

The Sutra of the Master of Healing (Bhaisajayaguru-Vaidurya-Prabhasa Tathagata)

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Thus I have heard: While wandering through many lands to convert the beings, Bhagavan arrived at Vaisali. He dwelt under a resounding tree, and with him was a big crowd of beings, including eight thousand monks, thirty-six thousand Great Bodhisattvas, as well as kings, ministers, brahmins, lay-disciples, the eight groups of dragons, and other celestial beings, such as kinnaras and the rest. This infinite mass surrounded him with devotion. He preached to them.

Then Manjushri, son of the Dharma-king and chief disciple of the Buddha, rose from his seat. He bared one of his shoulders, bent his right knee to the ground in the direction of Bhagavan, bowed, joined the palms of his hands, and reverently said: "World-honoured! We only wish you would tell us such and such names of the Buddha, their original vows, and their boundless virtues so that the hearers may know how to keep away from all karmic hindrances by their wisdom, to the blessing and joy of all beings who live in the formal period of Buddhism."

Then the World-honoured praised the disciple Manjushri and said: "Good! Excellent! Manjushri! Out of great pity you asked me to mention the names of the Buddhas and the virtues achieved from their original vows, so as to pull out from all beings the hindrances of the karma which bind them, to the blessing and joy of those who live in the formal period of Buddhism. Now listen well and bear in mind to what I shall tell you." Manjushri said: "Very well, we are happy that such is your wish. We are glad to listen." Then the Buddha said to Manjushri: "Eastward from here, beyond Buddha-land about ten times as numerous as the sands of the Ganga, there is a world called 'The Pure Crystal Realm', the Paradise of Yao Shih. Its Buddha has a few titles, such as The Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, The Arhat of Perfect Knowledge, The Prefect Mind and Deed, The Well Departed Sugata, The Knower of the World, The Peerless Nobleman, The Man Who Brings The Passions of Men Under Control, The Teacher of Devas And Men, The Buddha, and Bhagavan. At the time when that World-honoured Buddha of Medicine became a Bodhisattva, he made Twelve Great Vows to grant all beings with whatever they pray."

The first vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained unexcelled complete Enlightenment, my body should be shining like a brilliant light, throwing beams on infinite, and boundless, worlds, adorned with a retinue of thirty-two forms of the Great Men and with eighty physical characteristics of the Buddha, I shall make all beings wholly equal to me.'

The second vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, my body should be like a crystal in spotless purity both within and without, with splendorous radiant light, in the majesty of its virtue, sitting serenely, adorned with the aureole, brighter than the sun and the moon, I shall reveal my great power to all the beings in obscurity, in order that they may act freely according to their bent.'

The third vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, I should grant by means of boundless wisdom, to all beings the inexhaustible things that they may need and that they may be free from any want.'

The fourth vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect enlightenment, I should bring those who have gone the heterodox ways to dwell tranquilly in the way of Bodhi; and those who travel on the Vehicle of the Sramana and the Pratyekabuddha on the Vehicle of the Sramana and the Pratyekabuddha to stand firmly in the Great Vehicle of Bodhisattva.'

The fifth vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, I should enable the innumerable beings to observe all the moral laws to mend their ways to pure living, and to obey the three cumulative commandments. Should there be any relapse, or violation, they shall again become pure once they hear of my name, then they shall not fall into evil existences.'

The sixth vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, those beings who are physically inferior, with imperfect senses, such as, the ugly, stupid, blind, deaf, mute, crippled, paralysed, hump-backed, leprous, lunatic, or sick in many respects, shall all of them, when they hear my name, regain their normal appearances and become intelligent. All their senses shall be perfectly restored, and they shall not suffer from diseases.'

The seventh vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, those who are tormented by diseases, who have nobody to whom they can seek for help, without a refuge, without a doctor, without medicine, without relatives, without a home; these poor and miserable beings shall all of them be free from diseases and troubles, and shall enjoy perfect health of body and mind, once my name reaches their ears. They shall have families, friends and

properties a-plenty, and shall all be brought to the supreme Enlightenment of Buddha.'

The eighth vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, women who are tormented by the hundred of sufferings of the female sex, who are much wearied of life and long to make bodily sacrifice, shall all of them, when they hear my name, be transformed into men instead of women, in the next re-birth, they shall get the form of manhood and shall in the end attain the supreme Enlightenment of Buddha.'

The ninth vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, I should let all being to escape the evil nets of Mara, to be free from other non-Buddhist cults. If they should have fallen into the dense forest of false doctrines, I should assist and lead them to the noble truths, and gradually induce them to lead the life of a Bodhisattva and soon they shall attain supreme Enlightenment of Buddha.'

The tenth vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, I should bring it to pass that all those who are recorded and condemned by the royal law to be bound and whipped, to be enchained in prisons, to be sentenced to capital punishment, too meet numerous other disasters and insult, to be afflicted with sorrow and anguish, to be troubled both in body and in mind, shall, when they hear of my name, escape evil kalpas through the awe-inspiring majesty of my blessedness and virtue.'

The eleventh vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, I should bring it to pass that all beings who are tormented by hunger and thirst and who, in order to obtain drink and food, if they can carefully remember my name and cherish it, then I should let them taste the flavour of the Dharma, and eventually lead a tranquil and happy life.'

The twelfth vow. 'I vow that, after my reincarnation and having attained Perfect Enlightenment, all beings who are poor and naked, tormented day and night by mosquitoes and wasps, by cold and heat, when they hear my name and carefully remember and cherish it, shall receive the wonderful garments of all kinds, as well as valuable ornaments, chaplets of fragrant flower; and various kinds of instrumental music shall resound. Whatever they dream of, they shall have in abundance.'

"Manjushri, these are the twelve wonderful sublime vows made by the World's Most Venerable Buddha, of Medicine when he was a Bodhisattva."

"Now Manjushri! when the Buddha Medicine as a Bodhisattva, made his vows the stern virtues of them have reached the Buddhaland; if I should speak kalpa after kalpa about these virtues I could not mention all of them. Verily, this Buddhaland is eternally pure, it has no women, nor has it any evil influences, and no screams of pain are heard there. The ground is of lapis lazuli, golden cords set bounds to the ways of this land, the walls, towers, castles, halls, verandas, and bird nets are made of seven precious things. In all aspects it is equal to the Western Paradise. There is no difference between the two. There are two Great Bodhisattvas in this country: the name of one is Radiance of the Sun; that of the other, Radiance of the Moon. They are the chiefs of a host of Bodhisattvas. They represent the Buddha. They guard the treasury of the right doctrine of the Buddha of Medicine. Therefore, Manjushri, all good men and women who have confidence in faith should wish to be born in the world of Buddha."

Then the Buddha spoke further on to the disciple Manjushri and said: "Manjushri, there are those who do not distinguish good from evil. They indulge incessantly in greed and avarice. They do not know what alms-giving is, and what the effect of such a deed will be. They are idiots. They have no faith. They accumulate riches, and guard them carefully. When they see a beggar, they are not glad in heart. When they have to bestow a charity, it is like cutting a piece of flesh from the body. A deep and painful regret ensues. There are other innumerable greedy and stingy beings who gather money but do not use it even for themselves, so how could you expect them to give it to their parents, wives, children, servants, or beggar? These beings, after their death, shall be reborn as hungry ghost or as animals. Now, it may happen that, as men in a former incarnation, they had by chance heard the name of the Buddha of Medicine. Now, it may happen that, as men in a former incarnation, they had by chance heard the name of the Buddha of Medicine. Now in the evil incarnation the name of that Tathagata accidentally recurs to their mind. Then when they remember him, they suddenly disappear and again be transformed into men. There they remember their former life, they are afraid of the sufferings of the bad incarnation. They do not rejoice at worldly pleasures. They gladly practice charity, and they praise the giver. They are no longer greedy and do not regret the alms given by themselves. Yes, in time they are able to bestow upon the one who asks them even for their head, eye, hand, foot, blood, flesh, and other parts of their body, to say nothing of their money and property!"

"Furthermore, Manjushri, there are beings who, though having learned everything point and point from the Tathagata, trespass against the Commandments. There are others who, though not trespassing against the Commandments, trespass against

the minor rules. Others who, though neither trespassing against the Commandments nor against the minor rules, have not got the right views. Still Others who, though having the proper ideas, neglect to learn, and thus they are unable to understand the deep meaning of the Sutras taught by the Buddha. Others are studious but proud. Because their hearts are be-clouded with pride, so they think highly of themselves and think little of others. They criticise the correct doctrine of the Buddha and become the companions of Mara. These fools are not only themselves erring, but they also dig pitfalls for millions of others. They then do evil and are incessantly reborn into hells, as animals or as hungry ghosts."

"It may occur that they then heard the name of the Buddha of Medicine, they may turn from their wickedness, they may follow the right teaching, and they do not fall into evil destinies any more. But if there should be any among them who are unable to turn from wickedness, who do not follow the right teaching, and who fall into evil destinies as a consequence, then, they still have the chance to become men in the next re-birth in case that, through the magic power of the vows of this Tathagata, they are able to hear his name chanted just for a moment. If they take heart to follow the right doctrine and curb their lust, they will be enabled to leave their homes and to become monks. They cling implicitly to the teaching of the Tathagata, swerve no more from it, and from the right principles and learn more, then they will understand the profound meanings. Far from being haughty, they do not criticise the right teaching, do not become companions of Mara. Gradually they will enter the way of Bodhisattvas and will soon attain perfect enlightenment."

"Furthermore, Manjushri, there are beings who are avaricious and envious. They praise themselves and depreciate others. For this reason, they fall into the three evil destinies. During innumerable millenniums they suffer misery, after their death they will be reborn among men but as oxen, horses, camels or donkeys. They will be tormented constantly by whip, by hunger, and by thirst; they must carry heavy loads on their backs and walk long ways. Even if they were reborn as human beings, they will be reborn in a poor hut, and when they grow up they will become man-servants and maid-servants. They will be ordered around by other people and will never be their own bosses. When such beings, in a former incarnation, heard the name of the Buddha of Medicine, they will now be save by Him. If they remember him and whole-heartedly have recourse to the Buddha, all their sufferings will be removed through His majestic power. Their senses will be sharpened. They will become wise and they would like to listen and become learned. They will strive solely for the sublime teaching; they will hold social intercourse with friends who will lead them to the good deeds. They will cut all

nets of Mara. They will pierce the veil of ignorance. They will let the stream of suffering flow off and be released from pains of birth, old age, sickness, death, and all the worries and miseries."

"Still, Manjushri, there are beings who like to do that which is repugnant to others, who like to quarrel and cause displeasure both to themselves and to others. By deeds, words and thoughts, they create all sorts of bad karma. They constantly do harm to each other, they hatch plans to injure one another. They pray to the spirits of the mountains, trees and tombs. They kill living things, take their bleeding flesh, and offer it to the Yaksas and Rakshasas. They write down the name of their enemy, make a picture of him, and, by the use of sorcery, they curse over it. They use black magic and poison. They conjure up a ghost from corpse. This puts an end to the life of the enemy and destroys his body."

"When, by chance, these beings hear of the name of the Buddhas of Medicine, then all these evil things will lose power to harm them. They learn to have compassion on each other. They wish to be of service, they wish to make each other happy. They renounce malice and the impulse to create suffering. Everyone rejoices. Being contented with the property he owns, he does not covet that of others. They are helpful to each other."

"Furthermore, Manjushri, there are four groups in our community: the monk, the nuns, the male devotees, and the female devotees. There are other pious men and women, who believe and observe the first eight of the Ten Commandments. They observe all points from three months to a year. Because of this good seed they have planted, they expect to be reborn in the Western Paradise where the Buddha Amitayus dwells. But, though they hear the correct doctrine of the Buddha, they can not discern and put enough trust in it. When they hear the name of the Buddha of Medicine at the time of their death, then there will be eight Bodhisattvas who, with magic powers, will traverse the intervening space to come to show them their ways, and amidst the colourful flowers of that world, they will be born there by transformation."

"Sometimes they are also born in the Heaven. Though they are born in Heaven, the original good roots are still there, they will not fall into evil destinies again. When their life in Heaven is ended, they will again become men. Or they may become supreme rulers, governing the four inhabited continents of the Universe, and rule in independent majesty."

"Innumerable beings are established in the excellent Karma resulting from the practice of the Ten Commandments. Some are born as Kshatriyas or as Brahmins, some as lay-disciples, some born in a large family. They abound in riches, with

their treasuries and granaries overflowing. Their appearance are awe-inspiring. They have enough relatives and kinsmen, they are clever and they gain in wisdom. They are as strong and brave as the most powerful. If it is a woman who heard the name of the Buddha of Medicine, and if she whole-heartedly cherishes it, she shall never again become a woman in the next re-birth."

"Then, Manjushri, when the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, had attained perfect Enlightenment, to become the Buddha of Medicine, he saw by virtue of his vows, that the beings were suffering from all sorts of diseases, such as tuberculosis, bilious fever, or that they were affected by a spell or by poison, or that some were by their nature short-lived, or that some have died a violent death. He wish to fulfil all their desires by putting an end to all these diseases and miseries. Therefore the World's Most Venerable entered into a Samadhi called the Removal of Suffering for All Beings. While He was in this contemplation a great radiance of light of light was sent forth from his Ushnisa, and he pronounced the great Dharani as follows:

"NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAISAJAYA-GURU-VAIDURYA-PRABHA-RAJAYA
TATHAGATAYA ARHATE SAMYAKSAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA OM
BHAISAJYE BHAISAJYE BHAISAJYA SAMUDGATE SVAHA"

When He, in his radiance, had spoken this mystical formula, the earth was shaken and emitted a great light. All beings were delivered from their diseases and miseries, they are now happy because their bodies and minds are at rest.

"Manjushri, if you see a pious man or woman who suffers from a disease, you shall do the following whole-heartedly for those sick people: let them keep clean by taking frequently baths and rinse their mouths, give them food, medicine and clean water, and recite the Dharani for a hundred and eight times, then all diseases will disappear entirely. When one of them has a particular wish, he shall concentrate and recite the magic formula. Then he will fulfil all he wishes, he will be without disease, and will live longer. After his death, he will born in paradise without having to return to this world, and will in the end attain perfect Enlightenment. Therefore, Manjushri, if there is a pious man or woman who very seriously prays to the Buddha of Medicine and, he or she must always keep in mind this magic formula and never forget it."

"Still more, Manjushri, there may be a pious man or woman who hears the name of the Buddha of Medicine and repeats it and fosters it, he chews the Dantakastha (a stick for cleaning the teeth) in the morning, takes bath and rinses his mouth, until he is quite clean. He then prays with incense and flowers, he burns the incense and rubs the body with perfume, sings the Sutra and proffers offerings

before the image of the Buddha. He copies the Sutra or has it copied, learns it by heart, has it explained to him. He makes offerings to his Buddhist teacher and gives alms generously and not let him be in want of anything. Then all the Buddhas will protect him and keep him in mind. His prayers will be granted, he will eventually attain perfect Enlightenment."

Then the disciple Manjushri saluted the Buddha and said: "World honoured, I swear that I will pray Buddha-truth, I shall cause, by many means, all male and female devotees to hear the names of the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, I shall shout the names of the Buddha into their ears even in their sleep. World honoured, when someone learns this Sutra by heart and reads, proclaims and expounds it to other people, copies it himself, or has it copied, makes offerings reverently and seriously with various fragrant flowers, perfumed unguents, sandal-powder and burning incense, with garlands, strings of pearls, flags and music; he also makes bags of five-coloured silk and puts Sutra into them, sweeps clean a place, displays the bags the bags on a high table that they may lie there in readiness, then the four great Kings of Heaven with their retinue and the other innumerable hundreds and thousands of celestial hosts will come to make offerings and to protect the Sutra. World-honoured, where the treasures of this Sutra flow out and can be received through the blessing of the Vow of this World honoured Buddha of Medicine, and his name can be heard, then they will know that no violent death will ever occur at that place, and nobody's spirit will ever be seized by evil demons and evil spirits. And if it has already been wrested from him, he can still restore it as he was before, he will have peace both in Body and mind."

Then the Buddha said to Manjushri: "So it is, so it is! It is exactly as you say, Manjushri, if a devout man or woman who wishes to make an offering to this world honoured Buddha of Medicine, he or she must first make an image of this Buddha, prepare a clean place to erect it, strew various flowers, burn all sorts of incense, adorn the place with curtains and flags, for seven days and seven nights, keep the eight prohibitory commands, eat clean food, take baths so that one may have a clean odour, put on clean clothes, free the mind from dirty, angry and malicious thoughts, wish to be of service to others, and try to bring happiness to everybody. One should be full of compassion, glad to give alms, and sympathetic to every one. Thus cleansed, he should go around the Buddha image to the right, and sing the hymns with drum music. Moreover, he must remember the blessing of the Vows of Tathagata, read aloud this Sutra, meditate upon its meaning, recite and explain it. What he wishes for will all be fulfilled. If he wishes for wealth, he will become rich. If he wishes to become an official, he will become an official. if he

wishes to have a son or a daughter, he will get a son or a daughter. When he has a bad dream, sees evil omens, sees strange birds flocking together, or has his room filled with strange apparitions, if this man, will all the sacred implements worships and make offerings, then the World honoured Buddha of Medicine will bring it to pass that the bad dreams and the bad omens which prophecy ill luck will vanish completely and will do him no harm. He will be protected from the dangers of water, fire, sword, poison, elephants, lions, tigers, wolves, bears, snakes, scorpions, millipedes, mosquitoes, gnats and other frightful and unpleasant things if he whole-heartedly remembers the Buddha, worships Him , then all troubles will vanish."

Furthermore, Manjushri, in case there is a pious man or woman who does not care for other gods during his or her whole life and whose only thought is to become a Buddhist disciple, and who observes either five or ten of the Commandments, or the four hundred commandments of the Bodhisattva, the two hundred and fifty of the monk, or the five hundred of the nun, and who fears he may relapse into sin and fall into evil destinies; if he or she can only recite the name of the Buddha, worships Him and makes offerings to Him, he and she will certainly not suffer from the three paths of transmigration - the hells, hungry ghost and animals."

"A woman may suffer from great pain while giving birth. If she can whole-heartedly worship the Buddha of Medicine and to invoke the name Tathagata, worship Him and make offerings to Him, all pain will vanish, the newly born baby will have a sound and healthy body; whoever sees him will rejoice at his being so clever, so strong and healthy; and no demon comes to rob him of his vitality."

Then the Buddha spoke to Ananda: "If I praise the virtues of the Buddha of Medicine and let you know that the actions of the Buddha have an occult meaning that it is difficult to understand. Can you believe me?"

Ananda said: "Virtuous World honoured One, I have no doubt in my belief about the Sutras of Tathagata. My reason for this belief is that the karma of Tathagatas, formed through deeds, words and thoughts, is perfectly pure. World-honoured, the disc of this sun and moon may be torn down, the inconceivable high Sumeru mountain may be shaken, but the words of the Buddhas will never change. World-honoured, the beings whose faith is as yet insufficient may question the occult meaning of the Buddha's acts. They think: How is it possible that, by only remembering the name of the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, we can reap so many blessings? Then they do not believe, nay, they challenge. Such people forfeit their blessing and joy over one long night, they fall into evil existences and drift eternally in the stream of miserable life."

Then Buddha told Ananda: "When all these beings hear the name of the World-honoured Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata and cherish it wholeheartedly, and have no more doubts, then it is impossible for them to fall into evil destinies again. Those who have fallen into evil destinies, they have done no good deeds. Ananda, this is the occult meaning of the acts of the Tathagatas; it is hard to believe! You can conceive of it now, and so you know that all that I have told you has its root in the power of the Tathagatas. Ananda, all Shramanas and Pratyekabuddhas, and the Bodhisattvas who have not yet reached the ten stages, are unable to believe the full truth and to expound it, only the Bodhisattva who has only one life that binds him can do it. Ananda, it is difficult to get a human body. It is also difficult to have faith in the Triple Gems, to believe and to revere them. But it is still more difficult to hear the name of the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata. Ananda, the Bodhisattva deeds of the Buddha of Medicine, his skilful means to convert the beings, and his far reaching vows are innumerable. If I should expound them in great detail, I could speak kalpa after kalpa and even longer, the kalpas would soon be exhausted, but the deeds, the vows, and the skilful means of the Buddha would not be exhausted."

There was, at that time, a great Bodhisattva in the community. His name was Seeker of Salvation. He stood up from his seat, bared his right shoulder, touched the earth with his right knee, bowed with the palms of his hands joined together, and said to the Buddha: "Virtuous World honoured, in the decline of the formal period there shall be beings who are exhausted by many misfortunes, they are thin in consequence of long illness. Such a being can neither eat nor drink, his lips and throat are dry. Everything he sees is dark. The signs of death are presently manifest. His parents, family, relatives and friends stand around him weeping. His body lies on the bed, he sees the messengers of Yama leading his spirit to the judge. Verily, all beings have a spirit which originates with them. Everything they have done, be it good or bad, was in the record. Everything was kept with judge Yama. Just at that time, this judge questions the man. He sums up his deeds. He assigns him his place according to the proportion of his good and bad deeds. If at that time the relatives and friends of this sick man could make him believe in the Buddha of Medicine and ask the monks to recite this Sutra, light a seven-layer lantern, hang up either consciousness may return after seven, twenty-one, thirty-five, or forty-nine days. At that time when he returns consciousness, he feels like awakened from a dream, he remembers the award he has received for his good or bad deeds. For he has himself been a witness of the reward of his deeds."

"He remembers this throughout his life's hardships, he no longer commits any evil deed. Therefore men and women who are firm in their faith cherish the name of

the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, worship Him and make offerings to Him with what they can."

At that time, Ananda asked the Bodhisattva Seeker of Salvation: "Pious man, how shall we worship the Buddha of Medicine and make offerings to Him? What are the significances of the banners and the lanterns?"

The Bodhisattva Seeker of Salvation said: "Virtuous One, for the sick people whom one wishes to free from their sufferings, it is necessary to keep the eight prohibitory commands during seven days and nights, and to make offerings of food and drink and other things, according to one's capability, to the congregation of monks; to perform worship according to the ritual, for six times day and night and have offerings made to the Buddha of Medicine; to recite this Sutra forty-nine times, to light up forty-nine lamps, to have seven image of the Tathagata made, to have seven lamps put in front of each image, the flame of each lamp may illuminate a cartwheel. For forty-nine days these lamps must be kept burning unceasingly. Hang up five-coloured banners, forty-nine spans long, and set free various kinds of animals to the number of forty-nine. In this way, the sick people are made to overcome the danger of being violently killed by evil spirits."

"Furthermore, Ananda, in case of a Kshatriya or an Abhisecana or King at a time when calamity arises, such as pestilence among the population, invasion by foreign countries, revolution in his own country, ominous displacement in a constellation, eclipse of the sun or the moon, wind and rain out season or drought through no rain, this Kshatriya or Abhisecana King must then have pity on all beings, set all captives free, perform the above mentioned ceremonies of offering, and make offerings to the Virtuous Buddha of Medicine. As a consequence of these good deeds and the power of original vow of Tathagata, he will bring about the result that his country will be delivered, that wind and rain will come in good time, and will let the crops ripe, that the people will be happy without sickness, that no cruel Yaksha in his country will torment the people, and that all evil omens will at once disappear. And the Kshatriya's or Abhisecana King's life, material appearance, vitality, and sicknessless independence will all be benefited. Ananda, if the Queen, the wives of the princes, the crown-prince, the princes, the ministers, the court councillors, the ladies of the palace, the provincial officials or the common people suffering from diseases, or if another calamity occurs, he shall also hang up five-coloured banners for warding off all the evil spirits, light lamps and keep them burning, set animals free, strew many coloured flowers, burn precious incense, then the diseases will be cured and all afflictions will vanish."

Then Ananda asked the Bodhisattva Seeker of Salvation: "Pious man, how can a life that has come to an end be prolonged?"

The Bodhisattva Seeker of Salvation said: "Virtuous One, did you hear that the Tathagatas say that there are nine kinds of violent deaths? Therefore, I exhort you to hang up the life prolonging banner, to light up the lamps, and to perform the pious deeds. By performing the pious deeds, one's life come to a natural end without suffering from any painful experience."

Ananda asked: "what are the nine kinds of violent deaths?"

The Bodhisattva Seeker of Salvation said: "The nine violent deaths are;

(1) There are beings who become sick. Though the sickness is not serious but there is neither medicine nor a doctor for the treatment. In case they take the wrong medicine, they may meet violent death which can very well be avoided. Some trust in Maras and Heretics, or masters of magical and bewitching powers. From a frivolous prediction of good or bad luck, fear and uneasiness arises. Those people whose own heart cannot clearly discern, question fortune-tellers whether misfortunes awaits them. Some kill living beings for a sacrifice in order to propitiate the spirits. Some call out to the evil spirits and ask for protection, they wish to prolong their lives, but all to no avail. They are ignorant of the right way. They believe in heterodox views, not recognising the doctrine of moral karma. This leads in the end to a violent death. They enter into hell and can never get out of it. This is the first violent death.

(2) Some are violently executed by order of the law.

(3) Some hunt for pleasure, lead and unrestrained life with women and wine, and dissipated without halt and limit. Then the fiends come and violently snatch their spiritual vigour.

(4) Some come to a violent end by being burnt by fire.

(5) Some come to a violent end by being drowned.

(6) Some come to a violent end by being devoured by wild beasts.

(7) Some come to a violent end by falling from a steep cliff.

(8) Some come to a violent end by being destroyed by poison, by image spell Vetala, by spoken-spell Dharani, or by demonical influence to resurrect a corpse and cause it kill another person.

(9) Some suffer hunger and thirst, do not get anything to eat or drink and thus die an untimely death.

"These are what Tathagata briefly named as the nine kinds of violent deaths. Besides, there are innumerable other kinds which cannot all be told here."

"In addition, Ananda, the judge Yama keeps a complete list, with the deeds of each inhabitant on earth recorded, if any of the beings are not filial and commit the five mortal sins, revile the Triple Gems, infringe the laws of the country, and violate the natural moral laws, then the judge Yama examines, whether their sins were grave or light, and punishes them accordingly."

"Therefore I now ask all beings to light up the lamps and hang up the banners, to set free the animals, and to do good deeds, so that misery and grief can be overcome and the life's hardships can be avoided." At that time, there were twelve Yaksha spiritual generals in the assembly, viz:

General Kumbhira,
General Vajra,
General Mihira,
General Andira,
General Majira,
General Shandira,
General Indra,
General Pajra,
General Makura,
General Sindura,
General Catura,
General Vikarala.

These twelve Yaksha Generals, each having seven thousand Yakshas in his retinue, raised their voices, simultaneously and saluted the Buddha by saying: "World's Most Venerable, we have experienced today the wondrous power of the Buddha by permitting us to hear the name of the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, we have no further fear of the evil destinies. All of us are of one mind, that is as long as this form lasts, we shall have recourse to Buddhist Trinity. We swear to bear the responsibility to let all beings be benefited by the path of truth and to let them be abound with happiness. Wherever it may be - in villages, cities, capitals, or even in unfrequented forests, when any one preaches this Sutra and cherishes the names of the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, worships Him and makes Him offerings, we and our retinues shall guard and protect him, deliver him completely from all distress, fulfil all his wishes. When he falls ill and calls for help, he should also read this Sutra, take a five-coloured skein and tie it

into knots, forming the letters of our names, and untie the knots when his wishes are fulfilled."

At that time, the World's Most Venerable praised the Yaksha Generals and said: "Excellent, excellent, Great Yaksha Generals! If you want to return the favour of the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata, you must always be of service to all beings and make them happy."

Then Ananda saluted the Buddha and said: "World's Most Venerable! What is this revelation called? By what name shall we cherish it?"

Then Buddha said to Ananda: "This revelation is called: 'The Blessing of the Original Vow of the Master of Healing, Azure Radiance Tathagata'. It is also called: 'The scared formula' which tells how the twelve Yaksha spiritual generals vowed to be useful to all beings. A third name is called 'The Removal of All Karmic Hindrances'. So you shall bear in mind."

When Bhagavan was preaching these words, all the Great Bodhisattvas and the Great Sramanas, the kings and the great ministers, the Brahmins, the Upasakas the gods, the dragons, the Yaksas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras, Mahoragas, human and non-human beings, all others in the assembly heard the words of the Buddha. All of them greatly rejoiced, accepted the belief and promised to keep it faithfully.