

# **Sutra on How to Practice Meditation on Bodhisattva Universal Worthy**

This is what I heard:

At one time, when the Buddha was in the double-storied hall in the Great Forest Monastery in Vaishali, he announced to the monks, “Three months from now I will enter parinirvāna.”

The venerable Ananda thereupon rose from his seat, straightened his robe, brought his hands together so the palms were touching, and walked three times around the Buddha. Bowing in obeisance to the Buddha, he knelt on one knee, with his palms pressed together, and gazed intently at the thus come one, not turning his eyes aside for an instant. The elder Mahākāshyapa and the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya also rose from their seats, pressed their palms together, and bowed in obeisance, gazing up in reverence at the face of the honored one.

Then these three great men, three mouths speaking in one voice, addressed the Buddha, saying: “World-Honored One, after the thus come one has entered extinction, how can living beings nurture the bodhisattva mind, practice the great vehicle broad and impartial sutra, and employ correct thoughts in pondering the realm of the single truth? How can they be certain of attaining the mind of unsurpassed enlightenment? How, without cutting off earthly desires or separating themselves from the five desires, can they purify their senses and wipe away their offenses? How, with the pure everyday eyes they received from their fathers and mothers at birth, and without cutting off the five desires, will they be able to see what lies beyond obstacles?”

The Buddha said to Ananda: “Listen with attention, listen with attention, and consider the matter carefully. In the past I, the thus come one, on Mount Grdhrakuta and in other places, have already widely explained in detail the way of the single truth. Now in this place, for the sake of living beings of ages to come who wish to practice the unsurpassed Law of the great vehicle, and who wish to study the practice of Universal Worthy and to carry out Universal Worthy’s practice, I will now explain the method that they should hold in mind. Whether you have already seen Universal Worthy or have not yet seen him, I will now explain for you the steps to be observed in order to reduce the number of your offenses.

“Ananda, the bodhisattva Universal Worthy was born in the land Pure and Wonderful in the east. The characteristics of that land I have already explained in detail in the Miscellaneous Flower Sutra. Now in this sutra I will explain the matter in brief.

“Ananda, if there are monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen, heavenly beings, dragons, or others of the eight kinds of beings, or any living beings who **intone the great vehicle**, practice the great vehicle, **set their minds on the great vehicle**, wish to see the form and body of Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, wish to see the tower of Many Treasures Buddha, wish to see Shakyamuni Buddha and the many Buddhas that are emanations of his body, or wish to attain purification of the six sense organs—they should study this meditation.

“to the next never departing from the great vehicle, and by the time they have done so for The benefits of this meditation remove obstacles and impediments so they can see the finest, the most wonderful forms. **They need not enter a samadhi, but merely by reciting and upholding it [the great vehicle] they can practice with their entire minds, from one instant of mind one day and on up to three times seven days, they will be able to see Universal Worthy.**

**“Those who are impeded by heavy obstacles will have to do so for seven times seven days before they can see him. Those who have even heavier obstacles will take a lifetime to see him. Those with even heavier obstacles will take two lifetimes to see him. And those with even heavier will take three lifetimes to see him. Because the effects of karma differ in these various cases, it is necessary to explain the matter in different ways.**

“Bodhisattva Universal Worthy is boundless in the volume of his body, boundless in voice, boundless in form and shape. Wishing to come to this land, he employs his freely exercised transcendental powers to shrink his body, making it small. Because the people of Jambudvīpa are impeded by the three obstacles, he employs the power of wisdom, transforming himself and riding on a white elephant. The elephant has six tusks and seven legs that support it on the ground and under the seven legs grow seven lotus blossoms.

“The elephant is pure white in color, the finest of all whites. Even the crystal hue of the Snow Mountains cannot compare to it. The body of the elephant is 450 yojanas in length and 400 yojanas in height. At the tips of its six tusks are six ponds, and in each of these ponds there grow fourteen lotus blossoms that are as big as the pond itself. When these blossoms open and unfold, they are like the king of heavenly trees. On each blossom there is a lovely woman whose face is a crimson-like hue and who shines more brightly than a heavenly maiden. In each hand are five harps that have appeared as though of themselves and each harp is accompanied by five hundred other musical instruments as its attendants. Five hundred kinds of birds, ducks, wild geese, mandarin ducks, all with the colors of various treasures, spring up in the spaces between the blossoms and the leaves. There is also a blossom on the elephant’s trunk. Its stem is the color of a pure red pearl. The blossom is a golden color and is closed and not yet unfolded.

“Once you have seen these things, then if you carry out further repentance, meditate intensively with all your mind, and ponder the great vehicle, not permitting your mind to rest or to wander, then the blossom will unfold and shine with a golden hue. The dais or calyx of the lotus blossom is composed of kimshuka jewels and wonderful pure many

jewels, and diamond jewels make up the stamens of the blossom. You will see a conjured Buddha sitting on the dais of the lotus blossom, and a host of numerous Bodhisattvas sitting on the stamens of the lotus blossom.

“From the space between the eyebrows of this conjured Buddha a beam of golden light will shine forth and will enter the elephant’s trunk. Taking on the color of a red lotus blossom, it will emerge from the elephant’s trunk and enter the elephant’s eyes. Emerging from the elephant’s eyes, it will enter the elephant’s ears. Emerging from the elephant’s ears, it will illuminate the crown of the elephant’s head, where it will be transformed into a golden dais.

“On top of the elephant’s head there will be three conjured persons, one grasping a golden wheel, one holding a mani jewel, and one wielding a diamond-pounder. When the last raises the diamond-pounder and signals to the elephant, then the elephant is allowed to begin walking. His feet do not touch the ground, but he treads on empty air and moves about freely. He is elevated seven feet above the ground, but his footprints appear on the ground. In every footprint there is a thousand-spoked wheel, and in each of these wheels a large lotus blossom springs up. On each of these lotus blossoms there appears a conjured elephant, which also has seven feet and follows along after the big elephant. Each time these elephants raise and lower their feet, seven thousand other elephants appear to act as their attendants, all following along after the big elephant.

“The elephant’s trunk is the color of a red lotus blossom, and on top of it is a conjured Buddha who emits a light from the area between his eyebrows. This light is golden in color. As before, it enters the elephant’s trunk, emerges from the elephant’s trunk to enter the elephant’s eyes, emerges from the elephant’s eyes to enter the elephant’s ears, and emerges from the elephant’s ears to reach to the elephant’s crown. There it gradually extends until it reaches the elephant’s back, where it is transformed and becomes a golden saddle adorned with the seven treasures. On the four sides of the saddle are pillars made of the seven treasures and with many different treasures adorning them, which serve to form a jeweled dais. In the center of the dais or calyx is a single lotus blossom stamen made of the seven treasures, and that lotus blossom stamen is made up of a hundred different treasures. This calyx of the lotus blossom is a great mani jewel.

“There is a bodhisattva who sits cross-legged there, named Universal Worthy. His body is the color of white jade and it shines with fifty kinds of light. These lights are of fifty different colors, forming a light about his head. From the pores of his body a golden light streams out, and at the tips of these golden beams appear immeasurable numbers of conjured Buddhas, with conjured Bodhisattvas to act as attendants.

“The elephant moves forward at a slow and dignified pace, raining down great jeweled lotus blossoms, until it arrives in front of the practitioner. Then the elephant opens its mouth, and the lovely women in the pools on the elephant’s tusks play their musical instruments and sing. Their voices are subtle and wonderful as they praise the way of the single truth of the great vehicle.

“Once the practitioner has seen these things, he will be filled with joy and will make reverent obeisance. In addition he will read and recite the profound sutra, pay obeisance to all the immeasurable Buddhas of the ten directions, pay obeisance to the tower of Many Treasures Buddha and to Shakyamuni Buddha, and likewise pay obeisance to Universal Worthy and the other great Bodhisattvas, pronouncing this vow: ‘If I have acquired good fortune in past existences, I should be able to see Universal Worthy. I beg that the Venerable One of Universal Blessing will show me the form of his body!’

“After the practitioner has made this vow, then at six times in the day and night he should pay obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions, practice the method of repentance, read the great vehicle sutra, recite the great vehicle sutra, ponder the meaning of the great vehicle, keep in mind the concerns of the great vehicle, and reverently offer alms to those who uphold the great vehicle. He should view all people with the thought that they are Buddhas, and all living beings with the thought that they are his father and mother.

“Once he has embraced this thought, then Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will emit a bright light from the tuft of white hair between his eyebrows, which is the mark of a great man. When this light appears, the body of Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will be upright, imposing, like a mountain of purple gold, stately, subtle, wonderful, complete with all the thirty-two features.

“The pores of his body will emit a great light that will illuminate the big elephant and cause it to take on a golden color. All the conjured elephants likewise will become golden, and the conjured Bodhisattvas too will turn gold. The rays of golden light will illuminate the immeasurable worlds in the eastern region, so that they all become golden as well, and the same will occur in the southern, western, and northern regions, in the four intermediate directions, and in the upper and lower regions.

“At that time in each of the ten directions there will be a bodhisattva riding on a kingly white elephant with six tusks who is like Universal Worthy, not differing from him in the slightest. And the conjured elephants that fill the immeasurable and boundless worlds in the ten directions will all become visible to the upholder of the sutra through the transcendental power of Bodhisattva Universal Worthy.

“At that time the practitioner, seeing these Bodhisattvas, will rejoice in body and mind and, making obeisance to them, will say: ‘You beings of great compassion and great pity, because you are kind and thoughtful of me, preach the Law for my sake!’ And when he has spoken these words, the Bodhisattvas, different mouths speaking with a single sound, will each one preach the pure Law of the great vehicle sutra, and will fashion verses and hymns in praise of the practitioner. This is called the first realm in the meditation on Bodhisattva Universal Worthy.

“At that time, once the practitioner has seen these things, if he keeps his mind fixed on the great vehicle, day and night never letting go, then when he is asleep he will dream he sees Universal Worthy preaching the Law for him just as if he were awake, bringing ease to his

mind and speaking these words: 'In what you have been reciting and upholding, you have forgotten this phrase, you have forgotten this verse!'

"At that time the practitioner, hearing Universal Worthy preach the profound Law, will come to understand its meaning and purport, will retain it firmly in his memory without forgetting, and in this manner his mind day by day will become more acute.

"Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will teach him to consider and keep in mind the Buddhas of the ten directions. By following Universal Worthy's instructions, with correct mind and correct thought, gradually he will be able to employ his mind's eye to see the Buddhas of the eastern direction, their bodies a golden hue, upright, imposing, subtle, and wonderful.

"Having seen one Buddha, he will then see another Buddha, and so on step by step until he has seen all the Buddhas everywhere in the eastern direction. Because the ponderings of his mind are acute, he will be able to see all the Buddhas of the ten directions.

"When he has seen these Buddhas, his mind will be filled with joy and he will say to himself: 'Thanks to the great vehicle, I have been able to see this great man [Universal Worthy]. And thanks to the power of this great man, I have been able to see these Buddhas. But though I have seen these Buddhas, I have not done so with complete clarity. When I close my eyes, I see them, but when I open my eyes, they vanish!'

"Having spoken these words, he should fling his body and limbs to the ground and make obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions everywhere. Having made obeisance to the Buddhas, he should kneel on one knee, press his palms together, and speak these words: 'You Buddhas, world-honored ones, with the ten powers, fearlessness, the eighteen unshared properties, great compassion, great pity, and the three types of tranquility. You are constantly in the world, your forms are the finest of all forms. What guilt do I possess, that I am not able to see you?'

"When he has spoken these words, he should carry out further repentance. Once he has purified himself through repentance, then Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will appear before him again, and whether he is walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, will never leave his side. Even when he is dreaming, the bodhisattva will constantly preach the Law for him, and when the practitioner wakes from his dream, he will experience the joy and delight of the Law.

"If he does this day and night for three times seven days, he will thereafter be able to acquire the dharani of repetitions. And because he has acquired the dharani of repetitions, he will be able to remember and uphold the wonderful Law preached by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas without forgetting anything. In addition, in his dreams he will constantly see the seven Buddhas of the past. Of these, Shakyamuni Buddha alone will preach the Law for him, while the other world-honored ones will one by one praise the great vehicle sutra.

“At that time the practitioner, having gained a renewed sense of joy, will make obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions. When he has made obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions, Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will remain in his presence and will teach and explain to him all the deeds and causes from his past existences, enabling him to confess all the sins that blacken his past. He will then confront the various world-honored ones and with his own mouth will confess them.

“Once he has confessed them, he will immediately gain the samadhi in which the Buddhas are present before him. Having gained this samadhi, in the eastern region he will see Akshobhya Buddha and his land, Wonderful Joy, all perfectly clear and visible. In this way in the ten directions he will be able to see each of the various Buddhas and their supremely wonderful lands, all perfectly clear and visible.

“After he has seen the Buddhas of the ten directions, he will dream that on top of the elephant’s head there is a diamond man holding a diamond-pounder who uses it everywhere to point to the six sense organs. When he has finished pointing to the six sense organs, then Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will expound for the practitioner the method of repentance and the purification of the six sense organs.

“He should carry out repentance in this manner for one day and on up to three times seven days. Because he has the power of the samadhi in which the Buddhas are present before him, and because Bodhisattva Universal Worthy’s preaching of the Law adorns him, his ears will bit by bit come to hear sounds without impediment, his eyes will bit by bit see events without impediment, his nose will bit by bit smell scents without impediment, and his preaching far and wide will be in accordance with the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law. Having attained the purification of the six sense organs, he will rejoice in body and mind and will be free of all evil imaginings. His mind will be wholly imbued with the Law and will respond in accord with the Law.

“Once more he will gain hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of Dharanis of repetition and far and wide will see immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of Buddhas. Each of these world-honored ones will stretch out his right hand, pat the practitioner’s head, and speak these words: ‘Excellent, excellent! You practice the great vehicle, you have set your mind on great adornment, and you keep the great vehicle in your thoughts. In the past, when we set our own minds on the attainment of enlightenment, we were all like this. You must be diligent and attentive and never falter.

“Because in previous existences we practiced the great vehicle, we have now acquired pure bodies of right and universal knowledge. You must now pursue your efforts without slackening. This great vehicle sutra is the treasure storehouse of the Buddhas, the eye of the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three existences, the seed from which spring the thus come ones of the three existences.

“One who upholds this sutra upholds the body of a Buddha and practices the deeds of a Buddha. You should know that such a person is an envoy sent by the Buddhas. The

Buddhas, world-honored ones, clothe him with their robes. He is a true son of the Law of the Buddhas, the thus come ones. You should practice the great vehicle and never cut off the seed of the Law. Now you must meditate attentively on the Buddhas of the eastern region.’

“When these words have been spoken, the practitioner will at once see all the immeasurable worlds of the eastern region. The ground in them will be flat as the palm of a hand, without knolls or peaks or thorny groves. The ground will be of lapis lazuli, with gold marking the boundaries. The worlds in all the other of the ten directions will be the same as this.

“After seeing these things, he will see jeweled trees. The jeweled trees will be tall and wonderful, five thousand yojanas high. From the trees will emerge a constant flow of gold and silver, and they will be adorned with the seven treasures. Underneath the trees, jeweled lion seats will appear of themselves. These lion seats will be twenty yojanas high, and from the surface of the seats will radiate the bright light of a hundred treasures. There will be these trees and their jeweled seats, and each of these jeweled seats will be bathed in the bright light of a hundred treasures. There will be these trees and their jeweled seats, and in each of these jeweled seats five hundred white elephants will appear of themselves, and on the back of all of these elephants will be a bodhisattva Universal Worthy.

“At that time the practitioner will do obeisance to these Universal Worthies and say to them: ‘What guilt do I possess, that I can see only the jeweled ground, the jeweled seats, and the jeweled trees, but cannot see the Buddhas?’

“When he has spoken these words, on each one of the seats a world-honored one will appear, upright, imposing, subtle, and wonderful, seated on the jeweled seat. Having seen these Buddhas, his mind will be filled with great joy and he will devote himself once more to reciting and studying the great vehicle sutra.

“Through the power of the great vehicle, a voice will sound in midair, speaking these words of praise: ‘Excellent, excellent, good man. You practice the great vehicle, and the causes and conditions deriving from its benefits have enabled you to see these Buddhas. But although you have now been able to see these Buddhas, the world-honored ones, you cannot see Shakyamuni Buddha, the Buddhas that are emanations of his body, or the tower of Many Treasures Buddha.’

“When the practitioner has heard this voice from midair, he will once more diligently recite and study the great vehicle sutra. And because he recites and studies the great vehicle broad and impartial sutra, immediately in a dream he will see Shakyamuni Buddha and the members of the great assembly on Mount Grdhrakuta, the Buddha preaching the Lotus Sutra and expounding the principle of the single truth.

“Having received instruction, he will carry out repentance and, eager and thirsting for a further sight, will press his palms together, kneel on one knee, face Mount Gridhrakuta,

and speak these words: 'Thus Come One, hero of the world, you are constantly in this world. Because you pity and take thought for me, for my sake make yourself manifest.'

"Having spoken these words, he will see Mount Gridhrakuta adorned with seven treasures, the great assembly of countless monks and voice-hearers, the rows of jeweled trees, the jeweled ground level and smooth, the wonderfully jeweled lion seats spread there, and Shakyamuni Buddha emitting a light from the space between his eyebrows. This light will illuminate the worlds everywhere in the ten directions and will pass through the immeasurable worlds in the ten directions. In the places where the light reaches, the emanations of Shakyamuni Buddha in the ten directions will in one instant gather together like clouds and will preach the wonderful Law far and wide as it is set forth in the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law.

"Each of these emanation Buddhas will have a body the hue of purple gold. Their bodies will be boundless in volume, and they will be seated on lion seats. Hundreds, millions, an immeasurable number of great Bodhisattvas will attend them as followers, and each of these Bodhisattvas will carry out practices identical to those of Universal Worthy. In all the ten directions, the immeasurable Buddhas and their bodhisattva followers will be like this.

"When these great assemblies have gathered together like clouds, the practitioner will see Shakyamuni Buddha emit a golden light from all the pores of his body, and in each ray of light there will be hundreds and millions of conjured Buddhas. The emanation Buddhas will emit a light from the tuft of white hair between their eyebrows, the mark of a great man, and these beams of light will flow up to and enter the crown of Shakyamuni Buddha's head. When the practitioner sees this sign, the emanation Buddhas will emit rays of golden light from all their pores, and in each ray of light there will be conjured Buddhas as numerous as the finest particles of sand in the Ganges.

"At that time Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will once more emit a light from the space between his eyebrows, the mark of a great man, which will enter the mind of the practitioner. As soon as it has entered his mind, the practitioner will of his own accord recall how in the past under countless hundreds and thousands of Buddhas he accepted and upheld, read and recited the great vehicle sutra. Of his own accord he will see himself as he was in past existences, all perfectly clear and visible. It will be exactly as though he possessed the power of knowing past lives. He will attain a sudden burst of great enlightenment and will gain the dharani of repetitions and hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of dharani teachings.

"Rising from his samadhi, he will see before him all the emanation Buddhas seated on lion seats underneath the many jeweled trees. And he will see the lapis lazuli ground spring up from a space in the lower region like a mass of lotus blossoms, and within each blossom there will be Bodhisattvas, as numerous as dust particles, sitting cross-legged. He will also see the Bodhisattvas who are emanations of Universal Worthy in the midst of this throng, praising and preaching the great vehicle.

“At that time the Bodhisattvas, different mouths speaking in a single voice, will teach the practitioner how to purify his six sense organs. Some will say, ‘You must keep the Buddha in mind!’ Some will say, ‘You must keep the Law in mind!’ Some will say, ‘You must keep the Order in mind!’ Some will say, ‘You must keep the precepts in mind!’ Some will say, ‘You must keep almsgiving in mind!’ Some will say, ‘You must keep heaven in mind!’ These six rules constitute the mind that aspires to enlightenment; they are the rules that produce the bodhisattva. Now in the presence of the Buddhas you must confess your former offenses and sincerely carry out repentance.

“Over an immeasurable number of existences, **because of the organ of your eye** you have been greedily attached to forms. Because of this attachment to forms, you have been greedy for and coveted mere dust. And because you coveted dust, you have taken on female form, being born in existence after existence with this deluded attachment to forms. Forms have destroyed your eyes, making you the slave of sexual desire. Hence forms cause you to keep passing through the threefold world. Driven on by these evil forces, you have been blinded and made incapable of sight.

**“Now you recite the great vehicle broad and impartial sutra, and this sutra preaches that the Buddhas of the ten directions have forms and bodies that never pass into extinction. Now can you see the truth of that statement or not? Your eye organ is faulty and has caused you great injury. You must follow our instructions and take refuge in the Buddhas and Shakyamuni Buddha, describing the offenses that your eye organ has led you to commit. Say, “The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with their eyes of wisdom possess the water of the Law. I beg them to wash me and cause me to be pure!”**

“When you have spoken these words, make obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions everywhere. Then turn toward Shakyamuni Buddha and the great vehicle sutra and say: “I now repent the grave offenses of my eye organ, which has impeded and sullied me, made me blind and unable to see. I beg the Buddha in his great compassion to pity and protect me. Bodhisattva Universal Worthy rides in the ship of the great Law and ferries all the immeasurable Bodhisattvas of the ten directions across the water. I beg him to pity me and forgive me as I acknowledge my errors, the badness of my eye organ, the obstructions caused by evil deeds.”

“He should repeat this three times and then fling his body and limbs to the ground, keeping the great vehicle correctly in his thoughts, never letting his mind forget it. This is called the method for repenting the offenses of the eye organ.

“A person who recites the names of the Buddhas, burns incense, scatters flowers, sets his thoughts on the great vehicle, hangs up silken banners and canopies, describes the faults of his eyes, and repents his offenses—such a person will in his present existence see Shakyamuni Buddha and the immeasurable number of other Buddhas who are emanations of his body, and for asamkhyā kalpas he will not fall into the evil paths. Thanks to the power of the great vehicle and to the vow taken to the great vehicle, he will constantly be

numbered among the companions of the dharani Bodhisattvas. While he keeps this in mind, this will be correct mindfulness, but if he keeps anything else in mind, that will be erroneous mindfulness. This is called the mark of the first stage of the eye organ.

“Having purified the eye organ, the practitioner should once more read and recite the great vehicle sutra, and six times in the day and night should kneel on one knee, repent, and speak these words: ‘Why is it now that I see only Shakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhas that are emanations of his body, but do not see the tower of Many Treasures Buddha with the relics from his whole body? The tower of Many Treasures Buddha is constantly present and never passes into extinction. But my eyes are defiled and evil and therefore I cannot see it.’ Having spoken these words, he should carry out further repentance.

“After seven days have passed, the tower of Many Treasures Buddha will spring up out of the ground. Shakyamuni Buddha will immediately open the door of the tower with his right hand and the practitioner will see Many Treasures Buddha. He will be immersed in the samadhi on his physical forms manifested everywhere, and from each of his pores will flow forth rays of light as numerous as the finest particles of sand in the Ganges. And in each of these rays there will be hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of conjured Buddhas.

“When this sign becomes manifest, the practitioner, filled with joy, should recite verses of praise and circle around the tower. When he has finished circling the tower a full seven times, Many Treasures Thus Come One will praise him in a loud voice, saying, ‘Son of the Law, now you are in truth able to practice the great vehicle. Following the instructions of Universal Worthy, you have carried out the repentance of the eye organ. For this reason I have come to the place where you are and will bear witness for you.’ Having spoken these words, he will then say in praise, ‘Excellent, excellent, Shakyamuni Buddha! You are able to preach the great Law, to rain down the rain of the great Law, and to bring to fulfillment living beings, defiled and evil as they are.’

“At that time the practitioner, having seen the tower of Many Treasures Buddha, should go once more to the place of Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, press his palms together, make reverent obeisance, and say, ‘Great teacher, teach me how to repent my faults.’

“Then Universal Worthy will speak once more: ‘Over a period of many kalpas, because of the **organ of your ear** you have chased about after external sounds. When you heard some wonderful sound, your mind was roused to delusion and attachment, and when you heard an evil sound; your mind gave way to eight hundred varieties of earthly desires that plagued you. These bad ears of yours have brought you bad consequences as their reward. Constantly you heard bad sounds and these gave rise to entanglements. And because you heard in a topsy-turvy manner, you fell into the evil paths of existence, or were born in remote regions or places of erroneous views where you were unable to hear the Law.

“Today you recite and uphold the great vehicle with its ocean storehouse of benefits. As a result of this action, you have seen the Buddhas of the ten directions, and the tower of

Many Treasures Buddha has appeared to be your witness. Now you should describe your faults and repent your offenses.’

“At that time the practitioner, having heard these words, should once more press his palms together, fling his body and limbs to the ground, and say this: ‘World-Honored One of right and universal knowledge, manifest yourself and be my witness. The broad and impartial sutra is the lord of compassion and pity. I beg that you will look upon me and listen to my recital. Over many kalpas in the past and down to the time of my present form, I have through this ear organ listened to sounds with delusion and attachment, like glue sticking to a plant. When I heard evil, I responded with the poison of earthly desire. In place after place I gave way to delusion and attachment, never ceasing for a moment. Wearing by these sounds, I have exhausted consciousness and spirit and fallen into the three evil paths. Now for the first time I wake to and understand this, and turning to the world-honored ones, I confess and repent.’

“Having carried out repentance, he will see Many Treasures Buddha emit a great beam of light. The light, golden in color, will illuminate the eastern region and all the other worlds of the ten directions, and their immeasurable numbers of Buddhas the color of pure gold. In midair in the eastern region, a voice will speak, saying, ‘Here is a Buddha, world-honored one, named Good Virtue. He too has countless Buddhas that are emanations of his body and that sit cross-legged on lion seats under jeweled trees.’

“These world-honored ones will all be immersed in the samadhi on their physical forms manifested everywhere, and all will speak words of praise, saying, ‘Excellent, excellent, good man. You now read and recite the great vehicle sutra. What you recite is the realm of the Buddhas.’

“When they have spoken these words, Bodhisattva Universal Worthy will resume his explanation of the method of repentance, saying: ‘During the immeasurable kalpas of your former existences, **you were greedy for scents**. Because of this, your discrimination and consciousness were dominated by greed and attachment and you fell into the realm of birth and death. Now you must meditate upon the cause of the great vehicle. The cause of the great vehicle is the true aspect of all phenomena.’

“When the practitioner has heard these words, he should fling his body and limbs to the ground and carry out further repentance. Having done so, he should say: ‘Hail Shakyamuni Buddha. Hail Many Treasures Buddha tower. Hail emanation Buddhas of Shakyamuni Buddha in the ten directions.’

“When he has said this, he should pay obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions everywhere, saying, ‘Hail Good Virtue Buddha of the eastern region and his emanation Buddhas.’ As though he saw them with his own eyes, he should pay obeisance in his mind to each one, making offerings of incense and flowers. When he has finished these offerings, he should kneel on one knee, press his palms together, and recite various verses in praise

of the Buddhas. When he has concluded his praises, he should recite the ten evil acts and repent his offenses.

“Having repented, he should speak these words: ‘In the immeasurable kalpas of my former existences I was greedy for scents, flavors, sensations of touch, and committed many evils. As a result of this, for immeasurable existences I have constantly taken on some undesirable forms in the realms of hell, hungry spirits, or beasts, or have been born in remote regions or places of erroneous views. These evil acts I confess today in this manner, throwing myself upon the mercy of the Buddhas, the kings of the correct Law, describing my offenses and repenting.’

“After repenting, he should never be neglectful in body or mind but should continue to read and recite the great vehicle sutra. Because of the power of the great vehicle, there will be a voice in midair that will address him in these words: ‘Son of the Law, you should now face the Buddhas of the ten directions, praise and expound the Law of the great vehicle, and in the presence of the Buddhas describe your faults. The Buddhas, thus come ones, are like compassionate fathers to you. You should describe the evil and undesirable deeds that you have done through **the organ of your tongue**, saying: “This tongue organ, roused by thoughts of evil deeds, has spoken baseless words, extravagant words, evil utterances, duplicity, slander, falsehood, words in praise of erroneous views, pronouncements that are without profit. It has committed many kinds of evil deeds such as these that cause contention, injury, and chaos, saying that the Law is not the Law. All these many offenses I now repent.”

“After you have spoken these words in the presence of the heroes of the world, you should fling your body and limbs to the ground and pay obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions everywhere. Pressing your palms together and kneeling on both knees, you should speak these words: “The faults of this tongue are immeasurable and boundless. The thorns of many evil deeds have sprung up from this tongue organ. The cutting off of the wheel of the correct Law has been occasioned by this tongue. In this way my evil tongue has cut off the seed of benefit. In meaningless debate it has tried many approaches and forced arguments, praising erroneous views like someone piling sticks on a fire. It is like a raging fire that injures living beings, like someone who has drunk poison and, though free of boils or tumors, nevertheless dies. As recompense for such offenses, evils, erroneous and undesirable ways, I am certain to fall into the evil paths for a hundred kalpas, a thousand kalpas. Because of my false words I will fall into the great hell. So now I throw myself upon the mercy of the Buddhas of the southern region and confess my faults and offenses.”

“When the practitioner holds this thought in mind, there will be a voice in midair, saying, ‘There is a Buddha in the southern region named Sandalwood Virtue. This Buddha too has an immeasurable number of emanations. All these Buddhas preach the great vehicle and wipe away offenses and evils. Since you have many offenses, you should now face the immeasurable Buddhas of the ten directions, world-honored ones of great pity, confess your black evils, and carry out repentance with a sincere mind.’ When the voice has

finished speaking, the practitioner should fling his body and limbs to the ground and once more make obeisance to the Buddhas.

“At that time the Buddhas will emit a bright light that will illuminate the body of the practitioner and cause his body and mind to be naturally infused with joy. He will be moved to great compassion and pity and will be mindful of all beings everywhere. At that time the Buddhas will preach to the practitioner in broad terms the Law of great pity and compassion, of joy and impartiality, and will teach him words of loving-kindness and the practice of the six types of harmony and reverence.

“At that time the practitioner, having listened to these teachings and injunctions, will experience great joy in his mind and will renew his recitation and practice, never slackening or giving up. Then in midair there will once more be a subtle and wonderful voice speaking these words: ‘Now you must **repent in body and mind!** The body kills, steals, is lascivious, and the mind dwells on many matters that are not good. They commit the ten evil acts and the five sins that condemn one to the hell of incessant suffering. Like so many monkeys or like sticky birdlime, they become greedily attached in this place and that, and this penetrates to all the six sense organs. The actions of these six sense organs or roots, their branches, limbs, flowers, and leaves, fill all the threefold world, the twenty-five realms of existence, and all the places where life exists. And they have power to increase and prolong the suffering arising from the twelve-linked chain connecting ignorance to aging and death, so that one cannot escape passing through all the eight errors and eight difficulties. Now you must carry out repentance for evil and undesirable deeds such as these.’

“At that time the practitioner, having heard these words, should question the voice in the air, saying, ‘Where should I carry out this method of repentance?’

“Then the voice in the air will immediately speak these words: ‘Shakyamuni Buddha is called Vairochana Present in All Places. The place where this Buddha dwells is called Eternally Tranquil Light. It is a place constituted by the Paramita of eternity, a place peacefully established by the Paramita of true self, a place in which possession of aspects is wiped out by the Paramita of purity, a place where through the Paramita of happiness there **is no dwelling in the aspects of body or mind**, a place where the aspects of all phenomena are seen neither as existing nor not existing. **It is tranquil emancipation**, it is the **Paramita of obtaining wisdom**. The reason is that these forms represent the Law of eternal abiding. Thus you should meditate upon the Buddhas of the ten directions.’

“Then the Buddhas of the ten directions will each one stretch out his right hand, pat the head of the practitioner, and speak these words: ‘Excellent, excellent, good man. Now because you read and recite the great vehicle sutra, the Buddhas of the ten directions expound the method of repentance. **The practice of the bodhisattva is neither to cut off the forces that bind or drive him, nor to abide in the sea of such driving forces. Observing the mind, he sees there is no real mind, arising as it does from topsy-turvy thoughts. A mind with aspects such as this arises from deluded thoughts, like the wind in the sky that has no resting place.**

**“But the true aspect of phenomena is that they are neither born nor pass away.** Where then is there any guilt, or where is there any good fortune? My mind of itself is empty—guilt and good fortune are therefore master-less. All phenomena are like this, without any abiding, without any decline. This is how one should carry out repentance, observing how the mind is not a mind. Phenomena too do not abide among phenomena. All phenomena are in a state of emancipation, of the truth of extinction, of quietude. A state such as this is called great repentance. It is called greatly adorned repentance. It is called the repentance that is characterized by no guilt. It is called the destruction of mind consciousness. If you practice this repentance, you will be pure in body and mind, not abiding among phenomena, but resembling flowing water. In each instant of thought you will be able to see Bodhisattva Universal Worthy and the Buddhas of the ten directions.’

“At that time the world-honored ones will employ the light of great compassion to preach for the practitioner the Law without aspect, and the practitioner will listen to the preaching of the highest principle of emptiness. Having heard it, the practitioner will not be alarmed or startled in mind, but when the time comes, may enter the true status of bodhisattva.”

The Buddha then said to Ananda, “This is the practice that is called repentance. This repentance is the method of repentance carried out by the Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas of the ten directions.”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “After the Buddha has passed into extinction, if the disciples of the Buddha wish to repent their evil and undesirable acts, they should simply recite and read the great vehicle sutra. This broad and impartial sutra is the eye of the Buddhas. It is through this that the Buddhas are able to acquire the five types of vision. A Buddha’s three types of bodies are born from this broad and impartial sutra. It is the great seal of the Law that assures entry into the sea of nirvana. It is from this sea that a Buddha’s three types of pure bodies are born. These three types of bodies are fields of good fortune for human and heavenly beings and are highest among those worthy of alms. If a person recites and reads the great vehicle broad and impartial sutra, one should know that such a person is endowed with a Buddha’s benefits. All his evils wiped out forever, he is born from the Buddha wisdom.”

At that time the world-honored one spoke in verse form, saying:

If there are evils in the eye organ, if karma impedes the eye and the eye is impure, simply recite the great vehicle; keep in thoughts the highest principle.

This is called repentance of the eye, which wipes out all undesirable acts.

If the ear organ hears confused sounds this will injure and confuse the principle of harmony.

From this arises madness of the mind and one will behave like a foolish monkey.

One should constantly recite the great vehicle, meditate on how phenomena are empty and without aspect, wipe out all evils forever, and with heavenly ears listen to the ten directions.

If the nose organ is attached to fragrant scents, their stain will give rise to sensations.

When the nose is maddened and deranged in this manner, the stain of it will produce various kinds of dust.

But if one recites the great vehicle sutra and meditates on the truth of phenomena, one will be released from all evil karma forever and in future existences will produce it no more.

The tongue organ gives rise to the undesirable acts of the five types of evil speaking.

If one wishes to control and tame it, one must diligently practice pity and compassion.

Ponder the principle of the true tranquility of phenomena, do away with discriminatory conceptions.

The mind organ is like a monkey, never still for an instant.

If one wishes to master and subdue it, one must diligently recite the great vehicle.

Keep in mind the Buddha's great enlightenment body, all the power and fearlessness he has won.

The body, this master of motions, is blown about like dust in the wind.

The six thieves sport and play within it, free from all hindrance or restraint.

If one wishes to wipe out these evils and be free forever from the burden of their dust, to dwell constantly in the citadel of nirvana, peaceful in mind, calm and placid, then recite the great vehicle sutra, keep in mind the mother of Bodhisattvas.

Immeasurable numbers of excellent expedient means arise from pondering the true aspect.

Phenomena such as these six are called the six sense organs.

All the entire sea of karmic impediments is born from deluded thoughts.

If one wishes to carry out repentance, sit upright and ponder the true aspect.

Then the host of sins, like frost or dew, can be wiped out by the sun of wisdom.

Therefore with the utmost power of one's mind one must carry out this repentance of the six sense organs.

When the Buddha had finished speaking these verses, he said to Ananda: "Now you must take this repentance of the six sense organs and the method for meditation on Bodhisattva Universal Worthy and, observing the proper distinctions, preach them far and wide to all the heavenly and human beings of the ten directions everywhere. After the Buddha has entered extinction, if the Buddha's disciples wish to accept, uphold, read, recite, explain, and preach the broad and impartial sutra, they should select a quiet place such as a graveyard, a spot beneath the trees, or a place in the forest, and there read and recite the broad and impartial sutra and ponder the principle of the great vehicle. And when the power of their meditation is strong, they will be able to see me, as well as the tower of Many Treasures Buddha, the immeasurable emanation Buddhas of the ten directions, Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, Bodhisattva Manjushri, Bodhisattva Medicine King, and Bodhisattva Medicine Superior. Because they are reverent and respectful of the Law, these beings will bear various wonderful flowers and, standing in the midst of the air, will praise and pay respects to the practitioners and upholders of the Law. Simply because they recite the great vehicle broad and impartial sutra, these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas day and night will offer alms to the upholders of the Law."

The Buddha said to Ananda: “It is because I and the Bodhisattvas in the Wise Kalpa, along with the Buddhas of the ten directions, pondered the true principle of the great vehicle that we have been able to wipe out the sins accumulated through the births and deaths of a hundred, ten thousand, million asamkhya kalpas. Because we relied on this superb and wonderful method of repentance, now in the ten directions each of us has been able to become a Buddha. If there are those who wish to attain supreme perfect enlightenment quickly, if they wish in their present forms to see the Buddhas of the ten directions and Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, they should bathe and purify themselves, don pure clean robes, burn many kinds of choice incense, and in some deserted and quiet place should recite and read the great vehicle sutra and ponder the principle of the great vehicle.”

The Buddha said to Ananda: “If there are living beings who wish to meditate on Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, they should carry out this meditation. One who practices this meditation may be said to do correct meditation. But one who practices other meditations will be said to do erroneous meditations.

“After the Buddha has passed into extinction, if the Buddha’s disciples follow the Buddha’s words and practice this repentance, then one should know that such people are carrying out the practices of Universal Worthy. Those who carry out the practices of Universal Worthy will not see any evil signs or receive the recompense of evil karma. If such living beings at six times in the day and night make obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions, recite the great vehicle sutra, and ponder the profound Law of emptiness that is the highest principle, then in the time it takes to snap one’s fingers they will wipe out the sins accumulated through the births and deaths of a hundred, ten thousand, a million asamkhya kalpas.

“A person who carries out this practice is a true Buddha son, born from all the Buddhas. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions will act as his tutors. He may be called a fulfiller of the bodhisattva precepts. He will have no need of the confession ceremony, but will achieve success on his own and will be worthy to receive alms from all human and heavenly beings.

“At that time if the practitioner wishes to fulfill the bodhisattva precepts, he should press his palms together and in some deserted and quiet place should pay obeisance to the Buddhas of the ten directions, carry out repentance for his various offenses, and of his own accord confess his faults. After that in a quiet place he should address the Buddhas of the ten directions in these words: ‘The Buddhas, world-honored ones, constantly abide in the world. But because of the impediments of my karma, though I put my conviction in the broad and impartial sutra, I cannot fully see the Buddhas. Now I take refuge in the Buddhas.

“Shakyamuni Buddha, world-honored one of right and universal knowledge, I beg that you will act as my tutor. I beg that Manjushri, endowed with great compassion, will through his wisdom grant me the pure Law of the Bodhisattvas. That Bodhisattva Maitreya, excellent sun of great compassion, will take pity on me and for that reason permit me to receive the

Law of the Bodhisattvas. That the Buddhas of the ten directions will manifest themselves in order to bear witness for me, that the great Bodhisattvas will each one speak his name, and that these excellent great men will shelter and protect living beings and help me and the others.

“Today I receive and uphold the broad and impartial sutra, and though when I lose my life if I should fall into hell and undergo immeasurable sufferings, to the end I will never slander the correct Law of the Buddhas. For this reason, and because of the power of benefits, now may Shakyamuni Buddha act as my tutor and Manjushri be my Acharya. I beg that Maitreya of the world to come will grant me the Law, that the Buddhas of the ten directions will bear witness for me, that the Bodhisattvas of great virtue will be my companions. Now, relying upon the profound and wonderful principle of the great vehicle sutra, I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Law, I take refuge in the Order.’

“He should say this three times. When he has finished taking refuge in the three treasures, he should next swear to receive the six types of rules.<sup>1</sup> Having received the six types of rules, he should then diligently practice brahma practices that are free of impediments, set his mind upon the broad salvation of others, and receive the eight types of rules.<sup>2</sup> When he has finished making these vows, then in a deserted and quiet place he should burn various kinds of choice incense, scatter flowers, and offer alms to all the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, and the great vehicle broad and impartial sutra, and speak these words: ‘From today I set my mind upon enlightenment. May these benefits save all beings everywhere.’

“When he has finished speaking these words, he should once more bow his head to the ground, make obeisance to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and ponder the principle of the broad and impartial sutra. If he does this for one day and so on for three times seven days, then whether he is a householder or one who has left the household he will not need a tutor, nor will he require teachers or the declarations of the confession ceremony. Through the power acquired by accepting, upholding, reading, and reciting the great vehicle sutra, through the help and encouragement proffered by Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, and because this is the eye of the correct Law of the Buddhas of the ten directions, relying on this Law, on his own he will succeed in attaining the fivefold body of the Law, which is made up of the precepts, meditation, wisdom, emancipation, and the insight of emancipation. The Buddhas, thus come ones, are born from this Law, and in the great vehicle sutra they receive prophecies of their attainment of Buddhahood.

“Therefore, suppose a person of wisdom should be a voice-hearer and fail to observe the three refuges, or the five precepts, the eight precepts, the precepts of a monk, the precepts of a nun, the precepts of a male novice, the precepts of a female novice, the precepts of a sikshamanas, or the various rules of proper conduct, or suppose out of ignorance, lack of goodness, or evilness of mind he should violate many of the precepts or rules of conduct. If such a person wishes to wipe these out and cause himself to be free of faults, to become a proper monk once more and observe all the rules as they pertain to the shramana, then he should diligently practice and read the broad and impartial sutra, ponder its highest

principle, the profound teaching of emptiness, and cause the wisdom of emptiness to be reflected in his mind. One should understand that a person who does this will in the space of each succeeding instant of thought wipe away, forever and without residue, all offenses and blemish. This is called carrying out to the fullest the rules and precepts of the shramana, and fulfilling all the rules of conduct. Such a person is worthy to receive alms from all human and heavenly beings.

“Suppose a layman should violate the rules of conduct, doing things that are not good. Doing things that are not good means discouraging on the errors and shortcomings of the Law of the Buddhas, discussing the evils or offenses committed by the four kinds of believers, or stealing or committing acts of lewdness without any feeling of shame. If such a person wishes to repent and wipe out his offenses, he should diligently read and recite the broad and impartial sutra and ponder its highest principle.

“Suppose a ruler, a high minister, a Brahman, a householder, a rich man, an official, or some other person of this sort in his insatiable greed for gain should commit the five cardinal sins, slander the broad and impartial sutra, or carry out the ten evil acts. As recompense for such acts of great evil, he is certain to fall into the evil paths and be beaten by violent rainstorms. Inevitably he will fall into the Avichi hell. If such a person wishes to wipe out the impediments of such acts, he should summon up feelings of shame and remorse and determine to remedy his offenses.”

1. The Buddha said, “What is it that is called the Kshatriya and householder’s method of repentance? In the Kshatriya and householder’s method of repentance, you should simply **maintain an upright mind**, never slander the three treasures, never impede those who wish to leave household life, and never cause harm or difficulty to those who are carrying out brahma practices. Concentrate your thoughts upon the practice of the six rules of thought.<sup>3</sup> In addition, you should offer sustenance and alms to those who uphold the great vehicle, and invariably do honor and obeisance to them. You should think upon and keep in mind the profound teaching of the sutra, the highest principle of emptiness. One who keeps these rules in mind may be said to be carrying out the first act of repentance for Kshatriyas and householders.
2. “The second act of repentance is to **be filial and caring toward one’s father and mother, and respectful and reverent toward one’s teachers**. This is called the second act in the method of repentance.
3. “The third act of repentance is to **use the correct Law to order the country and not to lead the people astray with erroneous views**. This is called the third act of repentance.
4. “The fourth act of repentance is to issue orders within one’s realm, to all places where one’s authority extends, that on the six days of purification, **no acts of killing shall be carried out**. One who observes this method may be said to be practicing the fourth act of repentance.
5. “The fifth act of repentance is that **one should simply have profound strength of mind and determination in the workings of cause and effect**, have conviction in

the way of the single truth, and understand that the **Buddha never passes into extinction**. This is called the fifth act of repentance.”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “In future ages, if there are people who practice and carry out the method of repentance as it has been described, one should understand that these people clothe themselves in the garments of remorse. The Buddhas will guard and assist them, and before long they will succeed in attaining supreme perfect enlightenment.”

When the Buddha spoke these words, ten thousand sons of gods attained the pure eye of the Law. Bodhisattva Maitreya, the other great Bodhisattvas, and Ananda, hearing the preaching of the Buddha, joyfully honored and practiced it.

## **Notes**

1. The six types of rules are the five precepts (not to kill, not to steal, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to lie, and not to consume intoxicants) plus not speaking of other people’s faults.

2. The eight types of rules are the six types of rules plus neither concealing one’s faults nor pointing out others’ faults while concealing their merits.

3. The six rules of thought are keeping the following six in mind: the Buddha, the Law, the Order, the precepts, almsgiving, and heaven.