddha throughout his life, most famously unleashing his armies against him on the night of the Buddha's enlightenment.

**Meru** (Sanskrit): in Buddhist cosmology, the mountain in the centre of the universe. Gods inhabit its surface and summit.

**method** (Sanskrit: *upāya*): (1) the expedient means by which the Buddha leads beings to enlightenment by teaching them what is not

ultimately true until they are prepared for the definitive teaching; (2) practices (such as giving, ethics and patience) whereby the *bodhisattva* accumulates the requisite store of merit required to achieve buddhahood.

**mudrā** (Sanskrit): generally translated as 'symbol' or 'gesture', any of the many hand gestures of the Buddha, such as 'turning the wheel of the *dharmā*' or 'touching the earth'. In tantric Buddhism, *mudrā* are an important part of ritual practice, where they are regarded as physical embodiments of enlightenment.

**Nāgārjuna** (Sanskrit): Indian monk of the second century, regarded as the chief proponent of the doctrine of emptiness and as the founder of the Madhyamaka school. In traditional biographies, he is credited with retrieving the perfection of wisdom *sūtras* from the ocean realm of the serpent king.

**nembutsu** (Japanese): literally, 'buddha recitation', the practice of reciting the phrase, 'Homage to Amitābha Buddha'. A general Mahāyāna practice in China (and possibly in India), it became the central practice of the Pure Land (Shinshū) schools of Japan.

**nirmāṇakāya** (Sanskrit): literally, 'emanation body', the third of the three bodies of the Buddha. It is this body that appears in the realm of humans and teaches the *dharmā*. According to this Mahāyāna view, the Buddha who appeared on earth was the magical display of a buddha enlightened long before.

**nirvāṇa** (Sanskrit; Pali: *nibbāna*): literally 'blowing out', the cessation of suffering and hence the goal of Buddhist practice. The nature of *nirvāṇa* is widely interpreted in Buddhist literature, with distinctions being made between the vision of *nirvāṇa* that destroys the seeds of future rebirth and the final *nirvāṇa* entered upon death. Mahāyāna texts also distinguished between the *nirvāṇa* of an *arhat* and the enlightenment of a buddha. The term **parinirvāṇa** (Pali: *parinibbāna*), often translated as 'final *nirvāṇa*' or 'complete *nirvāṇa*', is sometimes used to describe the passage into *nirvāṇa* at death.

**parinirvāṇa**: see **nirvāṇa**.

**perfection of wisdom**: see **prajñāpāramitā**.

**prajñāpāramitā** (Sanskrit): literally 'perfection of wisdom', the understanding of reality required to achieve buddhahood, according to many Mahāyāna *sūtras*. The term also describes a genre of Mahāyāna *sūtras* devoted to the exposition of emptiness and the *bodhisattva* path.

**pratyekabuddha** (Sanskrit; Pali: *paccekabuddha*): literally, 'individually enlightened one', a disciple of the Buddha devoted to solitary practice who achieves the state of an *arhat* without relying on the

teachings of a buddha in his last lifetime. According to Mahāyāna exegetes the path of the *pratyekabuddha*, together with the path of the *śrāvaka*, constitute the Hīnayāna.

**pure land**: also referred to as a buddha-field, the domain that a buddha creates as an ideal setting for the practice of the *dharma*. Functioning in the Mahāyāna as a form of paradise, rebirth in a pure land, especially the pure land of Amitābha, was the focus of various practices, especially in East Asia.

**Śākyamuni** (Sanskrit): literally, 'Sage of the Śākya Clan', an epithet of the historical Buddha.

**samādhi** (Sanskrit): a state of deep concentration developed through meditation practice. One of the three trainings (along with ethics and wisdom), *samādhi*, especially a specific level known as serenity (*śamatha*), is regarded as a prerequisite for liberating wisdom.

**śamatha**: see *samādhi*.

**sambhogakāya** (Sanskrit): literally, 'enjoyment body', one of the three bodies of the Buddha. The *sambhogakāya* appears to *bodhisattvas* in pure lands.

**samsāra** (Sanskrit): literally, 'wandering', the beginningless cycle of birth, death and rebirth, composed of the realms of gods, demigods, humans, animals, ghosts and hell beings. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is liberation from *samsāra*.

**saṅgha** (Sanskrit): literally, 'community', a term most commonly used to refer to the order of Buddhist monks and nuns, it can be used more generally for any community of Buddhists, including fully ordained monks, fully ordained nuns, male novices, female novices, laymen and laywomen.

**śāstra** (Sanskrit): generally translated as 'treatise', one of the major genres, together with *sūtras*, of Indian Buddhist literature, consisting of commentaries and independent works on a variety of topics. Unlike *sūtras*, which are traditionally attributed to the Buddha or his inspiration, *śāstras* are attributed to specific figures in Indian Buddhism.

**siddhi** (Sanskrit): literally, 'achievement', a *siddhi* is a power gained through yogic practice. The term is especially important in Buddhist *tantra*, where there are two types of *siddhis*: (1) the mundane or worldly, such as the power to fly, walk through walls and transmute base metals into gold, and (2) the supramundane or transcendent *siddhi* of buddhahood. One who possesses *siddhi* is called a *siddha*, hence the *mahāsiddhas* or great adepts of Indian tantric literature.

**six perfections** (Sanskrit: *pāramitā*): the deeds performed by a *bodhisattva* on the path to buddhahood: giving, ethics, patience, effort, concentration and wisdom.

**skandhas** (Sanskrit): literally 'aggregates', one of the terms used to describe the physical and mental constituents of the person, among which there is no self. The five constituents are form, feeling, discrimination, conditioning factors and consciousness.

**śrāvaka** (Sanskrit): literally, 'listener', a general term for a disciple of the Buddha, interpreted in the Mahāyāna to designate those who follow the path in order to become an *arhat*. According to Mahāyāna exegetes the path of the *śrāvaka*, together with the path of the *pratyekabuddha*, constitute the Hīnayāna.

**stūpa** (Sanskrit): a reliquary containing the remains or possessions of the Buddha or a Buddhist saint. Initially taking the form of a hemisphere in India, *stūpas* developed into a variety of architectural forms across Asia, including the pagoda in East Asia. *Stūpas* have served as important places of pilgrimage throughout the history of Buddhism.

**sugata** (Sanskrit): an epithet of a buddha, meaning literally 'well gone'.

**Sukhāvati** (Sanskrit): literally, 'the Land of Bliss', the pure land presided over by the buddha Amitābha. It is also known as the western paradise.

**śūnyatā** (Sanskrit): literally, 'emptiness', the absence of substantial nature or intrinsic existence in any phenomenon in the universe. In the Madhyamaka philosophy of Nāgārjuna, emptiness is the final nature of reality and the understanding of emptiness is essential for the achievement of enlightenment.

**sūtra** (Sanskrit; Pali: *sutta*): literally, 'aphorism', a discourse traditionally regarded as having been spoken by the Buddha or spoken with his sanction.

**tantra** (Sanskrit): literally, 'continuum', *tantra* in its most general sense means a manual or handbook. In Buddhism it refers to a text that contains esoteric teachings, often ascribed to the Buddha. These texts provide techniques for gaining *siddhis*, both mundane and supramundane.

**tathāgata** (Sanskrit): literally, 'one who has thus come' or 'one who has thus gone'; an epithet of a buddha.

**tathāgatagarbha** (Sanskrit): literally, 'embryo' or 'essence' 'of the *tathāgata*', it is the buddha-nature that, according to some schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, exists in all sentient beings.

**Theravāda** (Pali): literally, 'School of the Elders', a branch of the Indian Sthāviravāda school that was established in Sri Lanka in the third century BCE. In the eleventh century CE the Theravāda became the dominant form of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. As the last remaining school of the many Indian non-Mahāyāna

schools, 'Theravāda' is often mistakenly regarded as a synonym of 'Hīnayāna'.

**three jewels** (Sanskrit: *triratna*; Pali: *tiratna*): the Buddha, the *dharma* and the *saṅgha*. A Buddhist is a person who regards the three jewels as a source of refuge and protection from the sufferings of *samsāra*.

**three vehicles** (Sanskrit: *triyāna*): in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, the term refers to the vehicles of the *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha* and *bodhi-sattva*. In tantric literature, the term refers to the Hīnayāna, the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna.

**tripiṭaka** (Sanskrit; Pali: *tipiṭaka*): literally, 'three baskets', one of the traditional schemes for organizing Buddhist discourses into three: *sūtra*, *vinaya* and *abhidharma*.

**triratna**: see **three jewels**.

**upāsaka** (Sanskrit): often translated as 'lay disciple', a male follower (a female follower is an *upāsikā*) of the Buddha who has taken refuge in the three jewels and keeps the lay precepts.

**upāya**: see **method**.

**vajra** (Sanskrit): often translated as 'thunderbolt' or 'diamond', a kind of magical weapon, sometimes described as a thunderbolt or discus, made of hard and unbreakable stone, like a diamond. In tantric Buddhism it is represented as a spoked sceptre, and is used in rituals, where it is said to represent method (*upāya*) or the immutable union of method and wisdom.

**Vajrayāna** (Sanskrit): usually translated as 'Diamond Vehicle' or 'Thunderbolt Vehicle', a term used to designate esoteric or tantric Buddhism, traditionally regarded as a form of the Mahāyāna capable of leading to buddhahood more quickly than the conventional *bodhi-sattva* path.

**vinaya** (Sanskrit): literally, 'taming', the code of monastic conduct.

**vipaśyanā** (Sanskrit; Pali: *vipassana*): literally, 'insight', a form of analytical meditation (as opposed to more single-pointed forms such as *śamatha*) the goal of which is insight into the nature of reality.

**Yogācāra** (Sanskrit): literally, 'practitioners of yoga', a philosophical school originating in India and associated with the fourth-century monk Asaṅga. Among its many tenets, it is best-known for the doctrine of 'mind-only', which describes the world as a projection of consciousness.

**Zen**: see **Chan**.