



The Mahāyana Sūtra

known as

**The Distinctively Vast Previous Prayers Of
The Ārya Bhagavān Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā**

(The Medicine Buddha Sūtra)

Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā

Full Title:

In Indian language: *ārya-bhagavān-bhaiṣajyaguru-vaidūrya-prabhāsya-pūrva-praṇidhāna-viśeṣa-vistara-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra*

In Tibetan language: *'phags pa bcom ldan 'das sman gyi bla bai dur ya'i 'od kyi sngon gyi smon lam gyi khyad par rgyas pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

In English: *The Mahāyana Sūtra Known as The Distinctively Vast Previous Prayers of the Ārya Bhagavān Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā*

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Summary

The Buddha has been traveling and arrives in Vaiśāli. He remains there to teach his sangha of monks, bodhisattvas, and multitude of sentient beings how to purify their karmic obscurations, safeguard their lives, and have a better rebirth through knowing the name of the Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā.

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The Translation

Sanskrit homage: *om namaḥ sarvajñāya | namo bhagavatebhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabharājāya tathāgatāya*

Om. Homage to the Omniscient One. Homage to the Bhagavān, the Tathāgata Bhaiṣajyaguru Vaiḍūrya Prabharāja.¹

Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

This is what I heard at one time: the Bhagavān was traveling places and arrived at Vaiśālī. In Vaiśālī, he stayed near the tree that produces the sound of music together with a great sangha of 8,000 monks and 36,000 bodhisattvas, and he was also surrounded by kings, ministers, brahmins, householders, gods, demigods, garudas,² kiṃnaras,³ and mahoragas⁴ who respected him; so he taught the Dharma.

Then through the power of the Buddha, the son of the Dharmarāja, Mañjuśrī, rose from his seat. Having thrown his robe over one shoulder, he knelt with his right knee on the ground. Placing his hands together in prayer, he petitioned the Bhagavān with these words:

“May the Bhagavān teach the distinctively vast previous prayers and the names of those tathāgatas for the sake of safeguarding those sentient beings when the *saddharma-pratirūpaka*⁵ has arisen in the last part of the last age, and so that the karmic obscurations of sentient beings will be thoroughly purified through hearing.”

Then the Bhagavān gave his benediction to the youthful Mañjuśrī: “Excellent! Mañjuśrī, excellent, excellent!”

“Mañjuśrī, you are a greatly compassionate one,⁶ having generated limitless compassion for the sake of the happiness, [274b1] benefit, and aims of gods and humans, and of sentient beings obscured by the multitude of karmic obscurations. Your supplication is excellent.

¹ I have included this salutation that exists only in the Sanskrit, but is not included in the Tibetan.

² Tib: *nam mkha' lding*; Skt: *garuḍa*, sky soarer (mythical eagle)

³ *mi 'am ci, kiṃnara*, mythical being with horse's head and human body.

⁴ *lho 'phyen chen po, mahoraga*, large bellied demons

⁵ *saddharma-pratirūpaka*, refers to a specific time period after the Buddha passed away and his teachings still remained. Along with *saddharma*, referred to as the period of the True Dharma, when the Buddha was still alive and teaching, and *saddharma-pratirūpaka* to the later period after he passed away. As noted by Jan Nattier in *Once upon a Future Time: Studies in the Buddhist Prophecy of Decline*, p. 49 excerpt from the *Candragarbha Sūtra*, “After I die, the True Dharma (saddharma) will remain in the world for five hundred years. Sentient beings will extinguish the *kleśas*, and the bodhisattva with *vīrya* will achieve fulfillment in the six *pāramitās*. . . . And the *saddharma-pratirūpaka* will in remain in the world for a full one thousand years.” T No 397 [15], 13.379c5–9.

⁶ This is based on the Sanskrit: “*mahākāruṇikastvaṃ mañjuśrīḥ*” was not included in the Tibetan.

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“Mañjuśrī, because of that, listen very well and hold this in your mind, and I will explain.”

Having supplicated the Bhagavān, the youthful Mañjuśrī replied: “I will do just so.”

Then with the assent of the Bhagavān, the Bhagavān spoke these words to him:

“Mañjuśrī, to the east from this buddhafield, past as many buddhafields as ten Ganges Rivers, there is a buddhafield called, the Vaidūryanirbhāsā Lokadhatu. There lives the one known as the Tathāgata, arhat, samyaksambuddha, the learned and honorable one, the sugata, the knower of the world, the master who tames all beings, the unsurpassed teacher of gods and humans named, the Buddha Bhagavān Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā. Mañjuśrī, that Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā, when he previously practiced the bodhisattva deeds, he offered up⁷ these twelve great aspirational prayers. What are the twelve?

“The first of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At a time in the future, in whichever of my lives I become perfectly enlightened in the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment, at that time: may the radiance of my body become blazing, glimmering, brilliant⁸ in limitless, immeasurable, ceaseless world systems. May all sentient beings become adorned with the thirty-two major marks and the eighty minor marks of a great being, and may all those sentient beings also become like me.’

“The second of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may my body be just like the precious jewel, the *vaidūrya*,⁹ absolutely pure inside and outside, stainless [275a1] and luminous; may my limbs be broad and great, with glory and radiance blazing and well established; may my body be well endowed with a net of lightrays which excels that of the sun and moon. May those sentient beings who are born in the spaces between the worlds¹⁰ and those born in the human realm who transmigrate into the different blackest dark places of the night through the light rays of my body, may they be able to move around at will. May they also be caused to perform deeds.’

“The third of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: through my limitless wisdom and skill, may the limits of the realm of sentient beings be endowed with ceaseless enjoyments that are inexhaustible. In any case, may no one have insufficiency.’¹¹

⁷ *btāb*, pf. of verb *'debs*, Chandra Das, p. 689, *smon lam 'debs*, “to express one’s wish with force, to offer up to answer, reply.”

⁸ *lham me lhan ne lhang nge*, radiant, clear, and brilliant (body, speech, and mind).

⁹ *Vaidūrya*, beryl. Noted by Geshe Damdul: “Since the Tibetan is transliterated Sanskrit, there is no need to translate this term into English.”

¹⁰ *jig rten gyi bar, lokāntarikā*, Dwelling or situated between the worlds.

¹¹ Here the Sanskrit has *vaikalya*, Deficiency, despondency, insufficiency.

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“The fourth of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may whatever sentient beings have gone down a bad path, may I lead them on the path of enlightenment. As for all those who have entered the śrāvaka path and the pratyekabuddha path, I will cause them to take up the great vehicle, the Mahāyana.’

“The fifth of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may any sentient being when near me practice chaste conduct¹² and similarly may all other limitless sentient beings and all those ceaseless limited ones who are bound as well by the three vows,¹³ having heard my name, may their ethics be uncorrupted. Moreover, may anyone who has engaged in perverse ethics [275b1] not go to a bad transmigration.’

“The sixth of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may whichever of those sentient beings who have a malformed body, incomplete sense faculties, bad complexions, are retarded,¹⁴ have defective limbs, are deformed,¹⁵ have vitiligo,¹⁶ have become lame, blind, deaf, insane, and furthermore, may all of those and any others who have been afflicted by diseases in the body, having heard my name, may they have completely perfect limbs and pure faculties.’

“The seventh of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may whichever of those sentient beings who are vexed¹⁷ by various diseases, without refuge, without protection, without necessities and medicine, without a friend to help, are poor, are suffering—may all their diseases be pacified by hearing my name. May they become unimpaired and free from disease up until final enlightenment.’

“The eighth of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may whichever women have become thoroughly afflicted by the hundreds of faults of being a woman, may they have their wish to be thoroughly freed from being denigrated as a woman, may they have their wish to be freed from the state of

¹² *brahmācārya, tsang par spyod pa*, Celibacy, chastity.

¹³ Three vows could be the ones referred to in previous paragraph: pratimokṣa, bodhisattva, and mantra vows.

¹⁴ *jaḍaīdamūkā, bems po*, Retarded.

¹⁵ *kubjāḥ, sgyur po*, Deformed.

¹⁶ *śvitrāḥ, sha bkra can*, Vitiligo—a skin condition where patches of skin lose pigment.

¹⁷ *gzir*, To be vexed.

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birth as female, and may they turn away from the state of being¹⁸ female. May they be born with the faculties of a man up until final enlightenment.’

“The ninth of those aspirational great prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I [276a1] attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may all sentient beings be completely freed from Māra’s snares. May I lead those who have been turned around by dangerous,¹⁹ incompatible, different views into correct views, and in the end may I teach them the proper bodhisttava conduct.’

“The tenth of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may all those who are afraid because of a frightening king, those who have been bound, beaten, imprisoned, endangered by many causes of deceit,²⁰ for those afflicted by suffering of the body, speech, and demoralized, may they be freed from all harm through the power of my merit.’

“The eleventh of those great aspirational prayers: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: may whosoever of those sentient beings that have done sinful actions burned by the flame of hunger and thirst, have striven to search for nourishment, may I make their bodies satisfied with food endowed with the best colors, smell, and tastes, and afterwards may I lead them to bliss by the taste of the Dharma.’

“The twelfth of the great aspirational prayers of that Tathāgata: ‘At that time in the future when I attain enlightenment, at the time of the buddhahood which is the completely perfectly pure unsurpassed enlightenment: for whichever of those sentient beings who are naked without clothing being indigent, miserable, and experiencing the sensations of suffering cold, heat, insects, and biting insects day and night; may I [276b1] give them the enjoyment of colorful sets of clothing worthy for use. In accordance with their wishes; may I adorn them with myriads of precious ornaments, garlands, incense, perfumes, a symphony of music with musical instruments and minstrels; may all thoughts of sentient beings be completely fulfilled.’

“Mañjuśrī, when the Bhagavān, tathāgata, arhat, samyaksambuddha, the Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabha previously practiced the bodhisattva deeds, there were these twelve great aspirational Prayers.

“Mañjuśrī, these are the very prayers of the Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā and these are the very good qualities of the buddhafield he established; they are incapable of being exhausted in an eon, or even more than eon. That buddhafield is thoroughly

¹⁸ Here I have chosen to translate this has being the “state of being a woman” meaning the state of the gender of being a woman.

¹⁹ Using N (Narhang), *zing gzing*, Difficult, dangerous.

²⁰ Y, Q, N, H, *rgyu*, Causes. *sgyu*, Deceit. Note: In the other recensions, this would be “everywhere by varieties of causes,” rather than “everywhere by varieties of deceit.” *gtses*, Endangered.

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pure: it is without stones, pebbles, or gravel; it is without the faults of desirous attachment; it is free from lower realm transmigrations and without the sound of suffering; it lacks the state of being female.²¹ The ground, walls, fences, gateways, lattice-work windows, and domes are the nature of *vaiḍūrya*; the balustrades are the nature of seven precious substances.²² Whatever is like the Sukhāvātī world system is also like the arrangement of good qualities of the Vaiḍūryanirbhāsā buddhafield. In that world system, there are countless bodhisattvas, among them there are two principal bodhisattva mahāsattvas. The name of the first one is Sūryavairocana, the name of the second is Candravairocana. They uphold the treasury of the excellent Dharma of the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā. Mañjuśrī, therefore may the faithful son or daughter of good family attain their aspirational prayers [277a1] to be born in that buddhafield.”

Again the Bhagavān praised the youthful Mañjuśrī saying:

“Mañjuśrī, some ordinary sentient beings do not know virtue or nonvirtue; they have been oppressed by desirous attachment, they do not know about giving, or the ripening effects of giving; they are childish, stupid, separated from the faculty of faith; their minds do not go towards assiduity²³ in gathering and protecting; their minds are contentious about giving. Their minds would be very unhappy to cut off the flesh from their own body at the time of giving. Since those sentient beings themselves do not even enjoy much, what need is there for them to consider giving to parents, wives, sons, or daughters? What need is there to consider what to do for male and female servants? What need is there to consider what to do for other monastics? Those sentient beings who are like that, having died and transmigrated from here will be reborn into the hungry ghost realm, or they will be reborn into the birthplace of an animal.

“When those who were previously human hear the name of that Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā, even though they live in the world of Yāma, or even though they live in the animal realm, the name of that Tathāgata would actually appear, and immediately the mere memory from that, upon having died and transmigrated, they will be reborn into the human realm. Having fright through fear of the lower realms, they will not seek the sensual pleasures, they will be very joyful in giving, they will express praise of giving, and they will thoroughly renounce all possessions. Gradually they will even give to those who have begged their own heads, arms, legs, eyes, flesh, and their blood; what need would there be to consider other heaps of riches?

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, those sentient beings who have [277b1] broken the precepts²⁴ of the Tathāgatas, having engaged in perverse ethics and perverse views, and those who have ethics but have not investigated in understanding the voluminous learning which

²¹ This suggests that there is no such thing as gender.

²² *rin po che bdun*, This could this be the seven precious substances in Edgerton, p. 450, “suvāna, rūpya, muktā, vaiḍūrya, sphatika, musāragalva...” Stede p. 620, “suvāna, muttā, manī, velūriya, vajira, pavāla.”

²³ Chandra Das, p. 365, *mngon par brtson pa*, “. . . assiduity, industry.”

²⁴ *bslab pa'i gnas*, Precepts.

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protects ethics; they do not understand the profound meaning of the sūtras which were taught by the Tathāgata. Those who are very learned but have become possessed with excessive pride, act jealous toward others because of being enveloped by excessive pride,²⁵ and under the sway²⁶ of that pride, they will abandon the excellent Dharma.

“Those such foolish people, partisans of Māra, have themselves gone on a bad path as well; they cause multitudes of hundreds of thousands of others to fall into a great abyss. The sentient being who is among such ones as those, will transmigrate to the existence of intolerable hell beings. If some of those had previously been human, when they heard the name of the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā, even if they lived as hell beings, through the power of the Buddha, the name of that Tathāgata will appear to them. Having died and transmigrated, they will be reborn into the human realm again, they will come to have the correct view, be endowed with perseverance, and have a virtuous mind. Those having abandoned the life of a householder, and having taken ordination in the teachings of the Tathāgata will eventually practice the deeds of the bodhisattva.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, those sentient beings who praise themselves but speak unpleasantly to others because of jealousy; those who disparage others but praise themselves, they will experience suffering for many thousands of years in the three lower realms. Having passed away for many thousands of years, then having died and transmigrated, they will then be reborn into animal births such as cows, horses, camels, donkeys, and so forth. They will go on journeys beaten by whips and maces, their bodies pained by hunger and thirst, laden by great burden. [277b1] Sometimes,²⁷ even if they found a human rebirth, they will be reborn into a low class family; they will become slaves and be under the power of others.

“If some of them were previously humans who have heard the name of the Bhagavān Tathāgata Radiant Vaidurya Medicine Guru, they will be completely liberated from all suffering through their roots of virtue. Their faculties will become sharp, wise, learned, genuine, they will definitely endeavor to seek virtue, and they will gain companionship with spiritual friends. Severing the snares of Māra, smashing the eggshell of ignorance, the river of afflictions will dry up. They will be thoroughly liberated from birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, unhappiness, and strife.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, some sentient beings definitely enjoy divisive speech, some have engaged in causing fights, disputes, and quarrels with each other. Through their argumentative thinking, those sentient beings clearly cause various kinds of nonvirtues. Because of desiring not to benefit each other and always mutually causing harm to each other, they make effort to summon the spirits of the forest, spirits of the trees, and spirits of the mountains; they summon the different ghosts in the burial grounds; they slaughter creatures who have gone to the animal births and make offerings of flesh and blood to the yakṣas²⁸ and rākṣasas.²⁹ Saying the name of their enemy, even making a likeness of their

²⁵ *gnod* Through harm. see fn. 3 above.

²⁶ *dbang za ba*, Under the power of, under the sway of.

²⁷ *brgyal la, kadācit*, Sometimes, in some cases.

²⁸ *gnod sbyin, yakṣa*, Demons in the earth, air, or lower heavens (JH dict.)

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body, they complete a fierce magical spell and curse, they interfere with a life by affixing a *vetāda*³⁰—a wandering dead spirit—desiring the destruction of the body. [278a1] But those who have heard the name of that King, the Bhagavān Tathāgata Vaiḍūryaprabhā Medicine Guru, will not be able to be interfered with by anyone. Those who abide in the mind of mutual love and the mind of benefit, they will abide in the mind which is without harmful thoughts. Each will be contented with their own respective possessions.

“Furthermore Mañjuśrī, the four assemblies—monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen—and moreover, the faithful son or daughter of a good family, will closely observe the *upavāsa* ceremony with the eight limbs.³¹ They will uphold the fundamental precepts for one year or even three months, and by their own thinking will say, ‘By the roots of our virtue may we reborn into Sukhāvāṭī, the world system where Amitāyus dwells, through that aspiration.’ Those who have heard the name of that Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā at the time of their death, the eight bodhisattvas³² will come by their magical powers and guide the way; miraculously born, they will appear on multi-colored lotuses.

“Some will be reborn into the god realms; those having been born there will not have exhausted their previous roots of virtue and will not go to the lower realms. From there, having died and transmigrated, they will be born here into the human realm: they will become cakravartin emperors, sovereigns [278b1] of the four continents; they will establish on the path of ten virtues as many as hundreds of thousands of sentient beings.

“Otherwise, they will be reborn in such as the households of a royal family, or in the households of a brahmin, or in the households of a layman, or reborn into homes of much wealth, grain, treasuries, and many storehouses with many acquisitions. Thus they will be endowed with a sublime body, sublime power, and sublime clothing; they will be endowed with heroism, courage, and the strength of the force of a great, great many. The women who have heard and apprehended the name of that Tathāgata should know that it is their last time of being female.”

Then the Youthful Mañjuśrī said this to the Bhagavān:

“At a later time, Bhagavān, I will proclaim to the ones who are faithful sons or daughters of a good family, the various aspects of the name of that Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā; to those who keep hold of this sūtra, who read, explain, correctly teach extensively to others, who write, bestow in writing, write books, and pay respect

²⁹ *srin po, rākṣasa*, Human-eating demons.

³⁰ *ro langs, vetāda*, Corpse-raiser, wandering dead spirit.

³¹ The *upavāsa* ceremony is the one day lay precepts including fasting. The *upāsaka* precepts are the subsequently mentioned eight branches: 1) no killing, 2) no stealing, 3) no lying, 4) no sexual misconduct, 5) no intoxicants. Note: the eight Mahāyāna precepts are the five *upāsaka* vows above with an additional three: 6) abstain from taking food at inappropriate times, 7) abstain from entertainment—dancing, music, singing, no perfumes, ornaments, makeup.

³² The eight bodhisattvas are: 1) Avalokiteśvara, 2) Mañjuśrī, 3) Maitreya, 4) Samantabhadra, 5) Vajrapani, 6) Kṣitigarbha, 7) Ākāśagarbha, and 8) Sarvanirvaranaviśkambhin.

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with flowers, incense, perfume, garlands, ointments, umbrellas, and victory banners. Even in dreams, I will proclaim the name of the Buddha closely in their ears. If they have tied five different colored cloths together in a clean place where this sūtra is recited, the four great kings with their entourage and hundreds of thousands of gods, will also come. Those who uphold this sūtra of the distinctively vast previous prayers and the name of the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā will not have untimely death. No one would take their vitality, even if someone could take their vitality, they would take it back again.”

The Bhagavān spoke:

“Mañjuśrī, it is just as you said! Mañjuśrī, those faithful sons or daughters of good family who have made offerings to that Tathāgata should make statues of the Tathāgata. They should observe the precepts of the *upavāsa* [279a1] ceremony which are endowed with the eight limbs of the noble one for one week. They should eat clean food and properly bathe their bodies, put on clean fine clothing, and the places which were cleaned should be spread with varieties of loose flowers. Having burned incense, beautifully adorned the varieties of clothing, umbrellas, victory banners with a mind which is stainless, a mind which is unsullied, a mind which is without harmful intent, a mind of love, a mind of equanimity, a mind of equality, and they should take up the sound of music, musical instruments, and song; they should circumambulate statues of the Tathāgata, and memorize the previous aspirational prayers when this sūtra is taught. Whoever has thought, and thinks of these aspirations, all of that would be completed: if they aspire for a long lifetime, a long lifetime will happen. If they aspire to be endowed with wealth, there will be wealth. If they aspire to be endowed with power with the least effort, they will find this power. If they desire a child, they will beget a child.

“The ones who dream of being sinful, or see evil omens where there is a bird, a magpie, or who live in a place where there were a hundred calamities; when they honor the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā through various types of offerings, then the totality of those bad dreams, bad omens, and the calamities will disappear. Those who are frightened by fire, water, weapons, poison, or a precipice, or frightened by a fierce elephant, a lion, a tiger, a bear, a yellow bear,³³ a poisonous serpent, or a snake,³⁴ or are frightened by evil, or by hundreds of extremities; through purity they will all [279b1] be completely liberated from fear since they had made offerings to the Tathāgata. Those who are frightened by enemy troops, by thieves or bandits, they should also make offerings to the Tathāgata.

“Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, those faithful sons or daughters of good family who uphold their refuge in the Three Jewels and do not adhere to any other gods for as long as they live; those who even uphold all five fundamental precepts,³⁵ the ten fundamental precepts,³⁶

³³ Using C, Cone has *dre*, which is a mule.

³⁴ Using Y, N, Yunglo and Narthang do not include the word, *sbrul*, Snake.

³⁵ Five precepts: 1) no killing, 2) no stealing, 3) no sexual misconduct, 4) no lying, and 5) no intoxicants.

³⁶ Ten fundamental precepts, the first four root precepts above, including 5) no intoxicants, 6) no playing of song and dance, 7) no jewelry and perfume, 8) no high bed, 9) no eating after noon, 10) no giving and taking of gold or silver.

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uphold the 400 precept vows of the bodhisattva, who emerge from remaining at home taking the 250 precepts of monks, and those who uphold the 500 precepts of nuns—just as some from among these who hold the vows of such precepts were to let them deteriorate, if they dread going to bad transmigrations, should they make manifold offerings to the Bhagavān Tathāgata Vaiḍūryaprabha Medicine Guru, they will not know the sufferings of the three lower realms.

“When any woman gives birth to a baby, if she makes offering to the Bhagavān Tathāgata Vaiḍūryaprabha Medicine Guru, she will be thoroughly and quickly liberated from that the awful, fierce, pernicious pain she would experience. She will give birth to a son with complete limbs, a beautiful body, handsome, and beautiful to behold, he will have sharp faculties, be endowed with intelligence, without illness and with little distress. It will not be possible to have his vitality taken away by nonhuman beings.”

From there the Bhagavān spoke to Venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, why I have spoken of the good qualities of this Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā? Do you have faith, are you convinced, or are you of two minds about this profound sphere [280a1] of activity of the Buddha? Are you uncertain, or are you undoubting?”

So these words were spoken. Then the Venerable Ānanda replied in these words to the Bhagavān:

“Lord Bhagavān, I am not of two minds, nor am I uncertain, nor am I in doubt regarding the things which are taught by the Tathāgata. For what reason? It is because there is not a thoroughly impure practice throughout all the body, speech, and mind with regard to the Tathāgatas.

“Bhagavān, the sun and the moon in the sky are just like great supernatural powers, even so these two great powers could fall into a narrow gorge; the king of the mountains, Mount Meru could move from where it stays; but the Buddhas do not change.³⁷”

“Lord Bhagavān, those who are like that, moreover, sentient beings who are separated from the faculty of faith, having heard the the sphere of buddha activities of the Buddhas, they come to think about this; they will think as such, ‘How can there be any benefits and good qualities accrued through merely recalling the name of this Tathāgata?’ And having thought about the benefits and qualities, they do not believe in it and do not have faith. Thus, through abandoning this concept, for a very long time they will be harmed, and without remedy, and unhappy, and they will fall into wrong ways.”

The Bhagavān spoke these words:

³⁷ I am not at all sure about the translation of this long sentence. Here I used the Sanskrit word, *mahāṛddhi*, Great supernatural powers.

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“Ānanda, those who have heard in their ears the name of that Tathāgata, they will not travel to bad transmigrations, it would be impossible,³⁸ there would not be such an occasion.

“Ānanda, the sphere of activity of the Buddha of the buddhas is difficult to believe.

“Ānanda, you are one who has faith and conviction having seen the power of the Tathāgata. With the exception of the bodhisattva mahāsattvas being bound by one birth, this does not include all³⁹ the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.”

“Ānanda, to find existence as a human is very difficult. It is difficult to find faith [280b1] and respect for the Three Jewels. Hearing the name of the Tathāgata is even extremely difficult to find.

“Ānanda, the bodhisattva conduct of that Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā is immeasurable. His skillful means are also immeasurable. The distinctions of his expansive prayers are also immeasurable. Even if I were to wish to explain in accurate detail an eon and even more than an eon of the bodhisattva deeds of that Tathāgata, that eon would be exhausted and there would be no limit in realization of the distinctive, expansive prayers of the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā.”

Also at that time, from within that retinue, the great bodhisattva mahāsattva, Trānamukta,⁴⁰ arose from his seat. Having uncovered one shoulder with his shawl, he knelt on his right knee, bending forward while placing his hands together. Then he implored the Bhagavān with these words:

“Lord Bhagavān, at a later time, in a later period, when sentient beings are thoroughly tormented by a multiplicity of diseases: their limbs emaciated from long lasting illnesses⁴¹, their throats and lips dry by thirst and hunger, when they are in the actual position for death; they are encircled by weeping friends, kinsmen, and relatives, they see darkness in every direction, and are drawn by the spirits⁴² of the Lord of Death, the Dharmarāja Yama. Here, the body of that one lies down, the consciousness also is led in front of the Dharmarāja Yama, and that human being together with its innate divinity follow with the virtues and nonvirtues done by that one. Everything, having been written down well in letters, are given to the Dharmarāja Yama. Having questioned and investigated that being about what virtues and nonvirtues were done, the Dharmarāja Yama makes a command [281a1] according to that.

³⁸ *gnas med*, Impossible. (JH dictionary)

³⁹ Using N, Narthang: “This does not include the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.”

⁴⁰ Skyabs ’grol, Trānamukta, Bodhisattva Refuge Liberation.

⁴¹ Here I used the Sanskrit: *kṣīṇagātrāḥ*, Emaciated limbs.

⁴² Here I have used the Sanskrit: *puruṣa*, Man, human being, or spirit.

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“For the sake of those who have illnesses, they should take refuge in the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā. And when they make offerings by activities such as that, the consciousness of that one once again⁴³ turns around, like one having a dream, abiding there, seeking oneself. Again and again that consciousness will regain its senses and return: again for seven days, again for twenty-one days, again for thirty-five days, again for forty-nine days. The thoroughly ripened virtuous and nonvirtuous actions of oneself would become thoroughly evident; for the sake of being alive, actions karma which is evil should not be done. By being like that, a faithful son or daughter of a good family should perform offerings to that Tathāgata.”

Then the Venerable Ānanda spoke to the bodhisattva Trānamukta: “Son of good family, how should you make offerings to the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā?”

The bodhisattva Trānamukta replied:

“Reverend Ānanda, those who wish to be thoroughly free from great diseases, on account of that disease⁴⁴ they should take the vows of sojong⁴⁵ which consist of the eight branches⁴⁶ for seven days. The sangha of monks should help and make offerings in whatever way through acquisitions of food and drink.⁴⁷ You should keep in mind the name of that one, the Bhagavan Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā, three times each day and three times each night. You should recite this sūtra forty-nine times. You should light butter lamps for forty-nine days. You should make seven statues. Before each of the statues, also place the butter lamps. The size of each butter lamp should be taken and just made into a chariot wheel as well: in any case, the butter lamps should not be extinguished for forty-nine days. You should make five-colored flags for forty-nine days.”

“Furthermore, Reverend [281b1] Ānanda, if the kings, the royal families who have been empowered have been harmed by illness, or harmed by their own armies, or harmed by their enemies’ troops, or harmed by astrological stars, or harmed by the planet of the sun or the planet of the moon, or whether it be the harm of untimely wind, the harm of untimely rain, or the harm of drought; if it so happens that the harm and infectious disease should cause trouble, then through their empowerment, the kings, the royal families, should make the mind of love for all sentient beings.

“They should let go of prisoners, and when they make offerings like that to the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā mentioned above—by the root virtues of that

⁴³ *slar, punar*, Once more, again, later.

⁴⁴ From this semi-colon to the ft. 9 is not included in N, Z recensions.

⁴⁵ *gso sbyong, poṣadha*, Known also as *sojong*, purification vows: taken for one day

⁴⁶ Eight branches of sojong: 1) no killing; 2) no stealing; 3) no sexual activity; 4) no lying; 5) no intoxication; 6) no taking a high seat (no sitting or sleeping in places that would raise pride through high social status); 7) no eating at inappropriate time (no eating after midday); 8) no singing, dancing, and wearing ornaments or perfume.

⁴⁷ From footnote of dpe bsdur ma: after “disease” to the end of this passage is not included in N, Z recensions.

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empowerment by the king and the royal family, and through the particular prayers of the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā—happiness, a happy country, and bumper crops will happen; and the wind, the time for rain will suffice and the harvest will be completed.

“All sentient beings who live in that country are also without illness, happy, and will have many delights. In that country, yakṣas, rākṣasas, ghosts, pernicious flesh eaters will not be harmful to sentient beings. Bad omens will not be seen anywhere. At the time of the empowerment of the royal lineage king, the appearance, strength, the health, and the sovereignty will manifestly expand.”

Then the Venerable Ānanda said these words to the bodhisattva Trānamukta: “O son of good family, how can a completely depleted life actually arise again?”

The bodhisattva Trānamukta replied: “Reverend Ānanda, have you not heard that there are nine untimely⁴⁸ deaths spoken about by Tathāgata? [282a1] It is because of these that he taught the practices of medicine and mantra.

“There are sentient beings stricken by illness who are not prepared for that intense illness, they also do not have medicine or help; or there is a doctor but no medicine even though it exists. This is the first untimely death.

“The second untimely death is: someone who is made to face death through a ruler’s punishment.

“The third untimely death is: someone who is very careless, living carelessly, at the time of death having their vitality stolen by nonhumans.

“The fourth untimely death is: someone who has been burnt to death.

“The fifth untimely death is: someone who dies through drowning.

“The sixth untimely death is: someone who is consumed inside a wrathful lion, a tiger, a fox, a snake, or a carnivorous beast.

“The seventh untimely death is: someone who falls into an abyss from a mountain pass.

“The eighth untimely death is: someone who is killed by poison, a curse, or a vetala.⁴⁹

“The ninth untimely death is: someone who, not finding food or drink, dies from starvation and thirst. In brief, the Tathāgata taught these as the great untimely deaths; moreover, untimely deaths are countless and immeasurable.

⁴⁸ *dus ma yin par 'chi, akālaciyuti*, Inopportune, untimely death.

⁴⁹ *byad, kakhorda*, An evil spirit, or by a curse. Here I have used the word *kakhorda*—Curse—since the last is *rolangs, vetala*, or corpse raiser.

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“Then the retinue gathered, including the twelve great generals of the yakṣas:

Great Yakṣa General Kumbhīra
Great Yakṣa General Vajra
Great Yakṣa General Mihira
Great Yakṣa General Aṇḍīra
Great Yakṣa General Anila
Great Yakṣa General Śāṇḍilya
Great Yakṣa General Indra [282b1]
Great Yakṣa General Pajra
Great Yakṣa General Indra
Great Yakṣa General Mahoraga
Great Yakṣa General Catura
Great Yakṣa General Vikarāla

“These are the twelve Great Yakṣa Generals.”⁵⁰

Each of these Great Yakṣa Generals also had with them a retinue of 7,000; they entreated the Bhagavān with this one phrase:

“Through the power of the Buddha, we will hear the name of that Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā and we will also not go to bad transmigrations arising from fears of death.

“Then, altogether and harmoniously: we take refuge in the Buddha, we take refuge in the Dharma, we take refuge in the Saṅgha for as long as we live. For the sake of the aims of sentient beings, of the doctor, and for the sake of happiness, we will perform joyfully.”⁵¹

“In this instance, we will protect the town, village, or city, or the forest where the deeds from this sūtra are practiced, we will make offerings to all the sentient beings who perform these acts of worship, and we will bear in mind the name of the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā. We will practice thoroughly, we will thoroughly free everywhere from harm. We will thoroughly perfect all thoughts.”

Then the Bhagavān gave approval to those Great Yakṣa Generals, “Excellent! Great Yakṣa Generals, for this reason, remember your gratitude to the Bhagavān Tathāgata Medicine Guru Vaiḍūryaprabhā: undertake this for benefit [283a1] all sentient beings. Excellent! Excellent!”

Then the Venerable Ānanda rose from his seat, having uncovered one shoulder from his shawl, knelt on his right knee, having bowed with both hands together on the side to the Bhagavān, he spoke to the Bhagavān: “Bhagavān, what is the name for classification of this Dharma teaching? How should we uphold this?”

The Bhagavān replied with these words:

⁵⁰ These generals also represent the different directions.

⁵¹ *spro ba*, To elaborate, to be joyful, to be uplifted.

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“Ānanda, it is for this reason, this classification of this Dharma should be known as, *The Distinctively Vast Previous Prayers of the Ārya Bhagavān Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā*. It can also be known as *The Promise of the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi*. It can also be known as, *Karmic Obscurations, the Practice Aspects and Completely Sustaining Hope*. It can also be known as *The Promise of the Twelve Great Yakṣa Generals*.”

The Bhagavān having said these words, the youthful Mañjuśrī and those bodhisattvas, the lord of secrets Vajrapāṇi together with all that assembly, the gods, humans, demigods, gandharvas of the world rejoiced and thoroughly praised the words by the Bhagavān.

This concludes *The Mahāyana Sūtra Known as The Distinctively Vast Previous Prayers of the Ārya Bhagavān Medicine Guru Vaidūryaprabhā*. It was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian abbot Jinamitra and Dānaśīla, and made into the new translation system by the editor-translator, Venerable Yeshe Dé.

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