

## CHAPTER 24

### Verses Offered in Praise

#### XXIV. CHAPTER 24: VERSES OFFERED IN PRAISE

##### A. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAISES TO MINDFULNESS-OF-THE-BUDDHA PRACTICE

Now that, in this way, we have reached the end of this explanation of the forty dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas, one should take the aspects emblematic of these forty exclusive dharmas and use them in one's own practice of mindfulness of the Buddha. One should also use verses to praise the Buddha, doing so as if one were standing directly before him, speaking to him. If one proceeds in this manner, then one may succeed in entering the mindfulness-of-the-Buddha samādhi. Accordingly, there are verses, as follows:

##### B. THE PRAISE VERSES

###### 1. VERSES IN PRAISE OF THE FORTY DHARMAS EXCLUSIVE TO THE BUDDHAS

Oh, greatly vigorous lord of the Āryas—  
Now, in the presence of the Buddha,  
I shall praise with reverential mind  
these forty dharmas possessed only [by buddhas].<sup>402</sup>

As for his supernatural powers and travel through flight,  
their power when enacted is utterly limitless.  
Among the psychic powers of the other *āryas*,  
there are none at all that can equal these.

Among the *śrāvaka* disciples, he holds sway with sovereign mastery,  
using his measureless knowledge of others' thoughts.

Thus he is well able to train their thoughts  
by according with their minds as he appropriately responds to them.

His mindfulness is as expansive as the great ocean  
while also being tranquil and calmly secure.

In all the world, there is no dharma  
able to cause him to become perturbed.

The jewel of the vajra samādhi  
that is praised by all buddhas—  
he has acquired it and it resides within in his heart  
just as the Worthies embrace the straightforward mind.

He thoroughly knows the unfixd dharmas  
and the matters associated with the four formless absorptions  
that are so subtle they are difficult to distinguish.

He exhaustively knows them all without exception.

Regarding whether a being has already died in the past,  
dies now in the present, or will die at some point later in the future,  
it is solely the Bhagavat, and he alone,  
whose wisdom is able to fully comprehend such things.

He knows well all matters related  
to the formless dharmas unassociated with the mind  
that everyone else throughout all worlds  
remains entirely unable to know.

The Bhagavat's great awesome powers,  
his measureless meritorious qualities,  
and his boundless wisdom  
are all unmatched by anyone at all.

In the four types of responses to questions,  
he is so preeminent that he has no peer.  
As for all the challenging questions that beings present,  
he replies to them all with utter ease.

If anywhere in any world  
there is someone wishing to harm the Buddha,  
this circumstance never comes to pass,  
for he has gained the dharma by which he cannot be slain.

If at any point throughout the three periods of time  
there is anything that he says,  
those words are definitely not set forth in vain,  
but rather always bring great fruits as a result.

Of all the dharmas that he proclaims,  
none of them are not especially rare.  
He is never in error as regards their significance,  
how much the less might he ever err in words and phrases.

For the three types of *ārya* disciples  
that differ as either superior, middling, or inferior,  
and include the eight classes in four pairs,<sup>403</sup> and the others,  
he is the foremost great spiritual guide.

In actions of body, speech, and mind, and in sustaining his life,  
he is ultimately and always pure  
and hence, in all of these,  
he never again needs to act in a guarded way.

When he himself proclaims his possession of all-knowledge,  
his mind remains utterly free of any doubt or fear  
such that he might think, "If someone comes and challenges me,  
I fear there may be something I do not know."

When declaring his characteristic of having ended the contaminants,  
thus reaching the utmost elimination of the contaminants,  
his mind remains utterly free of any doubt or fear  
that there might be residual contaminants that are not yet ended.

When proclaiming his knowledge of the obstructive dharmas,  
he has no doubt at the prospect of being challenged  
that, though one might indulge in these dharmas,  
they might not actually then constitute an obstacle.

As for the eight-fold path of the Āryas that he has proclaimed,  
his mind is free of any doubt or fear  
that someone might rightly claim of this eight-fold path  
that it is unable to lead one to reach liberation.

He knows in accordance with reality that this is a cause,  
this is its result, and this other factor does not constitute [a cause].  
It is for these reasons that he is said to be omniscient  
and that his fame spreads immeasurably far.

All actions carried out throughout the three periods of time,  
the fixed retribution associated with these actions,  
and their unfixed karmic results—  
He thoroughly knows all of these different matters.

As for all coarse, subtle, deep, and shallow phenomena  
within all of the *dhyāna* absorptions and samādhis,  
he is able to entirely know them all.  
In the realm of *dhyāna* absorptions, no one is his equal.

He first knows with regard to the faculties of beings,  
their distinctions as either superior, middling, or inferior,  
knows what they delight in, and knows their individual natures,  
whereupon, adapting to what is fitting, he teaches them the Dharma.

He cultivated the path and gained its benefits  
while also teaching and guiding others.  
It is in this manner that the community of disciples  
gains the wholesome benefit that accords with reality.

His knowledge of past lives is measurelessly vast  
and the vision of his heavenly eye has no bounds.  
Among all humans and devas,  
no one is able to know their limits.

He abides in the vajra samādhi,  
having extinguished the afflictions and karmic propensities,  
and also knows the utter ending of the human contaminants.  
Hence this is known as the power of having ended the contaminants.

The obstacle of afflictions, the obstacles to *dhyāna* absorptions,  
and the obstacles to the knowledge of all dharmas—  
he has gained liberation from all three obstacles  
and hence is known as one who has gained unimpeded liberation.

The forty exclusive dharmas  
have measureless meritorious qualities  
of which no one could present an expansive explanation.  
I have hereby now concluded this general explanation.

Even if, for an entire kalpa, the Bhagavat  
spoke in praise of these dharmas of the Buddhas,  
he would still be unable to completely describe them.  
How much the less might I do so in the absence of such wisdom.

## 2. VERSES PRAISING THE FOUR BASES OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

The shade of the Bhagavat's great kindness  
has been thoroughly gathered together through countless deeds.  
It is because of the four bases of meritorious qualities  
that he has gained the Buddha's measureless Dharma.

As for these four supreme bases of meritorious qualities  
of which the Bhagavat has spoken with praise—  
I shall now return to these  
in setting forth praises of the Tathāgata.

He is completely endowed with the thirty-two marks,  
each mark of which requires a hundred-fold generation of merit.  
As for the eighty marvelous secondary characteristics,  
who residing in the three realms could possibly possess them?

Were one to multiply by a hundred all the karmic rewards  
produced by the merit created by all the beings  
residing within a great trichiliocosm,  
each of the marks has just such a quantity of merit [as its cause].

It would require just such a quantity of merit  
as well as its associated karmic rewards,  
multiplied yet another hundred times  
to produce a buddha's mid-brow white hair mark.

It would require for each and every one of thirty marks  
all of their corresponding merit and karmic rewards,  
multiplied yet again a thousand more times,  
to produce the fleshy *uṣṇīṣa* sign atop a buddha's crown.

The meritorious qualities of the Bhagavat  
are such that they could never be measured.  
Any attempt to do so would be like someone using a ruler  
to measure the endless expanse of empty space.

From the moment he brought forth the great resolve  
for the sake of bringing about the liberation of all beings,  
he persevered for countless kalpas with solid resolve.  
It was because of this that he then achieved buddhahood.

Intensely diligent in his zeal to achieve the fulfillment  
of such a magnanimous vow,  
throughout an immeasurably great number of kalpas,  
he has cultivated all the difficult ascetic practices.

Just as with all buddhas of the ancient past  
who taught these four bases of meritorious qualities,  
only after countless kalpas were they then perfected  
so that now he has succeeded in securely abiding within them.

a. VERSES PRAISING THE TRUTH BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

Their foundation lies in preservation of the actual truth,  
for which he relinquished even his own body and loved ones,  
his riches, treasures, and the happiness associated with wealth.  
It is through this that he achieved its complete fulfillment.

Throughout measurelessly many kalpas,  
in every instance, he has first thoroughly contemplated  
the dharmas that are seen, heard, sensed, and known,<sup>404</sup>  
and then, afterward, has explained them for the sake of others.

Where others had not observed (some aspect of Dharma) and such,  
as well as in situations where they were beset by doubts,  
he was then able to explain these matters in accordance with reality.  
Those whom he benefited in this way were measurelessly many.

He would not discuss the confidential matters of others.  
Even if resented or ridiculed for this, he still refused to betray them.  
His thoughts always dwelt in a state of stable wisdom  
as he adapted his teachings to lead others to peace and security.

As for the foremost and most genuinely sublime truth,  
nirvāṇa is truly supreme,  
for all else, in every case, is false.

The Bhagavat has achieved<sup>405</sup> its complete fulfillment.

b. VERSES PRAISING THE RELINQUISHMENT BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

[He made gifts of] beverages, food, bedding, and such,  
halls, buildings, marvelous residences, viewing terraces,  
highly prized elephants, horses, and vehicles, and also  
relinquished female companions of especially fine appearance.

[He gave away] gold, silver, pearls, jewels, and such,  
villages, cities, and towns,

entire states, and exalted official positions,  
and gave away [his dominion over] the four continents as well.

[He relinquished] cherished sons, beloved wives,  
his limbs, his head, and his eyes,  
and made gifts by slicing off his flesh, removing bones and marrow,  
or even giving away his entire body.

Doing so out of pity for beings,  
he gave them all, having none that he continued to cherish.  
He did so aspiring to go beyond *samsāra*  
and not out of some quest to secure his own bliss.

All of the stars and constellations throughout empty space,  
and all the grains of sand in this entire earth—  
when the Tathāgata was still a bodhisattva,  
the number of times he gave in such ways exceeded even these.

He never resorted to actions contrary to Dharma  
as he sought out wealth to be used in giving.  
He never engaged in giving unaccompanied by knowledge and  
never engaged in giving that was invasive or distressing to others.

He never gave bad things as gifts  
because he coveted some other fine thing [in return].  
He never gave with an ingratiating deviousness  
and never engaged in forceful giving because of coveting something.

He never gave with a hate-filled or doubting mind,  
never did so with perverse intent or with derisive laughter,  
never did so out of disgust or disbelief,  
and never gave with the face turned away, or in other such ways.

He had no discriminating mind [by which he judged],  
“This one is worthy and that one is unworthy.”  
Because he only relied on the mind of compassion,  
it was with equal regard for everyone that he practiced giving.

He did not slight other beings,  
considering them to not qualify as fields of merit.  
On seeing *āryas*, his mind was reverential.  
On seeing those who have broken the precepts, he felt pity for them.

He did not elevate himself above others,  
treat others as mere inferiors,  
engage in giving for the sake of praise,  
give in expectation of rewards, or give in other such ways.

He never gave with regrets or with worry-filled misgivings  
and never gave with thoughts of disdain or disrespect.

He never gave with a mind affected by irritability or hostility  
and never gave simply as a protocol-dictated formality.

He never gave with a disrespectful mind,  
never gave by simply tossing the gift on the ground,  
never gave deliberately seeking to cause distress,  
and never gave out of a jealousy-driven struggle for supremacy.

He would never tease a supplicant,  
never failed to present a gift with his own hands,  
did not slight the recipient with a merely paltry gift,  
and did not give excessively in order to enhance his own esteem.

His giving was never motivated by intentions associated with  
either the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle.  
His giving was never limited to concern for only a single lifetime  
and he never engaged in giving done at the wrong time.

For countless kalpas, the Bhagavat  
practiced every form of rare giving,  
always doing so for the sake of the unsurpassable path  
and not merely in order to seek his own happiness.

Throughout the duration of all buddhas' Dharma,  
he became a monastic, practiced renunciation,  
cultivated the Dharma of all buddhas,  
and proclaimed the Dharma for the sake of all humans and devas.

He taught just such a dharma of giving as this  
that is supreme among all types of giving,  
just as, among all the stars and the moon,  
it is the light of the sun that is supreme.

Such supremacy in the relinquishment basis [of meritorious qualities]  
surpasses that of any deva or human,  
just as it is the Bhagavat  
who is superior to everyone in the world.

He was therefore able to perfect  
such supreme practice of the relinquishment basis.  
His fame shall endure for countless kalpas,  
flowing on and spreading ceaselessly.

#### C. VERSES PRAISING THE QUIESCENCE BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

For countless kalpas, the Bhagavat  
preserved and upheld the precepts of moral purity  
and opened the gates of the *dhyāna* absorptions  
for the sake of acquiring the deep quiescence basis.

He began by abandoning five characteristics<sup>406</sup>  
and later practiced the eight liberations.  
He entered and purified the three samādhis,  
and also dwelt in the three liberations.

The Bhagavat well distinguishes  
the sixty-five kinds of *dhyānas*.  
There is no *dhyāna* whatsoever  
that he has not formerly produced.

Even when abiding in these meditative absorptions,  
he did not indulge in their delectably pleasurable states.  
Due to the various meditative absorptions,  
the Bhagavat gained three types of spiritual superknowledges.

He used these in the liberation of beings  
and so became supreme in all things.  
For countless kalpas, with a mind of equal regard,  
the Bhagavat widely spread his kindly transformative teaching.

An *asamkhyeya* of beings  
was thereby caused to abide in the Brahma World Heavens  
because he was able to use skillful means  
in thoroughly teaching the *dhyāna* absorptions.

While still a bodhisattva, the Bhagavat  
for incalculably many lifetimes, always  
remained free of any entanglement in the affliction of covetousness.  
Thus he was able to come and go in the world.

Of those who succeeded in encountering him in the past,  
countless such beings thereby achieved rebirth in the heavens.  
As for that quiescence that  
all bodhisattvas of the past were able to practice,  
when still a bodhisattva, the Bhagavat  
also practiced, doing so in a manner no different from theirs.  
Thus, as regards the realization of quiescence,  
that supreme basis [of meritorious qualities], it was entirely fulfilled.

d. VERSES PRAISING THE WISDOM BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

All those forms of wisdom  
possessed by the Bhagavat while he was still a bodhisattva—  
He relied on such wisdom in his quest for bodhi  
so that, as a karmic result, he has now developed this wisdom.

Just as people rely on the earth for the production  
of all the food that it supplies,  
[so, too], as in life after life, the Bhagavat  
relinquished the ten courses of dark and bad actions



and always practiced the path of the ten good actions,  
these [deeds] were all due to the power of wisdom.<sup>407</sup>

He renounced the five desires and the five hindrances  
and thus acquired all the various *dhyāna* absorptions.  
He accomplished this for the number of lifetimes in countless kalpas  
and did not acquire this from others.  
This is excellent indeed, O Great Honored One of the Āryas.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

It is because of the Bhagavat that beings,  
countless in number, have taken rebirth in the six heavens.  
So too has he enabled them to reach the Brahma World.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

Throughout the course of his births and deaths, the Bhagavat,  
even when confused and perturbed by sufferings and pleasures,  
never lost the resolve to attain bodhi.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

Throughout the course of *saṃsāra*, the Bhagavat  
did not delight [in worldly existence] and yet still always remained.  
He delighted in nirvāṇa, yet did not seize on its [final] realization.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

When sitting peacefully there in the *bodhimaṇḍa*,  
he overcame Māra and his armies  
and proceeded to liberate all the classes of beings.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

When he originally strove in quest of bodhi,  
he accumulated countless provisions for the path.  
If merely hearing of them causes one to be confused and perturbed,  
how much the less might one be able to take on their practice.  
That the Bhagavat was able to patiently endure such things  
was in every case due to the power of wisdom.

That, in lifetime after lifetime, he was able to naturally know  
the classic texts as well as all the arts and skills  
while also being able to teach them to others  
was in every case due to the power of wisdom.

He drew close to countless buddhas  
and from them all drank the sweet-dew nectar of their teachings,  
He consulted them and inquired about the many different topics  
and then also pursued additional distinguishing [clarifications].

He was never the least bit miserly  
with the wisdom of the sutras' Dharma,

but rather offered it even to servants, youths, and menials,  
 allowing them to freely receive his fine explanations.  
 Because of this, [the fame of] the Bhagavat's  
 supreme wisdom basis [of meritorious qualities] spreads on afar.

Throughout his former lifetimes, as the Bhagavat  
 pursued his quest for the realization of bodhi,  
 he practiced the great kindness and compassion  
 toward all beings.

Relying on the foremost wisdom,  
 he always marshalled his great strength  
 to take up and do all the countless kinds  
 of rare and difficult endeavors.

### 3. CONCLUDING PRAISE VERSES

In all of the many worlds,  
 he exhaustively contributed all his efforts for countless kalpas.  
 One could never come to the end of them through verbal description,  
 nor could one even reach it through mathematical calculation.

All of his endeavors of such sorts  
 surpass those done by any human or deva.  
 Even in all the many worlds,  
 there is nothing comparable to his extraordinary marvels.

The fruits reaped through such great deeds  
 reach complete fulfillment in the realization of all-knowledge.  
 He is the king of those able to destroy *saṃsāra*  
 and dwells securely in the place of the Dharma king.