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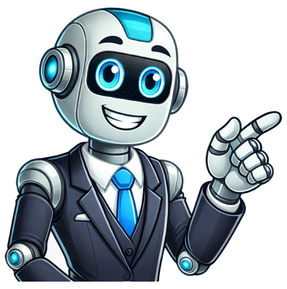

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The queen took a pleasant stroll; she leaned on the limb of an asoka tree which drooped down because of the weight of its flowers. At that moment, the Bodhisattva was born, suddenly and yet peacefully. Immediately after birth he took seven steps in each of the four directions and proclaimed, In heaven above and on earth below, I am the most honored one. I shall dispel the suffering that fills the world. The divine beings residing in space praised the virtues of the mother, Queen Maya. The Naga king rained down cold and warm water and bathed the body of the Bodhisattva. The great earth trembled and shook with joy. Shortly thereafter, the infant was received by the queen, and since everything proceeded without difficulty, the prince was named Siddhattha (Whose Goal Is Achieved). ...these stories are meant to educate us and not simply to entertain or captivate us. The story of Sakyamuni Buddhas birth is shared during the observance of his birthday. The date of his birth is given as April 8. The story of the Buddhas birth captivates us by bringing us into a world where the entire world is abloom with life; the flowers, the sky and even the earth itself are alive. Every element of the story shares in the life that is introduced in the birth of this child, the human child that will become a Buddha. To help us understand that this human child will become a Buddha, we are told the fantastic story of how the infant took seven steps in each of the four directions and then made his proclamation. This aspect of the story is especially intriguing to us. It is something that we find ourselves so unaccustomed to; it is something so unbelievable, that we might dismiss it outright. However, we should keep in mind that these stories are also meant to educate us and not simply to entertain or captivate us. The newborn is said to have immediately taken seven steps in each of the four directions of East, South, West, and North. These seven steps represent how the infant would transcend the six realms of suffering and take the extra step into the awakened life that is the Buddhas. At the end of his stroll of seven steps in each of the four directions, the infant child proclaims his future as the Buddha. These directions, in this order, will be repeated in many other Buddha-Dharma stories. As a motif, these directions tell us that the Truth is neither static nor is it something that can change. Gravity, for example, influences everything including something as large and heavy as the planets as well as things that have no mass at all, like light. Gravity, however dynamic it may seem, cannot change. It cannot, for example, behave like electromagnetism. The significance behind the four directions as it relates to human life will be discussed again in the narrative of the princes search for meaning. The infants proclamation announces the future Buddhahood of Siddhartha. It also reveals the desire of the Buddha to help all of us to understand the potential we all share. The Three Treasures, for example, begins by saying, It is difficult to receive a human body; already, now, have I received it. It is difficult to hear the Buddha-Dharma; already, now, have I heard it. This statement is made to keep us from taking our lives for granted, because if we take life for granted we cannot understand the potential of our humanity. The potential of our human birth is demonstrated by the words of the new born child: In heaven above and on earth below, I am the most honored one. I shall dispel the suffering that fills the world. Through this description of the Buddhas birth, we are given a grand vision of the meaning of human life: we are the ones, by having been born into the human realm, who have the power to dispel the suffering that is found in the world. It is the Buddha, the person who would dispel suffering, who we call the most honored one. The story of the Buddhas birth is often accompanied by the ritual observance called Kanbutsu. As part of the ritual, an image of the baby Buddha in proclamation is placed within an altar that is decorated with flowers. The altar is often placed atop a stand that is fashioned after the white elephant that Queen Maya was said to have seen in her dream prior to giving birth to Siddhartha. Those who participate in the service are asked to come before this image and pour sweet tea over it, thus recreating the scene described in the Sutra. We become a part of the story, acting out the role of the Naga King who bathes the babys body, preparing him for his life journey. Through ritual, we participate in the birth of the Buddha; first as part of the narrative, and then as a human being who has the potential to become a Buddha. The story of the future Buddhas birth ends tragically with the death of Queen Maya seven days after the birth of the prince. We are reminded that even the most noble among us are unable to escape the impermanent nature of our existence in this world. It is this fundamental truth that we most confront and overcome if we, like the Buddha, are to understand the great meaning of our human birth. Saint Augustines Confessions begins with one of the most famous lines in Christian thought:You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.This restlessness serves as the basis for the souls journey to God a journey that unfolds in seven distinct stages. In De Quantitate Animae (On the Greatness of the Soul), Augustine systematically outlines these stages, showing how the soul progresses toward union with God.At first glance, this schema seems like a simple roadmap for spiritual growth. But it goes deeper than that Augustines framework directly corresponds to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as the seven days of creation.Whats more, Augustines stages mirror his own deeply personal journey. In his Confessions, Augustine recounts everything from his indulgence in material pleasures to his moral struggle, and his final surrender to divine grace.Augustines framework reveals the spiritual journey of historys greatest theologian. More importantly, it provides a roadmap that you too can follow to guide the ascent of your own mind and soul.In which stage of the souls journey are you? Keep reading to find outEarth & AltarJan 24, 20202 min readWilliam Blake -- Jacob's LadderOne of the problems in Direction is to know where one is going. We might know that the end, the telos, for humans is the Beatific Vision, but how does one start on that journey? In the classic work, The Spiritual Life, Very Rev. Tanqueray S.S.D.D. argues that though Direction is quite personal and must answer the needs of particular people in particular circumstances, he has found a general path of steps. While some might come in well along their way, this progression will be found in all. He offers this "certain measure of unity to spiritual direction" in seven steps. These are helpful guideposts for clergy, Directors, and laity to consider. The first step starts with attentiveness and intentionality--the offering of ones actions to God.Our life long process of sanctification requires us to give up our own desires (mortification), work against our sins in thanksgiving to God (penance), and live out the gifts of grace God has given us. This, therefore, according to Tanqueray is a long step to which one must return often.The result of step two will be growth in humility, the fertile soil for the blossoming of charity. Personal growth and humility, however, is only effective in so far as it builds our love for God and our neighbor. As the Lords Prayer states, our relationships with others in our community affects our relationship with God. As we grow in charity towards our neighbor, we also grow in charity with Our Lord. This results in a desire to be with Him more and more. The fervent desire to be with Him now inspires one to once again grow ones virtues, but this time at a much deeper level. As our love for Our Lord grows, all our desires are turned towards Him, culminating in a zeal for Our Lord in all our doings. Fr. Sean McDermott is Curate at All Saints Anglican Church in Charlottesville, VA and Editor in Chief at Earth & Altar. o0o CHAPTER 7 o0o Ananda, you asked about collecting ones thoughts; I have now begun to explain the wonderful method of cultivation for entrance into samadhi. Those who seek the Bodhisattva Way must first be as pure as glistening frost in keeping these four rules of deportment. If one is able to never give rise to anything superfluous, then the three evils of the mind and the four of the mouth will have no cause to come forth.Ananda, if one does not neglect these four matters, and, further, if one does not pursue forms, fragrances, tastes, or objects of touch, then how can any demonic deeds arise?If there are people who cannot put an end to their habits from the past, you should teach them to single-mindedly recite my light atop the Buddhas summit unsurpassed spiritual mantra, mwo he sa dan dwo bwo da la.It is the invisible appearance atop the summit of the Thus Come One. It is the spiritual mantra proclaimed by the Buddha of the unconditioned mind who comes forth from the summit in a blaze of light and sits upon a jeweled lotus flower.What is more, your past lives with Matangis daughter created accumulated kalpas of causes and conditions. Your habits of fondness and emotional love go back not just one life, nor even just one kalpa. Yet, as soon as I proclaimed it, she was freed forever from the love in her heart and accomplished Arhatship.That prostitute, who had no intention of cultivating, was imperceptibly aided by that spiritual power and was swiftly certified to the position beyond study; then what about you Sound-Hearers in the assembly, who seek the most supreme vehicle and are resolved to accomplish Buddhahood? For you it should be as easy as tossing dust into a favorable wind. What, then, is the problem?Those in the final age who wish to sit in a Bodhimanda must first hold the pure precepts of a bhikshu. To do so, they must find as their teacher a foremost Shramana who is pure in the precepts. If they do not encounter a member of the Sangha who is truly pure, then it is absolutely certain that their deportment in precepts and rules can not be accomplished.After accomplishing the precepts, they should put on fresh, clean clothes, light incense in a place where they are alone, and recite the spiritual mantra spoken by the Buddha of the Mind one hundred and eight times. After that, they should secure the boundaries and establish the Bodhimanda.In the countries within them, they should seek for the unsurpassed Thus Come Ones throughout the ten directions to emit a light of great compassion and anoint the crowns of their heads.Ananda, when any such pure bhikshus, bhikshunis, or white-robed donors in the Dharma-ending Age who can rid their minds of greed and lust hold the Buddhas pure precepts, and in a bodhimanda make the vows of a Bodhisattva and can bathe upon entering each time, and day and night for three weeks without sleep continue this practice of the Way, I will appear before these people in a physical form and rub the crowns of their heads to comfort them and enable them to become enlightened. o0o Establishing the BodhimandaAnanda said to the Buddha, World Honored One, enveloped in the Thus Come Ones unsurpassed, compassionate instruction, my mind has already become enlightened, and I know how to cultivate and be certified to the Way Beyond Study. But for those who cultivate in the final age and want to establish a bodhimanda: how do they secure the boundaries in accord with the rules of purity of the Buddha, the World Honored One?The Buddha said to Ananda, If there are people in the Dharma-ending Age who wish to establish a bodhimanda, they should first find a powerful white ox in snowy mountains, one which eats the lush and fertile sweet-smelling grasses of the mountain. Since such an ox also drinks only the pure water of the snowy mountains, its excrement will be very fine. They can take that excrement, mix it with chandana, and plaster the ground with it.If it is not in the snowy mountains, the oxs excrement will stink and cannot be used to smear on the ground. In that case, select a level place, dig down five feet or so, and use that yellow earth.Mix it with chandana incense, sinking-in water incense, jasmine incense, continuously permeating incense, burnished gold incense, white paste incense, green wood incense, fragrant mound incense, sweet pine incense, and chicken-tongue incense. Grind these ten ingredients to a fine powder, make a paste, and smear it on the ground of the platform. The area should be sixteen feet wide and octagonal in shape.In the center of the platform, place a lotus flower made of gold, silver, copper, or wood. In the middle of the flower set a bowl in which dew that has collected in the eighth lunar month has been poured. Let an abundance of flower petals float on the water. Arrange eight circular mirrors in each direction around the flower and the bowl. Outside the mirrors place sixteen lotus flowers and sixteen censers, so that the incense-burners are adorned and arranged between the flowers. Burn only sinkingin-water incense, and do not let the fire be seen.Place the milk of a white ox in sixteen vessels, along with cakes made with the milk, rock-candy, oil-cakes, porridge, turushka, honeyed ginger, clarified butter, and filtered honey. These sixteen are set around the outside of the sixteen flowers as an offering to the Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas.At every mealtime and at midnight, prepare a half-pint of honey and three tenths of a pint of clarified butter. Set up a small incense burner in front of the platform. Decoct the fragrant liquid from the turushka incense and use it to cleanse the coals. Light them so that a blaze bursts forth, and toss the clarified butter and honey into the flaming censer. Let it burn until the smoke disappears, and present it to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.About the four outside walls one should suspend flags and flowers, and within the room where the platform is located, one should arrange on the four walls images of the Thus Come Ones and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions.In the most prominent place, display images of Vairocana Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha, Maitreya Bodhisattva, Akshobhya Buddha, Amitabha Buddha, and all the magnificent transformations of Gwan Yin Bodhisattva. To the left and right, place the Vajra-Treasury Bodhisattvas. Beside them display the lords Shakra and Brahma, Ucchushma, and the Blue Dirgha, as well as Kundalin and Bhrukuti and all Four Heavenly Kings, with Vinayaka to the left and right of the door.Then suspend eight mirrors in the space around the platform so that they are exactly opposite the mirrors on the platform. This will allow the reflections in them to interpenetrate ad infinitum.During the first seven days, bow sincerely to the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions, to the great Bodhisattvas, and to the names of the Arhats. Throughout the six periods of the day and night, continually recite the mantra as you circumambulate the platform. Practice the way with a sincere mind, reciting the mantra one hundred and eight times at a stretch.During the second week, direct your intent by making the vows of a Bodhisattva. The mind should never be cut off from them. In my vinaya, I have already taught about vows.During the third week, one holds the Buddhas mantra, Bwo Da La, for twelve hours at a time, with a single intent; and on the seventh day, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions will appear simultaneously. Their light will be mutually reflected in the mirrors and will illumine the entire place; and they will rub one on the crown of ones head.If one cultivates this samadhi in the Bodhimanda, then even in the Dharma-ending Age one can study and practice until ones body and mind are as pure and clear as Vaidurya.Ananda, if any one of the bhikshus precept transmitting masters or any one of the other bhikshus practicing with him is not pure, the Bodhimanda as described will not be successful.After three weeks, one sits upright and still for a hundred days. Those with sharp faculties will not arise from their seats and will become Shrotaapannas. Although their bodies and minds have not attained the ultimate fruition of sagehood, they know for certain, beyond exaggeration, that they will eventually accomplish Buddhahood.You have asked how the Bodhimanda is established. This is the way it is done. o0o The Spiritual MantraAnanda bowed at the Buddhas feet and said, After I left the home-life, I relied on the Buddhas affectionate regard. Because I sought erudition, I still have not been certified to the unconditioned.When I encountered that Brahma Heaven Mantra, I was captured by the deviant spell; though my mind was aware, I had no power to free myself. I had to rely on Manjushri Bodhisattva to liberate me. Although I was blessed by the Thus Come Ones spiritual mantra of the Buddhas summit and imperceptibly received its strength, I still have not heard it myself.I only hope that the greatly compassionate one will proclaim it again to kindly rescue all the cultivators in this assembly and those of the future who undergo the turning wheel, so that they may become liberated in body and mind by relying on the Buddhas secret sounds.At that moment, everyone in the great assembly bowed as one and stood waiting to hear the Thus Come Ones secret divisions and phrases.At that time, a hundred brilliant rays sprang from the mound of the flesh on the crown of the World Honored Ones 92 Volume One The Spiritual Mantra head. A thousand-petalled precious lotus arose from amidst those rays. Upon the precious flower sat the Thus Come Ones transformation.From the crown of its head, in turn, he emitted ten beams, each composed of a hundred rays of precious light. Every one of those glowing rays shone on lands as many as the sands of ten Ganges Rivers, while throughout empty space there were Vajra Secret-Traces Spirits, each holding aloft a mountain and wielding a pestle.The great assembly, gazing upward, felt fearful admiration and sought the Buddhas kind protection. Single-mindedly they listened as the Thus Come One in the light at the invisible appearance on the crown of the Buddhas head proclaimed the spiritual mantra: o0o First DivisionNa mwo sa dan, two su chye dwo ye, e la he di, san myau san pu two syeNa mwo sa dan two, fwo two jyu jr shai ni shanNa mwo sa pe, bwo two bwo di, sa dwo pi biNa mwo sa dwo nan, san myau san pu two jyu jr nan, swo she la pe jya, seng chye nanNa mwo lu ji e lwo han dwo nanNa mwo su lu dwo bwo nwo nanNa mwo swo jye li two chye mi nanNa mwo lu ji san myau chye dwo nan, san myau chye be la di bwo dwo nwo nanNa mwo ti pe li shai nanNa mwo syi two ye, pi di ye, two la li shai nan, she pwo nu, jya la he, swo he swo la mwo two nanNa mwo ba la he mwo niNa mwo yin two la yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, lu two la ye, wu bwo be di, swo syi ye yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, nwo la ye, na ye, pan je mwo he san mwo two laNa mwo syi jye li dwo yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, mwo he jya la ye, di li bwo la na, chye la pi two la, bwo na jya la ye, e di mu di, shr mwo she nwo ni, pe syi ni, mwo dan li chye naNa mwo syi jye li dwo yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, dwo two chye dwo jyu la yeNa mwo be tou mwo jyu la yeNa mwo ba she la jyu la yeNa mwo mwo ni jyu la yeNa mwo chye she jyu la yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, di li cha, shu la syi na, bwo la he la na la she ye, dwo two chye dwo yeNa mwo pe chye pe diNa mwo e mi dwo pe ye, dwo two chye dwo ye, e la he di, san myau san pu two yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, e chu pi ye, dwo two chye dwo ye, e la he di, san myau san pu two yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, bi sha she ye, jyu lu fei ju li ye, bwo la pe la she ye, dwo two chye dwo yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, san bu shr bi dwo, sa lyan nai la la she ye, dwo two chye dwo ye, e la he di, san myau san pu two yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, she ji ye mu nwo ye, dwo two chye dwo ye, e la he di, san myau san pu two yeNa mwo pe chye pe di, la dan na ji du la she ye, dwo two chye dwo ye, e la he di, san myau san pu two yeDi pyau:Na mwo sa jye li dwo, yi tan pe chye pe dwo, sa dan two chye du shai ni shan, sa dan dwo bwo da lanNa mwo e pe la shr dan, bwo la di, yang chi la, sa la pe, bwo dwo jye la he, ni jye la he, jye jya la he ni, ba la bi di yeChr two ni, e jya la, mi li ju, bwo li dan la ye, ning jye liSa la pe, pan two nwo, mu cha ni, sa la pe, tu shai jya, tu syi fa, bwo na ni, fa la ni, je du la, shr di nan, jye la he, swo he sa la rau she, pi dwo beng swo na jye lie shai ja bing she di nan, na cha cha dan la rau she, bwo la sa two na jye li, e shai ja nanMwo he jye la he rau she, pi dwo beng sa na jye li, sa pe she du lu, ni pe la rau she, hu lan tu syi fa, nan je na she ni, pi sha she, syi dan la, e ji ni, wu two jya la rau she, e bwo la shr dwo jyu laMwo he bwo la jan chr, Mwo he dye dwo, Mwo he di she, Mwo he shwei dwo she pe la, Mwo he ba la pan two lape syi ni, e li ye dwo la, pi li jyu jr, shr pe pi she ye, ba she la mwo li di, pi she lu dwo, bwo teng wang jya, ba she la jr he nwo e jeMwo la jr pe, bwo la jr dwo, ba she la shan chr, pi she la je, shan dwo she pi ti pe bu shr dwo, su mwo lu bwoMwo he shwei dwo, e li ye dwo la,Mwo he pe la e bwo la, ba she la shang jye la jr pe, ba she la, jyu mwo li, jyu lan two li, ba she la he sa dwo je, pi di ye, chyan je nwoMwo li jya, ku su mu pe, jye la dwo nwo, pi lu je na, jyu li ye, ye ta tu, shai ni shan, pi je lan pe mwo ni je, ba she la jya na jya bwo la pelu she na, ba she la dwun jr je, shwei dwo je, jya mwo la, cha che shr, bwo la pe, yi di yi di, mu two la, jye naswo pi la chan, jywe fan du, yin tu na mwo mwo syeSecond DivisionWu syin, li shai jye na, bwo la she syi dwoSa dan two, chye du shai ni shanHu syin du lu yung, jan pe naHu syin du lu yung, swo la shai di ye, san bwo cha, na jye laHu syin du lu yung, sa pe yau cha, he la cha swo, jye la he rau she, pi teng beng sa na jye laHu syin du lu yung, je du la, shr di nan, jye la he, swo he sa la nan, pi teng beng sa na la,Hu syin du lu yung, la cha, pe chye fanSa dan two: chye du shai ni shan, bwo la dyan, she ji li, mwo he swo he sa la, bwo shu swo he sa la, shr li sha, jyu jr swo he sa ni, di li e bi ti shr pe li dwo, ja ja ying jya, mwo he ba she lu two la, di li pu pe na, man cha laWu syin, swo syi di, bwo pe du, mwo mwo, yin tu na mwo mwo syeThird DivisionLa she pe ye, ju la be ye, e chi ni pe ye, wu two jya pe ye, pi sha pe ye, she sa dwo la pe ye, pe la jau jye la pe ye, tu shai cha pe ye, e she ni pe yee jya la, mi li ju pe ye, two la ni bu mi jyan, bwo chye bwo two pe ye, wu la jya pe dwo pe ye, la she tan cha pe ye, nwo chye pe ye, pi tyau dan pe ye, su bwo la na pe yeYau cha jye la he, la cha sz jye la he, bi li dwo jye la he, pi she je jye la he, bu dwo jye la he, jyu pa cha jye la he, bu dan na jye la he, jya ja bu dan na jye la he, wu tan mwo two jye la he, che ye jye la he, syi li pe di jye la heShe dwo he li nan, jye pe he li nan, lu di la he li nan, mang swo he li nan, mi two he li nan, mwo she he li nan, she dwo he li nyu, shr bi dwo he li nan, Pi dwo he li nan, pe dwo he li nan, e shu je he li nyu, jr dwo he li nyu, di shan sa pi shan, sa pe jye la he nanPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, bwo li ba la je jya, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, cha yan ni, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, mwo he bwo su bwo dan ye, lu two la, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, nwo la ye na, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, dan two chye lu cha syi, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, mwo he jya la, mwo dan li chye na, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, jya bwo li jya, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, she ye jye la, mwo du jye la, sa pe la two swo da na, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, je du la, pe chi ni, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, pi li yang chi li jr, nan two ji sha la, chye na bwo di, swo syi ye, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, na jye na she la pe na, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, e lwo han, chi li dan, pi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, pi dwo la chye, chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, ba she la bwo ni, jyu syi ye jyu syi ye, jya di bwo di chi li danPi two ye she, chen two ye mi, ji la ye mi, la cha wang,Pe chye fan, yin tu na mwo mwo syeFourth DivisionPe chye fan, sa dan dwo bwo da laNa mwo tswei du di, e syi dwo na la la jya, bwo la pe syi pu ja, pi jya sa dan dwo be di lishr fwo la shr fwo la, two la two lapin two la pin two la, chen two chen two, hu syin hu syinpan ja pan ja pan ja pan ja pan ja, swo heSyi syi pan, e mu jye ye pan, e bwo la ti he dwo panpe la bwo la two pane su la, pi two la, bwo jya panSa pe ti pi bi pansa pe na chye bi pansa pe yau cha bi pansa pe chyan ta pe bi pansa pe bu dan na bi panjya ja bu dan na bi panSa pe tu lang jr di bi pansa pe tu sz bi li, chi shai di bi pansa pe shr pe li bi pansa pe e bwo syi mwo li bi panSa pe che la pe na bi pansa pe di di ji bi pansa pe dan mwo two ji bi pansa pe pi two ye, la shr je li bi panShe ye jye la, mwo du jye la, sa pe la two swo two ji bi panpi di ye, je li bi pan, je du la, fu chi ni bi panba she la, jyu mwo li, pi two ye, la shr bi panmwo he bwo la ding yang yi, chi li bi panBa she la shang jye la ye, bwo la jang chi la she ye panmwo he jya la ye, mwo he mwo dan li jya na, na mwo swo jye li dwo ye panbi shai na bei ye pan, bwo la he mwo ni ye pane chi ni ye pan, mwo he jye li ye panjye la tan chr ye pan, mye dan li ye panLau dan li ye panje wen cha ye panjye lwo la dan li ye panjya bwo li ye pane di mu jr dwo, jya shr mwo she nwo, pe sz ni ye panYan ji jr, sa two pe sye, mwo mwo yin tu na mwo mwo sye Fifth DivisionTu shai ja jr dwo, e mwo dan li jr dwowu she he lachye pe he lalu di la he lape swo he lamwo she he lashe dwo he lashr bi dwo he laba lyau ye he lachyan two he labu shr bwo he lapwo la he lape sye he laBe bwo jr dwo, tu shai ja jr dwo, lau two la jr dwoyau cha jye la hela cha swo jye la hebi li dwo jye la hepi she je jye la hebu dwo jye la hejyou pan cha jye la hesyi chyan two jye la hewu dan mwo two jye la heche ye jye la hee bwo sa mwo la jye la hejai chywe ge, cha chi ni jye la heli fwo di jye la heshe mi jya yje la heshe jyu ni jye la hemu two lana di jya jye la hee lan pe jye la hechyan du bwo ni jye la heshr fwo layin jya syi jyajywe di yau jyadan li di yau jyaje tu two jyani ti shr fa labi shan mwo shr fa labwo di jya bi di jyashr li shai mi jyaswo ni bwo di jyasa pe shr fa laThe Spiritual Mantra 113shr lu ji dimwo two pi da lu jr chyane chi lu chyanmu chywe lu chyanjye li tu lu chyanjya la hejye lan jye na shu landan dwo shu lanchi li ye shu lanmwo mwo shu lanba li shr pe shu lanbi li shai ja shu lanwu two la shu lanjye jr shu lanba syi di shu lanwu lu shu lanchang chye shu lanhe syi dwo shu lanba two shu lanswo fan ang chye, bwo la jang chye shu lanbu dwo bi dwo chacha chi nishr pe latwo tu lu jyajyan du lu ji jrpe lu dwo pi sa bwo luhe ling chyeshu sha dan laswo na jye lapi sha yu jyae chi niwu two jyamwo la pi lajyan dwo lae jya lami li duda lyan bu jyadi li la jabi li shai jr jyasa pe na jyu lasz yin chye bijye la li yau chadan la chumwo la shrfei di shanswo pi shansyi dan dwo bwo da lamwo he ba she lu shai ni shanmwo he bwo lai jang chi lanye bwo tu twoshe yu she nwobyan da li napi two yepan tan jya lu midi shupan tan jya lu mibwo la pi twopan tan jya lu miDwo jr two: nan, e na li, pi she ti, pi la ba she la, two li, pan two pan two ni, ba she la bang ni pan, hu syin du lu yung pan, swo pe he. Miraculous of the MantraAnanda, this cluster of light atop the crown of the Buddhas head, the secret gatha, Syi Dan Dwo Bwo Da La, with its subtle, wonderful divisions and phrases, gives birth to all the Buddhas of the ten directions. Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions use this mantra-heart, they realize unsurpassed, proper, and all-pervading knowledge and enlightenment.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions take up this mantra-heart, they subdue all demons and control all adherents of outside ways.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions avail themselves of this mantra-heart, they sit upon jeweled lotusflowers and respond throughout countries as numerous as motes of dust.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions embody this mantra-heart, they turn the great dharma wheel in lands as numerous as fine motes of dust.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions hold this mantra-heart, they are able to go throughout the ten directions to rub beings on the crowns of their heads and bestow predictions upon them. Also, anyone in the ten directions who has not yet realized the fruition, can receive a Buddhas prediction.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are based in this mantra-heart, they can go throughout the ten directions to rescue beings from such sufferings as being in the hells, being hungry ghosts, being animals, or being blind, deaf, or mute, as well as from the suffering of being together with those one hates, from the suffering of being apart from those one loves, from the suffering of not obtaining what one seeks, and from the raging blaze of the five skandhas. They liberate beings from both large and small accidents. In response to their recitation, difficulty with thieves, difficulty with armies, difficulty with the law, difficulty with imprisonment, difficulty with wind, fire, and water, and difficulty with hunger, thirst, and impoverishment are all eradicated.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are in accord with this mantra-heart, they can serve good and wise advisors throughout the ten directions. In the four aspects of awesome deportment, they make wish-fulfilling offerings. In the assemblies of as many Thus Come Ones as there are sands in the Ganges, they are considered to be great Dharma Princes.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions practice this mantra-heart, they can gather in and teach their relatives in the ten directions. Causing those of the Small Vehicle not to be frightened when they hear the secret treasury.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions recite this mantra-heart, they realize unsurpassed enlightenment while sitting beneath the Bodhi tree, and they enter Parinirvana.Because the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions transmit this mantra-heart, those to whom they have bequeathed the Buddhadharma can, after their Nirvana, dwell in it completely and uphold it. Being strict and pure about the precepts and rules, they can all obtain purity.If I were to explain this mantra, Bwo Da La, of the cluster of light atop the crown of the Buddhas head from morning till night in an unceasing sound, without ever repeating any syllable or phrase, I could go on for as many kalpas as there are sands in the Ganges and still never finish.I also will tell you that this mantra is called The crown of the Thus Come One.All of you with something left to study who have not yet put an end to the cycle of rebirth and yet have brought forth sincere resolve to become Arhats, will find it impossible to sit in a Bodhimanda and be far removed in body and mind from all demonic deeds if you do not hold this Mantra.Ananda, let any living being of any country in any world copy out this mantra in writing on materials native to his region, such as birch bark, pattra, plain paper, or white cotton cloth, and store it in a pouch containing incense. If that person wears the pouch on his body, or if he keeps a copy in his home, then you should know that even if he understands so little that he cannot recite it from memory, he will not be harmed by any poison during his entire life.Ananda, I will now tell you more about how this mantra can rescue and protect the world, help people obtain great fearlessness, and bring to accomplishment living beings transcendental wisdom.You should know that, after my extinction, if there are beings in the Dharma-ending Age who can recite the mantra themselves or teach others to recite it, such people who recite and uphold it cannot be burned by fire, cannot be drowned by water, and cannot be harmed by mild or potent poisons.And so it is in every other case, such that they cannot be possessed by any evil mantra or any heavenly dragon, ghost, or spirit, or by any essence, weird creature, or demonic ghost. These peoples minds will attain proper reception, so that any spell, any paralyzing sorcery, any poison or poisoning gold, any poisoning silver, any plant, tree, insect, or snake, and any of a myriad kinds of poisonous vapors will turn into sweet dew when it enters their mouths.No evil stars, and no ghost or spirit that harbors malice in its heart and that poisons people can work its evil on these people. Vinayaka as well as all the evil ghost kings and their retinues will be led by deep kindness to always guard and protect them.Ananda, you should know that eighty-four thousand nayutas of Ganges sands of kotis of Vajra Treasury-King Bodhisattvas and their descendants, each with vajra multitudes as retinue, are ever in attendance, day and night, upon this mantra.If living beings whose minds are scattered and who have no samadhi remember and recite the mantra, the vajra kings will always surround them. Therefore, good men, that is even more true for those who are decisively resolved upon Bodhi. All the Vajra Treasury-King Bodhisattvas will regard them attentively and secretly hasten the opening of their spiritual consciousness.When that response occurs, those people will be able to remember the events of as many kalpas as there are grains of sand in eighty-four thousand Ganges Rivers, knowing them all beyond any doubt.From that kalpa onward, through every life until the time they take their last body, they will not be born where there are yakshas, rakshasas, putanas, kataputanas, kumbhandas, pishachas and so forth; where there is any kind of hungry ghost, whether with form or lacking form, or with thought or lacking thought, or in any such evil place.If these good men read, recite, copy, or write out the mantra, if they carry it or treasure it, if they make offerings to it, then through kalpa after kalpa they will not be poor or lowly, nor will they be born in unpleasant places.If these living beings have never accumulated any blessings, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions will bestow their own merit and virtue upon these people.Because of that, throughout asamkhyeyas of ineffable, unspeakable numbers of kalpas, as many as the Ganges sands, they are always together with the Buddhas. They are born in the same place, due to their limitless merit and virtue, and, like the amala fruit-cluster, they stay in the same place, become permeated with cultivation, and are never parted.Therefore, it can enable those who have broken the precepts to regain the purity of the precept-source. It can enable those who have not received the precepts to receive them. It can cause those who are not vigorous to become vigorous. It can enable those who lack wisdom to gain wisdom. It can cause those who are not pure to quickly be come pure. It can cause those who do not hold to vegetarianism to become vegetarians naturally.Ananda, if good men who uphold this mantra violated the pure precepts before they received the mantra, their multitude of offenses incurred by violating the precepts, whether major or minor, can simultaneously be eradicated after they begin to uphold the mantra.Even if they drank intoxicants or ate the five pungent plants and various other impure things in the past, the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, vajras, gods, immortals, ghosts, and spirits will not hold it against them.If they are unclean and wear tattered, old clothes to carry out the single practice and single dwelling, they can be equally pure. Even if they do not set up the platform, do not enter the Bodhimanda, and do not practice the Way, but recite and uphold this mantra, their merit and virtue will be identical with that derived from entering the platform and practicing the Way.If they have committed the five rebellious acts, grave offenses warranting unintermittent retribution, or if they are bhikshus or bhikshunis who have violated the four parajikas or the eight parajikas, such heavy karma as this will disperse after they recite this mantra, like a sand dune that is scattered in a gale, so that not a particle remains.Ananda, if living beings who have never repented and reformed any of the obstructive offenses, either heavy or light, that they have committed throughout countless kalpas past, up to and including those of this very life, can nevertheless read, recite, copy, or write out this mantra or wear it on their bodies or place it in their homes or in their garden houses, then all that accumulated karma will melt away like snow in hot water. Before long they will obtain awakening to patience with the non-production of dharmas.Moreover, Ananda, if women who do not have children and want to conceive can sincerely memorize and recite this mantra or carry the mantra, Syi Dan Dwo Bwo Da La, on their bodies, they can give birth to sons or daughters endowed with blessings, virtue, and wisdom.Those who seek long life will obtain long life. Those who seek to quickly perfect their reward will quickly gain perfection. The same is true for those who seek something regarding their bodies, their lives, their appearance, or their strength.At the end of their lives, they will gain the rebirth they hope for in whichever of the countries of the ten directions they wish. They certainly will not be born in poorly endowed places, or as inferior people; even less will they be reborn in some odd form.Ananda, if there is famine or plague in a country, province, or village, or if perhaps there are armed troops, brigands, invasions, war, or any other kind of local threat or danger, one can write out this spiritual mantra and place it on the four city gates, or on a chaitya or on a dhvaja, and instruct all the people of the country to gaze upon the mantra, to make obeisance to it, to revere it, and to single-mindedly make offerings to it; one can instruct all the citizens to wear it on their bodies or to place it in their homes; and then all such disasters and calamities will completely disappear.Ananda, in each and every country where the people accord with this mantra, the heavenly dragons are delighted, the winds and rains are seasonal, the crops are abundant, and the people are peaceful and happy.It can also suppress all evil stars which may appear in any of the directions and transform themselves in uncanny ways. Calamities and obstructions will not arise. People will not die accidentally or unexpectedly, nor will they be bound by fetters, cangues, or locks. Day and night they will be at peace, and no evil dreams will disturb their sleep.Ananda, this Saha World has eighty-four thousand changeable and disastrous evil stars. Twenty-eight great evil stars are the leaders, and of these, eight great evil stars are the rulers. They take various shapes, and when they appear in the world they bring disaster and weird happenings upon living beings.But they will all be eradicated wherever there is the mantra. The boundaries will be secured for twelve yojanas around, and no evil calamity or misfortune will ever enter in.Therefore, the Thus Come One proclaims this mantra as one which will protect those of the future who have just begun to study, as well as all cultivators, so that they can enter samadhi, be peaceful in body and mind, and attain great tranquility.Even less will any demon, ghost, or spirit, or any enemy, calamity, or misfortune due from former lives that reach back to beginningless time, or any old karma or past debts come to vex and harm them.As to you and everyone in the assembly who is still studying, and as to cultivators of the future who rely on my platform, hold the precepts in accord with the dharma, receive the precepts from pure members of the Sangha, and hold this mantra-heart without giving rise to doubts: should such good men as these not obtain mind-penetration in that very body born of their parents, then the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions have lied!When he finished this explanation, measureless hundreds of thousands of vajra power-knights in the assembly came before the Buddha, placed their palms together, bowed, and said, With sincere hearts we will protect those who cultivate Bodhi in this way, according to what the Buddha has said.Then the Brahma King, the God Shakra, and the four great heavenly kings all came before the Buddha, made obeisance together, and said to the Buddha, If indeed there be good men who cultivate and study in this way, we will do all we can to earnestly protect them and cause everything to be as they would wish throughout their entire lives.Moreover measureless great yaksha generals, rakshasa kings, putana kings, kumbhanda kings, pishacha kings, vinayaka, the great ghost kings, and all the ghost commanders came before the Buddha, put their palms together, and made obeisance. We also have vowed to protect these people and cause their resolve for Bodhi to be quickly perfected.Further, measureless numbers of gods of the sun and moon, lords of the rain, lords of the clouds, lords of thunder, lords of lightning who patrol throughout the year, and all the retinues of stars which were also in the assembly bowed at the Buddhas feet and said to the Buddha, We also protect all cultivators, so that their Bodhimandas are peaceful and they attain fearlessness.Moreover, measureless numbers of mountain spirits, seaspirits, and all those of the earth the myriad creatures and essences of water, land, and the air as well as the king of wind spirits and the gods of the Formless Heavens, came before the Thus Come One, bowed their heads