Power, Wealth and Women in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism

This book examines the concepts of power, wealth and women in the important Mahāyāna Buddhist scripture known as the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, and relates these to the text's social context in ancient India during the Buddhist Middle Period (0–500 CE).

Employing contemporary textual theory, worldview analysis and structural narrative theory, the author puts forward a new approach to the study of Mahāyāna Buddhist sources, the 'systems approach', by which literature is viewed as embedded in a social system. Consequently, he analyzes the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in the contexts of reality, society and the individual, and applies these notions to the key themes of power, wealth and women. The study reveals that the spiritual hierarchy represented within the *Gaṇḍavyūha* replicates the political hierarchies in India during Buddhism's Middle Period, that the role of wealth mirrors its significance as a sign of spiritual status in Indian Buddhist society, and that the substantial number of female spiritual guides in the narrative reflects the importance of royal women patrons of Indian Buddhism at the time.

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Douglas Osto is Lecturer in the Religious Studies Programme at the School of History, Philosophy and Classics, Massey University, New Zealand. His research interests are Mahāyāna Buddhism, Asian philosophies, narrative theory and gender studies.

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The Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra

Douglas Osto

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To my female kalyāṇamitras—
Kate, Marie, Joanne and Doreen

May any merit I gain from this work
be dedicated to them and
to all sentient beings . . .

Contents

Preface

My first encounter with the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* occurred in the autumn of 1994. At that time, I was taking a course on Maitreya in the Buddhist traditions with Professor Masatoshi Nagatomi as a part of my Master of Theological Studies degree at Harvard Divinity School. I vividly recall purchasing Thomas Cleary's 1,500-page, single-volume edition of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* (his English translation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*) from the Divinity School bookstore. It was a fateful day. I immediately read its final 'Book' (the *Gaṇḍavyūha*) and was enthralled by the *sūtra*'s cosmic vision of the universe. The following spring semester, I enrolled in an independent study with Professor Stephanie Jamison to work on the Sanskrit *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Struggling through the long compounds in the prose and the hybridized verse was a joy for me. I felt like an adventurer entering a magical new world filled with unimaginable wonders. While at the University of Washington in Seattle (1996–2000), I wrote a study and translation of the final prose section of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* for my Master of Arts in Asian Languages and Literature. Between 2000 and 2004, I continued my studies of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. The work before you is primarily based on my SOAS PhD (2004).

In the following pages, I discuss at length the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s 'worldview'. However, this approach does not presuppose an objective viewpoint from which to analyze this Buddhist text. Before I proceed with my study, I feel it necessary to acknowledge my position within the dominant worldview of my particular time and place, which I define as 'late modernism'. Modernism is a term often used to describe a worldview that possibly began in the eighteenth century during the Enlightenment, but which is clearly evident as the dominate worldview of Europe and North America by the early twentieth century. Fundamental tenets of modernism are that science, reason and individual freedom 'will lead to social progress through virtuous, self-controlled work, creating a better material, political, and intellectual life for all' (Cahoone 1996: 12). Modernism's secularist vision of reality looks to science for its description of the physical world. Within its 'regime of truth' (Foucault 1972b), modernism hierarchically constructs the legitimate means of knowledge such that the 'hard sciences' (mathematics, physics, chemistry,

biology) maintain a higher position above the softer ones (psychology, sociology, linguistics etc.), and these in turn are situated above the social sciences and humanities (history, anthropology, religious studies etc.). This hierarchical arrangement is reflected by patterns of funding for academic programmes by governments and the private sector, as well as by differences in rates of pay for faculty members in academic institutions, student funding etc.

Free market capitalism, liberal democracy and secular humanism are each part of modernism's economic, political and ethical posturing. Universal basic education is generally valued and supported by the state. And the belief in the autonomy of the individual creates an ethic of responsibility whereby it is thought that any individual who has strong enough moral fibre and works hard enough should be able to advance higher up the economic and social hierarchy. However, an examination of the social hierarchies in European and North American societies demonstrates that white males possess the vast majority of the political and economic power. Within the worldview of modernism power 'games' are played with a 'stacked deck' in favour of men over women, white over black, Anglo over Asian or African. In this worldview the white, youthful, able, male body is the ideal human body and all other types are defined in terms of it (Grosz 1994: 14). Thus the male body is normalized so that the sexual specificity of men may be ignored in favour of men as fundamentally rational beings. Because rationality finds its home and source in the mind of the white male, he is able to discern the true from the false and the real from the unreal through his science and reason. The sexual specificity of the female body on the other hand is primary, and as object of desire and symbol of sex, the image of female beauty is exploited by media and advertising within the consumer capitalist system.

Late modernity is characterized by the growth of multinational corporations, globalization, the information explosion (the internet and world wide web), wars fought for economic control of oil (Gulf Wars I and II), and a growing disillusionment within certain intellectual circles concerning the ideals and assumptions of modernism often referred to loosely as 'postmodernism'. In recent decades, Anglo-European academic discourse has taken a reflexive turn expressed by post-structuralism, or deconstruction. While this methodology has been valuable in pointing out the limitations of structural approaches, as the logical endpoint to the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' and an extreme form of interpretive scepticism and relativism, deconstruction may result in a theoretical and moral *cul-de-sac*. However, regardless of the intellectualist revolt against the precepts and practices of modernism expressed by the 'postmodern' lament, the modernist worldview continues to exert global influence now in our early twenty-first century.

Because it is one of, if not *the*, dominant worldview today, late modernism functions as the ideological background of my current study. Although deeply critical and suspicious of patriarchal constructions of power based on a metaphysic of objectivity and culturally constructed views of rationality, I must admit that I have embraced, embodied and benefited from this

worldview to a large extent. While acknowledging my privileged position as a white male within the worldview of late modernity, I nevertheless attempt in the following pages to employ the legitimate means of knowledge of my time and place to analyze a different worldview of a people from a different time and place. Thus, by admitting my position within late modern Anglo-American academic discourse, I hope to remain aware of the horizons of my own 'hermeneutical circle'. The meeting of my worldview and the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview forms the dialogical space wherein the following interpretations take place. Because the ancient Indian compilers and early audience of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* have long since given up the mortal coil, one pole of this dialogue must necessarily be a reconstructed worldview based on textual and cultural remains.

Now that I have issued this caveat concerning the present study's firm location within the realm of modernist academic discourse, I must also admit that my interest in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* has always been more than scholarly. Much more than an interesting artifact of an ancient culture, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* portrays a cosmic vision of the spiritual path that defies the human imagination, whether ancient or modern. The scripture describes a reality of limitless beauty hidden behind the gossamer web of our human ignorance that transcends the bounds of linear time and three-dimensional space. For those that take its religious message seriously, it offers a challenge to remove the veil created by our obsessive self-concern and enter upon a heroic quest for supreme enlightenment. Although such a 'theological' approach to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is not the aim of the present study, I readily acknowledge the validity of such an orientation for those contemporary practitioners of the Mahāyāna tradition.

While its religious message may transcend history, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is still to some extent defined by the society and culture of its origin. It serves no purpose for the contemporary practitioner to turn a 'blind eye' to this truth out of a sense of false piety. By employing modern scholarly tools such as textual theory, worldview analysis and structural narratology, I present in the following pages an examination of certain themes – power, wealth, and women – that occur in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and relate these to its ancient Indian context. While I believe that my findings are important and relevant for both Buddhist scholars and practitioners, they are hardly the last word. The innumerable dimensions of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* defy any reduction to a single study, and doubtlessly some aspects of the *sūtra* will remain impenetrable to any analysis that lacks the profound insight of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Douglas Osto
21 May 2008
Kimbolton, New Zealand

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While living in London a number of individuals and institutions made my stay both possible and successful. I am especially grateful to the funding bodies that awarded me the following: the SOAS Research Student Fellowship, the Overseas Research Studentship, a Spalding Scholarship to study religion, and a Sutasoma Scholarship to study Buddhism. Sam van Schaik from the British Library (International Dunhuang Project) and Joe Cribb from the British Museum (Department of Coins and Metals) provided me with stimulating and friendly work environments.

Since arriving in New Zealand in 2005, both Phyllis Granoff and Michael Radich have offered valuable advice and suggestions for improving early drafts of this work. Peter Harvey also provided useful criticisms of portions of Chapters 2 and 6, which appear in my article, 'Soteriology, Asceticism and the Female Body in Two Indian Buddhist Narratives', published in the *Buddhist Studies Review*, 23.2 (2006). Stephen Berkwitz and Dorothea Schaefter at Routledge have greatly aided in the process of producing this, my first book.

Finally, I must express my deep gratitude to Ulrich Pagel, my PhD supervisor and friend. Over the span of seven years, Ulrich taught me Classical Tibetan, helped with my Master's thesis, assisted in my acquisition of funding and employment, advised me innumerable times on everything from

punctuation to travel, and greatly improved several drafts of my PhD dissertation by his criticisms and observations. He has been a true teacher and friend to me.

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Abbreviations

A	Royal Asiatic Society MS of *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, Hodgson 2
Aṣṭa	*Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*
Av	*Avataṃsaka-sūtra*
BHS	Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit
BHSD	*Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, Vol. II*
BHSG	*Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, Vol. I*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
C	Thomas Cleary's English translation (1993), *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, of T 279
Ch.	Chinese
D	Derge Kanjur of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*
Dio	Torakazu Doi's German translation (1978), *Das Kegon Sutra*, of T 278
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*
G	Gāndhārī
IIJ	*Indo-Iranian Journal*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JIABS	*Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*
JIP	*Journal of Indian Philosophy*
JPTS	*Journal of the Pali Text Society*
km	*kalyāṇamitra*
MS	manuscript
MW	Monier-Williams' *Sanskrit–English Dictionary* (1899)
P	Peking Kanjur edition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*
PED	*Pali–English Dictionary*, Davids and Stede (1921–25)
PraS	*Pratyutpanna-buddhasaṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*
Skt	Sanskrit
SI	Suzuki and Idzumi edition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (1949)
T	*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*
Tib.	Tibetan
V	Vaidya's edition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (1960)

1 Introduction

Although modern scholars have been investigating Mahāyāna Buddhism for over a century, much remains unknown about the origins and early development of this movement within India. This situation is due in large part to two main factors: the general lack of reliable historical evidence, and the large volume of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s. While pioneers in the field have added greatly to our knowledge through detailed philological investigation of a number of important Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, conclusions thus far about 'early Mahāyāna' have been made based on an extremely limited data set and some rather suspect assumptions. A primary objective of the current study is to redirect our approach to the subject field.

Rather than attempting to stratify the Mahāyāna in India into some chronological periodization (an approach that I feel is premature at best and most likely impossible based on the evidence), I will in the following pages focus on three themes – power, wealth and women[1] – in one prominent Mahāyāna scripture, the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, and relate these to its social context in ancient India. Through this approach, I not only hope to illuminate important features of this *sūtra*, but also to demonstrate how the text's conceptions of power, wealth and women reflect a target audience consisting of royal, wealthy and female elites of ancient Indian society. This project rests on two important assumptions: that literature exists within a social system, and that the production of texts as material objects requires patronage. Approaching the Mahāyāna as a literary movement in this manner has the distinct advantage of placing us on solid historical and sociological ground. Although much remains unclear about the social basis of early Indian Mahāyāna, one thing that we know for certain is that the Mahāyāna was a literary movement – the hundreds of *sūtra*s surviving in the Chinese and Tibetan canons attest to this fact. Moreover, the early Chinese translations of many of these texts predate our earliest epigraphical evidence of the Mahāyāna in India. Thus we know that regardless of what else they were doing, early Mahāyāna Buddhists were composing texts, and doing so in quite large numbers.

Obviously a broad application of a 'systems approach' to the vast body of Mahāyāna literature lies beyond the scope of any one study. Therefore, the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* will function as our 'test case' for this method. The

benefit of using this particular *sūtra* is twofold. Since previous scholars have largely overlooked this text in their accounts of Indian Mahāyāna, this present study is a valuable addition to the curtain body of research. Moreover, as will be quickly obvious to the reader, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* does not fit neatly into the two most popular models for the development of the Mahāyāna as either a popular lay-inspired movement, or a reactionary forest-ascetic movement. In fact, the *sūtra* has its own distinctive vision of reality and the religious path. Thus it is my hope that the following detailed investigation of the text will provide much needed nuance to our understanding of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* was composed somewhere in the Indian subcontinent probably during the first few centuries of the Common Era,[2] and came to be highly regarded by Indian commentators. Translated four times into Chinese, the *sūtra* was one of the foundational texts of the Chinese philosophical school, Huayan, and was chanted by numerous Chinese lay Buddhist societies. The scripture was translated into Tibetan in the early ninth century, and an inscriptional text of it accompanied by paintings can still be found today on the temple walls of Tabo dating to the tenth century. In the late eighth or early ninth century, scenes depicting the complete narrative of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* were carved into the gallery walls of Barabuḍur in Java, the largest Buddhist monument ever built. Thus the impact of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* upon Asian religious art and thought is undeniable.

The *sūtra*'s continued appeal throughout the centuries may be due in part to its presentation of the Buddhist path in the form of a heroic quest narrative. The story told is of a young man's search for enlightenment in ancient India during the time of the Buddha. Like the Buddha, this young man named Sudhana ('Good Wealth'), the son of a merchant-banker (*śreṣṭhidāraka*), leaves home in search of spiritual counsel. But Sudhana does not renounce the world and take up ascetic practices; rather on the advice of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī he sets out to visit 'good friends' (*kalyāṇamitra*) in order to learn how to carry out the course of conduct of a bodhisattva. After travelling far and wide across India visiting numerous good friends of various occupations (the *Gaṇḍavyūha* narrates 52 of these encounters), Sudhana has his final visionary experience of the supreme bodhisattva Samantabhadra and merges with him.

The narrative of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* reflects its own 'imagined universe' complete with its vision of reality, society and the individual. This image or 'worldview' did not arise out of a vacuum, but emerged from an ancient Indian context. Unfortunately, our understanding of this context has been dimmed by the process of time. However, I proposed to read the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a lens with which to learn something about this context; and conversely, examine what we know about ancient India as a way towards understanding the text. Thus, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* will be our 'looking-glass' to see reflected aspects of ancient Indian society. But before we can further investigate the dynamics of the *sūtra* and its social context, I will review what we know of its historical development and our current understanding of it.

Textual ontology

As a useful point of departure, I feel I should clarify what exactly I mean by a 'text'. Although 'text' is often used in academic discourse in a manner that assumes a common-sense referent, its meaning becomes problematized when one asks such questions as, 'If the *Mona Lisa* is in the Louvre, where is *Hamlet*?'[3] The answer is hardly straightforward, and the various attempts to answer such questions define what is known as 'textual ontology' – or what it means for a 'text' to 'exist'.

Jerome McGann, one of the leading American textual theorists, defines 'text' in terms of a finite set of linguistic and bibliographical codes.[4] As a critique of and response to the concept of 'authorial intentions' developed by modern text criticism,[5] McGann stresses these two codes in order to highlight texts as material objects with social histories (McGann 1991, 1992). Because texts are socially produced objects inscribed with both linguistic and bibliographical codes, their position within societies and cultures is constantly transforming. The transformations of a text throughout time and in various places not only constitute what that text is, but also what that text means. In other words, a text's significance depends on how its linguistic and bibliographical codes are read at any given place and time, which may or may not be related to the intentions of the author(s) who produced it.

If we accept that a text's meaning is not an inherent property of it inscribed for all time by authorial intentions, but emerges within the act of reading,[6] then we must pay close attention to context. Bibliographical codes such as the style and format of a text (printed book or manuscript, type of script, illuminations, ornamentations etc.) are part of the social meaning of a text, as well as its means of production, the expense of copying and maintaining it, and the number of its available copies. Factors such as cost of production determine who has access to certain texts, and social codes and values determine who may read certain texts, when they are read, to whom they are read, and other similar factors. There is always a social and cultural context to reading (or listening) to texts and this context plays a central role in the production of meaning.[7]

As culturally produced objects, texts are positioned within the social, political and economic hierarchies of the societies that produce and maintain them. For most of human history, both the ability to read texts and the necessary wealth to produce them have been limited to scribal, royal and wealthy elites. Because ideology functions within texts by means of linguistic codes, and moves through them by means of their bibliographical codes, they are acts of power that play a part in the construction of a worldview.[8]

Employing McGann's view of textual ontology, we can offer one possible answer to the question 'where is the *Gaṇḍavyūha*?' As a text, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a finite set of linguistic and bibliographical codes that exists where and whenever it is materially manifested. Thus in a sense there are as many *Gaṇḍavyūhas* as there are copies of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. As a story, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* exists in

each and every act of its reading. Thus on the textual level, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* exists as a cultural product, and on the narrative level, as a discursive act within a cultural context. As an act of power within a worldview, the story's multiple meanings are related to both levels of text and narrative. We may assume that members of various social hierarchies have limited and restricted the infinite possible readings of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* by determining such things as who produced copies of it and how many were produced, who read it, the significance that surrounded these acts of disclosure, and what were accepted methods of interpretation.

This understanding of textual ontology shares a number of similarities with what André Lefevere calls a 'systems approach' to literature.[9] Lefevere outlines four assumptions of such an approach. First, it assumes that literature is a system embedded in a cultural or societal environment. Second, every literary system possesses a regulatory body that extends patronage to it. This patronage possesses at least three components: an ideological, economic and status component. Third, a literary system possesses a poetics, which has both an inventory aspect that defines genres, characters, and typical literary situations, and a functional aspect that defines literature's role within society. And fourth, there is a constraint imposed on the system by natural language, both formally through the language's grammar, and pragmatically by the way the language reflects culture. In this interpretation of literature as system, Lefevere recognizes texts both as cultural products with bibliographical codes, and as linguistic codes limited by cultural conventions. Also, Lefevere's discussion of literature's regulatory body highlights the notion that texts function within the hierarchical power structures of worldviews. The relationship of patronage to literature is particularly relevant to our study of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and I address this issue in more detail when I discuss the text's Indian context in Chapter 7. Now I will provide a brief overview of our current state of knowledge concerning the historical development of the text.

A textual history of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*

We find our earliest dateable evidence of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in the Chinese catalogues of the Buddhist canon composed in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries CE.[10] According to these catalogues, the monk Shengjian first translated the *Gaṇḍavyūha* into Chinese (T 294) sometime between 388 and 408 CE. Compared to the extant Sanskrit text this is only a partial translation.[11] The first complete Chinese translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* soon followed in 420. Entitled the 'Chapter on the Entrance into the Dharma Realm' (T 278),[12] it was translated by Buddhabhadra and his team of translators as the final chapter of the immense *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.[13] The Khotanese monk, Śikṣānanda and his team translated the *Avataṃsaka* once more into Chinese between 695 and 699.[14] The translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* within this work is substantially the same as the earlier one.[15]

The fourth and final Chinese translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was completed in 798 by the Kashmiri monk, Prajñā (T 293). Called 'The Vow Concerning the Course of Conduct of Samantabhadra and the Entry into the Range of the Inconceivable Liberation',[16] it is based on an expanded and no longer extant Sanskrit version belonging to the king of Orissa, who sent his personal copy to China as a gift to the Emperor in 795.[17] This version contains the verses of the Avalokiteśvara section[18] and the *Bhadracarī* verses at the end of the Samantabhadra section[19] as found in the existing Sanskrit manuscripts. There are also a number of passages in this translation not found in any extant Sanskrit source. Thomas Cleary, in a brief discussion (1993: 1535) of Prajñā's translation, states that these additions appear to be explanations or amplifications of the text, which may be attributed to Prajñā or his assistants.[20] Rather than assuming that the Chinese translators tampered with their Sanskrit archetype, I think an equally plausible explanation is that the king of Orissa possessed an expanded version of the Sanskrit text no longer extant in the surviving Nepalese manuscripts.

Our brief survey of the Chinese translations has demonstrated a general trend towards an expansion of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* over time. Prajñā's translation contains passages that are not found in the earlier Chinese translations. Some of these are found in the existing Sanskrit versions and some are not found in any other version. This evidence suggests that the surviving Sanskrit versions (see below for details) were compiled sometime between the completion of Śikṣānanda's translation (699 CE) and Prajñā's translation (798 CE).

According to modern scholarly consensus, the Tibetans translated the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* during the early period of Buddhist transmission (seventh to ninth centuries),[21] possibly during the 'Great Revision' sponsored by kings Khri lde srong btsan (*c*. 800–815 CE) and Khri gtsug lde btsan (*c*. 815–836 CE).[22] Ernst Steinkellner (1995: 19) maintains that an earlier translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* existing prior to the codification that took place under these two kings is very unlikely. If this is the case, then the Tibetan translation is our next earliest evidence of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* after the Chinese translations.[23] Tibetan tradition is divided concerning the translators of the *Avataṃsaka*; the famous translation trio of Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi and Ye shes sde are the most commonly mentioned in the Kanjur colophons.[24]

Unlike the Chinese who often included several translations of a single Buddhist work in their canon, the Tibetans, after a period of using multiple translations, instituted a general policy of including only one official and authoritative translation of each work.[25] Following the initial translation efforts in the early ninth century, after several centuries of textual transmission, the distinct Tibetan Kanjur (*bKa' 'gyur*) collections began to emerge in the fourteenth century with the development of the Old Narthang manuscript Kanjur. According to Peter Skilling, this Kanjur was 'the *conceptual prototype* for later, large-scale, single-project Kanjurs – but not their *textual archetype*' (Skilling 1997a: 100; emphasis in original). In other words, although the Old Narthang

was the first project of its kind, it has not functioned as a direct textual source for all the subsequent Kanjurs. Since the fourteenth century, over 20 distinct Kanjurs have been compiled. Although textual relationships between all of these different versions are hardly clear, a number of scholars have made substantial progress in tracing the Kanjurs' genealogies through the application of modern text critical method.[26] The textual variations found in the different Kanjurs of a work such as the *Gaṇḍavyūha* reflect (in theory) transmissional variation all stemming from an original, single Tibetan translation of a Sanskrit text.[27] In the following study, I consult the Derge (D) Kanjur from the Tshal pa branch[28] for all extended quotes from the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and provide a concordance of the Derge, Peking and Tog Palace Kanjur versions of the text in Appendix C.

The earliest dateable, complete Sanskrit manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was brought from Nepal by the British civil servant, B. H. Hodgson, and presented to the Royal Asiatic Society, London, in 1835.[29] Numbered Hodgson 2, this manuscript is written in Newārī script and consists of 289 palm leaves ($22^{1}/_{2}$ inches by 2 inches) with six lines to a page. The colophon gives the date of the manuscript as Newārī Saṃvat 286 (1166 CE), during the reign of Ānandadeva. Since Hodgson's 'discovery' of this manuscript, several modern Nepalese, Sanskrit manuscripts have come to the attention of scholars.[30] Between 1934 and 1936, D. T. Suzuki and H. Idzumi used six Nepalese manuscripts[31] to produce the first printed edition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in four volumes.[32] Using the Suzuki and Idzumi edition and an additional manuscript from the Oriental Institute, Baroda,[33] P. L. Vaidya produced a new edition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* that was published in 1960.

Text critical studies on four of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* manuscripts by Gómez and eight by Jastram have led both scholars to conclude that the surviving Nepalese manuscripts all derive from a common source.[34] Jastram believes there is only one archetype for these manuscripts, which is primarily represented by Hodgson 2. Although all manuscripts so far studied appear to represent the same recension, contamination among them prevents us from establishing a definitive textual genealogy.

Because of the particular textual problems involved in the use of the Nepalese sources, editorial practice applied to the study of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* has tended to rely heavily on the readings of Hodgson 2 as a primary source, and use the other manuscripts to fill in lacunae. Neither of the existing editions is critical in the contemporary sense of the word – Suzuki and Idzumi never published their list of variant readings, and Vaidya only includes sporadic variant readings from the Baroda manuscript. In both the Suzuki-Idzumi and Vaidya editions, the editors have modified readings towards more classical Sanskrit norms in order to compensate for various idiosyncrasies of spelling, *sandhi* and punctuation found in the Nepalese manuscripts.

As the most recent edition based on the most manuscripts, Vaidya has functioned as a primary source for most (non-text critical) scholarly work on the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.[35] But Vaidya's edition (V) is not without its faults. In order

to produce a more text critical thematic study, I have checked V's readings against the revised Suzuki and Idzumi (SI) edition (1949), and supplied page references to the Derge (D) and Thomas Cleary's English translation (C) of the second Chinese translation (T 279) for all extended quotes from the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Also, I include concordances of the two Sanskrit editions with Hodgson 2 (A),[36] and three Tibetan Kanjurs in the appendices. Because I am not attempting to develop a critical edition *per se*, I have limited my use of the Sanskrit manuscript (A) and the Tibetan Derge (D) to resolve textual problems found in the Vaidya (V) and Suzuki and Idzumi (SI) editions.

I will now briefly summarize the major scholarly contributions to our current understanding of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

Modern scholarship

The western world's initial exposure to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* came in 1828, when *Asiatic Research* published a description of Hodgson's Sanskrit manuscript finds in Nepal.[37] In the article titled 'Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet', Hodgson classifies the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a narrative scripture. In 1835, he brought his palm-leaf manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to London and presented it to the Royal Asiatic Society (where it remains to this day). But it was not until 1882 that details about the text came to light. Having studied Hodgson 2, R. Mitra described the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as 'the history of Sudhana in search of perfect knowledge' in his *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* (1882: 90). In a few pages, Mitra gives a general, but accurate summary of the narrative, recounting Sudhana's initial encounter with Mañjuśrī, his journey through India visiting the good friends (*kalyāṇamitra*), up to his final encounter (*ibid.*: 90–93). In the same year as Mitra's publication, Otto Schulze published H. Kern's *Der Buddhismus und seine Geschichte in Indien*. In this work, Kern refers to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as an 'idealist text' (*idealistische Schrift*) in which the Buddha is a spiritual omnipresence that manifests itself in various forms within nature through the 'power of miracle' (*Wunderkraft*).[38] Mark Ehman (1977: 17) correctly points out Kern's 'indebtedness to Hegalian metaphysics' in his attempt to describe the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview in terms of western Idealism. By trying to force the *Gaṇḍavyūha* into a Hegalian worldview, Kern failed to understand the text on its own terms, vocabulary and inner logic.[39]

In the beginning of the twentieth century, *Gaṇḍavyūha* studies were advanced by the above-mentioned first printed edition by D. T. Suzuki and H. Idzumi (1934–36; revised edition 1949). Suzuki followed up this edition with selected translations from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and an analysis of the text's worldview in his third series of *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (1953). In his *Essays*, Suzuki provides translations of selected passages from the introduction (*Nidāna-parivarta*), Sāgaramegha and Maitreya sections.[40] In addition to his translations, Suzuki also presents the first lengthy discussion of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview in the English language.

According to Suzuki, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* describes a spiritual world that is governed by its own rules. No longer is the Buddha considered merely a historical figure limited by space or time; rather the Buddha is coextensive with the universe itself (1953: 76). When the Buddha (called Vairocana in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*) enters into his trance state (*samādhi*) in the 'Introductory Chapter' (*Nidāna-parivarta*) at the beginning of the *sūtra*, his peaked dwelling (*kūṭāgāra*) and the Jeta Grove both expand to infinity. Linear time is also transformed so that past, present and future all collapse into a single, eternal moment. All objects within this limitless space and time are transparent, luminous and reflect every other object. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* calls this limitless inter-reflecting universe the *dharmadhātu* (*ibid*.: 78). Although the *dharmadhātu* contains the ordinary world of finite space and linear time within it (called the *lokadhātu*), it transcends the boundaries of the ordinary world and is the universe as seen from the spiritual level of the bodhisattvas.

Suzuki refers to the notion of 'Interpenetration' as 'the fundamental insight' of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and compares this idea to the Hegelian concept of concrete-universals. He states,

> It [Interpenetration] is, philosophically speaking, a thought somewhat similar to the Hegelian concept of concrete-universals. . . . A system of perfect relationship exists among individual existences and also between individuals and universals, between particular objects and general ideas. This perfect network of mutual relations has received at the hand of the Mahāyāna philosopher the technical name of Interpenetration.
>
> (Suzuki 1953: 87)

According to Suzuki (*ibid*.: 148), the true nature of the *dharmadhātu* is Interpenetration, which is best demonstrated by the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s description of the great peaked dwelling (*mahākūṭāgāra*) in the Maitreya section.[41] The inter-reflection of the thousands of peaked dwellings within Maitreya's great peaked dwelling and the inter-reflection of each and every object within each dwelling with every other object represents the complete interpenetration and non-obstruction of all phenomena. The ultimate spiritual goal of any Mahāyāna Buddhist according to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is to enter into the *dharmadhātu* through the practice of the 'life of enlightenment' (*bodhicaryā*). According to Suzuki (*ibid*.: 83–84, 170), this 'life of enlightenment' the *Gaṇḍavyūha* identifies as the 'life of Bhadra' (*bhadracaryā*) personified as the bodhisattva Samantadhadra who functions as the ultimate goal of Sudhana's pilgrimage.

In his study, Suzuki, like Kern before him, invokes Hegelian philosophy to explain the worldview of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Nevertheless, through his sensitivity to the philosophical dynamics of the text and use of the text's own vocabulary (such as *dharmadhātu*, *adhiṣṭhāna*, *bodhicaryā*), he moves considerably closer than Kern to an understanding of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview. But as thoughtful as Suzuki's study may be, his characterization of the

fundamental insight of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as 'Interpenetration' reveals his indebtedness to the Chinese Huayan masters. Suzuki gives no Sanskrit equivalent for 'Interpenetration', and I have found none in my reading of the text. It seems that he is using this term to translate the Huayan concepts of *rong* 融, or *ton* 通 used by the Huayan masters in their analysis of the *Avataṃsaka*. These Chinese terms appear to encompass a number of concepts found in the Sanskrit *Gaṇḍavyūha*, such as *pratibhāsa* ('reflection'), *prativedha* ('penetration'), and *spharaṇa* ('pervading'), among others used to describe the *dharmadhātu*.

Further in-roads into *Gaṇḍavyūha* studies were made in 1953, with the publication of Franklin Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (*BHSG* and *BHSD*). Using the Suzuki and Idzumi edition, Edgerton gives numerous citations and entries from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in this monumental work of Sanskrit philology that provide much insight into and important information about the language of the Sanskrit text.[42]

In 1960, the Mithila Institute published the above-mentioned edition of the Sanskrit *Gaṇḍavyūha* edited by P. L. Vaidya. In Vaidya's opinion (1960: ix), his edition 'marks a vast advance over the older edition', because he fills in many lacunae with the Baroda manuscript and corrects the Suzuki and Idzumi edition in numerous places with regard to punctuation, and the separation of words, phrases and paragraphs.[43] As mentioned above, Vaidya tends to be the edition most often used for non-text critical work on the Sanskrit *Gaṇḍavyūha*.[44]

In 1967, Luis Gómez completed his PhD dissertation 'Selected Verses from the Gaṇḍavyūha: Text, Critical Apparatus, and Translation' (1967). In this first true critical study of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, Gómez edits and translates verses from the *Nidāna-parivarta* and Samantagambīraśrīvimalaprabhā section based on four Sanskrit manuscripts, the two Sanskrit editions, and the Peking and Lhasa Kanjurs. In addition to his editing and translating these verses, Gómez provides a lengthy introduction discussing the textual relationships among various versions of the Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese texts, references to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in Indian literature, linguistic features of the Sanskrit text, its original title, date of origin and philosophy.

Gómez's analysis of the philosophy of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in his dissertation and in a later article written in 1977,[45] provide important insights into the worldview of the text. For Gómez, the central doctrines of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* represent 'an elaboration and combination of two notions common to all Buddhists: the notion that all appearance is illusory and the traditional belief in the psychic powers attained through the exercise of asceticism' (1967: lxxvi). Gómez asserts that the most important psychic power mentioned in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, possessed only by buddhas and the most advanced bodhisattvas, is the ability to generate illusory bodies. Buddhas and bodhisattvas are able to generate magical bodies because they are thought to possess two bodies: a 'Dharma body' (*dharmakāya* or *dharmaśarīra*) and a 'Form body' (*rūpakāya* or *rūpaśarīra*), corresponding to two different aspects of the *dharmadhātu*:

the undivided *dharmadhātu* (*asambhinna-dharmadhātu*) and the *dharmadhātu* divided into levels (*dharmadhātu-tala-bheda*). The Dharma body represents the *dharmadhātu* as the non-differentiated, absolutely pure, empty, metaphysical foundation of all phenomena.[46] The Form body represents the infinite, illusory manifestations of the *dharmadhātu* – all the forms of buddhas, bodhisattvas, realms, beings and objects inter-reflecting and interpenetrating one another.[47] Thus enlightened beings who possess the Dharma body are beyond duality and therefore are able to recreate illusory form bodies for the sake of saving all deluded beings. In this way, the *dharmadhātu* is the foundation, the goal and the fruit of the bodhisattva's course of conduct. Thus, according to Gómez (1977: 235), the *Gaṇḍavyūha* goes beyond the 'common ground' of the Mahāyāna by establishing 'an equation between the true nature of *dharma*s, the *dharmadhātu*, the ultimate essence of Buddhahood, and the bodhisattva's course (*caryā*) represented by the function of the Form body'. This equation leads the text to present the 'principle fruit' of concentration and trance as the ability to produce reality (*ibid.*). Thus as the central concept of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the *dharmadhātu* possesses metaphysical, magical and soteriological aspects.

Although probably the most insightful and influential interpretation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview in modern times, Gómez's analysis is not without faults. Mark Ehman (1977: 26) is right to point out that Gómez's emphasis on the 'psychic powers attained through the exercise of asceticism' finds little textual support in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Psychic powers are a central concern of the *sūtra*, but there are no discussions of ascetic practices leading to these powers. Rather, in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, psychic powers come through the attainment of trances (*samādhi*), which are achieved solely through the instruction and sustaining power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the *kalyāṇamitra*s.

A weakness in both Suzuki's and Gómez's interpretations is their failure to elaborate on the connection between the text's worldview and narrative. By failing to examine the function of Sudhana's pilgrimage within the worldview of the text, they neglect one of the crucial aspects of worldview analysis: the role of society in relation to the individual and reality (see Chapter 2 below). Both Suzuki and Gómez point out essential features of the text's vision of reality and the individual's spiritual goal to attain this vision, but both fail to elaborate on the social roles of the good friends, their relation to Sudhana, or their connection to the *dharmadhātu*.

In the 1970s, a number of Buddhist scholars produced partial translations, translations and studies of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In 1977, Herbert Guenther translated selections from the Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā, Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmati, Vasantī, Gopā and Maitreya sections into English.[48] Using the Buddhabhadra translation, Torakazu Doi translated the entire *Avataṃsaka* into German under the title *Das Kegon Sūtra: Das Buch vom Eintreten in den Kosmos der Wahrheit* (1978). In *Women in Buddhism* (Paul 1985), Francis Wilson provides abbreviated translations of the Siṃhavijṛmbhitā, Āśā, Prabhūtā and Vasumitrā sections using Vaidya's edition.[49] In the same

work, Wilson provides brief introductions to her translations in which she discusses the role of these female *kalyāṇamitra*s in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.[50]

Probably the most significant contribution to *Gaṇḍavyūha* studies from the 1980s is Thomas Cleary's English translation of the entire *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* from the Chinese translation by Śikṣānanda.[51] Although not a text-critical study, Cleary's translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was the first of its kind in the English language, and is a valuable resource for non-specialist students of comparative religion and a useful quick reference for English-speaking Buddhist scholars.[52]

The 1990s witnessed continued progress in the field of *Gaṇḍavyūha* studies. In 1994, the first complete translation of the Sanskrit *Gaṇḍavyūha* into a modern language (Japanese) was published. Titled *Satori eno henreki*,[53] this translation is based on the two Sanskrit editions, the Peking and Derge Tibetan translations and the three complete Chinese versions. Also in the 1990s, David McMahan wrote about the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in his article 'Orality, Writing, and Authority in South Asian Buddhism: Visionary Literature and the Struggle for Legitimacy in the Mahāyāna' (McMahan 1998). Using Vaidya's edition, McMahan translates a passage from the *Nidāna-parivarta* and cites this as an example of a movement away from the oral and aural experience of the world in Early Buddhism to an emphasis in Mahāyāna Buddhism on the visual world and visionary experience (*ibid.*: 250–51). According to McMahan, this transformation was based on a shift from an oral tradition of textual transmission to a written one with the advent of Mahāyāna Buddhism (*ibid.*: 251). That there may be a relationship between writing and the rise of the Mahāyāna was first proposed in an article written by Richard Gombrich (1990), which although interesting, has its faults.[54] McMahan's own contribution to Gombrich's view – the connection between writing and visionary experience – is provocative, but unsubstantiated in that he fails to show any necessary or logical connection between literacy and a visually based mysticism.

McMahan further elaborates his understanding of the role of visionary experience in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in his *Empty Vision: Metaphor and Visual Imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhism* (2002: 111–142). In this study, McMahan makes an important observation about the image of kingship:

> For example, in the opening scene of the *Gaṇḍayvūha*, Śākyamuni Buddha is dwelling in a multi-storied palace or tower (*kūṭāgāra*) that then expands to encompass the universe as the surrounding area is transformed into a luxuriant pure land. Many images associated with royalty are present in this transfigured landscape. . . . The many bodhisattvas and disciplined in the scene now resemble a vast retinue of royal attendants.
>
> (McMahan 2002: 118)

This image of kingship[55] I refer to as the 'metaphor of kingship' and examine closely in this study as a key concept in understanding how hierarchical structures of power are developed within the story.

Although this brief survey of the modern scholarship on the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is not exhaustive, it covers all the major research done on the text in English, as well as some substantial works done in German and Japanese.[56] Clearly, important studies already have been carried out on the text, but much work remains to be done. The areas for future research may be divided roughly into three main categories. The first is philological: further text-critical studies on the Tibetan and Chinese versions, a complete critical edition of the Sanskrit text, as well as a complete translation into English from the Sanskrit remain important *desiderata*. The second is historical and cultural: except for a few studies,[57] the relationship between the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and its historical and cultural contexts has not yet been explored in any depth. The third area is interpretative and narratological: whereas a number of scholars have written on the worldview of the text, no one to date has attempted to relate this worldview to the story's narrative structure.

The current study aims to fill a scholarly lacuna by addressing aspects of areas two and three. Through examining the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview in relation to the narrative role of the *kalyāṇamitra*s, I hope to demonstrate how the text's vision of reality relates to its position on society and the individual's aspirations towards spiritual advancement within this society. Having done this, I examine the themes of power, wealth and women in the text, and relate these to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s social context in ancient India.

Chapter outline

In Chapter 2, I examine the worldview of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In order to understand how the text constructs its view of reality, society and the individual, I analyze several passages that give insight into its key concepts such as *dharmadhātu*, *dharmakāya*, *rūpakāya*, and *kalyāṇamitra.* In Chapter 3, I discuss Sudhana's story and explore its structure using ideas developed by structural narratologist Mieke Bal (1997). In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I investigate the way the *Gaṇḍavyūha* employs notions about power, wealth and women. My choice of these themes has been motivated by three factors. First, ideas about wealth and gender play important roles in worldview construction. Second, notions of power reveal ideological justifications for social and political hierarchies within the text's social context. Third, these themes have been largely ignored by modern scholarship. In Chapter 7, first I argue, based on internal and inscriptional evidence, for the compilation of the narrative in the first several centuries CE. Then I investigate the role of Buddhist monasticism and urban society during Buddhism's Middle Period in India (0–500 CE). Using epigraphical evidence, I examine patterns of patronage of Buddhist monasteries during this period. I argue in this chapter that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was compiled by monks (possibly from Nāgārjunikoṇḍa during the rule of the Ikṣvākus) for patrons from an urban, wealthy elite in which women played an important role.

Assumed in my analysis of these themes in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is Umberto Eco's notion that texts are 'ideologically overcoded' (1979: 22–23). According to Eco, a text is never ideologically neutral, but possesses a structure that may not be apparent to the author(s). Whenever someone reads a text his/her own position encounters the ideological structures of the text. Differing ideological positions when coming into contact have the potential to uncover novel readings of a text. Because texts are cultural and institutional products, they always contain an over-abundance of semiotic codes and thus are ideologically overcoded. My goal in studying power, wealth and women in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is to reveal information about the ideological overcoding within the text's narrative and worldview, such as its assertions that certain economic, social and political hierarchies are cosmic norms.

The implications of my 'systems approach' to this important Mahāyāna *sūtra* extend beyond the current study. By examining the text in this way, I am suggesting that we view the Indian Mahāyāna of the Buddhist Middle Period as a literary movement embedded within a social system. As cultural products and material objects, Indian Mahāyāna *sūtra*s played a role in the social 'exchange game' that was intimately connected to social class, economic wealth, status and prestige. As such, these Mahāyāna *sūtra*s were connected to patterns of patronage in ways that impacted their ideological formation. In this regard, my current examination of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s themes of power, wealth and women is an 'acid test' of my proposed method. I think the results of this investigation speak for themselves, and if taken seriously will cause those of us that study this literature to pay closer attention to the social 'embedded-ness' of Indian Mahāyāna.

2 Worldview

> These early [Mahāyāna] sūtras seem to have functioned in mutual independence, with each sūtra deemed by its devotees to be complete unto itself, representing its own world.
>
> (Lopez 2001: 114)

In order to understand the themes of power, wealth and women in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we need to locate them with the unique 'world' of the *sūtra*. To do this, I will employ the concept of 'worldview' (*Weltanschauung*). I define a worldview as a totalizing and generalized theory of existence that constructs meaning out of experience through establishing the relationships among reality, society and the individual.[1] Since a worldview locates society's position within reality, it maps out a social hierarchy that establishes the extent and range of certain groups' powers and authority. Through the development of institutions (government, university, military) a society establishes realms of discourse that define the roles and limitations of individuals and groups based on such things as gender, class, race and ethnicity. The privileged groups, of course, are the ones with the most power. Power may be defined here as political (the ability to wage war, collect taxes, make and enforce laws through a penal system etc.), economic (the ability to amass a surplus of wealth and goods, to buy and sell, invest, trade, hire labour etc.), and military (access to tactical knowledge, weapons technology and manpower). These different types of power coexist in complex and interrelated ways to establish 'a regime of truth'[2] whereby reality, the social world and the individual's place within them are defined.

In a religious worldview the highest power is transcendental and spiritual. Thus within the religious hierarchy, spiritual powers are at the top and often these powers are arranged in very similar ways to the social hierarchy. Within societies developed on a religious worldview, a priestly caste often functions as an intermediary between the worldly and transcendental realms. Because the priestly caste exists in a special relationship to transcendental power, it often maintains a privileged position within the worldly sphere through high social status, economic wealth and political power. The legitimation of

the professional priestly caste's worldly power highlights an important feature of worldviews: they not only define what is real and unreal, true and false, but they do this through establishing what are considered legitimate means of knowing. The religious caste has power through its ritual, scholarly or mystic knowledge only if this type of knowledge is recognized as legitimate. On the level of discourse, epistemology (a theory of knowledge) is central to establishing a truth regime's ideological foundation.

In addition to establishing what is real and society's relation to the real, a worldview positions the individual within these two. In an important sense, it is not simply that each individual has a worldview, but that worldviews have individuals. Because an individual's sense of self emerges within the context of a society and culture through forces largely unconscious and therefore unrecognized, the idea that an 'I' exists as an independent centre of consciousness, volition and intention ceases to be a tenable position. Personal identity, like reality, is something that is constructed within truth regimes.[3]

Central to the construction of self is the notion of body. The body, as the locus of consciousness and unconsciousness, is always gendered and positioned within hierarchical structures. In patriarchal societies, the male gender is constructed as the normative human gender with 'female' considered a special and inferior type of human. Both 'body' and 'gender' are not givens in experience, but ideas that emerge as part of a worldview's totalizing vision of experience generated through the play of power. Even our bodies' concrete sensorial experiences may not be taken as normative, natural or given. Culture constructs the body, which cannot be understood divorced of its social context.[4] Therefore, any analysis of a worldview must take into consideration not only that worldview's notions of reality and society, but also its concept of the individual, which includes ideas about the body, gender and beauty.

In this chapter, I will examine in some detail notions about reality, society and the individual in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in order to outline the narrative's assumed worldview. As a Buddhist text emerging out of an ancient Indian context, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* reflects an idealized and spiritualized view of this context. Within this framework, the worldview of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* defines the 'rules' of what we could call a 'reality game' – the basic structures and underlying assumptions about reality, society and the individual that form the imagined universe wherein the activity of the narrative takes place. In later chapters, I examine the details of the *sūtra's* narrative structure (Chapter 3), and how its worldview and narrative reflect aspects of ancient Indian society (Chapter 7).

Reality in Indian Buddhist thought

To understand the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s view of reality, it is necessary to locate its position within classical Indian cosmological thought. During Buddhism's Middle Period (0–500 CE) in India, both Buddhist and Brahmanical thinkers maintained certain notions of time and space. Indian cosmology at this time

asserted that space was limitless and filled with innumerable world realms each cycling endlessly through incredibly vast periods of evolution and devolution. Time was measured in terms of eons (*kalpa*); one eon being the time it takes for a world realm to complete its cycle of evolution and devolution until its destruction by fire.[5] It was speculated that once a world realm was destroyed, another began – a process that was thought to possess neither beginning nor end.[6] Thus Indian thinkers did not posit a temporal origin of the universe, and therefore, unlike Christianity or Big Bang Theory, classical Indian cosmology did not entail a cosmogony.[7]

Indian Buddhists recognized various classes of world realms (*lokadhātu*) distinguished according to size. The Pāli *Mahāniddesa* 356 first divides world realms into 50 categories, beginning with a world realm consisting of just a single world, up to a world realm of 50 worlds (see *PED*: 587). Beyond 50, the text mentions *sahassī culanika*, *dvisahassī majjhimikā*, *tisahassī* and *mahāsahassī lokadhātu*s (*ibid.*). The first is a minor world realm consisting of 1,000 worlds, and the second a middling world realm of 2,000 worlds. The third would seem to be a world realm of 3,000 worlds, although Buddhaghosa interprets a 'thrice-thousandfold world realm' (*tisahassī lokadhātu*) to be a system of 1,000,000,000,000 worlds.[8] A 'great thousand' (*mahāsahassī*) world realm, from the *Mahāniddesa* list, seems to rank above a *tisahassī* world realm, but what '*mahā-*' means before a number is unclear.[9] The Pāli Vinaya 1.12 also mentions a world realm of 10,000 worlds (*dasasahassilokadhātu*).[10]

Edgerton has noticed three types of world realms mentioned in Buddhist Sanskrit literature: *sāhasracūḍika*, *dvisāhasra* and *trisāhasramahāsāhasra* (*BHSD*: 464). The first two correspond to the Pāli *sahassī cūlanika* and *dvisahassī majjhimikā*. The third term has caused modern translators some difficulty.[11] Although Edgerton points out that in the *Mahāvyutpatti* 7999 ff. and in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* 343.16 ff. '*mahā-*' compounded with numbers means ten times that number, he chooses to translate *trisāhasramahāsāhasra* with '(world system) consisting of a "triple thousand great thousand" (worlds)' (*BHSD*: 259). Other contemporary scholars also attempt more or less literal translations, and thereby avoid giving a definite value to the term.[12] Although the exact number of worlds in a *trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu* is far from clear, this term plainly indicates a world realm of many thousands of worlds and appears regularly in Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, including the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.[13]

As mentioned above, the smallest world realm is thought to be one consisting of a single world. Thus a *lokadhātu* may refer to a system of thousands of worlds or a single-world realm. Although Indian Buddhists believed in a universe consisting of untold millions of worlds, each world was generally described as possessing the same basic structure.[14] All world realms, including our own called the 'Sahā world realm' (*sahā lokadhātu*), were believed to be divided into three parts: the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*), the realm of form (*rūpadhātu*) and the formless realm (*arūpyadhātu*). The realm of desire was understood as the world of the five senses and imagined to possess a symmetrical topography. At its centre, there was thought to be a

massive mountain called Sumeru or Meru. Surrounding this mountain were seven rings of mountains divided by seven seas. Beyond the mountains and seas, Indian Buddhists imagined island-continents located at the primary compass points. At the outermost edge of the realm of desire stood a circular chain of iron mountains called Cakravāla.

Within the realm of desire there were thought to be five or six primary states of rebirth or existence (*gati*): the state of gods, demigods, humans, animals, ghosts and hell beings.[15] The six classes of gods dwelled on or above Mount Meru. Below the gods on Mount Meru lived the demigods. Buddhist literature and iconography depict them as jealous, warlike beings envious of the gods. Upon the four island-continents lived humans, animals, ghosts and various human-like mythological creatures. Indian Buddhists believed that in the Sahā world realm they inhabited the southern island-continent which they called Jambudvīpa (the Rose Apple Island). Living among the humans and animals of this island were imagined many different sorts of creatures such as demons (*yakṣa*), centaurs (*kiṃnara*), sea serpents (*nāga*), giant birds (*garuḍa*), celestial musicians (*gandharva*) and celestial maidens (*apsaras*). At this same level within the realm of desire, Indian Buddhists thought that an unfortunate class of spirits, most often called 'hungry ghosts' in English,[16] wandered the earth in search of nourishment. Buddhist art depicts these piteous creatures with huge bellies and tiny mouths and throats. Due to their excessive greed in a former human life, they were believed to be doomed to constant hunger, never able to satisfy themselves. Beneath Jambudvīpa, were thought to be various hell realms. Indian Buddhists described these hells in detail – some were thought to be extremely hot, others extremely cold – but all are quite horrible. The wicked in the hells were imagined to die over and over again in the most hideous ways: through dismemberment, boiling, crushing, burning, drowning etc., until their evil karma has been expiated.[17]

Indian Buddhists believed that above the realm of desire was located the realm of form. Here divine beings abided dwelling in sublime states of mental bliss. This realm was further divided into four main levels corresponding to the four stages of concentration (*dhyāna*) attained through the practice of 'calm' (*śamatha*) meditation. Higher still, was the formless realm. Here Indian Buddhists thought beings existed as pure consciousness without form. Four levels are distinguished in the literature corresponding to the highest levels of concentration thought to be attainable through *śamatha* meditation: Infinite Space, Infinite Consciousness, Nothingness and Neither Consciousness nor Unconsciousness.[18]

Indian Buddhists imagined that the basic structure of their Sahā world, both in terms of its various levels and topographical features, are the same for all worlds. Gómez (1996: 8) observes: 'The universe of the classical Buddhist Indian imagination was a system of parallel worlds all of which shared a similar structure'. An important exception to this general pattern and a characteristic of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism was a belief in special worlds called 'buddha-fields' (*buddhakṣetra*).[19] A buddha-field or buddha land was

imagined to be a world that either contains a buddha or had the potential to contain one (see *BHSD*: 401). Due to the spiritual power of the buddha residing in a buddha-field, that world was thought to possess a different structure considered more conducive to religious practice.[20] Buddhas in their own rarefied lands were imagined to be surrounded by retinues of bodhisattvas. Unlike ordinary human beings, the advanced bodhisattvas of a buddha's assembly were considered to possess the power to instantly transport themselves to other worlds, and this is a common motif occurring in many Mahāyāna *sūtra*s.[21]

The cosmological notions outlined above form the basic presuppositions of both the authors and the early audience of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Before we discuss in some detail specific features of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s own understanding of reality, I should mention one more important feature of Buddhist cosmology in general, which Gethin aptly calls the 'principle of *the equivalence of cosmology and psychology*'.[22] According to this principle the various cosmological realms were understood to be the result of certain psychological states of the beings that inhabited those realms. Thus in the bad states of existence (*durgati*), the greedy were reborn as hungry ghosts; the hateful were reborn in the hells; and the ignorant returned to life as animals. Good actions were believed to lead to rebirth in the heavens; while the practice of calm meditation was thought to cause rebirth in the realms of form or the formless realms. Also, the physical characteristics of a world realm were thought to depend upon the virtues of the beings that inhabit it. The most virtuous humans were thought to be reborn in buddha lands like Amitābha's pure land where the trees are made of jewels, lotus ponds are scattered across the perfectly level ground and palaces float in the sky.[23] The Mahāyāna notion (elaborated in the Madhyamaka school) that all phenomena (*dharma*s) lack inherent existence or independent essence (*svabhāva*) and therefore are characterized by their emptiness (*śūnyatā*) reinforces the idea that the 'external world' arises in dependence upon multiple factors including one's mental states.

The Yogācāra school of Mahāyāna Buddhism took the equivalence between cosmology and psychology to its logical extreme: the belief that all the innumerable worlds with their different levels and, indeed all phenomena, are merely the product of thought (*cittamātra*).[24] The illusory nature of all things is at times expressed in Mahāyāna sources in terms of one or more of the following comparisons: all *dharma*s are like acts of magic, a mirage, the moon reflected in water, space, an echo, the city of the Gandarvas, a dream, a shadow, an image reflected in a mirror and objects created by psychic powers (Gómez 1967: lxxvi).[25] The last of these comparisons highlights the Buddhist acceptance of the traditional Indian belief that through mental discipline one is able to attain psychic powers (*ṛddhi*).[26] As I mentioned in the Introduction, Gómez states that the central doctrines of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* represent an 'elaboration and combination' of the Buddhist belief in the illusory nature of phenomena and in psychic powers (*ibid.*: lxxvi).[27] As will

be evident in what follows, the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, while not specifically elaborating a Madhyamaka or Yogācāra position, contains passages that support aspects of both schools.

Reality in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*

Central to understanding the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s view of reality is the concept of *dharmadhātu*.[28] The term '*dharmadhātu*' appears frequently in Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature and is often translated into English as 'Dharma-element' or 'Dharma realm'.[29] The *Gaṇḍavyūha* employs the common Mahāyāna understanding of *dharmadhātu* to identify a special locus of enlightened activity that both simultaneously encompasses all the infinite world realms (*lokadhātu*) and transcends them. In order to grasp this particular understanding of *dharmadhātu* in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we must look at the occurrences of the term within the text.

Although the compound *dharmadhātu* appears in numerous places within the *Gaṇḍavyūha*,[30] the text as a narrative prefers to 'show, not tell', and does not provide an exact definition of the term. Therefore, I shall look first at a number of passages in the text where the compound is used in order to get a sense of its significance in the *sūtra*, and then turn to some descriptions of objects that seem to represent the *dharmadhātu*, such as Maitreya's peaked dwelling.[31] Gómez has pointed out that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* refers to the '*dharmadhātu* divided into levels' (*dharmadhātutalabheda*) and an 'undivided *dharmadhātu*' (*asambhinnadharmadhātu*). In addition to the occurrences of these terms,[32] '*dharmadhātu*' appears more often without special qualifiers or with other qualifiers such as 'unobstructed *dharmadhātu*' (*anāvaraṇa-dharmadhātu*)[33] and the '*dharmadhātu* of unobstructed space' (*asaṅga-vara-dharmadhātu*).[34] Therefore, while *dharmadhātu-tala-bheda* and *asambhinna-dharmadhātu* broadly define the dual aspects of the *dharmadhātu*, a number of other important phrases add nuance to these two.

The most significant description of the Dharma realm's qualities occurs in a passage[35] in which the night goddess Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhavatejaḥśrī (*km*#37)[36] tells Sudhana about the bodhisattva's liberation (*bodhisattva-vimokṣa*) she attained called 'the entrance into the profound miracle through a beautiful sound'.[37] During her description, the goddess says that she sees, approaches and advances towards the *dharmadhātu* by means of ten aspects (*ākara*). The Dharma realm's ten aspects are that it is:[38]

1) immeasurable (*aprameya*),
2) infinite (*anantamadhya*),
3) boundless (*aparyanta*),
4) unlimited (*asīmāprāpta*),
5) uninterrupted (*avyavacchinna*),
6) a single unity (*ekotībhāvagata*),[39]
7) inherently pure (*svabhāva-vimala*),

8) the same in all worlds (*sarvajagat-samatānugata*),
9) a single ornament (*ekālaṃkāra*)[40] and
10) indestructible (*avināśana*).

This list is the most detailed direct reference to qualities of the *dharmadhātu*, and provides us with some insight into the religious significance of the term in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. To borrow terminology from Christian theology, this list demonstrates both the 'immanence' and 'transcendence' of the Dharma realm. As a locus that is immeasurable, infinite, boundless and unlimited, it is always present, yet always more than what is present. As an indestructible, single, uninterrupted, pure unity that is the same in all worlds, it functions as the 'ground'[41] of all the multiplicity of realms and worlds. In its immanent aspect, it is described as 'divided into levels'; and in its transcendent aspect as 'undivided' or 'unobstructed'. As I hope to demonstrate in the following pages, the *dharmadhātu* is one of the two most important religio-philosophical concepts in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.[42] It represents both the ultimate nature of reality behind and beyond all illusory phenomena, and the ultimate goal of the religious quest.

Further investigation into the *dharmadhātu* concept in the text reveals that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* tends to eschew precise definitions in favour of lavish descriptions, and to describe reality through metaphor rather than philosophical analysis. Two of the most prominent metaphors in the text for the Dharma realm are buildings and bodies. The most common architectural structure associated with the *dharmadhātu* is the peaked dwelling or pavilion (*kūṭāgāra*). Let us now examine the two most significant descriptions of *kūṭāgāra*s in the narrative.

In the opening scene of the *sūtra*, the Buddha Vairocana resides at Śrāvastī in the park of Anāthapiṇḍada in the Jeta Grove within a peaked dwelling called the 'Great Array' (*mahāvyūha*) surrounded by 5000 bodhisattvas with Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī foremost among them, 500 *śrāvaka*s, and the lords of the world (*lokendra*) (V 1–4). Having discerned the thoughts of his followers and seen that they desired to know of his past attainments and current powers, the Buddha enters into a trance (*samādhi*) called the 'Lion's Yawn' (*siṃhavijṛmbhita*) that magically transforms his peaked dwelling into an infinitely vast array (*vyūha*) filled with countless parasols, banners, flags, diamonds, jewels and gems of all varieties (V 5.1–8). The Jeta Grove also expands infinitely and the ground and sky become adorned with priceless substances.[43] Although the peaked dwelling is not explicitly associated with the *dharmadhātu*, its transformation into an infinitely vast array suggests that it is used here to represent it.

One finds further evidence that Vairocana's peaked dwelling functions as a metaphorical representation of the *dharmadhātu* in the Maitreya section.[44] Having gone to a park called 'Great Array' (*mahāvyūha*)[45] in the region of Samudrakaccha in search of Maitreya, Sudhana finds a great peaked dwelling containing the ornaments of Vairocana's array.[46] After prostrating himself

before the dwelling and circumambulating it hundreds of thousands of times, Sudhana speaks aloud a long list of its inhabitants' spiritual qualities. A number of these are worth special mention. Sudhana states that this *kūṭāgāra* is the residence 'of those who dwell in the undivided abode of the *dharmadhātu*';[47] and it is a place in which 'there is the means to pervade the *dharmadhātu* in all its aspects'.[48] He declares that this abode's inhabitants dwell where 'one eon enters into all eons, and all eons enter into one eon';[49] 'in which there is no division between one land and all lands, [or between all lands] and one land';[50] and where there is 'no impediment between one element (*dharma*) and all elements, or between all elements and one element'.[51] Then Sudhana recites verses wherein he proclaims that the *kūṭāgāra*'s residents 'roam the *dharmadhātu* unattached',[52] 'move in the sky of the *dharmadhātu* like the sun and moon',[53] and 'course the unobstructed *dharmadhātu* with thoughts unattached.'[54]

Sudhana's words, by associating the inhabitants of the *kūṭāgāra* with those that travel within the *dharmadhātu*, explicitly connect Maitreya's dwelling with the Dharma realm.[55] His statements about all eons, lands and objects entering each other without division or impediment within the *kūṭāgāra* signify what the Chinese masters called the 'interpenetration'[56] of the *dharmadhātu*. This association of a bodhisattva's peaked dwelling with the Dharma realm suggests that the Buddha Vairocana's *kūṭāgāra* in the opening scene of the *sūtra* also represents the *dharmadhātu*.

Vairocana's *kūṭāgāra* is referred to as the 'Great Array' (*mahāvyūha*) and Maitreya's is said to contain the ornaments of Vairocana's array. The word '*vyūha*' is extremely common term in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and often occurs in descriptions of mystical visions and in the names of the liberations attained by the good friends.[57] Although countless *vyūha*s are mentioned in the text, these two peaked dwellings represent particularly important ones – *vyūha*s depicting the *dharmadhātu* in its manifestation of infinite multiplicity. I suggest that these *vyūha*s are representations of the Dharma realm as the 'Supreme Array' (*gaṇḍavyūha*).[58]

One other example of the *dharmadhātu* as a building is particularly illuminating. When Sudhana asks Ratnacūḍa (*km*#16) about the bodhisattva's path, he tells him to look at his house (*niveśana*). Sudhana sees a building with ten stories and eight gates ornamented with priceless objects made of gold, silver, jewels, gems and other treasures (V 114.11–16). He enters and sees on the first three floors food, drink, all types of garments, and all kinds of gem-encrusted ornaments being given away. On the fourth floor he witnesses virtuous young women being given away for the pleasures of love (V 114.17–19). On each floor from the fifth to the ninth,[59] Sudhana sees assemblies of bodhisattvas with various spiritual attainments. The higher he ascends the greater their attainments. The bodhisattvas of the fifth floor have attained the fifth stage (*pañcamī-bhūmi*) of the bodhisattva's path; those on the sixth floor have achieved the abode of the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā-vihāra*); those on the seventh have obtained intellectual

receptivity similar to an echo,[60] perfected their firm resolve towards a knowledge of means and received the cloud of teachings (*dharmamegha*) from all the *tathāgata*s.[61] The bodhisattvas of the eighth floor have obtained the imperishable supernatural knowledges (*abhijñā*), they roam through all world realms, and are evenly distributed throughout the entire Dharma realm. The bodhisattvas of the ninth floor are only a lifetime away from buddhahood. And finally, on the tenth floor Sudhana sees,

> the *tathāgata*s' oceans of vows arising from their course of conduct [beginning] with their initial thought [of enlightenment], the miraculous spheres of all the teachings of the buddhas, the assembled groups of all buddha lands, and the arrays of power for the guidance of all beings that [emitted] the sound of the wheels of teachings of all the buddhas.[62]

This description of Ratnacūḍa's house provides valuable insight into the nature of the *dharmadhātu*. The building's construction out of priceless substances belies its similarity on a somewhat lesser scale to the two *kūṭāgāra*s previously mentioned. Ratnacūḍa shows Sudhana his house in response to Sudhana's questions about the bodhisattva's path, just as Maitreya sends Sudhana into his peaked dwelling. This parallel also suggests that the house is an architectural representation of the Dharma realm. The first four floors visually demonstrate the perfection of giving (*dānapāramitā*), the first of ten perfections,[63] with each higher level representing greater acts of generosity. Floors six to nine possess an obvious spiritual hierarchy – the bodhisattvas seen at higher floors have achieved greater spiritual attainment. On the tenth and highest floor Sudhana has a vision of the teachings and lands of the supreme beings, the buddhas. Thus Ratnacūḍa's house represents the *dharmadhātu* hierarchically arranged according to spiritual attainment.

Besides buildings, we find that the human body is another powerful metaphor used in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to represent the *dharmadhātu*. An example is found early in the text when Sudhana meets the monk Sāradhvaja[64] (*km*#7) from Milaspharaṇa (V 68–78). Sudhana finds the monk seated in deep meditative trance with countless miraculous projections emanating from every pore in his body and pervading the entire Dharma realm. These projections are of all types of beings who appeared to go forth to worship all buddhas, purify all buddha lands, spiritually mature all beings, save all beings from suffering and lead them all to omniscience. The beings emerging from Sāradhvaja's body are hierarchically arranged like those in Ratnacūḍa's house. From the soles of Sāradhvaja's feet, countless merchants and brahmin householders come forth and help the poor through giving all types of gifts. From his knees, endless numbers of scholars (*paṇḍita*) come forth and aid beings through their teachings. From his navel, appear sages (*ṛsi*); from his sides, serpent girls (*nāgakanyā*); from his chest, the lords of the demigods (*asurendra*) (V 68.27–70.8). Bodhisattvas emerge from Sāradhvaja's head and buddhas from his top-knot (*uṣṇīṣa*). Thus the monk's limbs, like the floors

of Ratnacūḍa's house, represent the various levels (*tala*) of spiritual hierarchy within the Dharma realm.

As Sudhana progresses on his quest for enlightenment, he meets more spiritually advanced good friends. The more advanced the *kalyāṇamitra*, the more exalted is the text's description of his or her body. For instance, when Sudhana meets the night goddess Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā (*km*#39), he sees that her body is 'covered with a net of jewels reflecting the principles of the Dharma realm',[65] 'showing the reflection of all the light of the moons and suns, planets and constellations of stars',[66] and 'pervading all directions with infinite manifestations'.[67] This description concludes with the following: 'Having come from the indivisible solid realm that is the Dharma body, her physical form was naturally pure in essence and naturally undefiled through the power of the non-abiding *tathāgata*s.'[68]

Five characteristics mentioned here suggest a connection between the body of the night goddess and the Dharma realm. First, her body, like the buildings mentioned, is adorned with jewels and reflects all the principles (*naya*) of the *dharmadhātu*. This strongly implies a connection between her body and the Dharma realm. Second, her body reflects all the light of the celestial bodies, which suggests that through this power of reflection (*pratibhāsa*) it contains the entire physical world, like the *dharmadhātu*. Third, her body projects infinite manifestations. This use of the adjective 'infinite' (*anantamadhya*) hints at the infinite Dharma realm. Fourth, her body comes from the indivisible solid realm (*abhedya-sāravatī-dhātu*) that is the Dharma body (*dharmakāya*). The concept of *dharmakāya* is extremely important for an understanding of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s soteriology, and one I shall return to in greater detail when I discuss the text's conception of the individual later in this chapter. For now, let us note that this Dharma body is said to be an undifferentiated realm like the Dharma realm, which is undivided (*asaṃbhinna*) and a single unity (*ekotībhāva*). Fifth, her physical form has been purified through a body (*śarīra*) that is 'naturally pure in essence' (*svabhāva-nirmala-dharmatā*) and is 'naturally undefiled' (*prakṛtya-saṃkliṣṭa*).

Recall that earlier I cited a passage in which the night goddess Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhavatejaḥśrī (*km*#37) describes the Dharma realm as 'inherently pure', or literally 'pure with regard to its essence' (*svabhāva-vimala*).[69] Thus unlike ordinary phenomena (*dharma*), which lack this purity, Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā's body, like the Dharma realm, has a pure essence. I would suggest that implied in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s assertion that both the night goddess's body and the *dharmadhātu* possess a pure essence is that they are the *same thing*. This identity is made explicit when a little later in the text the night goddess states that a bodhisattva has a 'body that is the undivided Dharma realm' (*asaṃbhinna-dharmadhātu-kāya*).[70] Thus the Dharma body of the night goddess and all spiritually advanced beings is co-extensive with the Dharma realm. This identity is best illustrated in the description of Samantabhadra's body in the final section of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (V 420–36), which I discuss in detail in Chapter 4.

Let me now summarize our findings on the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview thus far. From the viewpoint of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, because all things lack an essence (*svabhāva*), all worlds, realms and beings are illusory manifestations of the *dharmadhātu*. As ultimate ground and locus, the Dharma realm is the totality of everything divided into hierarchically arranged levels. These levels represent a spiritualized view of the universe wherein the physical world is miraculously transformed into an infinitely reflecting, jewelled paradise. Although all levels interpenetrate each other, by representing the *dharmadhātu* as buildings or bodies, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* reveals a spiritual hierarchy wherein the more advanced beings inhabit spatially central or higher levels of architectural structures or human limbs. The most advanced beings, the bodhisattvas and buddhas, through their knowledge that all things are illusory, have the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) to control, generate and manipulate reality. This power ultimately derives from their Dharma body that is one in essence with the Dharma realm. Both the *dharmakāya* and the *dharmadhātu*, from the point of view of their essence (*svabhāva*), are infinite, omnipresent, indivisible and inherently pure. These two concepts are central for understanding the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview and vision of the spiritual path.

Society

The characters of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* represent the 'players' in the imagined social world in which the hero's adventures and encounters take place. They appear to correspond to a wide array of occupations and social classes that interacted within urban centres during the Middle Period (0–500 CE) of Indian Buddhism. Of the 41 locations visited by Sudhana and mentioned by name, 19 are referred to as *nagara* – a town or city. Sudhana begins his quest in Dhanyākara, which is called a *mahānagara* (V 39.5), or a 'great city' – this term no doubt implying a substantial urban centre. The spiritual guides ('good friends', *kalyāṇamitra*s) Sudhana encounters in these locations are of many different types. Among them we find: five monks, a nun, five merchant-bankers (*śreṣṭhin*), four householders (*gṛhapati*), two laywomen, a courtesan, a sage, a brahmin, a perfumer, a homeless wanderer, a mariner, a teacher, a goldsmith, three princesses, two queens, two kings, five bodhisattvas and ten goddesses. Three of the goddesses recall past lives as queens, two as princesses, one as a prince and one as a merchant-banker's daughter (*śreṣṭhidārikā*). This abbreviated list[71] of good friends strongly represents a certain social demographic: the wealthy, the royal and the female.[72]

The presence of characters representing urban, social elites within the *Gaṇḍavyūha* becomes more significant when we examine their religious status as *kalyāṇamitra*s. As we saw in our discussion of the text's concept of reality, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* divides experience into two primary levels: the mundane level of world realms and the supra-mundane spiritual level of the Dharma realm. In a similar fashion, the text distinguishes two types of societies: a mundane society that appears to reflect Indian society during the Buddhist Middle Period

and the spiritual society of the good friends. Let us now look more closely at the concept of the 'good friend' in the Indian Buddhism.

The concept of *kalyāṇamitra* (Pāli: *kalyāṇamitta*) within the Buddhist tradition is both ancient and widespread. In an article titled, '*Kalyāṇamitta* and *Kalyāṇamittatā*', Steve Collins discusses the various meanings of these terms found in Pāli literature (Collins 1987). For *kalyāṇamitta* Collins distinguishes three overlapping levels of meaning in the Pāli sources: 1) a general sense 'in which trustworthiness, reciprocity and perhaps a consequent mutual regard are extolled'; 2) a 'Buddhicised' level where such sentiments are set within the framework of Buddhist morality; and 3) a specifically Buddhist sense when it is applied 'to someone who helps another on the Buddhist Path' (*ibid.*: 52–53). When *kalyāṇamitta* is used in Collins' third sense, it refers to a number of different types of helpers. In the *Kalyāṇamitta-sevanā-sutta*, the Buddha states, 'Ānanda, it is owing to my being a good friend to them that beings subject to birth are freed from birth.'[73] Citing this passage, Buddhaghosa in the *Visuddhimagga* writes that, 'it is only the Fully Enlightened One who possesses all the aspects of the good friend.'[74] Thus in the Pāli sources the Buddha functions as the ideal *kalyāṇamitta*. Collins points out that famous monks during the lifetime of the Buddha were also considered exemplars of good friends (1987: 58–59). Moreover, any monk or layperson that advises or encourages may be considered a good friend; although in the Pāli tradition the term *kalyāṇamitta* seems to be used much more often for monks than laypeople (*ibid.*). This title is especially common for monks acting in the role of meditation teachers.[75]

The concept of the good friend as spiritual guide continues to be important in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* each mention the 'blessing of having taken hold of a good friend'.[76] Finding a good friend is a necessary first step on the bodhisattva's path, and that friend remains a valuable aid at all times (Dayal 1932: 63). According to the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, only someone who has been very charitable to the poor in a past life is able to find such a friend (*ibid.*). A *kalyāṇamitra* always encourages a bodhisattva to follow the precepts and ideals of the Mahāyāna rather than the other systems.[77] The *Caturdharmaka-sūtra* states that a bodhisattva, 'must never give up the good friend for his long life; nay even at the cost of life'.[78] According to Śāntideva, the entire acceptance of the Buddha's teaching is implied in the injunctions not to leave the good friend and to study the scriptures (*ibid.*).

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the *kalyāṇamitra* concept in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. All the occurrences of the term are too numerous to discuss here; however, several of them are worth close examination for the insight they provide into the significance of the concept.

Early in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (*km*#1) leaves the Buddha's assembly and goes to the south. Having stopped in the city of Dhanyākara, he preaches the Dharma to a large congregation of people. As

he is leaving, Sudhana recites verses praising him and asks him to show the way to enlightenment. In response, the bodhisattva says:

> Son of Good Family, it is very good that you, having aroused the thought for supreme perfect enlightenment, follow the good friends. You, who desire to perfect the bodhisattva's path, think one should enquire about the course of conduct of a bodhisattva. Indeed, Son of Good Family, for the perfection of omniscience this is the beginning and natural course – namely the visiting, serving and worshipping of the good friends. Therefore, Son of Good Family, you should tirelessly venerate the good friends.[79]

The significance of these statements is twofold. First, Mañjuśrī refers to good friends in the plural (*kalyānāmitrāṇi*). Other occurrences of the term discussed so far from Pāli and Mahāyāna sources use the singular. I shall return to this point shortly. Second, Mañjuśrī's statements provide us with important information about the *kalyānamitra*s' relation to the spiritual path. Supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*) is the highest goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism and is synonymous with the attainment of omniscience (*sarvajñatā*). Those who strive towards it train in the bodhisattva's path (*bodhisattva-mārga*) or practise the bodhisattva's course of conduct (*bodhisattva-caryā*). Thus, when Mañjuśrī states that visiting, serving and worshipping the good friends is the beginning and natural course for the perfection (*pariniṣpatti*) of omniscience, he means that through these practices one attains supreme, perfect enlightenment. This assertion of a devotional spiritual path is very much at odds with other Buddhist systems that focus on individual effort and ascetic practices.[80]

We find further evidence of the centrality of the good friends later in the text. Just prior to Sudhana's encounter with Maitreya, the boy and girl, Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmatī,[81] make the most emphatic statements in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* concerning devotion to the *kalyāṇamitra*s as a means to attain enlightenment. After telling Sudhana that he should go to Maitreya who is a 'good friend that will water all your roots of merit and cause them to grow',[82] Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmatī enter into a protracted discourse on the *kalyāṇamitra*s. First, the two state that one should never tire of seeking good friends, nor resist their advice, nor doubt their instructions (V 363.19–25). Next, the pair provides an extensive list of reasons why. Some of these are: 'the bodhisattvas' hearing about the course of conduct of all bodhisattvas depends on the good friends',[83] 'the practices of the teachings of all bodhisattvas depend on the good friends',[84] 'the lights of knowledge of all bodhisattvas are produced by the good friends,'[85] 'the enlightenment of all buddhas is obtained through propitiating the good friends',[86] 'bodhisattvas supported by the good friends do not fall into evil destinies',[87] and 'bodhisattvas embraced by good friends do not turn away from the Mahāyāna'.[88]

This list reinforces Mañjuśrī's statements and clarifies the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s position on the *kalyānamitra*s. Again we learn that practising the *bodhisattva-caryā* depends on the good friends. The statements about 'practices' (*pratipatti*) and 'lights of knowledge' (*jñānāloka*) emphasize the need for bodhisattvas to rely upon the *kalyāṇamitra*s. Any doubt that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* presents a devotional path to enlightenment is immediately dispelled by the declaration that, '*the enlightenment of all buddhas is obtained through propitiating the good friends*'. The statement that bodhisattvas who are supported by good friends do not fall into evil destinies highlights the *kalyānamitra*s' protective role. This role is reinforced when Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmatī proclaim that the good friends are true mothers, fathers and nurses.[89] Finally, the pair's statement that bodhisattvas embraced by the *kalyāṇamitra*s do not turn away from the Mahāyāna defines the good friends in a strictly Mahāyānistic sense: only those that teach the Great Vehicle are real *kalyāṇamitra*s.

The statements made by Mañjuśrī, Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmatī about the importance of the good friends are repeated hundreds of times throughout the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The centrality of devotion to the *kalyāṇamitra*s raises an important question about the religious orientation of the text: how does Sudhana's worship of merchant-bankers, householders, princesses, queens, kings etc. lead to his enlightenment? In order to answer this question we must search the *Gaṇḍavyūha* for clues as to the true nature of the good friends.

Our first clue comes at the end of the opening scene of the *sūtra*. After countless bodhisattvas gathered at the Jeta Grove witness the Buddha emitting a ray of light from his brow, they experience innumerable mystic visions (V 27.9–32.15). This causes them to realize as many entrances into great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) as atoms in an inconceivable number of buddha lands. Motivated by this great compassion, the bodhisattvas send out infinite magical creations of various types throughout all worlds to spiritually develop beings (V 34.11–35.8). Some of these creations possess the forms of wandering ascetics, brahmins, doctors, merchants, dancers and patrons of all arts (*sarvaśilpādhāra*), and they are seen in all villages, towns, cities and countries (V 35.8–11). This passage suggests that the good friends Sudhana encounters are the magical creations (*nirmita*) of these advanced bodhisattvas.

For those adhering to the Mahāyāna doctrine that all things are ultimately insubstantial, the magical creations of the bodhisattvas are as real (or unreal) as any other creature. Because these creations are generated for the sake of enlightening all suffering beings, they may themselves be considered manifestations of the bodhisattvas. For the *Gaṇḍavyūha* there is no difference between a manifestation of a bodhisattva and a bodhisattva; because they originate from the same enlightening source,[90] they share the same essence.[91] Such a metaphysical position implies that the *kalyāṇamitra*s are themselves bodhisattvas. This is made explicit when the night goddess Vāsantī (*km*#32) states, 'Having obtained the majesty of a god among the gods and the majesty

of a human among humans, I was never separated from the good friends, namely the buddhas and bodhisattvas'.[92]

Vāsantī's equation of good friends with buddhas and bodhisattvas compels us to ask another question: if *kalyāṇamitra*s are bodhisattvas why are only five in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* called bodhisattvas?[93] The title 'bodhisattva' appears to be reserved for only those good friends who have achieved a particularly advanced stage on the bodhisattva's path. Thus the term '*kalyāṇamitra*' is applied to anyone that is acting as a spiritual guide to one or more beings, while the titles 'buddha' and 'bodhisattva' are used exclusively for the most spiritually developed teachers.

We may now return to our original question about how Sudhana can attain enlightenment from worshipping good friends. This is possible because *kalyānamitra*s themselves are bodhisattvas and because all bodhisattvas and buddhas are also good friends when they act as spiritual guides. Thus the less advanced bodhisattvas are thought to progress along the spiritual path through devotion to the more advanced. In the imagined world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the good friends are bodhisattvas who, through their skilful means (*upāya-kauśalya*), assume various social roles as costumes or disguises in order to train other bodhisattvas. In this way, the good friends may have been viewed as magical creations or disguised manifestations of advanced bodhisattvas.

Thus far in our discussion of the concept of *kalyāṇamitra* in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* most of the references mention 'good friends' in the plural (*kalyāṇamitrāṇi*). This use of the term is a characteristic feature of the text, and reflects the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s vision of the spiritual path. Any individual striving for enlightenment must visit and venerate many good friends rather than having just one spiritual guide. In this way, the text portrays an imagined universe wherein the good friends constitute a spiritual society that exists within mundane society. There are at least three different elements in the narrative that suggest this: 1) the good friends are known to each other; 2) they (like every society) are hierarchically arranged; 3) they are not (necessarily) known to outsiders.

We find our first two elements from this list demonstrated at the beginning of Sudhana's quest, when Mañjuśrī sends Sudhana to see the monk Meghaśrī (V 47.19). Towards the end of this visit, Meghaśrī declares his ultimate ignorance of the bodhisattva's course of conduct[94] and dispatches Sudhana to see the monk Sāgaramegha (V 50.11–12). This pattern repeats itself each time Sudhana meets a different good friend,[95] demonstrating both that the *kalyāṇāmitra*s know of each other's existence and they recognize the existence of a spiritual hierarchy. The statements of ignorance continue until Sudhana meets the three final and most important *kalyāṇamitra*s: Maitreya, Mañjuśrī (revisited) and Samantabhadra. Thus the hierarchy we see depicted in the *dharmadhātu*, as it is represented in buildings and bodies, is replicated in the progression of the narrative.

The third indication that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* characterizes the good friends as constituting their own society is that they are not always recognized as

*kalyāṇamitra*s by others. Twice on his journey, Sudhana questions whether the person he is visiting is actually a good friend and needs reassurance from divinities.[96] When Sudhana visits the courtesan Vasumitrā (*km*#26), the people who do not know of her virtues tell him not to go to her; while those aware of her spiritual excellence encourage him to see her.[97] According to the imagined social world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, whether someone knows that a person is a good friend depends on his/her own level of spiritual attainment. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* indicates early in the text that those who have developed the necessary roots of merit (*kuśalamūla*) are able to see and understand things that people of lesser attainment cannot.[98] Thus the community of *kalyāṇamitra*s appears to be envisioned in the *sūtra* as a quasi-esoteric association permeating worldly society, but known only to the spiritual elite.[99]

Within the imagined world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, just as the Dharma realm pervades and transcends the innumerable world realms, so the society of good friends pervades and transcends the worldly, urban society of monks, merchants, householders and royalty. Although the hierarchy of the *kalyāṇamitra*s is based on spiritual attainment rather than the wealth or power of mundane society, the *sūtra* connects this spiritual community to mundane existence in particular ways. A significant proportion of the good friends are wealthy, female and royal. In the following chapters, I explore the connections between religious status on one hand, and the power, wealth and gender of the *kalyāṇamitra*s on the other.

Individual

In order to understand the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s notion of the individual and the relationship of the individual to its imagined reality and society, we must first widen our focus and look at the role of the individual in Indian Buddhist literature. As mentioned, a worldview's construction of an individual cannot be divorced from its concepts about the body, gender and beauty. Therefore, I shall explore some general aspects of these categories within Indian Buddhism before returning to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

Attitudes towards the body, gender and beauty have not remained constant within the Indian Buddhist literary tradition. For instance, Pāli sources portray the human body as 'a sore with nine openings'.[100] However, all Buddhist schools maintain that the human form is ideal for attaining enlightenment. Biographical accounts of Prince Siddhārtha's hedonistic lifestyle, followed by his severe self-mortification prior to his enlightenment, function to underscore the Buddhist teaching as a 'middle path' (*madhyamo mārga*) between these two extremes. Nevertheless, early Buddhist teaching upholds a decidedly ascetic ideal of celibacy and the denial of bodily pleasures.

There can be little doubt that early Buddhism considered the youthful, healthy male body as the ideal and standard.[101] We find evidence of this in descriptions of the young Siddhārtha within the biographical accounts of the Buddha.[102] In sharp contrast to this positive assessment of the male body,

early Buddhist hagiographies display a decidedly negative attitude towards the female body. A good example is found in the story of the Yaśas, a disciple of the Buddha, as found in an ancient collection of Buddhist tales known as the *Songs of Lake Anavatapta*.[103]

In the *Songs of Lake Anavatapta*, the disciples of the Buddha sit at a mountain lake and take turns singing songs about their past lives. When it is Yaśas' turn, he recites verses recalling a time when he was a sage who lived in an ancient forest. One day while walking to a village to beg for alms the sage comes across the corpse of a woman.[104] He sits down to meditate upon the rotting body,[105] and while sitting there, he sees the stomach of the cadaver burst open,[106] unleashing a horrible smell of putrefaction and exposing hundreds of hungry maggots busy eating the rotting intestines, heart, kidneys, lungs, blood and excrement. At this horrific sight, the sage (not surprisingly) loses his appetite and instead of going to the village, returns to his ashram.

Eventually he goes back to the village for food,[107] and upon arrival realizes that all the beautiful people there are like the rotting corpse of the woman on the inside – filled with excrement, blood, intestines etc. As a result of this realization he attains a state of dispassion, cultivates the Four Immeasurables (loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity), and in his next life becomes enlightened.

Liz Wilson discusses Buddhist stories from the Pāli tradition similar to the story of Yaśas in her *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiographic Literature* (1996). In this study of what she calls Post-Aśokan hagiography, Wilson interprets these biographies as establishing a 'gendered system of point of view', where the male 'I' views the corrupt female body as an object of contemplation in order to attain freedom from lust and attachment to the body (*ibid.*: 183). The examples that Wilson gives underscore the moral dimension to the foulness of the female body. In many stories the female characters distract either actively or passively the male characters from the spiritual life with their physical beauty. This distraction can be nothing but 'false advertising' for the true nature of the female body is corruption (*ibid.*: 76). In other words, the foulness of the female body reflects women's spiritual and moral deficiency. Such a view Susanne Mrozik (2007) refers to as the 'ascetic discourse' on the body, and is well suited for a male audience committed to celibacy and the denial of bodily pleasures.

This negative assessment of the female body and women in general is also found in Indian Mahāyāna literature. According to the larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*, only men are reborn in Amitābha's pure land.[108] The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* and *Candrottarā-dārikā-vyākaraṇa sūtra*s each contain passages where a female character, due to an advance in spiritual status, miraculously changes gender.[109] Based on his study of the Lokakṣema corpus, Paul Harrison (1987: 77) states that 'This theme of the undesirability of birth as a woman and the necessity of sex change is a common one'. In his *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Śāntideva quotes with approval from

the *Saddharma-smṛtyupasthāna*, which states that 'a woman is the destruction of destructions in this world and the next; hence one must avoid women if he desires happiness for himself',[110] and from the *Ugradatta-paripṛccha*, which declares a wife to be 'an obstacle to virtue, to meditation, and to wisdom. . . . She is like a thief, a murderer, or a guardian of hell'.[111] These statements display a negative assessment both of the female body and women's spiritual potential.[112]

When we look at the *Gaṇḍavyūha* we find a rather different perspective. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* clearly supports the general Buddhist view that the youthful, male body is superior to others. This premium awarded to the male youth is obvious: as the protagonist of the story, Sudhana represents the ideal spiritual aspirant who is called a 'boy' (*dāraka*); and Mañjuśrī has the epithet *kumārabhūta* ('remaining young').[113] Also, those referred to as buddhas and bodhisattvas are always gendered male in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.[114] The perfect form of the male body is defined in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, as in many other Buddhist sources, by the 32 characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of a 'great man' (*mahāpuruṣa*).[115] That these characteristics are found upon the bodies of buddhas as well as those of princes, kings and world-ruling monarchs (*cakravartin*) suggests a symbolic connection between spiritual and temporal power (I shall return to this idea in Chapter 4). Moreover, at one point in the *sūtra*, goddesses refer to Sudhana as a 'great man' (V 300.6–7), which implies he also possesses this ideal physical form.

Although the *Gaṇḍavyūha* strongly favours the male body as superior to the female, it makes no statement about the necessity of having a male body, the foulness of the female body, or the spiritual inferiority of women. In fact, as Francis Wilson points out in Diana Paul's *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahāyāna Tradition* (1985), many of the female good friends of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are described as beautiful 'with lustrous black locks and skin the colour of gold' (Paul 1985: 45). For example, the narrative declares princess Acalā (*km*#20) to be more beautiful than any other being and describes her complexion, proportions and aura to be unmatched by any except for buddhas and the most advanced bodhisattvas (V 132.10–19). Also, Vasumitrā (*km*#26) displays a beauty that surpasses all the gods and humans within the realm of desire (V 155.4–14). Her spiritual power is such that she may transform herself into the female form of any creature in order to teach beings through embraces and kisses (V 155.20–156.6).[116] This premium placed on physical attractiveness represents what Mrozik (2007) refers to as the 'physiomoral discourse' found in Indian Buddhist literature, which foregrounds the importance of bodies for the ethical and spiritual development of one's self and others. This discourse in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* I address in detail in Chapter 6.

According to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s religious worldview, the highest aspiration of any individual within society is the attainment of spiritual perfection. Sudhana's quest to discover how one carries out the bodhisattva's course of conduct represents this aspiration. As a young man and the son of a

wealthy merchant-banker, Sudhana functions as an archetype and ideal for anyone who would set out to achieve this highest goal. This goal is most often described as the attainment of supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*), or omniscience (*sarvajñatā*). We have seen in our discussion of the *kalyāṇamitra*s that it is achieved through devotion to the good friends. As spiritual guides to Sudhana, the *kalyāṇamitra* characters themselves represent individuals at various stages along the path to enlightenment. Therefore, descriptions about their ages, bodies and social status also provide insight into the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conception of the individual.

As already noted, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* distinguishes between two dimensions or modes of existence: the mundane worldly dimension, and the supramundane. In other words, it proposes a division between the world realms and the Dharma realm, and between conventional society and the society of good friends. In the same way, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* distinguishes between two types of bodies: the form body (*rūpakāya*) and the Dharma body (*dharmakāya*). A comprehension of the differences between and the relationship of, these two bodies will allow us to connect the text's conception of the individual with its notions about reality and society.

Buddhas and bodhisattvas are able to generate magical bodies because they are thought to possess both a Dharma body and a form body, corresponding to two different aspects of the *dharmadhātu*: the undivided *dharmadhātu* and the *dharmadhātu* divided into levels. The Dharma body represents the *dharmadhātu* as the non-differentiated, absolutely pure, empty, metaphysical foundation of all phenomena.[117] The form body represents the infinite manifestations of the *dharmadhātu* – all the forms of buddhas, bodhisattvas, realms, beings and objects inter-reflecting one another.[118] Enlightened beings who possess a perfected Dharma body are able to create illusory form bodies for the sake of saving all deluded beings. In this way, the *dharmadhātu* is both the foundation and the goal of the bodhisattva's course of conduct.

Earlier in this chapter, I pointed out that the night goddess Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā possesses an inherently pure Dharma body. This body, I argue, is co-extensive with the Dharma realm. This is supported by a passage from the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, which states that a bodhisattva has a 'body that is the undivided Dharma realm'. This two-body theory provides valuable insight into the text's position on gender and beauty in relation to the spiritual path. Not only does the text indicate that the beauty of female *kalyānamitra*s is due to their past good actions, but it also establishes that a number of female friends possess the Dharma body (I shall explore the full implication of this position in Chapter 6). Because the acquisition of the Dharma body is equivalent to entry into the Dharma realm, we will pay special attention to statements about the Dharma body and use these as one criterion for assessing the spiritual status of the good friends.

In order to understand the worldview of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we have examined its notions of reality, society and the individual. Our analysis reveals that within the *sūtra* there is a primary bifurcation between a conventional level

and a higher, spiritual level of experience. The world is divided into the world realms and the Dharma realm; society into mundane, urban society and the society of good friends; the individual into one or many form bodies and a Dharma body. As a text with a religious worldview, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* asserts that the ultimate goal of any individual is to transcend ordinary society and become a member of the spiritual society through visiting and worshipping the good friends. Such activity propels one along the bodhisattva's path and eventually leads to entry into ultimate reality, the undivided *dharmadhātu*. Although distinct and superior to conventional levels, the higher spiritual reality, society and individual are imagined to be connected to the lower levels. Thus, the *dharmadhātu* is always and forever immanent within the infinite *lokadhātu*s and is often symbolically represented by buildings and bodies. The good friends function within conventional society and are found routinely among its wealthy, royal and female members. Also, the individual who quests for enlightenment (Sudhana) and those who teach the way to it (the *kalyāṇamitra*s) tend to be young, beautiful and equally male and female. Although the *Gaṇḍavyūha* privileges the male gender as spiritually ideal, descriptions of female good friends and their prominent role within the narrative point to a spiritual equality between the genders that is unparalleled in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist literature.

3 Narrative

> The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a literary masterpiece, the most readable of all the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s and almost the only one organised as a balanced work of art on an effective plan. The progressive plan leads the reader on, whilst the formidable prose style is impressively in keeping with the outlook embracing the whole universe and its inconceivable nature. The elaborate descriptions and wealth of similes and figurative language generally mark this as a work of art. In fact it is a highly imaginative religious novel, though it opens in the manner of a *sūtra*.
>
> (Warder 1980: 424)

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a long narrative[1] filled with extremely elaborate descriptions of magical places and visionary experiences. The story begins with the Buddha entering into a trance state (*samādhi*) that transforms his dwelling and the surrounding park into an infinitely vast bejewelled space. Shortly after this scene, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī travels to the south of India and meets Sudhana, a merchant-banker's son and hero of the story. Sudhana asks the bodhisattva how one is to carry out the course of conduct of a bodhisattva (*bodhisattva-caryā*). As a way of response, Mañjuśrī sends the young man on a quest to visit the good friends. During his travels, Sudhana encounters 52 of these good friends from all occupations and walks of life until finally meeting and merging with Samantabhadra, the supreme bodhisattva and embodiment of the spiritual path.

Throughout the *Gaṇḍavyūha* a number of prominent themes are present. The spiritual power and the authority of the Buddha and the good friends is one recurrent theme. Another is the importance of material wealth as a sign of one's religious status. A third is the substantial and significant role given to the female good friends – queens, princesses, a nun, a courtesan, goddesses and others – as powerful teachers and spiritual guides. In order to contextualize these themes within Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, I have discussed in some detail the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview in the preceding chapter. So that we may understand the role of these themes within the narrative as a whole we must now enquire into the genre of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, its narrative structures, and the story's employment of a number of stock formulas.

Genre

How may we classify the literary genre of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*? A. K. Warder states that the text is 'a highly imaginative religious novel, though it opens in the manner of a *sūtra*' (*ibid.*). Are these two categories – religious novel and *sūtra* – mutually exclusive, as Warder seems to think? The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is clearly a *sūtra* in the traditional Buddhist sense of the word: it begins with the necessary phrase, 'Thus have I heard . . .' (*evaṃ mayā śrutam*) and the Nepalese manuscripts conclude with the statement that, 'the noble *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the royal gem of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, is finished'.[2] In the first two complete Chinese translations and in the Tibetan Kanjur versions, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* constitutes the final chapter of the much larger *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. This massive work represents the collection of a number of separate *sūtra*s brought together to form a single corpus. Thus, if we accept these Buddhist traditions' own assessments, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* should be considered a *sūtra*. So why does Warder refer to it as a religious novel?

Warder's designation appears to be inspired by the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s progressive narrative structure. However, in agreement with the Russian formalist M. Bakhtin (1981: 5), I consider the 'novel' to be a distinctively modern genre; and therefore, I am inclined to regard Warder's use of the term as inappropriate for this ancient Indian text. McMahan (2002: 131) proposes that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (and the *Avataṃsaka* as a whole) may be understood as 'symbolic fantasy', a distinctive Buddhist literary genre similar to modern science fiction. This suggestion aside, I propose that we should attempt to identify how the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s Indian audience may have understood the narrative, thereby locating the story within the broader context of Indian Buddhist literature.

Although many Mahāyāna *sūtra*s contain narrative portions interspersed with didactic sections,[3] the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is distinctive in that it is entirely devoted to a single story.[4] Therefore, we may consider the *Gaṇḍavyūha* a special sort of Mahāyāna *sūtra* constructed as a progress narrative relating a young man's quest for enlightenment. A much shorter version of this type of quest narrative is found in the final section of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*Aṣṭa*).[5] A number of parallels exist between Sudhana's story and the story of the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita at the conclusion of the *Aṣṭa*.[6] Both involve a young man's journey in search of enlightenment at the instruction of a spiritual authority. Sadāprarudita travels in search of his *kalyāṇamitra*, the bodhisattva Dharmodgata, while Sudhana also seeks good friends. Moreover, both Sudhana's encounter with Maitreya and Sadāprarudita's meeting with Dharmodgata occur at peaked dwellings (*kūṭāgāra*). These similarities suggest that the story of Sudhana may be viewed as an expanded Mahāyāna quest narrative that develops certain motifs also found in the story of Sadāprarudita.[7]

Edward Conze (1978: 8) maintains that the story of Sadāprarudita was a late addition to the *Aṣṭa*. If correct, then both stories may fall roughly into the same time period: the first several centuries CE. Their locations in the final sections of much larger Mahāyāna philosophical and didactic works (the *Aṣṭa* and *Avataṃsaka*) imply a certain functional similarity. But what was

the functional significance of these quest narratives for Indian Mahāyāna Buddhists during this period?

The general term for a story about the Buddha or Buddhist holy person is *avadāna* ('glorious tale').[8] Although *avadāna*s often contain information about one or more previous lives of their protagonist, this does not seem to be an essential element.[9] Is it possible then that the authors and target audience of the stories of Sadāprarudita and Sudhana considered them Mahāyāna *avadāna*s? The placement of both stories at the end of long didactic *sūtra*s would seem to indicate that they functioned as inspirational tales used to demonstrate certain Buddhist virtues expounded in the preceding philosophical discourses in a more dramatic and emotive manner. The Middle Period of Indian Buddhism (0–500 CE) witnessed a flourishing of this type of dramatic narrative literature, generally understood as *avadāna*s, and apparently equally embraced by all Buddhists regardless of sectarian affiliation or philosophical school. Since the *Gaṇḍavyūha* developed in this period, it may well represent a fusion of two Buddhist genres. In other words, it could be viewed as both a Mahāyāna *sūtra* and an *avadāna*.

Another clue to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s association with the Indian Buddhist *avadāna* tradition is found in the story itself. During several of Sudhana's encounters, the good friends relate stories about their past lives.[10] Concerning these Fontein (1981: 106) comments:

> The fully developed *Mahāyāna-avadāna* occurs in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* where some of Sudhana's women teachers,[11] especially the Night Goddesses, Gopā, and Māyā, explain in detail how they have attained their advanced stage of enlightenment by virtuous deeds and acts of devotion performed in countless previous births. These stories, like the rest of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, are populated by innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; *bhakti* is their *Leitmotiv*, and predictions of future Buddhahood occur in the lives of all in whom the *bodhicitta* has just been aroused.

This passage highlights two important details. First, by focusing on devotion (*bhakti*) and the arising of *bodhicitta*, these stories constitute a distinctive type of '*Mahāyāna-avadāna*'. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* asserts a spiritual path that places great emphasis on devotion. Second, the fact that several prominent *kalyāṇamitra*s use these stories indicates the value that *avadāna*s held for the authors and target audience of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Given the importance of these glorious tales within the text itself, it is easy to see how the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a whole may have been conceived of as an expansive Mahāyāna-style '*Sudhanāvadāna*'.[12]

Narratology

Now that we have identified the possible genre of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* within Indian Buddhist literature, I wish to develop some theoretical tools for

analyzing its structure. We find such tools in structural narrative theory, or 'narratology'. Narratology, the scientific study of narrative, was first introduced in the 1970s by theorists such as Gerard Genette, Mieke Bal and Gerald Prince.[13] Roland Barthes describes the nearly infinite scope of the field:

> The narratives of the world are numberless. . . . Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy. . . . Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society. . . . narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself.[14]

Early structural narratologists made a number of important advances in formalizing the structure of narratives. However, narratology as a 'scientific' discipline came under attack by post-structuralists in the 1980s and 1990s. In these decades, the term 'narratology', associated as it was with the structuralist enterprise, fell into disfavour by many literary theorists who preferred the term 'narrative theory' instead.[15] The Deconstructionists' critique of classical narratology, while pointing out a number of weaknesses in structuralist theory, has failed to produce a comprehensive understanding of narrative. Moreover, Jonathan Culler, a contemporary American theorist, argues that deconstruction may complement rather than delegitimize structuralist theory.[16] I find Culler's view appealing in that it recognizes the utility of early structural narratology, while simultaneously taking into consideration important insights from post-structuralism and semiotics.

Narratology may be employed to examine stories' formal structures and also to address the meaning of particular narratives. However, as reader-response semiotics demonstrates, the meanings of stories are not stable, static identities that exist separately from their shifting interpretations through time and space (Eco 1979). Narratives mean more than their author(s) intended them to mean; with each re-telling new meanings are generated through the disclosure of the tale. Meaning is thus continuously created and recreated. Because I feel that the cultural and social contexts of narrative disclosure are central to understanding the production of any story's meanings, I view the meanings of a narrative to be dependent upon its use within a particular worldview.

With these qualifications in mind, I believe we can apply some general principles of narratology in order to understand better the story of Sudhana and its relation to the worldview of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. A useful point of entry is the system developed by the Dutch narratologist Mieke Bal in her *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1997). In the following pages, I outline some of this system's salient features and relate them to our analysis of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

According to Bal, a 'text' is 'a finite, structured whole composed of language signs' (1997: 5). Bal defines a 'narrative text' as 'a text in which an agent relates ("tells") a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof' (*ibid.*). 'A *story* is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner. A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors' (*ibid.*; emphasis in original). Bal's division of a narrative into text, story and fabula is generally recognized by structural narratologists and will function as a useful analytical tool to investigate the structure of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

The agent that relates a narrative text is called a 'narrator'. In structural narratology, a narrator is *not* conceived of as an actual person, but rather as a function of narration (Bal 1997: 16). Bal distinguishes between two types of narrator: an 'external narrator' and a 'character-bound narrator' (*ibid.*: 22). An external narrator of a narrative text is a narrator that never mentions him/herself and thus is external to the text. Like all Buddhist *sūtra*s, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* begins with the words *evam mayā śrutam*, which traditionally indicated that the Buddha's faithful monk-servant Ānanda recited the text at the first council from memory. However, by the time of the composition/compilation of the sūtra, the beginning phrase *evam mayā śrutam* seems to function more stylistically and rhetorically. Above all, it indicates that a text enjoys the status of a *sūtra* and appears to have lost any connection to a particular historical recitation.[17]

The external narrator of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* begins 'telling' the narrative as a witness to a scene at the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī where the Buddha Vairocana is surrounded by bodhisattvas, disciples and other beings. From this location, the narrator follows the movements of Mañjuśrī to Dhanyākara where he meets Sudhana, and from then on describes all of Sudhana's activities. In the course of this narration, 12 good friends tell their own *avadāna*s. Bal calls this type of narrative within a larger narrative an 'embedded narrative text' (*ibid.*: 52). While these narratives are told, the narration switches from the external narrator to character-bound narrators who relate the story from their own point of view.

Not all parts of a narrative text are, strictly speaking, narrative. Because a narrative, as Bal defines it, is a chronological sequence of events narrated in a particular manner, sentences or passages that do not relate these events Bal refers to as 'argumentative' or 'descriptive' passages (*ibid.*: 31–43). Bal defines argumentative passages as passages that 'do not refer to an element (process or object) of the fabula, but to an external topic' (*ibid.*: 32–33). This definition would include both opinions and statements about the state of the world. Therefore, as Bal points out, argumentative passages often give explicit information about the ideology of a text. Descriptive passages are those in which features are attributed to objects. Because descriptions interrupt the sequence of events in the fabula, the manner in which they are inserted 'characterize the rhetorical strategy of the narrator' (*ibid.*: 37).

If one reads the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in order to determine which passages are narrative, argumentative or descriptive, one soon realizes that the vast majority of the text *is not narrative.* Most of the passages I cite from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in my analysis of the text's worldview (Chapter 2), for example, are argumentative or descriptive. These passages best illustrate the ideological structures that constitute the text's worldview. The actual narrative passages of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* involving a sequential series of actions form only the barest of skeletons that is filled in by lengthy descriptions and some significant argumentation. The objects, opinions and statements about the world reported in these passages, the manner in which they are described and the relation of these passages to the fabula, all constitute the rhetorical strategies of the narrator. Before investigating some of the themes involved in these strategies, we must analyze the structures of the fabula and story.

Structural narratology rests on the assumption that all narratives share certain elements that allow them to be recognized as narratives (Bal 1997: 175). These elements are necessarily abstract and are thought to function on a deep structural level – the level of fabula (*ibid.*).[18] As mentioned above, Bal defines a fabula as 'a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors'. Events, according to Bal, are 'the transition from one state to another state, caused or experienced by actors' (*ibid.*: 182). Borrowing concepts from Greimas, Bal divides actors into a number of different classes based on their shared characteristics in relation to the telos of the fabula (*ibid.*: 195–198). This approach implies a certain functional homology between the structure of a fabula and the structure of a sentence. Actors of every fabula have an aim that represents the telos of the fabula. Actors who follow this aim are analogous to the subject of a sentence, while the aim represents the object. The intention to achieve this aim functions as the verb. Thus the entire fabula of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* may be structured as the following sentence 'Sudhana [subject] wants [verb] enlightenment [object]'.

Another important class of actors Bal calls 'the power' (*ibid.*: 198). The power is the actor that enables the subject to achieve the aim of the fabula. It may be a person or a characteristic. In addition to the power, there are two other classes of actors: helpers and opponents, who aid or obstruct the subject. In order to distinguish between power and helper, Bal provides a number of characteristics for each (*ibid.*: 201). The power 'has power over the whole enterprise; is often abstract; often remains in the background; usually only one'. The helper 'can give only incidental aid; is mostly concrete; often comes to the fore; usually multiple'. If we continue with the analogy of sentence structure, the power, helpers and opponents may be understood as 'adverbial adjuncts' (*ibid.*). Applying these classes of actors to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we may identify Vairocana Buddha as the power, the good friends as the helpers and Sudhana's own ignorance of the bodhisattva's path as the opponent. The following sentence thus represents the fabula: 'Sudhana, despite his ignorance, achieves enlightenment through the help of the good friends and the Buddha'.

So how does this analysis help us in understanding the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s narrative? By examining the narrative at the level of fabula, we are able to distil the basic features of Sudhana's story in relation to the universal categories of narrative. The application of Bal's approach has highlighted a class of actors in fabulas that is particularly important for this study: the power. Bal's characterization of the power (abstract, in the background, singular) perfectly describes Vairocana Buddha. In the following chapters, I discuss the ways in which Vairocana is manifested in the narrative through the activities of the good friends.

The story is the particular manner in which a fabula is told. At this level, suspense, ideology and point of view all come into play (Bal 1997: 79). Therefore, a correct understanding of the structural features of Sudhana's story is essential before we can discuss themes in the following chapters. The features that distinguish the story from the fabula, Bal refers to as 'aspects' (*ibid.*: 78). Several aspects are particularly relevant to the present study.

Bal first discusses sequential ordering (*ibid.*: 80–99). In the fabula, the sequence of events is analyzed chronologically. In the story, the fabula is told in any number of ways; sometimes stories start *in media res*, and often there are retroversions ('flash-backs') and anticipations ('flash-forwards') (*ibid.*: 84). Bal refers to differences between the arrangement of a story and the chronology of a fabula as 'chronological deviations' or 'anachronies' (*ibid.*: 83). The sequential ordering of Sudhana's story is strictly chronological. I discuss the importance of this type of sequencing later in this chapter.

The second aspect relevant to this study is rhythm. According to Bal, rhythm is a functional relationship between the time of the fabula and the time of the story (*ibid.*: 102). The time of the fabula corresponds to the amount of 'real' time that is supposed to have transpired during the course of events in the fabula. The time of the story is the amount of time used in 'telling' a certain portion of the fabula and may be expressed in the number of pages, lines or words used (*ibid.*: 100). Descriptive and argumentative passages generally create a 'pause' where the time of the story continues, but the time of the fabula has stopped (there are no events taking place). In a summary the time of the fabula exceeds the time of the story ('Sudhana wandered for many years' would be an example of a summary). During scenes, dialogues and monologues there is a general equivalence between the time of the fabula and time of the story – the events and their 'telling' are taking place at roughly the same time.

Analyzing the sequential ordering and rhythm in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s story is a useful means to develop criteria to determine the spiritual status of the various good friends. Because each *kalyāṇamitra* proclaims his/her own ultimate ignorance[19] and then sends Sudhana to the next good friend, a good friend's position earlier in the story may be used as a general indication of lower status. Examining the rhythm of the story as a percentage of the total text[20] devoted to each *kalyāṇamitra* may also provide an indication of status.

I refer to this criterion as the 'weight' of a section. For example, using position and weight, we find that Ratnacūḍa is the sixteenth good friend and Sudhana's visit with him constitutes only 0.69 per cent of the total text; while Maitreya is the 52nd *kalyāṇamitra* and 11.9 per cent of the total text is devoted to this section. Thus by these criteria, we may assume that Maitreya has greater status than Ratnacūḍa.[21]

Position and weight are only useful guidelines to determining status. Other aspects of the story reveal further useful criteria. Determining the spiritual status of the various *kalyāṇamitra*s enables us to gauge the relative importance of events and speech acts that occur in the story. By using structural analysis, we are able to gauge the ideological force of passages dealing with power, wealth and women in the following chapters.

A number of other aspects defined by Bal are relevant to our current study. The most important of these in any story are the characters. Bal defines a character as 'the effect that occurs when an actor [in a fabula] is endowed with distinctive human characteristics' (Bal 1997: 115). Thus, whereas an actor is a more abstract concept defined simply as the agent of events in a fabula, a character emerges in a story as a more defined personality. Although there are many characters in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, there is minimal character development. Often the good friends represent personifications of Buddhist virtues and, as such, lack personal characteristics. The story supplies general information about the characters including the names of their cities or towns, their occupations and spiritual attainment.[22] While the *Gaṇḍavyūha* provides detailed information about the physical appearance of some of the good friends, it gives very little or none for others. Certain geographical locations, occupations and physical descriptions possess ideological implications that may also be used to determine the religious status of the good friends. When the story refers to a *kalyāṇamitra* as a brahmin from the 'southern region' (*dakṣiṇāpatha*),[23] or a goddess (*devatā*) from Vairocana's site of enlightenment (*vairocana-bodhimaṇḍa*),[24] these characterizations must be compared to the position and weight of the section devoted to that particular good friend. From these we may determine the *kalyāṇamitra*'s spiritual status and the ideological significance of that section's content.

Literary theorists often refer to the central character of a story as the 'hero'. The hero of a story generally represents the characterization of the actor-subject of the fabula.[25] In our discussion of the fabula, I identified Sudhana as the subject of the analogical sentence representing the fabula of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Is Sudhana the hero of the story? Bal (*ibid.*: 132) lists a number of criteria to determine whether a character may be considered the hero (my emphases):

- *qualification*: comprehensive information about appearance, psychology, motivation, past;
- *distribution*: the hero occurs often in the story, his or her presence is felt at important moments in the fabula;

- *independence*: the hero can occur alone or hold monologues;
- *function*: certain actions are those of the hero alone: s/he makes agreements, vanquishes opponents, unmasks traitors etc.;
- *relations*: s/he maintains relations with the largest number of characters.

When we compare Sudhana's character to others in the story using distribution, independence, function and relations, he is the obvious choice as hero. Once the narrator introduces him, Sudhana is present throughout the entire story, his external and internal experiences are the central focus of the story and he encounters the greatest number of other characters.

Although it would be difficult to imagine readers not intuitively identifying Sudhana as the hero of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, by applying Bal's criteria, we are able to offer structural reasons for this choice. Identification of the hero is crucial for the current study: the narrator's choice of a hero and his attributes provide important information about the story's ideological position (Bal 1997: 132). Therefore, in the next three chapters, I pay close attention to the entire range of Sudhana's attributes, actions and statements.

Space is another aspect of stories that is particularly relevant to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Bal defines space as the relation of places to their points of perception (Bal 1997: 133). A place is the location of events in a fabula (*ibid.*: 214). Thus, the relationship between place and space in analogous to the relationship between actors and characters: the first term is a more abstract concept of the fabula, while the second term is a more concrete notion arising from the telling of the story. According to Bal, spaces can function merely as 'frames' (locations of actions), or may be 'thematized', and thereby become objects of presentation for their own sake (*ibid.*: 136).

In the preceding chapter, I establish that space plays a central role in relation to the distinction between the *dharmadhātu* (which encompasses all space-time) and the multitude of *lokadhātu*s of relative space–time. By representing the *dharmadhātu* as a building, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* clearly 'thematizes' space in the manner described by Bal. Such thematization of space also takes place through Sudhana's travels. Some of the locations that he visits possess special significance for Indian Buddhists, such as the place of the Buddha's birth at Lumbhinī Grove, or the site of his enlightenment. In this way, space becomes thematized as 'sacred space', and events that occur in these locations reveal clues to the story's ideological orientation.

Space is further thematized through the structure of the story as a travel narrative. Bal offers important insights into this genre:

> In many travel stories, the movement is the goal in itself. It is expected to result in a change, liberation, introspection, wisdom, or knowledge. It tends to be gender-specific as well: in traditional genres, men travel whereas women stay at home.
>
> (Bal 1997: 137)

Sudhana's quest for enlightenment clearly represents an Indian Mahāyāna version of this type of travel story. Sudhana, the male hero, travels tirelessly for years and years searching for spiritual liberation. Although he visits numerous female good friends, as in other traditional travel stories, these women all stay at home. Bal states that in these types of stories movement is often circular – the character returns to his or her point of departure (*ibid.*). Sudhana's story is also circular – before his final encounter with the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī appears once again and returns Sudhana to his 'own place'.[26] In the following chapters, I pay close attention to these types of thematization in order to understand the roles of the *dharmadhātu*, sacred space and travel.

One more of Bal's aspects warrants special mention: 'focalization'.[27] Bal defines focalization as the relations between the elements of the fabula and the vision through which they are presented (*ibid.*: 142). In this manner, focalization describes the process of perspective (both psychological and physical) from which a story is told (*ibid.*: 143). Focalization, like narration, may either be internal or external to the story. When it is internal, focalization is from the point of view of a character. Thus Bal refers to internal focalization as 'character-bound focalization', and non-character-bound focalization as 'external focalization' (*ibid.*: 148). Character-bound focalization can shift from one character to another even though the narrator remains constant (*ibid.*). Most of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is narrated by an external narrator and also focalized by an external focalizer. The focalized object of most of the story is Sudhana and his thoughts, actions and experiences. Words such as the verb form 'saw' indicate a change in level of focalization (*ibid.*: 158). For example, the level of focalization shifts from external focalizer to a character-bound focalizer when the external narrator states that Sudhana saw a particular vision. In other words, Sudhana becomes the character-bound focalizer and his vision the object focalized, while the level of narration remains the same.

As MacMahan (1998; 2002) demonstrates, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is replete with visionary experience. Because of this concern with visual perception, Bal's notion of focalization is particularly useful for analyzing the story. According to Bal, focalization is 'the most important, most penetrating, and most subtle means of manipulation' (Bal 1997: 171). Because of this, she advocates employing the notion to uncover 'hidden ideology' embedded in texts (*ibid.*). In order to identify the prevailing ideological overcodings embedded in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, I shall observe shifts in focalization signalled by forms of the verb 'to see'.

We now have a set of theoretical tools with which to analyze the narrative of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. But before proceeding to the next chapter, a number of comments need to be made on the *sūtra*'s style and use of stock formulas.

Formulas

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is extremely verbose in both descriptive and argumentative passages,[28] a characteristic common throughout the entire *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.

In order to render the text more accessible in the following chapters, I employ a number of strategies to deal with this seemingly endless cascade of words. First, I focus solely on those passages that are directly relevant to the current study. Second, I paraphrase and summarize passages that do not need a word-for-word translation. Finally, I abbreviate using 'etc.' and 'so forth' for long lists of spiritual qualities and descriptive features. This last method is rather inexact, but I provide the page and line numbers of the entire passage referenced in the Vaidya edition for the interested reader.[29]

As is typical of Buddhist *sūtra*s in general, repetition is a common feature in the story. This may be due to the original oral nature of Buddhist literature.[30] It is entirely possible that sections, particularly some of the hybridized verse, represent early oral strata that were incorporated into the body of a written text. Regardless of whether the Mahāyāna began as a written tradition or not,[31] its *sūtra*s incorporated this repetitive style. A common characteristic is the use of stock formulas, particularly in standard greetings.[32] The *Gaṇḍavyūha* employs a number of these formulas, repeated in various forms during each of Sudhana's encounters. In order to provide a sense of the basic structure of these visits, I shall now cite examples of five formulas that occur throughout the narrative.

1 Question formula

During Sudhana's encounter with Mañjuśrī, his first good friend, our hero asks a long list of questions about a bodhisattva's course of conduct. I refer to this collection of questions as the 'Question' formula. In order to convey a sense of its content, I shall translate its first occurrence in full:

> Noble One, please explain in detail, how should a bodhisattva learn the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should it be understood? How should a bodhisattva undertake the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva follow the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva perfect the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva purify the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva comprehend the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva accomplish the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva go after the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva grasp hold of the course of conduct of a bodhisattva? How should a bodhisattva expand the course of conduct of a bodhisattva?[33]

The exact content of the 'Question' formula varies considerably throughout the narrative, but it tends to begin with the basic question, 'How is a bodhisattva to learn the course of conduct of a bodhisattva?' (*kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryāyāṃ śikṣitavyam*).

2 'Go and Ask' formula

The Mañjuśrī section contains two other significant stock formulas that I call the 'Go and Ask' formula and the 'Departing' formula. Both occur with slight variations at the end of almost every section. The first occurrence of the 'Go and Ask' formula reads:

> There is,[34] Son of Good Family, in this very world, in the southern region, a country named Rāmāvarānta. There is a mountain there called Sugrīva. On that mountain lives a monk named Meghaśrī. Approach him and ask – 'how should a bodhisattva learn the course of conduct of a bodhisattva, how should it be engaged in? How should the course of conduct of a bodhisattva be undertaken? How should the course of conduct of a bodhisattva be followed? How should the course of conduct of a bodhisattva be perfected? How should it be purified? How should it be comprehended? How should it be accomplished? How should it be gone after? How should it be grasped? How should it be expanded? How is the circle of the universally good course of conduct to be accomplished by a bodhisattva?' Son of Good Family, that good friend will teach you about the circle of the universally good course of conduct.[35]

The general structure of this formula consists of the *kalyāṇamitra* Sudhana is visiting telling him to 'go' (*gaccha*) to a place often 'in the southern region' (*dakṣiṇāpathe*). Then the statement that a certain good friend lives there is followed by the imperative 'ask' (*paripṛccha*) him/her some version of the 'Question' formula. Notice that the 'Question' formula repeated by the bodhisattva is very similar to Sudhana's initial 'Question' formula, but not exactly the same.

3 Departing formula

The next stock set of expressions is the 'Departing' formula. This first occurrence reads as follows:

> Then Sudhana, the son of the merchant-banker, pleased, enraptured, transported with joy, delighted, content, and full of joy and gladness respectfully saluted by placing his head at the feet of princely Mañjuśrī. He circumambulated the princely Mañjuśrī many hundreds of thousands of times, and gazed upon [him] many hundreds of thousands of times, while his mind lingered behind out of love for the good friend, unable to bear not seeing the good friend, crying with tears streaming down his face, he departed from the presence of the princely Mañjuśrī.[36]

Standard elements in the formula involve Sudhana saluting, circumambulating and looking at the *kalyāṇamitra* many of hundreds of thousands of times, and then leaving his/her presence.[37]

4 Approach formula

When Sudhana approaches the next good friend, the monk Meghaśrī, he performs a set of standard devotional acts, which I call the 'Approach' formula. The first occurrence reads: 'After approaching the monk Meghaśrī and saluting him by placing his head at his feet, he circumambulated him, stood in front of him with his palms placed together and said this . . .'[38] This formula is used to express Sudhana's reverence for the good friends and to introduce his 'Question' formula. There are very slight variations of it throughout our hero's encounters.

5 Statement of attainment and ignorance formula

At the conclusion of Sudhana's visit to Meghaśrī, the monk makes a declaration to our hero, which I call the 'Statement of Attainment and Ignorance' formula. Its first occurrence begins:

> Son of Good Family, I have attained a recollection of the buddhas from this light manifesting and uniting all entrances and all locations. How am I able to know the course of conduct of those bodhisattvas purified through the circle of infinite knowledge, or speak of their qualities – those who have obtained entrance into a recollection of buddhas within the group of all lights through having a vision directed toward the pure array that is the dwelling place of the collection of all *tathāgata*s and all buddha lands?[39]

These statements continue for 24 more lines (V49.19–50.10). The standard features of this formula are the good friend's statement of attainment – usually a liberation (*vimokṣa*), light of knowledge (*jñānāloka*), or entrance (*mukha*) – and a declaration of ignorance beginning with 'how am I able . . .' (*kiṃ mayā śakyaṃ . . .*). The actual content of what the *kalyāṇamitra* does not know varies considerably and is usually related to his/her particular attainment. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, all but five of the good friends make this statement of ignorance.

These five stock formulas form the narrative frames for almost all of Sudhana's encounter with the good friends. Although stylistically repetitive, they create a certain cadence or rhythm to the voluminous text and signal to the reader/audience important transitions in the story. I will refer to these five throughout the remainder of this study according to the designations provided above.

With the groundwork laid in this chapter, we are now prepared to examine the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conceptions of power, wealth and women in the following chapters. To summarize our findings in this chapter, we have seen that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* appears to combine the styles of a Mahāyāna *sūtra* and a Buddhist 'glorious tale' (*avadāna*). By outlining the structural narratology

of Mieke Bal, we now have a vocabulary and set of analytical tools for examining the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s basic narrative structures. And finally, by highlighting and labelling five stock formulas that occur during each of Sudhana's encounters, we have a sense of the primary narrative frames used to divide the lengthy prose.

4 Power

As I mentioned in the Introduction, 'power' may be variously defined. The *Gaṇḍavyūha*, as a Mahāyāna Buddhist narrative about a young man's quest for enlightenment, naturally places the highest value on spiritual power. This power may be defined both in a narrow and broad sense. The narrow sense is generally designated in the *sūtra* by the term *adhiṣṭhāna*. *Adhiṣṭhāna* may be understood as the ability to generate, manipulate and control reality. It is also the power to induce visions in others and inspire them to speak the Dharma. In Mahāyāna literature, buddhas are considered the ultimate source of *adhiṣṭhāna*, and there are several references in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to verses recited through the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of Vairocana. More broadly defined, spiritual power is also the ability to enter trances (*samādhi*) and attain liberations (*vimokṣa*), lights of knowledge (*jñānāloka*) and entrances into the Dharma (*dharmamukha*) that propel one further into the Dharma realm. The *kalyāṇamitra*s are understood to be good friends because they possess this power and use it to aid Sudhana on his path toward omniscience. In the imagined universe of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, enlightenment depends on the aid of the *kalyāṇamitra*s. Thus the narrator of the scripture places the highest value on devotion to them and absolute obedience to their authority. As the power to command, authority is also an important theme within the story and plays a prominent role during two of Sudhana's encounters.[1]

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* hierarchically arranges the good friends according to their spiritual power. This hierarchy is based upon a metaphor of kingship: Vairocana represents the King of the Dharma realm, Mañjuśrī (*km*#1) and Samantabhadra (*km*#53) are his chief ministers, and Maitreya (*km*#52) is the crown prince. Within this metaphor, the other good friends may be seen as royal officials within Vairocana's domain. As discussed in Chapter 3, we may employ three criteria to determine the spiritual status of the good friends: weight, position and content. These will allow us to judge the relative importance of the *kalyāṇamitra*s in relation to each other. At the same time, we may examine the relationship between the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s idealized spiritual society of the good friends and the economic and political hierarchies of the story's imagined mundane society. Rather than discussing all the good friends (which would take much too long!), I shall move through the *sūtra* sequentially

and investigate those *kalyāṇamitra*s that are particularly relevant to the story's conception of power.

The *Nidāna-parivarta*

The *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s opening scene, the *Nidāna-parivarta*, is 34 pages in the Vaidya edition[2] and constitutes approximately 7.8 per cent of the total text. As one of the longest sections in the narrative and its introductory chapter, the *Nidāna* is important for a comprehension of the text as a whole. In this section, the narrator introduces worldview and narrative structures and develops themes that recur throughout the *sūtra*. An analysis of the worldview reveals that Vairocana represents the supreme being at the apex of an elite spiritual society. His mystical trance (*samādhi*) introduces the *dharmadhātu* as a higher dimensional reality that both transcends and interpenetrates infinite worlds and times.

In the *Nidāna*, our narrator provides us with our first information about the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conception of power. The power in this section is the 'power of the Buddha' (*buddhādhiṣṭhāna*), and constitutes the ability to transform reality through trance or the emission of light-rays in order to teach beings the path to omniscience. Ideological assumptions encoded in the introduction reveal a metaphorical connection between the Buddha as spiritual ruler of the *dharmadhātu* and Indian monarchy as it may have been conceived during the Buddhist Middle Period (0–500).[3] The transformation of Vairocana's peaked dwelling and the Jeta Grove into a vast array of jewels, gems, gold etc., in the opening scene also establishes a connection between the Buddha's power and material wealth (discussed in detail in the next chapter).

The *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s *Nidāna* begins in typical *sūtra* fashion with the following:

> Thus have I heard. At one time the Lord was dwelling at Śrāvastī in Jeta Grove, the pleasure park of Anāthapiṇḍada, within the Great Array peaked dwelling accompanied by five thousand bodhisattvas, with the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī foremost among them.[4]

In this passage, a number of elements central to the narrative and worldview are already introduced. In the previous chapter, by applying concepts from structural narrative theory, we saw that Vairocana Buddha may be understood in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as 'the power' – the abstract force that allows the subject to attain his/her goal. Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī may also be viewed as his two most important 'helpers'. Thus in the very first sentences of the story, we find the narrator introducing the power and chief helpers in Sudhana's quest for enlightenment.

In Chapter 2, I argued that reality in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is divided into the mundane world realms and the infinite Dharma realm. When the narrator begins by stating that the Buddha is 'at Śrāvastī in Jeta Grove, the pleasure park of Anāthapiṇḍada', the time and place of the story is specified within

the mundane world realms. The Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī is a very common location in Buddhist *sūtra*s, and would not have seemed remarkable in any way to a Buddhist audience in ancient India.[5] However, the Buddha's position within the Great Array peaked dwelling is significant because (as I demonstrated in Chapter 2) frequently in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* buildings and bodies are used to represent the *dharmadhātu*. This particular *kūṭāgāra* is transformed by Vairocana into an infinite expanse witnessed only by the advanced bodhisattvas. Thus the narration begins with an introduction of the mundane aspect of reality, only to shift dramatically to the supra-mundane level of the Dharma realm.

Following these initial statements, the narrator lists by name 153 of the 5,000 bodhisattvas attending (V 1.3–3.19).[6] After this list, we are told that there are present 'five hundred auditors, all with great powers'[7] and 'lords of the earth who had performed services to previous conquerors'.[8] This presentation possesses an obvious hierarchy. First, Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, bodhisattvas of the highest attainment, are mentioned. Next, 5,000 bodhisattvas are referred to, followed by a list of 153 by name. Finally, there are 500 unnamed auditors (*śrāvaka*) and an unspecified number of 'lords of the earth' (*lokendra*). In this way, the opening scene of the *sūtra* establishes a spiritual hierarchy in both temporal and spatial terms: temporally by first mentioning the Buddha, then Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattvas, auditors and lords of the world; spatially by positioning the Buddha in the centre and the others on the periphery radiating outward from the central power. As a result of this arrangement, the narrator establishes the superiority of the bodhisattvas over the auditors and lords of earth by their spatio-temporal location – a method even more dramatically depicted later in the *Nidāna*.

Up to this point in the story there has been only description – no true narrative action has taken place. The first action of the story is a mental event. All those gathered before the Buddha are said to share the same thought:

> It would not be possible for the world of humans and the gods to understand, plunge into, earnestly devote themselves to, comprehend, discern, investigate, ascertain, divide, recognize, or establish with regard to the mental disposition of other beings the domain of the *tathāgata*, or the range of knowledge of the *tathāgata*, the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the *tathāgata*, the strength of the *tathāgata*, the confidence of the *tathāgata*, the trance (*samādhi*) of the *tathāgata*, the abode of the *tathāgata*, the sovereignty of the *tathāgata*, the body of the *tathāgata*, or the knowledge of the *tathāgata*, without the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the *tathāgata*, the miraculous action of the *tathāgata*, the authority of the *tathāgata*, the previous vow of the *tathāgata*, his cultivating roots of merit under the previous buddha, his accepting the good friends, his purification of knowledge leading to faith, his undertaking the light of noble intention, his purification of the bodhisattva's resolve, and his setting out with a vow toward resolve and omniscience.[9]

In this passage we witness a shift in what Bal calls 'focalization' (see Chapter 3 above) from the scene in the Jeta Grove to the internal thoughts of those gathered around the Buddha. This event's significance rests in the declaration about Vairocana's inconceivable nature. It is only through the Buddha's power (*adhiṣṭḥāna*) that those around him are able to comprehend the extent of his spiritual qualities. This passage makes clear that Vairocana is 'the power' of the fabula, who is both the ultimate cause and source of Sudhana's attainments. In other words, this first (mental) event reinforces the importance of Vairocana that is suggested by the initial description of the Jeta Grove.

The second action is another thought shared by those present before the Buddha:

> If only the Lord would show his previous setting out for omniscience to us – [namely] all the bodhisattvas with such a mental disposition, and beings who through a variety of mental dispositions, intentions and realizations, comprehend a variety of words and gestures, are established in various stages of mastery, have purified various faculties, strive toward various mental dispositions, whose domain are various types of consciousness, who rely on the good qualities of the *tathāgata*, and who are approaching from various directions for the elucidation of the Dharma.[10]

This is followed by a long list of other thoughts, each expressing the desire that the Buddha demonstrate spiritual qualities that he developed in the past such as his 'realization of previous vows of a bodhisattva',[11] 'the purification of the collection of previous perfections of a bodhisattva',[12] 'the miracle of ascending the previous stages of a bodhisattva',[13] 'the accomplishment of the previous realizations of the collection of a bodhisattva's courses of conduct'[14] and 'the light of the array of previous realizations of the bodhisattva's vehicle'.[15]

Then the Buddha, knowing the thoughts of those bodhisattvas, enters into a trance (*samādhi*) called 'the Lion's Yawn' (*siṃhavijṛmbhita*) that is an array (*vyūha*) illuminating the world (V 4.30–5.1). As soon as he enters this trance his Great Array peaked dwelling becomes an infinite expanse. The Buddha's dwelling is also miraculously transformed so that it appeared to be,

> an array with a ground-surface of unsurpassed diamonds, with a surface of the earth that appeared to be a royal net of all *maṇi*-gems,[16] covered with many gem flowers, evenly dispersed with great *maṇi*-gems, and adorned with pillars of lapis lazuli. Adorned with storehouses of gold and *maṇi*-gems, it was a royal ornament evenly distributed with world-illuminating jewels, in which there was a multitude of pairs of all gems. It was a purified array of turrets, archways, mansions, windows and innumerable pavilions all of gems. It was an array of *maṇi*-gems resembling

> those possessed by all the lords of the earth. It was an array of *maṇi*-gems [found] within the oceans of the world, and was covered with all *maṇi*-gems, with parasols, banners and raised flags. It was a pervasive array discharging nets of light rays into the Dharma realm through all the openings in its gates and archways. It was an array with pavilions outside on the ground-level containing an inconceivable number of assembled groups, with houses of *maṇi*-gems having staircases in all directions, supremely well distributed and adorned.[17]

In a similar fashion, the Buddha's *samādhi* transforms the Jeta Grove and buddha lands equal in number to the atoms in buddha lands beyond description (V 5.8–28). With this shift in focalization back to the peaked dwelling and the Jeta Grove, we see for the first time a description of landscape transformed into an infinite jewelled realm. Next, the external narrator introduces an argumentative passage by asking the rhetorical question, 'What was the reason for this?' (*tat kasya hetoḥ*), and immediately supplies the answer – a long list of the Buddha's spiritual virtues beginning with,

> It is because the *tathāgata*'s roots of merit are so inconceivable, his accumulation of pure factors (*dharma*) are so inconceivable, his power (*adhiṣṭhāna*), which is the great majesty of a buddha, is so inconceivable, his miracle of pervading all world realms with one body is so inconceivable. . . . that the Jeta Grove appeared purified by means of the purification of a Buddha land with such a form . . .[18]

By applying the concept of focalization, we are alerted to several shifts in perspective taking place in the above quoted passages. First, we see that the external focalizer shifts from the viewpoint of an observer of the scene at the Jeta Grove to the internal thought processes of those attending the Buddha. Next, attention moves to the internal processes of the Buddha ('. . . knowing their thoughts, he entered into the *samādhi* . . .'); and finally the focus turns to the transformation of the Lord's peaked dwelling and the Jeta Grove. These shifts represent the 'omniscient' perspective often found in modern novels – the external narrator has privileged access to viewpoints and internal psychological activity that would be impossible for an internal focalizer.

In the transformation of the peaked dwelling and the Jeta Grove we see the thematization of space, whereby a mundane building and grove become changed into limitless space filled with countless gems, jewels, gold and other precious objects. This magical transformation reveals a concept central to the worldview of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*: the ultimate ground of all relative spacetime is the infinite, eternal Dharma realm. The particular nature of this transformation provides the initial discloser of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s position on power.

We have already identified Vairocana as 'the power' of the fabula. His transformation of his peaked dwelling and the Jeta Grove gives us the first indication of the concept of power in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The Buddha transforms

reality by entering a *samādhi*, or trance.[19] The importance of this concept for the *Gaṇḍavyūha* cannot be overstated: it is through the attainment of *samādhi*s that bodhisattvas achieve insight into the nature of the *dharmadhātu*, the power to manipulate reality and the ability to progress along the spiritual path. The good friends teach Sudhana by either describing or imparting *samādhi*s to him. In the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the concept of *samādhi* is also closely associated with the notion of *vyūha*. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a *vyūha* may be translated as an 'array'. In the passage cited above, the external narrator describes the Buddha's *samādhi* as a *vyūha*. Thus this passage provides insight into both concepts: a *samādhi* is a mystical state of consciousness that transforms mundane reality into a supra-mundane state. The result of this transformation is a *vyūha*, a magical creation generated by the power of an advanced spiritual being. As 'the power' of the fabula, Vairocana enters a trance that manifested the 'supreme array' (*gaṇḍavyūha*),[20] the infinite *dharmadhātu*, and it is through this display that he reveals, in a single visionary experience, both the path toward and the result of omniscience.

The array generated through the Buddha's trance also provides some content for the concept of *adhiṣṭhāna* in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The term occurs twice already in the narration of the first event of the story: 'it would not be possible for the world of humans and gods to understand . . . the power (*adhiṣṭḥāna*) of the *tathāgata* . . . except through the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the *tathāgata* . . .'. The term has a number of different meanings depending on its context and has been variously translated.[21] In a lengthy entry, Edgerton offers 'supernatural power' as one among a number of interpretations of the word (*BHSD*: 15–16). The context of this passage requires something close to Edgerton's 'supernatural power' and I have rendered *adhiṣṭhāna* as 'power' both for the sake of elegance in translation, and also to allow a wider range of interpretations in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

Obviously, in this context the Buddha's *adhiṣṭhāna* has a supernatural component. He displays his power through a trance that magically transforms his dwelling and the surrounding grove. This demonstrates a central notion about power in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*: true power is the supernatural power of the buddhas and bodhisattvas acquired through their spiritual development. But if we look closely at the application of the term *adhiṣṭhāna* for ideological overcoding, we find that there is a political component to the term as well.

Twice in the description of the array generated through the Buddha's trance, the narrator makes reference to objects related to royalty: 'a royal net of all (kinds) of *maṇi*-gems'[22] and 'royal ornaments evenly distributed'[23]. These are far from accidental – they indicate a connection between spiritual power and temporal power. In the opening scene, the Buddha is centrally positioned in his peaked dwelling surrounded by bodhisattvas, auditors and rulers of the earth with Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra foremost among them. The Indian target audience, who were ruled by powerful monarchs, most likely associated this arrangement with a king (*rāja*) or overlord (*rājādhirāja*) flanked by his chief ministers and surrounded by his court.[24] Thus, the Buddha is

portrayed as a type of spiritual monarch who rules over his own domain,[25] just as temporal monarch rules over his kingdom. This associating becomes more apparent later in the *Nidāna*.[26]

Next in the story, bodhisattvas from distant buddha lands approach the Buddha, pay their respects and set up various types of jewelled *kūṭāgāra*s. The narration of this event is deliberate and highly structured. First, a bodhisattva from the east named Vairocanapraṇidhānābhiraśmiprabha, from the buddha land of the *tathāgata* named Vairocanaśrītejorāja, gains permission from that buddha to leave, approaches with a large retinue of bodhisattvas, pays his respects and sets up *kūṭāgāra*s to the east (V 6.16–28). Then a bodhisattva named Duryodhanavīryavegarāja comes from the south with his retinue of bodhisattvas, pays his respects and sets up peaked dwellings to the south. This pattern continues with bodhisattvas arriving in the following order: west, north, northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest, from below and then above (V 7.13–12.5).

This gathering of the bodhisattvas reveals important information about the story's construction of power. The specific pattern and order of arrangement thematize space by representing this gathering as a type of array (*vyūha*). Viewed through the lens of the external focalizer, we see that this array is a three-dimensional *maṇḍala* constructed with Vairocana at the centre.[27] The *maṇḍalic* formation also reinforces the metaphor of the Buddha as spiritual monarch. The arrival of the bodhisattvas from distant buddha lands suggests temporal rulers gathering to pay homage to an overlord (*rājādhirāja*).[28]

Following a description of the newly gathered bodhisattvas' spiritual virtues, focalization shifts to the experiences of the 'great auditors' (*mahāśrāvaka*) sitting before Vairocana. This shift highlights the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s hierarchically arranged spiritual society. The narrator states, 'But these auditors . . . did not see the miracle of the *tathāgata* in the Jeta Grove'.[29] This statement is followed by a lengthy list of what the great auditors did not see, beginning with:

> They did not see the arrays of the Buddha, or his majesty, his exhibition of supernatural power, his magic performance, his overlordship, the miracle of his deeds, his might, his power, or the purity of his buddha land. They also did not see that inconceivable domain of the bodhisattvas, the coming together of the bodhisattvas, the assembly of the bodhisattvas, the meeting of the bodhisattvas, the approach of the bodhisattvas, the magic performance of the bodhisattvas, the assembly-*maṇḍala* of the bodhisattvas. . . .[30]

In other words, the detailed description of the transformation of the Jeta Grove and the following assembly of the bodhisattvas escapes the auditors' view, even though they sit right in front of the Buddha!

Anticipating the surprise of the target audience, the external narrator poses this rhetorical question, 'What was the reason for this?'; and immediately answers with, 'This was due to their lack of the corresponding roots of merit'.[31]

The term 'roots of merit' (*kuśalamūla*) commonly occurs in Buddhist literature. In the Pāli sources it refers specifically to three qualities: non-greed (*alobha*), non-hate (*adosa*) and non-delusion (*amoha*).[32] In Mahāyāna sources, the term is variously defined.[33] Typical of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the text does not provide a precise definition of 'roots of merit', but follows with a long list of other qualities that the auditors did not possess. We may interpret this as a collection of characteristics that constitute the necessary roots of merit lacking in the auditors. Some of these are that,

> While previously wandering in the cycle of existence, they had not incited beings with regard to the perfections for [the attainment of] supreme, perfect enlightenment. Nor did they establish the production of the thought of enlightenment in the mental continuums of others. . . . Nor did they accumulate the root of merit conducive to omniscience.[34]

Each element from this quotation contains a characteristic of the Mahāyāna: the perfections (*parāmitā*); supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*); the production of the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*); and omniscience (*sarvajñatā*). This sample is representative of the entire list of attributes lacking in the great auditors. When examined as a whole the reason the *mahāsrāvaka*s do not see the results of the Buddha's *samādhi* becomes obvious to the informed Mahāyāna audience: they are not bodhisattvas. Because they have not established themselves on the bodhisattva's course of conduct (*bodhisattva-caryā*), they have not performed the necessary actions to generate the corresponding merit needed to see the transformation of the Jeta Grove. This passage also provides a clear division within the story's spiritual hierarchy. At the top of the spiritual pyramid sits Vairocana; his knowledge and power infinite. Flanking him are his closest aids, the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī. Further down on the pyramid are the other bodhisattvas, all of whom witness the Buddha's miraculous transformation of his dwelling and the Jeta Grove. Below them are the *mahāśrāvaka*s, who represent beings upon an inferior spiritual path.

Following this passage, focalization shifts to the ten bodhisattvas from distant buddha lands. The narrative details how each bodhisattva recites ten verses praising Vairocana, his *samādhi*, his qualities and various spiritual attainments. The sequence and the number of verses are both intentional and exact: the bodhisattvas recite in the order they appeared before the Buddha (first the bodhisattva from the east, then south, west, north, northeast etc . . .), and each recite ten verses.[35]

Then, the bodhisattva Samantabhadra illuminates the *samādhi* of the *tathāgata* by means of ten elucidating characteristics (*nirdeśapada*). After this passage, the narrator states that Samantabhadra 'by the power of the Buddha' (*buddhādhiṣṭhāna*) sings verses (V 25.21– 25). This compound, *buddhādhiṣṭhāna*, occurs frequently within the narrative before a character recites verses to indicate that the Buddha functions as the enlightened source

of power behind such utterances. Once again, the narrator reminds his audience that Vairocana functions as 'the power' of the fabula and represents the highest spiritual force attainable.

Immediately following Samantabhadra's verses, the text reads:

> Then the Lord, in order to put into effect his trance, the 'Lion's Yawn', to a specially high degree for those bodhisattvas present emitted a ray of light from the space between his brows called 'the light of the three times making known all the gates into the Dharma realm within the circle of hair between the eyebrows', and made manifest streams of light within all lands within the oceans of all world realms within the ten directions with a spread of rays equal in number to the atoms in an inexpressible number of buddha lands.[36]

This light-show causes the bodhisattvas to see all buddha lands within the entire *dharmadhātu*, the previous meritorious activities of Vairocana, his oceans of miracles and trances etc. (V 27.9–30.17). It allows them to penetrate and pervade the entire *dharmadhātu* within every instant of thought and to develop untold spiritual qualities.

The narrator employs this mystical action and the following description of its effect to demonstrate, once more, the power of Vairocana. The Buddha's power to generate such visionary experiences establishes him as the supreme individual among an elite spiritual society. The content of the bodhisattvas' visions reveals the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s view of reality: beyond and within the infinite multiplicity of world realms (*lokadhātu*) there is a higher dimensional reality, the Dharma realm, which binds the entire spacetime continuum into a seamless, inexpressible unity. As supreme spiritual monarch, Vairocana is able to display this vision to his inner circle of ministers, the bodhisattvas gathered around him.

After a verbose description of Vairocana's spiritual might, the external narrator states that, 'the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, displaying these very same miracles through the power of the Buddha (*buddhādhiṣṭhāna*), surveyed the ten directions and spoke these verses at that time –'.[37] The 13 verses that follow summarize the vision generated through the Buddha's light-ray. Mañjuśrī's demonstration of the same miracles as well as the content of his verses, indicate this bodhisattva's special status within the spiritual hierarchy of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The location of these verses after Samantabhadra's verses and as the final verses of the *Nidāna* also belies the importance of their reciter.

When we examine the *Nidāna* as a whole, we can see that it contains a textual symmetry indicating status. In the opening sentence of the text, the external narrator mentions first Vairocana and then Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī; Vairocana enters a *samādhi* and Samantabhadra is the last to comment on it; Vairocana emits a light-ray and Mañjuśrī then recites verses about it. Algebraically, this symmetry may be represented as follows: if we use a 'V' for Vairocana, 'S' for Samantabhadra, and 'M' for Mañjuśrī, and use '-'

to indicate a close temporal connection and '→' to represent temporal progression of the narrative, then we have the pattern: V-S-M→V-S→V-M. This pattern structurally indicates that Vairocana is 'the power' of the fabula and that Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī are his most important 'helpers'. The temporal order also indicates that Samantabhadra has a slightly higher status than Mañjuśrī. The final pages of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* generate a similar symmetry that supports these conclusions (see below).

After Mañjuśrī's recitation, the text reads: 'Then every single one of the bodhisattvas from among those bodhisattvas whose mental continuum was illuminated by the Buddha's *samādhi* realized entrances into great compassion equal in number to the atoms in an inexpressible number of buddha lands'.[38] Here we see the immediate result of the Buddha's trance and light-ray: the generation of great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) in the bodhisattvas present. This emphasis on *mahākaruṇā* highlights the Mahāyāna orientation of the text. As a form of motivation for action, great compassion distinguishes the Buddha and bodhisattvas as rulers of the spiritual domain from their earthly counterparts, who may be motivated to action by greed for wealth or lust for power.[39]

Once the bodhisattvas realize these entrances in *mahākaruṇā*, they send out infinite magical creations in the form of ascetics, brahmins, doctors, merchants etc. throughout all worlds to develop beings (V 34.11–35.11). This passage constitutes the final pages of the *Nidāna* and serves to connect the introductory scene of the *sūtra* to the travel narrative of Sudhana's visits to the *kalyāṇamitra*s. As I argued in Chapter 2, the bodhisattvas' emission of magical creations suggests that the good friends are themselves magical creations of these bodhisattvas. In this manner, the external narrator connects the spiritual elite society described in the story's opening scene to the mundane society occupied by the good friends.

Before proceeding with our investigation of the rest of the story, let me point out the gender inequality present in the *sūtra*'s introduction. References to members of the female gender, whether nun or laywoman, in the Jeta Grove are conspicuously absent from the *Nidāna*. Furthermore, all the bodhisattvas included in Vairocana's retinue and who visit from distant buddha lands are gendered male.[40] The lack of female characters in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s *Nidāna* is likely to represent a consciously held ideological position. The message seems to be that females do not possess the necessary roots of merit to be among the spiritual elite present before the Buddha, or to witness the rarefied vision of reality he reveals. In this way, the story's beginning (*Nidāna*) and end (see below) assert male spiritual superiority and contextualize the otherwise positive portrayal of women in its middle sections.

Mañjuśrī and the monks

After the description of the bodhisattvas sending out magical emanations, the external focalizer shifts attention to Mañjuśrī. This section is significant

for three reasons. First, the events of the *Nidāna* have already established Mañjuśrī as one of the chief 'helpers' of Vairocana Buddha. In this way, the audience of the narrative understands that this bodhisattva's actions within the story are charged with importance. Second, the position of this section immediately after the *Nidāna* and its weight (2.8 per cent of the total text) signal its narratological significance.[41] Third, its content demonstrates this section's importance – after his conversion of a group of monks, Mañjuśrī meets Sudhana (the hero) and sends him on his quest.

After paying his respects to the Buddha, Mañjuśrī and his retinue set out to visit the countries in the south (V 36.19–20). Then focalization shifts from external to internal when Śāriputra, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha, 'by the authority of the Buddha',[42] sees the bodhisattva leaving the Jeta Grove, and thinks that he should go with him. Śāriputra approaches the Buddha with 60 monks[43] and asks the Lord's consent to follow Mañjuśrī (V 36.21–30). Permission granted, the venerable monk goes to the bodhisattva and describes Mañjuśrī's spiritual qualities to his fellow *bhikṣu*s. These words inspire the monks and produce Mahāyānist attributes in them such as faith in the bodhisattvas (*bodhisattva-prasāda*), great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), great vows (*mahāpraṇidhānāni*) and faith in omniscience (*sarvajñatā-prasāda*) (V 37.13–19). Mañjuśrī teaches them how to realize the stage of a *tathāgata* through the 'ten productions of an indefatigable mind'.[44] This discourse causes the monks to enter into a *samādhi* called, 'Domain of the Unobstructed Eye Seeing All Buddhas',[45] which firmly establishes them in 'the course of conduct of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra'.[46]

The scene of Mañjuśrī's conversion of *bhikṣu*s serves four ideological purposes. First, it demonstrates the spiritual power of the bodhisattva, one of Vairocana's chief 'helpers'. Second, it highlights the universality of the Mahāyāna: the bodhisattva's path is opened to any, monastic or lay, who has established the necessary roots of merit, has developed great compassion, wishes to obtain omniscience etc. Third, the conversion of Śāriputra, a central character in mainstream Buddhist literature, serves to connect the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to the meta-narrative tradition of Indian Buddhism. Thus, this scene functions to counteract the distancing from mainstream Buddhism that is produced in the previous section when the auditors fail to see the Buddha's miracle. In this manner, the distinctiveness and superiority of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s Mahāyānistic vision is maintained. At the same time, it is connected to the larger tradition of mainstream Buddhism through the conversion scene of Śāriputra and the 60 monks. Finally, Mañjuśrī's conversion of monastics prior to his meeting with Sudhana reinforces the spiritual authority of monks over lay practitioners.

Mañjuśrī meets Sudhana

Following the conversion of the monks, Mañjuśrī travels to the city of Dhanyākara and preaches the Dharma to a large audience that includes our

hero Sudhana. Inspired by Mañjuśrī's teachings, Sudhana recites 37 verses to the departing bodhisattva (V 41.17–46.10). The content of these verses consists primarily in Sudhana's desire to be established in the Mahāyāna. This is poetically referred to by such expressions as 'the path to enlightenment'[47] the 'royal vehicle',[48] the 'best vehicle',[49] the 'vehicle of knowledge',[50] the 'vehicle of enlightenment'[51] and the 'Dharma-vehicle'.[52] These verses function to demonstrate both Sudhana's insight into the importance of the bodhisattva's path and his earnest desire to follow it. By making our hero call after Mañjuśrī with these verses, the narrator indicates that Sudhana possesses the necessary merit to recognize the spiritual authority of Mañjuśrī. Sudhana's final verse highlights the metaphorical connection between this spiritual authority and worldly authority already witnessed in the *Nidāna*:

> With your superior vision,
> Look at the city of the Dharma king,
> Where those with heads bound with the turban of Dharma,
> Are decorated with the crown of the king of knowledge.[53]

We may interpret the 'Dharma king' as a reference to the Buddha and the 'city of the Dharma king' to represent the *dharmadhātu*. Those wearing the turbans and crowns, therefore, would be the advanced bodhisattvas of his retinue. Royal imagery to establish the exalted spiritual status of buddhas and bodhisattvas is used frequently within the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and functions as a central motif in the text's definition of power.

Following Sudhana's verses, Mañjuśrī looks upon our young hero with the 'gaze of an elephant' (*nāgāvalokita*) and responds to him with statements about worshipping the good friends in order to obtain omniscience.[54] This passage is the first indication that devotion to the *kalyāṇamitra*s is the primary means to attain enlightenment. Mañjuśrī's statements about the importance of the *kalyāṇamitra*s mark a fundamental shift in the narrative. From this point onward, the primary focus of the story is Sudhana's visits to the good friends.

Our hero responds to the bodhisattva by performing his 'Question' formula for the first time.[55] Instead of answering Sudhana's questions, Mañjuśrī recites ten verses in which he praises the merchant-banker's son for his resolve and predicts his enlightenment (V 46.24–47.10). This section concludes with Mañjuśrī's version of the 'Go and Ask' formula and Sudhana's first 'Departing' formula to see the monk Meghaśrī.

The authority of the monks

In the next three sections following this encounter, the narrator recounts our young hero's visits to three *bhikṣu*s: Meghaśrī (*km*#2), Sāgaramegha (*km*#3), Supratiṣṭhita (*km*#4). The length of narration of each of these visits is three pages, four pages and four pages respectively in the Vaidya edition (for a

combined total of only 2.53 per cent of the total text). Although these sections lack weight, their position immediately after Sudhana's first encounter with Mañjuśrī increases their narrative significance.

Sudhana's meeting with the monk Meghaśrī begins with the young hero's arrival in the country of Rāmāvarānta. Once there Sudhana locates the mountain Sugrīva, climbs it and after seven days of searching, spots Meghaśrī on the plateau of a nearby mountain (V 48.1–8). Sudhana approaches the monk and performs the 'Approach' and 'Question' formulas. In response, Meghaśrī praises Sudhana for asking his questions and states how difficult it is to seek out such a path. He then tells Sudhana about his own spiritual attainment – the ability to see the '*tathāgata*s in all directions'.[56] The manner in which Meghaśrī describes this ability illustrates both the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s preoccupation with large numbers and its conception of the infinite vastness of space. The monk begins by stating that he sees a single *tathāgata* to the east. Then he declares that he sees two, ten, 100, 1,000, 100,000, a *koṭī*,[57] 100 *koṭī*s, 1,000 *koṭī*s, 100,000 *koṭī*s, 100,000 *niyuta*s[58] of *koṭī*s of buddhas, and continues like this until stating that he sees as many *tathāgata*s as there are atoms in an inexpressible number of buddha lands (V 48.27–49.8). Meghaśrī concludes his description by telling our hero that in the same way as he sees buddhas to the east, so he sees buddhas in all directions. After this description, Meghaśrī tells Sudhana his 'Statement of Attainment and Ignorance' and 'Go and Ask' formulas and Sudhana performs his 'Departuring' formula, leaving to visit the monk Sāgaramegha.

The next section begins with Sudhana recollecting the instructions of Meghaśrī as he travels gradually (*anupūrveṇa*) to the region of Sāgaramukha to find the monk Sāgaramegha (V 51.1–6). Upon meeting, Sāgaramegha tells a story about his own spiritual attainment. Here we see a shift in both narration and focalization: external narration has changed to character-bound narration and focalization has shifted from Sudhana to Sāgaramegha. The monk's story begins:

> Son of Good Family, for twelve years I have been living here in the region of Sāgaramukha making the great ocean my basis and keeping it present in my mind, namely by reflecting on the vast infinitude of the great ocean, its pure clarity, the difficulty in fathoming its depth, its well established gradual depth, its variety of many stores of gems. . . . Son of Good Family, then this thought occurred to me – 'There is nothing else vaster, more expansive, infinite, deep or varied in this world than this great ocean.' Son of Good Family, while I was thoroughly concentrating on this thought in this manner a great lotus appeared from the depth of the great ocean.[59]

Sāgaramegha then describes in great detail the nature of this mystic lotus. In typical *Gaṇḍavyūha*-style, the flower is made of precious substances and encrusted with countless jewels and gems. His description begins:

> Its stem was made of unsurpassed sapphire *maṇi*-gems and diamond jewels with a great garland of lapis lazuli and *maṇi*-gems. Its pure pedals, vast as the ocean, were of gold arrayed with buds of yellow sandalwood and furnished with emeralds, gems and fragrant powders. Its calyx was on a stem held by a million god-chiefs, enveloped by a net of a million *maṇi*-gems of different kinds. . . .[60]

After his lengthy description of the lotus, Sāgaramegha characterizes the mystic flower as 'produced from transcendental roots of merit of the *tathāgata*s',[61] as 'produced out of illusory phenomena,'[62] and states that 'its nature was like a dream'.[63] The ultimate illusory nature of this vision demonstrates the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conception of the unreality of all phenomena. Next, the monk tells Sudhana that the form of a *tathāgata* appeared on the lotus and describes its inconceivable nature (V 52.19–53.2). He then narrates how this buddha extended his right hand, touched him on the head and revealed to him a religious discourse called 'Universal Eye' (*samantanetra*).[64] This Universal Eye discourse is Sāgaramegha's special attainment. Following this story, the *bhikṣu* sends Sudhana to see another monk named Supratiṣṭhita on the island of Laṅka.

When our hero reaches the island of Laṅka, he sees the *bhikṣu* walking in the sky surrounded by a retinue of the lords of the serpents (*nāga*), centaurs (*kinnara*), demigods (*asura*), mythical birds (*garuḍa*), demons (*yakṣa* and *rākṣasa*) and various divinities, all bearing precious offerings (V 55.1–23). After Sudhana's 'Approach' and 'Question' formulas, the monk tells our hero that he has attained the liberation (*vimokṣa*) of the bodhisattvas, 'Unobstructed Entrance' (*asaṅgamukha*).[65] Through this liberation he has attained a light of knowledge (*jñānāloka*) called, 'Ultimate Non-obstruction' (*asaṅgakoṭi*). Supratiṣṭhita then describes at length the various powers he has acquired through this light of knowledge, such as the ability to multiply his form and to travel to innumerable worlds and worship the buddhas there (V 56.15–57.25). After this, the monk lists a number of attainments that come to those whom he encounters such as, 'those beings whom I come within their range, with whom I meet, those all become established in supreme, perfect enlightenment'.[66]

Sudhana's visits to these three monks are particularly important for our comprehension of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conception of power. In the course of Sudhana's conversations with the *bhikṣu*s, the audience learns about the range of spiritual power that is wielded by *kalyāṇamitra*s. Meghaśrī has the power to see limitless buddhas in the ten directions. Through concentrating his mind on the ocean, Sāgaramegha (whose name means 'Ocean-cloud') is able to see a buddha sitting on a jewelled lotus and learns the religious discourse known as 'Universal Eye'. Supratiṣṭhita's attainments are even more advanced. First, he has the ability to walk in the sky. Second, he has learned the liberation 'Unobstructed Gate' and has gained a 'light of knowledge' from this called 'Ultimate Non-obstruction'. This light of knowledge endows him

with many psychic powers, including the ability to multiply his body and travel vast distances through space. In other words, the spiritual power of the good friends consists in visionary experiences of buddhas, learning religious discourses, attaining liberations and lights of knowledge, and the acquisition of psychic abilities.

In order to understand the narrative significance of these three good friends in relation to worldly power in ancient India, we must enquire into their social status as *bhikṣu*s. This is one of the aims of Chapter 7, in which I demonstrate that monks and monasteries played an active role in the commercial activities of ancient India during the first several centuries CE, and that such activities led to the accumulation of considerable wealth. Often this wealth resulted in an elevated economic and political status.[67] Also in Chapter 7, I argue that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* may have been composed by monastics for wealthy and royal laypeople. Given the possible monastic authorship of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the early position of these three *bhikṣu*s gains considerable significance.

By placing these visits directly after Sudhana's encounter with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and before the first lay *kalyāṇamitra*, the external narrator asserts monastic authority. As mentioned, Mañjuśrī is one of the two most important 'helpers' of the 'power' (Vairocana) in the fabula and is located at the top of the spiritual hierarchy. As such, he is imagined to transcend mundane social hierarchies. The bodhisattva tells our hero to go to a monk at the outset of his spiritual quest. This sends a clear message to the target audience of the story: the layperson's journey towards enlightenment begins with spiritual advice from monks. Even though each monk claims his ultimate ignorance of the bodhisattva's course of conduct, Sudhana first visits three monastics and pays the appropriate homage to them in recognition of their elevated spiritual status. In this manner, the external narrator is able to tell a story about a wealthy merchant-banker's son tailored to the interests and aspirations of laypeople while preserving monastic authority.

The sage and the brahmin

Sudhana's next four encounters are with the grammarian Megha (*km*#5), the merchant-banker Muktaka (*km*#6), the monk Sāradhvaja (*km*#7) and the laywoman Āśā, (*km*#8). As queen and laywoman, Āśā is both the first royalty and the first female *kalyāṇāmitra* in the narrative. I discuss Sudhana's visit with Āśā in detail in Chapter 6, but for the moment let me point out that the queen's social status as royalty is the first instance of an overt connection between spiritual and worldly power – a theme that recurs numerous times throughout the narrative.

For now let us focus attention on Sudhana's next two encounters with *kalyāṇamitra*s #9 and #10. These sections are brief,[68] but worth mentioning for three reasons. First, these two visits are with good friends who, at least by outward appearance, are non-Buddhist.[69] Their non-Buddhist status in the

story may have ideological implications related to an attempt by the composers of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to incorporate other religious practices within a Buddhist conceptual framework. Second, in these sections Sudhana experiences *samādhi*s for the first time, an accomplishment directly related to the power of these good friends. Third, the narrator develops the conceptions of the *sūtra*'s imagined spiritual society, and this society's power and authority.

When Sudhana goes to see the sage (*ṛṣi*) Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa in the country of Nālayu, he finds the good friend in a hermitage surrounded by 10,000 religious disciples (V 87.7–14). Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa tells the merchant-banker's son that he has attained the liberation of the bodhisattvas called 'Unsurpassed Banner'.[70] When Sudhana enquires about its range (*viṣaya*), the sage stretches out his right hand, rubs our hero on his head, and grasps his right hand;[71] whereupon, Sudhana sees incalculable buddha lands. Moreover, he observes himself sitting at the feet of all the buddhas in these buddha lands, listening to their teachings, witnessing their past actions, and experiencing the spiritual qualities of their buddha lands for countless eons (V 88.18–89.11).

When Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa releases Sudhana our hero finds himself standing before the sage just as he had been. Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa then asks him, 'Son of Good Family, do you remember?' And Sudhana replies, 'Noble One, by the power (*adhiṣṭḥāna*) of the good friend, I remember'.[72] This response clearly acknowledges the power (*adhiṣṭḥāna*) of the *kalyāṇamitra* as the direct cause of his visionary experience.

Having left Bhīṣmottaranirghosa, Sudhana arrives in the country of Īṣāna to locate the brahmin Jayoṣmāyatana, and finds him carrying out ascetic practices surrounded by four great 'masses of fire' (*mahān agniskandhaḥ*) blazing like mountains of flame (V 90.19–20). In response to our hero's 'Question' formula, Jayoṣmāyatana says, 'Son of Good Family, go, ascend this mountain with its razor-edged path and throw yourself into this pit of fire. In this way your bodhisattva's course of conduct will be purified'.[73]

What happens next is the first of only two occasions in the *sūtra* when Sudhana questions the spiritual advice of a *kalyāṇamitra*.[74] After hearing the brahmin's command to throw himself into the fire, our hero reflects on how difficult it is to achieve the necessary conditions to carry out the spiritual path, and then wonders if Jayoṣmāyatana might not be a demon (*māra*) attempting to trick him (V 90.27–91.2). At this point 10,000 Brahmā-gods appear and tell Sudhana not to entertain such thoughts. They then explain to the merchant-banker's son that the brahmin has 'obtained the light of a trance that is a diamond flame' (*vajrārciḥ-samādhy-avabhāsa-labdha*) and list his many spiritual attainments acquired from it. The Brahmās are followed by 12 more groups of 10,000 beings of various sorts, who also speak of Jayoṣmāyatana's good qualities telling Sudhana to trust him and obey his instructions (V 91.15–94.7).

After hearing this barrage of support, Sudhana is overjoyed, realizes that the brahmin is a 'true good friend' (*bhūta-kalyāṇamitra*), bows at his feet

and says, 'Noble One, I confess my sin – I rejected the authority (*ājñā*) of the good friend'.[75] Immediately after this statement, Jayoṣmāyatana recites the following verse:

> A bodhisattva who successfully makes his mind one with his teachers,
> Follows instructions and does not doubt.
> From this all his aims are also successful,
> And he skilfully awakens to the knowledge of
> The buddhas under the tree of enlightenment.[76]

This verse highlights the moral of this episode: a bodhisattva 'should not doubt' (*na kāṅkṣaye*) the instructions of his teachers. In other words, the spiritual authority of the good friends is absolute and should be obeyed without hesitation.[77]

Sudhana then climbs the mountain path and jumps into the fire. While falling he attains a trance of the bodhisattvas called 'Well Established' (*supratiṣṭhita*), and upon touching the fire, attains another *samādhi* called 'The Supernatural Knowledge of Bliss within Cessation' (*praśama-sukhābhijña*) (V 94.23–25).

What is most unusual about these encounters is that although Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa is a sage (*ṛṣi*) with matted hair[78] (a non-Buddhist ascetic) and Jayoṣmāyatana is a brahmin, both teach our hero Buddhist Dharma. Even more surprising, Sudhana attains his first *samādhi*s during these encounters. What is our narrator's motivation for relating these events? One reason may be the attempt of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s composers to incorporate or 'encompass' non-Buddhists into the worldview of the *sūtra*. In other words, the purpose of these sections is similar to Mañjuśrī's conversion of Śāriputra and the monks, but within a broader framework. Whereas, the conversion of Śāriputra and his followers serves to connect the story to mainstream Buddhism, Sudhana's visits to a sage and brahmin may be an attempt to expand this universality to include non-Buddhist religious practices. This attempt at universality points to a social context for the *Gaṇḍavyūha* that was religiously pluralistic and highly competitive.

However, Sudhana's encounters with Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa and Jayoṣmayatana go well beyond a mere attempt to incorporate non-Buddhist practices: through the spiritual power of these *kalyāṇamitra*s our hero attains his first direct experiences of *samādhi*. Why would the narrator give such an exalted role to seemingly non-Buddhist religious practitioners? These sections suggest that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* may have developed within a social environment heavily influenced by brahmanical religion. There is some evidence to suggest that the text emerged from such a religious milieu (see Chapter 7). If the *Gaṇḍavyūha* developed in such an environment, Sudhana's attainments of *samādhi* from a sage and brahmin, may be the external narrator's attempt to assert simultaneously the universality of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s religious vision and co-opt the spiritual power of (seemingly) brahmanical religious

practitioners. These encounters would then represent an attempt by Buddhists to recognize the validity of brahmanical religious specialists (albeit as crypto-Buddhists) who were often patronized by Indian kings and princes.[79]

These sections also further develop the story's conception of an imagined spiritual society existing within mundane society, as well as this society's spiritual power and authority. Although Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa and Jayoṣmayatana outwardly appear to be non-Buddhists, they are actually *kalyāṇamitra*s who empower Sudhana to have distinctively Buddhist visions. This highlights a recurrent concept in the story: whereas the *kalyāṇamitra*s are known to each other, people in the story's mundane society may not recognize them as such.[80]

The power elite: the three final friends

Although the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conception of power is reiterated throughout the entire narrative in multiple forms, for the sake of our present analysis, I will conclude this chapter with a detailed presentation of the hero's three last encounters, which are fundamental to the *sūtra*'s portrayal of spiritual power. Sudhana's final three visits are with the bodhisattvas Maitreya, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. Within the metaphor of kingship, Maitreya plays the role of crown prince of the Dharma realm; while Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, as Vairocana's primary helpers, represent his chief ministers. Weight, position and content establish these final three friends as the power elite of the spiritual hierarchy and simultaneously assert the superiority of the masculine spiritual ideal.[81]

The Maitreya section is the longest of the narrative and constitutes approximately 11.7 per cent of the total text (V 368–418). Sudhana's visit with Mañjuśrī is extremely brief;[82] while his final visionary experience of Samantabhadra and the accompanying verses (the *Bhadracarī*) is much longer, occupying 3.9 per cent of the total (V 420–436). Based on the criterion of weight alone, Maitreya qualifies as the highest-ranking *kalyāṇamitra*, but position and content indicate that Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra inhabit higher positions. Let us recall the prominent role these two played in the *Nidāna* and the textual symmetry that establishes them as the most important 'helpers' of 'the power' (Vairocana) in the fabula. Their final positions in the narrative reinforce this role. In the concluding lines of the *sūtra*, Vairocana speaks in approval of Samantabhadra's verses (V 436.21–46). This replicates the symmetry of the *Nidāna* only in reverse, thereby creating an *inclusio* structure for the action of the story.[83]

Traditionally, Buddhists conceived of Maitreya (*km*#52) as the 'Future Buddha', who succeeds Śakyamuni Buddha (Vairocana) once the Dharma is no longer present in this world realm.[84] However, as McMahan (2002: 140) points out, the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s 'spatialization of time' subordinates time to space and effectively neutralizes temporality. Thus, the notion of a 'Future Buddha' is undermined by the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s vision of the *dharmadhātu* as the interpenetration of all spacetime. Within the metaphor of kingship,

Maitreya, being Vairocana's spiritual successor, is therefore the heir apparent to the Dharma realm. His peaked dwelling represents his palace, constituting a gateway from the mundane world realms to the infinitely inter-reflecting *dharmadhātu*. His role within the narrative is indicated by his attainments and statements about his body and dwelling. For the purpose of analysis, we may divide Sudhana's visit to Maitreya into three parts: Sudhana's initial sight of Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra* and the arrival of the bodhisattva with his retinue; Sudhana's entry into the *kūṭāgāra* and the description of its interior; and finally Maitreya's entry into and comments about his dwelling.

This section begins with Sudhana entering a park called 'Great Array' (*mahāvyūha*) in the country of Samudrakaccha where he sees a great peaked dwelling called 'Containing the Ornaments of Vairocana's Array' (*vairocana-vyūhālaṃkāra-garbha*). After circumambulating the dwelling 100,000 times, our hero makes a number of proclamations about the *kūṭāgāra* that reveal both his spiritual insight and the religious significance of the dwelling. We learn that it is 'the undivided Dharma realm',[85] the 'non-essence of all *dharma*s',[86] and that one may 'pervade the Dharma realm through all its entrances'.[87] As I discussed in Chapter 2, such statements establish the *kūṭāgāra* as an architectural representation of the *dharmadhātu*. This adds importance to Maitreya's role as the keeper of the dwelling. Next, Sudhana recites 55 verses beginning with:

> Here is He, who has acquired great compassion,
> Whose mind is completely pure;
> Maitreya, the holy benevolent one,
> Intent upon the welfare of the world.
> Abiding at the Coronation Stage,
> This eldest son of the conquerors dwells
> Reflecting upon the domain of the Buddha.[88]

The most important phrase here is that Maitreya 'abides at the Coronation Stage' (*abhiṣeka-bhūmisthita*). The term *abhiṣekha* ('coronation' or 'anointing') is the name given to the tenth and highest stage of the bodhisattva's path. The term was also used in ancient India to indicate the coronation of a crown prince. This metaphorical connection between temporal and spiritual power has been pointed out by Ronald Davidson. He writes:

> The Lokottaravādins in the *Mahāvastu* understood Maitreya to be the crown prince (*yuvarāja*), following in the footsteps of Śakyamuni, who is the Dharmarāja. With early Mahayana scriptures – particularly the *Laṅkāvatāra* and *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* – the mythic coronation ritual became firmly embedded in the bodhisattva's assuming the tenth stage. . . . The myth builds on the idea that a crown prince exercises power even while waiting to become the ruler of the kingdom . . .
>
> (Davidson 2002: 125)

As we have seen, this 'imperial metaphor' (*ibid.*: 113 ff.) operates also in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In the *Nidāna*, the metaphor establishes Vairocana as the King of the Dharma realm. In this section, Maitreya, as buddha-to-be, occupies the role of crown prince.

Upon completion of his verses, Sudhana notices Maitreya approaching flanked by Śakra and Brahmā together with a large retinue of followers (V 377). Maitreya recites verses praising Sudhana and predicting his attainment of supreme enlightenment. Sudhana asks Maitreya his 'Question' formula about the course of conduct of a bodhisattva. Maitreya tells Sudhana to obtain his answer he should enter the *kūṭāgāra*. Our hero respectfully asks to enter and with a snap of Maitreya's fingers the gates to the peaked dwelling open. Focalization now shifts to Sudhana's vision of the *kūṭāgāra* as he sees that its interior is many hundreds of thousands of leagues (*yojana*) wide, and as vast as the realm of space (*ākāśadhātu-vipulam*). Like Vairocana's dwelling, this one is adorned with precious substances (V 407–408). Inside the *kūṭāgāra* hundreds of thousands of other peaked dwellings are arrayed in the same manner spread out in all directions. Miraculously, each dwelling remains distinct while simultaneously reflecting (*pratibhāsayoga*) every other one and all of its objects.

This description of Maitreya's dwelling illustrates three important aspects of the *dharmadhātu*. First, similar to Vairocana's transformation of his *kūṭāgāra*, the change from finite to infinite space as Sudhana enters demonstrates the Dharma realm's limitlessness. Second, both dwellings are adorned with precious substances. Here we witness a connection between wealth and a higher dimension of reality (see Chapter 5 below). Third, the inter-reflection of the *kūṭāgāra*s and all their objects functions as a demonstration of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s vision of reality: like a holographic image, all of spacetime co-exists simultaneously in every point within spacetime.[89]

After experiencing this vision, Sudhana is overcome with bliss and bows down in all directions. At the moment of prostration, through the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of Maitreya, Sudhana perceives himself simultaneously in each and every *kūṭāgāra* witnessing a different scene from Maitreya's bodhisattva-course (*bodhisattva-caryā*). Here we witness the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s most famous example of the 'spatialization' of time.[90] In a single instant Sudhana sees countless eons, realms, beings, bodhisattvas and buddhas, and hears endless teachings (V 408–414). In the centre of the great *kūṭāgāra*, Sudhana sees one peaked dwelling larger than the others. Inside it he witnesses Maitreya in his final life performing the acts of a buddha, such as going forth to homeless life, sitting under the enlightenment tree, attaining omniscience and preaching the Dharma (V 410.16–30). While Sudhana is watching the endless and simultaneous practices of Maitreya in all the *kūṭāgāra*s, suddenly the bodhisattva enters the peaked dwelling, snaps his fingers once more and says,

> Arise, Son of Good Family! This is the nature of conditioned factors. Son of Good Family, characterized by their non-fixity, all conditioned

> factors are controlled through the knowledge of bodhisattvas. In this way, lacking the perfection of an essence, they are like illusions, dreams and reflections.[91]

Maitreya's statements about Sudhana's vision highlight the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s position on all conditioned factors (*dharma*). Unlike the *dharmadhātu*, which is characterized by its pure essence (*svabhāva-vimala*),[92] all these factors lack substantiality (*svabhāva*) and are therefore ultimately unreal. It is this realization that allows advanced bodhisattvas to control and manipulate experience in order to enlighten beings.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, both Vairocana's and Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra*s are metaphorical representation of the *dharmadhātu* as supreme array (*gaṇḍavyūha*) intended to inspire religious awe through their infinite manifestations. In both peaked dwellings the centre is occupied by a buddha (Vairocana and Maitreya as a buddha) surrounded by bodhisattvas. This spatial arrangement represents a spiritual hierarchy in which those in the middle are the most spiritually advanced, while those at the periphery are less so.

Towards the end of Sudhana's visit with Maitreya, the bodhisattva declares that he has 'a body that enters into the states of existence within all world realms',[93] and that having pervaded the entire Dharma realm, he has come to Kūṭagrāmaka in the country Māladeśa in order to discipline people belonging to the brahmin caste (V 417.23–30). Maitreya tells our hero that he lives in the *kūṭāgāra*, but that upon passing away he will manifest in Tuṣita heaven and eventually obtain omniscience. At this point Sudhana will see him again with Mañjuśrī (V 417.30–418.7).

Maitreya's statements demonstrate the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s dual conception of reality. The bodhisattva is able to enter all world realms, pervade the entire Dharma realm and simultaneously appear in one particular place and time. Due to Maitreya's advanced attainment, he is fully immersed in the Dharma realm and thus able to enter all world realms at the same time. Given the equivalence of the Dharma realm and the Dharma body in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, Maitreya's ability to transverse the *dharmadhātu* and simultaneously appear in various locations within the *lokadhātu*s implies that he possesses both the Dharma body and limitless form bodies.

The section concludes with Maitreya performing the final utterance of the standard 'Go and Ask' formula wherein he tells Sudhana to go to Mañjuśrī. Here we witness the *inclusio* structure of the narrative: following 52 encounters with the good friends, our hero is instructed to return to the bodhisattva who originally sends him on his quest. Before Sudhana leaves, Maitreya eulogizes Mañjuśrī, stating such things as, 'the princely Mañjuśrī is the mother of hundreds of thousands of *niyuta*s of *koṭī*s of buddhas',[94] 'princely Mañjuśrī is one whose range has come far from within the principles of all liberations',[95] and 'he has penetrated into the course of conduct of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra'.[96] These statements suggest Mañjuśrī's spiritual

superiority to Maitreya. Maitreya's final declaration leaves little room for doubt:

> Sudhana, as many good friends as you have seen, as many entrances into courses of conduct as you have heard, as many principles of liberations as you have penetrated, as many properties of vows as you have plunged into – all should be seen as the authority (*anubhāva*) and power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the princely Mañjuśrī. Moreover, that princely Mañjuśrī has obtained the highest perfection.[97]

Looking for Mañjuśrī, Sudhana travels to more than 110 cities until he comes to Sumanāmukha, where he stays and meditates upon the bodhisattva (V 419.1–3). Mañjuśrī then stretches out his arm over 110 cities, places it on Sudhana's head and praises him. He tells our hero that those who have not developed the necessary faith, roots of merit etc., cannot know the nature of conditioned factors (*dharmatā*), their principle (*naya*), their range (*gocara*), or their abode (*vihāra*). Then having aided Sudhana in numerous ways, the bodhisattva causes him to penetrate into 'the *maṇḍala* of the course of conduct of Samantabhadra',[98] and establishes him in his 'own place' (*svadeśe*).[99]

The surviving Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of this final section may be divided into two parts: the initial prose portion of the text (V 420.1–428.22), and the verse portion know as the *Bhadracarī* (V 428.23–436.20). As Gómez has pointed out (1967: xxv–xxviii), the first two Chinese translations do not contain the *Bhadracarī*; rather the narrative ends with verses praising all bodhisattvas. The *Bhadracarī*, most likely due to its liturgical popularity, appears to have been added to the end of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* sometime between the end of the seventh and the end of the eighth centuries CE. Moreover, the content of the *Bhadracarī* clearly does not fit with either this section or the narrative as a whole.[100] Therefore, I shall focus my analysis on the prose portion of Sudhana's final encounter.

As the embodiment of the bodhisattva's course of conduct (*bodhisattvacaryā*), Samantabhadra (*km*#53) resides at the top of the spiritual hierarchy of good friends. Although the *Gaṇḍavyūha* never states that Samantabhadra is a buddha, his status as the primary helper of Vairocana is so exalted that it blurs the distinction between bodhisattvahood and buddhahood. Thus Sudhana's encounter and union with Samantabhadra represent the completion of his spiritual quest.

This last section unfolds as a revelation of the bodhisattva in five stages.[101] In the first two stages of revelation, ten signs and ten lights purify all buddha lands and transform the mundane world realm through clouds of multicoloured lights, flowers, gems and so forth, into the limitless Dharma realm. Through their transformation of the world realm, these signs and lights foreshadow the appearance of Samantabhadra and emphasize the extraordinary importance of Sudhana's encounter with this bodhisattva. After seeing the ten signs and ten lights, our hero achieves the third stage of revelation: a

vision of Samantabhadra sitting before Vairocana Buddha reflecting all of spacetime within every pore of his body (V 423.29–424.29). In the description of this vision we learn that the bodhisattva has 'obtained equality with all *tathāgata*s' (V 422.13). In Mahāyāna sources, 'equality' or 'sameness' (*samatā*) represents the absolute identity of all phenomena due to their inherent emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of an essence (*svabhāva*). Those who realize the undivided Dharma realm comprehend this identity and simultaneously attain equality with other enlightened beings. Therefore, the statement in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* that Samantabhadra has obtained equality with the *tathāgata*s is our first suggestion that the bodhisattva is equal in status to a buddha.

The fourth stage of revelation occurs when the bodhisattva places his right hand upon Sudhana's head causing him to attain *samādhi*s equal in number to the atoms in all buddha lands. Following this mystical experience, Samantabhadra asks Sudhana, 'Did you see my miracle?' Our hero replies, 'I saw, Noble One. But only one claiming to be a *tathāgata* would understand a miracle so inconceivable'.[102] Assuming that the bodhisattva is believed to understand the miracle that he himself imparts to Sudhana, then our hero's reply is our second clue that Samantabhadra possesses a spiritual status equal to a buddha.

The bodhisattva then explains that through engaging in religious practices for untold eons he eventually attained ten powers (*bala*). One of these is the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the *tathāgata*s (V 425.27–28). We have already noted that in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the *adhiṣṭhāna* of the buddhas is the highest form of spiritual power. Those that possess it can generate and manipulate illusory phenomena in order to enlighten beings, as well as inspire them to speak the Dharma. Samantabhadra's statement that he possesses the power of the *tathāgata*s, is our third suggestion that he has a spiritual status equal to a buddha.

Our fourth clue that Samantabhadra could be enlightened comes in the form of his declaration about the purity of his Dharma body and the omnipresence of his form body:

> I have obtained the Dharma body that is absolutely pure and non-differentiated within the three times. I also purified a supreme form body, which is conformable everywhere, is intent upon all buddha lands, has a universal basis, makes visible all miracles in every direction, and may be seen in all worlds.[103]

Next, the bodhisattva says, 'Moreover, Son of Good Family, beings who hear about the complete purity of my buddha land are reborn within pure buddha lands'.[104] This statement by a bodhisattva referring to his own buddha land seems odd, unless Samantabhadra was considered by the composers of the *sūtra* to be equal to a buddha. As we have seen from our examination of the *Nidāna*, Vairocana, although the supreme spiritual power, plays primarily a passive role in the narrative. His spiritual power is always present, but in

the background. The good friends are his agents who act throughout the limitless world realms. Within the metaphor of kingship, Samantabhadra symbolically represents Vairocana's chief minister. As such he possesses all of his lord's power and authority.[105] Thus Samantabhadra's statement about his 'buddha land' is our fifth and final clue that his spiritual status is on par with the buddhas.

In the beginning of the fifth and final stage of Sudhana's revelation, Samantabhadra tells our hero, 'Those beings that see the purity of my body are reborn within my body. Son of Good Family, see the purity of my body!'[106] Upon beholding the bodhisattva once more Sudhana sees all bodhisattvas, buddhas and realms, and penetrates all world realms inside the body of Samantabhadra. In every instant of thought, he enters infinite oceans of lands throughout all time within every single pore of the bodhisattva, and brings all beings to spiritual maturity. Through this experience, Sudhana attains 13 equalities (*samatā*), the most important of which are: 'equality with the ocean of vows concerning the course of conduct of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra',[107] 'equality with all *tathāgata*s',[108] 'equality in accomplishing the vision of the miracle of perfect enlightenment',[109] and 'equality with regard to the inconceivable miracle of the liberation of the bodhisattvas'.[110] Thus by entering into the body of Samantabhadra, Sudhana attains equality with him and all *tathāgata*s. This equality is none other than the acquisition of the purified Dharma body, entry into the Dharma realm and the realization of supreme enlightenment.

As a bodhisattva endowed with the power of a buddha, Samantabhadra skilfully resolves an ideological tension within the narrative between the mandates of devotionalism and the attainment of enlightenment for the sake of all beings. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, buddhas do not worship other buddhas. According to the worldview of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, as long as one remains a bodhisattva on the verge of becoming a buddha, one can continue to worship infinite buddhas, while possessing all the powers of a buddha in order to aid beings. Sudhana's entry into the bodhisattva's body indicates that he has become, like Samantabhadra, the perfect devotee and saviour. Within the metaphor of kingship, this means that Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, has achieved the highest goal attainable by someone of his station. He has become a chief minister to the King of the Dharma realm.

Spiritual power and royalty: an overview

In this chapter we have examined in detail several key passages from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in order to understand the *sūtra*'s conception of power. From our analysis, we have uncovered a spiritual hierarchy and seen its metaphorical associations representing the Buddha Vairocana as Dharma King, his advanced bodhisattva as ministers, and monks and non-Buddhists as aids. It may be helpful now to contextualize our findings with a brief overview of the conception of power in the narrative.

Throughout the bulk of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* the theme of the spiritual power of the good friends and its connection to an imagined worldly society repeatedly appear. A number of good friends are royalty, such as queen Āśā (*km*#8), the princess Maitrāyaṇī (*km*#11), king Mahāprabha (*km*#18), king Anala (*km*#19); Gopā (the wife of the Buddha), and Māyā (the mother of the Buddha).[111] Not only are Gopā and Māyā temporal royalty, but also (as I demonstrate in Chapter 6) they metaphorically represent the Queen and Queen Mother of the Buddha Vairocana.

The entire middle third of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* consists of Sudhana's meetings with ten goddesses (*kms*#31–40).[112] During a number of these encounters the goddesses narrate stories to our hero about their past lives, in which they encounter 'wheel-turning monarchs' (*cakravartin*), mythical world-rulers, whom we discover were previous incarnations of the Buddha Vairocana, and the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya. By connecting the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s spiritual elite to these mythical rulers, the character narrators (the goddesses) strengthen the metaphorical connection between buddhahood and kingship. Because the Buddha and these advanced bodhisattvas continued to spiritually develop in future lives after having been world conquerors, these stories also assert the superiority of sovereignty within the Dharma realm over worldly power. These tales indicate to their audience that good Buddhist rulers can spiritually advance to become rulers of the eternal Dharma realm.

5 Wealth

Descriptions of fabulous wealth are extremely common in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* – almost every page contains some reference to diamonds, gems, jewels, gold or other precious substances. Although descriptions of this type are not unique to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in Indian Buddhist literature, the story is distinctive for the frequency, length and self-conscious use of such descriptions.[1] Particularly valuable objects and substances are mentioned throughout the narrative. Commonly occurring in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (and several other Mahāyāna *sūtra*s) are the 'seven treasures' (*saptaratna*): gold (*suvarṇa*), silver (*rūpya*), lapis lazuli (*vaiḍūrya*), crystal (*sphaṭika*), red pearl (*lokitamukti*), emerald (*aśmigarbha*) and coral (*musāragalva*).[2] Also mentioned frequently are diamonds (*vajra*), gems (*ratna*), jewels (*maṇi*), and '*maṇi*-gems' (*maṇiratna*).[3] Another fairly common object that often features among the jewellery of the story's characters is the 'wish-fulfilling gem' (*cintāmaṇi*). *Cintāmaṇi*s (literally 'thought-gems') are magical objects that grant their owners whatever they desire (see MW: 398).[4] In the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, these are often called 'royal thought-gems' (*cintārājamaṇi*), 'royal thought-*maṇi*-gems' (*cintārāja-maṇiratna*), or even 'royal, great thought-*maṇi*-gems' (*cintārāja-mahāmaṇiratna*).[5]

Wealth appears primarily in four forms in the story: 1) fortunes owned by particular individuals; 2) treasures that magically appear; 3) natural landscapes appearing as jewelled; and 4) the transformation of mundane landscapes into bejewelled lands. Some examples of the first type are queen Āśā's adornments, the abodes of the girl Maitrāyaṇī and the laywoman Prabhūtā (Chapter 6); the wealth of king Anala and king Mahāprabha (see below); and the courtesan Vasumitrā's house and jewels (Chapter 6). Notable examples of the second type – the magical appearance of wealth – occur in the description of the conception and birth of Sudhana (see below), the monk Sāgaramegha's description of a visionary jewelled lotus (Chapter 4), the god Mahādeva's manifestation of wealth (see below), the goddess Sthāvarā's materialization of treasures (see below), and Sudhana's visions of the peaked dwellings of queen Māyā (Chapter 6) and Maitreya (Chapter 4). Examples of natural landscapes appearing as jewelled (type 3) are the pleasure parks of queen Āśā and the nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā (Chapter 6). The most dramatic example of the transformation of a mundane landscape (type 4) occurs in the opening

scene of the *sūtra* (Chapter 4) when Vairocana Buddha's *samādhi* transforms his pavilion and Jeta Grove into an infinitely vast jewelled land.

Why do such conspicuous displays of fabulous wealth occur so often in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*? Thomas Cleary in an appendix to his translation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* states:

> Jewels and precious substances symbolize enlightening teachings. . . .
>
> Canopies or parasols represent protection from afflictions, inclusion in a sphere of activity or enlightenment, compassion, breadth of mind, and universality of knowledge.
>
> Seats, thrones, and residences represent spiritual states, stability, or spheres of awareness and action.
>
> Banners and pennants stand for virtues, outward manifestations of qualities or realizations, excellences of character; . . . .
>
> Personal ornaments such as garlands and jewellery represent virtues, knowledge, skills, or cultivation of one's faculties.
>
> (Cleary 1993: 1531)

Cleary's explanation for the occurrence of these objects reflects either the views of the Chinese commentators or his own interpretation (he does not cite a source). But does it reflect the understanding of the composers and assumed Indian audience of the story? Why would wealth function metaphorically to represent elevated spiritual states? If we assume that 'metaphor is never innocent'[6] we must enquire into its use. The Pāli *sutta*s, for instance, abound with a concern for and constant discussion of, compassion, excellence of character, virtues and the cultivation of one's faculties without using material wealth to represent them. There is no evidence within the *Gaṇḍavyūha* that indicates that particular objects represent certain spiritual virtues. Nor is it necessary to interpret descriptions of gems, jewels, gold, silver etc. as purely metaphorical, whether spiritual (Cleary 1993) or visual (McMahan 2002). Rather, it seems to me that the narrator of the story was deeply concerned with 'real'[7] material treasures, and their relation to the religious life and the very nature of reality. As I hope to demonstrate in this chapter, appearances of wealth are more than mere 'glitter' – in fact, they indicate an ideological position central to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview.

A close reading of the *sūtra* reveals both an ethical and ontological aspect to wealth in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Beings who own fabulous treasures are often said to possess them as a result of their previous 'roots of merit' (*kuśulamūla*) or past good deeds (*puṇya*). Hence, wealth functions as a sign of one's ethical development. Also, the magical appearance of riches and the transformation of mundane landscapes into jewelled paradises serve to indicate spiritual power (*adhiṣṭhāna*). As a sign of both ethical development and spiritual power, the possession of wealth demonstrates one's spiritual status.

The ontological basis for such an opinion about wealth is related to the concept of the Dharma realm. As I argued in Chapter 2, buildings and bodies

often represent the *dharmadhātu*. Both Vairocana's and Maitreya's peaked dwellings are architectural presentations of the Dharma realm divided into levels (*dharmadhātu-talabheda*). These buildings are made of various precious objects. In a similar fashion, the external narrator describes king Mahāprabha's city (see below) and Siṃhavijṛmbhitā's park (Chapter 6). These buildings, parks and cities represent a higher order of reality – the supra-mundane Dharma realm. In this way, the text establishes a link between mundane wealth in the world realms (*lokadhātu*) and the infinite jewelled world beyond all economic hardship, the Dharma realm. Mundane riches are attained through one's previous good actions, leading eventually to the magical appearance of wealth and finally to the entrance into a world filled with countless treasures.

Let us now take an in-depth look at specific examples of wealth in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

Why is Sudhana called 'good wealth'?

After Mañjuśrī's conversion of the monks (Chapter 4), he journeys to the great city of Dhanyākara. While teaching the crowd gathered before him, Mañjuśrī 'gazed upon Sudhana'.[8] Here we see a shift in perspective from an external focalizer to a character-bound focalizer. Instead of looking at Mañjuśrī and following his actions, the audience is now looking at Sudhana through Mañjuśrī's eyes. The external narrator then interrupts the flow of the story with a narrative aside,[9] asking the question, 'But why is Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, called "Sudhana" [Good Wealth]?'[10] This question is followed by a long description of the miraculous events surrounding Sudhana's conception and birth:

> As soon as Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, entered the womb of his mother, within the household seven jewelled sprouts appeared from all directions evenly distributed throughout the house. There were seven great treasures underneath those jewelled sprouts from which they sprung up, penetrating the surface of the earth and arose – [great treasures] of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, ruby, emerald and coral as the seventh gem. When his limbs, finger and toes were fully formed and he was born after ten months, those seven great treasures that measured seven spans[11] in length, width and height, arose, opened, shone forth and sparkled. Five hundred vessels appeared within the house made of various gems, such as vessels of clarified butter, oil, honey and fresh butter; and every one was filled with all types of implements – such as diamond vessels filled with all perfumes, fragrant vessels filled with various garments, crystal vessels filled with various enjoyable foods and delicious drinks, jewelled vessels filled with various gems, gold vessels filled with silver powder, silver vessels filled with gold powder, silver and gold vessels filled with lapis lazuli and *maṇi*-gems, crystal vessels filled with coral, coral vessels

> filled with crystal, emerald vessels filled with rubies, ruby vessels filled with emeralds, vessels of *maṇi*-gems that give off light[12] filled with *maṇi*-gems that purify water, and vessels of *maṇi*-gems that purify water filled with *maṇi*-gems that give off light. These were the most excellent of the five hundred jewelled vessels.[13] As soon as Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, was born in the house, showers of wealth, grain, gold coins, gold and diverse gems rained down into all the treasuries, granaries and apartments. Because abundant prosperity appeared in the household at the moment of his birth, his fortune-tellers, brahmins, parents and kinsman gave Sudhana the name 'Sudhana' ['Good Wealth'].[14]

This passage is highly significant for an understanding of the narrative's view of wealth. Both the shift in focalization and the rhetorical question made in the present tense serve as narrative devices employed to indicate this passage's importance. As an 'argumentative' passage (see Chapter 3), it tells the reader something about the 'world' (Why is Sudhana called 'Good Wealth'?), and therefore possesses particular ideological force. This aside gains additional narrative significance through its weight (it is lengthy and detailed) and position (it is the first information the audience learns about the hero).

Sudhana is called 'Good Wealth' because at his conception and birth miraculous events took place involving the magical appearance of fabulous wealth including the seven great treasures. This account establishes a second connection between spirituality and wealth. Just as the Buddha's *samādhi* transforms the Jeta Grove into an infinitely vast space filled with countless treasures, so too Sudhana's conception and birth lead to the (less grand, but still impressive) magical appearance of untold priceless objects. Here, we see the emergence of a particular message quite the opposite of the Christian Bible's 'blessed are you poor'.[15] The message of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* appears to be 'blessed are you rich'.

Not only does our hero's name, 'Good Wealth', support this special connection between spirituality and wealth, but also so does his title as the 'merchant-banker's son' (*śreṣṭhi-dāraka*). The precise meaning of the Sanskrit term, *śreṣṭhin*, which I am translating as 'merchant-banker', is not entirely clear. Monier-Williams provides as a common definition: 'an eminent artisan, the head or chief of an association following the same trade or industry, the president or foreman of a guild' (MW: 1102). For the Pāli equivalent, *seṭṭhi*, the *Pāli English Dictionary* offers 'foreman of a guild, treasurer, banker, "City man", wealthy merchant' (*PED*: 722). The term, in its Sanskritic or Prakritic forms, occurs with some frequency in Indian Buddhist donative inscriptions.[16] Textual and inscriptional sources indicate that *śreṣṭhin*s were important and wealthy urban figures – the heads of guilds, bankers, or wealthy merchants. Thus to the Indian audience of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, Sudhana's epithet would have indicated that our young hero was not from a humble background. In ancient India, a son of a *śreṣṭhin* would belong to a powerful economic, urban elite with close connections to royalty.[17]

The passage that immediately follows this narrative aside, when read together with it, illustrates an important connection between Sudhana's economic and religious status. The narrator states,

> Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, had served previous conquerors, planted roots of merit, had a noble resolution and intended to follow the good friends. His body, speech, mind, actions and intentions were faultless. He was engaged in the purification of the bodhisattva's path, was approaching omniscience, and had become a vessel for the teachings of the buddhas. He had purified his mental continuum and completely perfected an unobstructed thought of enlightenment.[18]

Here we see a relatively brief enumeration of Sudhana's spiritual qualifications that follows a much longer list of the jewelled sprouts, treasures and vessels that appeared at his conception and birth. Thus through both position and weight, the narrator gives priority to an explanation of the fabulous wealth acquired by Sudhana's family over a list of Sudhana's religious qualifications. This priority indicates a fundamental ideological position in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*: wealth is an indicator of one's spiritual status.

Let us review the evidence provided in this section for this attitude towards riches. In the above-cited passages, the external narrator for the first time in the narrative makes an explicit connection between the spiritual elite (the bodhisattvas described in the *Nidāna* and represented by Mañjuśrī), and an economic elite (represented by Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son). The hero of our story is named 'Good Wealth' because of the fabulous treasures that appeared at his conception and birth; he is the son of a *śreṣṭhin*, a wealthy merchant-banker, part of an urban, economic elite; and his religious qualifications indicate he is an advanced bodhisattva. A comparison of the two passages about Sudhana's name and his spiritual attributes highlights the importance given to Sudhana's high economic status.

The grammarian and the merchant-banker

Wealth comes to the fore once again during Sudhana's meeting with Megha (*km*#5). On the advice of the monk Supratiṣṭhita, Sudhana journeys to Vajrapura in search of the grammarian Megha. Once he arrives in the city, our hero sees him 'at the cross-roads in the middle of the city, seated on a lion-throne for preaching the Dharma, illuminating a religious discourse to 10,000 beings called "The Array Turning Syllables on a Wheel" '.[19] After Sudhana performs his usual 'Approach' and 'Question' formulas, a dramatic inversion takes place:

> Then Megha, the grammarian, out of reverence for the bodhisattva, got up from that lion-throne, descended, completely prostrated himself before Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, and covered him with a multitude

> of all different types of flowers. He also bestrewed upon him priceless gems and the best sandalwood powder; and covered him with many hundreds of thousands of garments brightly dyed with various bright colours. Covering and bestrewing him with many beautiful, pleasant, fragrant flowers of various colours and worshipping, honouring, praising and demonstrating his esteem for him with various other types of worship, he said this to Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son: 'It is very good, Son of Good Family, that the thought for supreme, perfect enlightenment has arisen in you in such a manner'.[20]

The significance of this passage is manifold. Although Megha is a *kalyāṇamitra*, he descends from his throne and worships Sudhana with priceless gifts. This inversion of devotional activity immediately after Sudhana's visits to the three monk *kalyāṇamitra*s (see Chapter 4) highlights the religious authority of the *bhikṣu*s. When Sudhana meets Meghaśrī, Sāgaramegha and Supratiṣṭhita, he bows down and worships them; but as monks, these three do not bow down and worship Sudhana, a lay bodhisattva. Megha is the first lay *kalyāṇamitra* who Sudhana encounters. Although the grammarian is teaching to a large crowd of people, he worships the merchant-banker's son. The message here appears to be that lay bodhisattvas should pay respect to monks or other lay bodhisattvas, but monastic bodhisattvas do not worship lay bodhisattvas. In this manner, the external narrator seems to assert the authority of monastics over lay teachers. Additionally, Megha's reference to Sudhana as a bodhisattva enhances the religious status of our hero. Moreover, by showering flowers, gems and garments upon him, Megha indicates that Sudhana deserves priceless treasures, while simultaneously highlighting his own wealth. Once again, we see an explicit connection between wealth and spiritual status.

In Megha's 'Go and Ask' formula, he tells Sudhana to see Muktaka (*km*#6), the merchant-banker, in the city Vanavāsin. The external narrator informs us that our hero arrives at Vanavāsin 'gradually after twelve years'.[21] Here we see the greatest divergence so far between the time of the fabula and the time of the story. This change in rhythm, which Bal refers to as a 'summary' (see Chapter 3), has two primary effects. First, it informs us of Sudhana's intense devotion to the path by demonstrating his resolve to find Muktaka even after 12 years. Second, it indicates that the hero's spiritual abilities cited in the preceding portion of text were cultivated during the intervening years. The audience may assume that Sudhana is now older and wiser, and therefore, more accomplished in his bodhisattva training.

As if to demonstrate this advancement, Sudhana provides Muktaka with an extended version of the 'Question' formula, wherein he explains in detail his desire to attain supreme, perfect enlightenment (V 63.21–64.19). Following this passage the story reads:

> Then Muktaka, the merchant-banker, at that time attained an entrance into a trance of the bodhisattvas that was the foremost entrance into the infinitely revolving mystic verse called 'Uniting All Buddha Lands'

> through employing the strength of his previous roots of merit, through the power of the *tathāgata*, and through the princely Mañjuśrī's focusing of attention and his production of a light of knowledge.[22]

We find woven into this passage a succinct account of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conception of spiritual power. Muktaka's *samādhi* is achieved through three sources: the strength of the merchant-banker's own previous roots of merit (*kuśulamūla*), the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the Buddha and the aid of Mañjuśrī. In this way, the external narrator emphasizes the Buddha as the ultimate source of enlightened activity and identifies Mañjuśrī as a primary helper, while simultaneously recognizing Muktaka's own spiritual contribution.[23] As a result of his *samādhi*, Muktaka's body becomes completely pure and countless buddhas in all directions become visible within it (V 64.23–24). The activities and realms of these buddhas are then described in detail and we learn that Muktaka has accomplished a liberation of the *tathāgata*s called 'Unobstructed Array'.[24]

Muktaka is one of six *kalyāṇamitra*s who belong to the merchant-banker class and teach Sudhana, himself a *śreṣṭhin*'s son.[25] The inclusion of characters from this wealthy urban social stratum is unlikely to be accidental. About the connection between Buddhism and merchant-bankers, Gokhale (1977: 127–8) writes:

> It is in the Buddhist texts that the special relationship between Buddhism and the mercantile class in general and the *seṭṭhi* in particular is best seen. Even before he formally inaugurated the Saṃgha for monks and nuns the Buddha's first converts were laymen, the two merchants named Tapussa and Bhallika. In the Jātaka stories whenever the Bodhisattva is represented as being born a human being, and in cases where social rank or caste is definitely stated, he is shown as being born in families associated with commerce as many as 67 times, next in number only to the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya caste. . . . The merchant very frequently figures in the votive inscriptions from Bharhut, Sanchi, Karle, Bhaja, Mahad, Nasik, Pitalkhora and Ajanta. That the merchant community maintained a special relationship with the heterodoxies, Buddhism and Jainism, is an obvious feature of their history.

In Chapter 7, I further discuss this connection between monastics and merchants in the Middle Period of Indian Buddhism. Given this important economic relationship, it is not unlikely that *śreṣṭhin*s constituted important members of our narrator's target audience.

The two kings

The most dramatic and obvious association between wealth and religious status occurs during Sudhana's encounters with the kings Anala (*km*#18) and Mahāprabha (*km*#19). These visits are brief,[26] but crucial for an understanding

of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s view of wealth. Ideas elsewhere hinted at in the narrative are here rendered explicit. Therefore, we may view these two meetings as contextualizing all other descriptions of wealth in the story.

Our narrator tells us that after a long search Sudhana approaches the city Tāladhvaja and asks, 'Where is the king Anala?'[27] The people of Tāladhvaja inform our hero that the king is seated upon a lion throne carrying out the duties of a king for the good of the city. These duties include: punishing criminals, promoting the good, comforting the wretched, stopping misdeeds and delivering his people from false views (V 120.10–16).

When Sudhana approaches Anala, he sees a wondrous sight:

> . . . king Anala seated on a great jewelled lion throne brilliant with the diamond jewels of Nārāyaṇa, with legs of gems [giving off] various innumerable lights and sounds, with beautiful spherical ornaments well constructed out of many gems, well crafted with cowry shells on a net of threads of gold, illuminated with many lamps of *maṇi*-gems, containing lotuses made of *maṇi*-gems and bewitching royal jewels, well arranged with the raiment of many celestial gems, with ornaments made fragrant with various celestial perfumes, illuminated with a hundred thousand jewelled banners and parasols mounted on it, adorned with a hundred thousand elevated flags made of gems, illuminated by bundles of variegated jewelled flower garlands hanging down, and cover with manifold celestial jewelled canopies . . .[28]

Moreover, the king wears a crown of wish-fulfilling jewels, sapphire earrings, a breastplate and bracelets made from the finest gems etc., and he is young, thin and extremely handsome (V 120.22–121.6). Here we witness a clear example of the premium the story places on wealth, youth, slimness and masculine beauty. However, following this dazzling vision of Anala on his jewelled throne, the scene takes a dramatic and terrifying turn. Sudhana sees that the king is surrounded by 10,000 executioners (*kāraṇāpuruṣa*) resembling the guardians of hell (*narakapāla*) armed with swords, axes, spears, lances, pikes and various other weapons, carrying out horrific punishments upon criminals. Our hero witnesses the armed men cutting off their victims' hands, feet, ears, noses, arms, legs and heads, even burning them alive, or completely dismembering them. The bodies are heaped upon each other, a torrent of blood flows from them, and the screams of those who are mutilated and killed are as terrifying as the cries of the tortured in the great Naraka hell (V 121.6–26).

After witnessing this horrific slaughter, Sudhana thinks:

> I have set out toward supreme, perfect enlightenment with the welfare and happiness of all beings as my aim. Entirely devoted to striving after the course of conduct of a bodhisattva, I ask good friends what good is to be done by a bodhisattva, and what evil is to be avoided. But this

> king Anala is deprived of the good Dharma, a doer of tremendously wicked deeds, a desirer of sin, one practiced at the injury of other beings' lives, entirely devoted to wounding other beings, indifferent to other beings, and is striving for descent into the evil destinies. How then am I to hear the course of conduct of a bodhisattva from him?'[29]

In this passage Sudhana questions the authority of a good friend for the second and final time in the narrative (see Chapter 4). While our hero is engaged in this thought, divinities appear on a platform in the sky above him and say, 'Son of Good Family, do you not remember the instruction of the good friend, the sage Jayoṣmāyatana?'[30] A direct reference to a previous section of the text is rare in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and its use here serves to connect Sudhana's questioning of Jayoṣmāyatana to his doubting of Anala. As in his encounter with the brahmin, Sudhana's hesitation about the king is immediately followed by the appearance of divinities that reassure him and assert the authority of the good friends. When Sudhana says that he remembers the instructions of Jayoṣmāyatana, the divinities tell him:

> Son of Good Family, you must not give rise to doubt concerning the instructions of the good friends. The good friends rightly guide [beings]; they do not lead them astray. For, Son of Good Family, the knowledge of the conduct of bodhisattvas' skilful means is inconceivable.[31]

This is the clearest statement in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* on the authority of the good friends – it is absolute and should not be questioned. When Jayoṣmāyatana tells Sudhana to jump into the fire, after much reassurance, he jumps. This is followed by a verse about how a bodhisattva should not doubt his teachers (see Chapter 4). When Sudhana sees Anala surrounded by executioners, he again has misgivings, but is once more instructed not to question. On this occasion, the divinities invoke the Mahāyāna notion of skilful means (*upāya-kauśalya*).[32] Because the skilful means of bodhisattvas is inconceivable, Sudhana should not question the good friends. Unquestioned obedience to the *kalyāṇamitra*s is required because one only attains omniscience through serving and worshipping the good friends (see Chapter 2). The devotional path of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* demands nothing less of the devotee than complete obedience to the instructions of the *kalyāṇamitra*s.[33]

Once our hero performs his 'Approach' and 'Question' formulas to the king, Anala steps down from his throne, takes Sudhana by the hand and leads him to his palace (V 122.16–17). When they arrive, Anala says to the merchant-banker's son, 'Look at the enjoyments of my house'.[34] What follows is a description of fabulous wealth even more dazzling than the king's throne. For example, Anala's palace is adorned with many hundreds of thousands of jewelled towers, it gives off rays of light that shine from nets illuminated by an inconceivable number of gems, and raised above it fly lion banners made of rubies

and *maṇi*-gems. Moreover, within the palace walls live a hundred million exceedingly beautiful women (V 122.19–27).

Once Sudhana has seen the priceless riches of Anala, the king says, 'What do you think, Son of Good Family, would such a karmic result arise for evil-doers; or the acquisition of such a body [as mine], such followers, such great enjoyments or such great power and control?'[35] Sudhana replies, 'Indeed, it would not, Noble One'.[36] This passage features the most definitive statement in the narrative about the relationship between wealth and religious status. The belief that wealth is the direct result of past good actions is so strongly maintained by the external narrator and the assumed target audience that its possession by Anala functions by itself as proof that he is not a wicked man. The Buddha's transformation of the Jeta Grove, Sudhana's name 'Good Wealth', and the visionary experiences of inconceivable riches that occur throughout the *sūtra* must be seen in this context. Wealth is proof of one's past good actions. And by extension, the greater one's wealth, the greater one's past good deeds.

After demonstrating to Sudhana that he is not a villain, king Anala tells our hero that he has attained a liberation known as 'Gone to Illusion' (*māyāgata*). He uses this liberation as a means of disciplining the unruly citizens of Tāladhvaja by generating the magical display that executioners are killing criminals (V 122.31–123.12). In fact, no one has ever really been killed. The king then reassures our hero stating, 'Son of Good Family, I do no harm to any being with my body, speech or mind. I would [rather] wander suffering as a future inhabitant of the Avīci Hell'.[37] King Anala only appears to be punishing his citizens using the special tactics (*upāya*) of a bodhisattva's powers of illusion! Here we see the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s resolution of the tension that has existed throughout Buddhist history between the dictates of righteous kingship through violent punishment and the virtue of non-violence.[38]

The account of Sudhana's visit with king Anala provides us with a number of valuable keys to interpret the themes of wealth and power. The character of Anala embodies three types of power: economic, political, and spiritual. Moreover, the king's wealth is proof of his goodness and that his religious authority, like his worldly authority, is absolute. These ideas about wealth and authority, so clearly expressed here, operate throughout the entire story.

We may juxtapose this encounter with Sudhana's next one. When our hero arrives at the great city of Suprabha in search of king Mahāprabha (*km*#19), he sees that the city is made of the seven precious substances: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, red pearl, emerald, coral (V 124.17–19). Even, the city's streets, mansions, palaces and towers are constructed out of the precious substances and other countless diamonds, gems and jewels. The king's palace is described in equally exalted terms (V 125.18–26).

After passages that contain some of the most elaborate descriptions of unimaginable wealth in the story, the external narrator reveals Sudhana's attitude towards these countless riches:

> Then Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, his mind not pleased with the jewelled moats, not being astonished by the jewelled walls, not being charmed by the rows of jewelled palm trees, not enjoying the sound of the nets of jewelled bells, his mind not attached to the sweet sounds of the concert of celestial voices, not concentrated on the enjoyments of the various and manifold jewelled palaces and peaked dwellings, delighted in the pleasures of the Dharma groves among happy groups of men and women. With his mind free from the pleasures of form, sound, smell, taste and touch, completely occupied with the profound meditation upon the Dharma, he gradually made his way to the crossroads of the city constantly asking about the good friend to beings as they approached.[39]

Because he is so concerned with finding the good friend, our hero is not distracted by the bejewelled city. By describing our hero's mental state, our external narrator appears to prescribe Sudhana's attitude to his target audience. Even though wealth functions as a sign of spiritual status, the bodhisattva's correct attitude toward it is one of disinterest. In fact, this passage reads much like a warning: 'do not be attached to material wealth'. Sudhana, although from a wealthy family, is not interested in riches or seduced by the wondrous displays of them. The wealth of the *kalyāṇamitra*s is not something they crave after or are attached to. Rather, as we will see in Sudhana's encounter with Prabhūtā (see Chapter 6), the correct attitude towards fabulous treasures is generosity.[40] Wealth, if approached correctly, is not an obstacle towards spiritual development, but the natural result of past good actions. It should be used to practice generosity, and thereby further one on the path to enlightenment. In light of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s probable monastic origin and affluent target audience (see Chapter 7), this emphasis on wealth as a sign of religious status, and a generous attitude toward it make sense. These views would clearly serve the best interests of the story's monastic authors.

Next in our story, the narrator relates the encounter between Sudhana and Mahāprabha. The king sits on a jewelled throne in the middle of city, possesses the ideal human form (the 32 marks of a great man) and is surrounded by inconceivable amounts of wealth (V 126.4–24). After describing, in some detail, his righteous rule and how he develops his subjects spiritually, the king comments on the nature of his city:

> Moreover, Son of Good Family, these beings who live within this great city, Suprabha, all of them are bodhisattvas advanced in the Mahāyāna. This great city, Suprabha, appears to them according to the purity of their mental dispositions; namely for some it appears limited, for others, expansive; for some its surface appears to be clay, for others, bestrewn with *maṇi*-gems and lapis lazuli; for some its walls appear to be clay, for others scattered on the great walls are unsurpassed banners of cloth, garments and *maṇi*-gems; for some it appears uneven with scattered gravel

> and sand, and has many chasms and cliffs; for others it is beautiful with innumerable jewelled houses, mansions, palaces, peaked dwellings, buildings, surfaces, turrets, windows, nets, half moons, lions and cages of manifold gems. Even for those dwelling outside of the city, whose mental dispositions are purified, whose roots of merit have been made, who have respectfully attended many buddhas, who are directed toward omniscience and who have recourse to omniscience, it appears as made of gems.[41]

This passage establishes a connection between wealth and religious attainment on the ontological level. Advanced bodhisattvas, whose mental dispositions are purified (*śuddhāśaya*), who have developed the necessary roots of merit (*kuśalamūla*), who have attended many buddhas and who have set out to attain omniscience, perceive a magical, jewelled city. Those who lack such spiritual qualifications experience only a city of clay, gravel and sand, uneven with cliffs and chasms. The king's statement about the nature of his city also demonstrates certain ontological presuppositions fundamental to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s worldview. As discussed in Chapter 2, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* divides reality into two primary components: the infinite world realms (*lokadhātu*) and the Dharma realm (*dharmadhātu*). The Dharma realm also has two basic aspects: divided into levels (*dharmadhātu-talabheda*) and undivided (*asambhinna-dharmadhātu*). Mahāprabha's description of his city demonstrates the difference between those who experience only the city in the Sahā world realm and those that see it as part of the Dharma realm divided into levels. In other words, in the imagined world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* the type of city one witnesses is based on where one is situated within the spiritual hierarchy. In this description, the jewelled city represents a higher order or reality. Sudhana's experience of the city within the Dharma realm therefore functions as evidence of our hero's advanced spiritual status.

The god and goddess who give

Descriptions of countless treasures appear on almost every page of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, but two more of Sudhana's encounters are particularly worth mentioning with regard to the theme of wealth. Like the grammarian Megha (*km*#5) early in the story, the god Mahādeva (*km*#30) and the earth goddess Sthāvarā (*km*#31) give Sudhana priceless treasures.

After two brief encounters with the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (*km*#28) and Ananyagāmin (*km*#29), Sudhana journeys to the city of Dvāravatī in search of the god Mahādeva (*km*#30). When our hero finds him at the crossroads of the city, the god stretches out his four hands, brings water from the four directions, and washes his face. Following his ablutions, he showers Sudhana with golden flowers and tells our hero that he has attained the liberation 'Net of Clouds' (*meghajāla*). When Sudhana enquires about the range of this liberation, Mahādeva manifests before him a mountain of gold,

heaps of silver, crystal, coral, emeralds, gems and other countless treasures, including 'innumerable, hundreds of thousands of *koṭī*s of girls'.[42] The god then says,

> Son of Good Family, take from these and give gifts, perform good actions, worship the *tathāgata*s; protect beings through gifts that are for protection, urge them with regard to the perfection of abandoning, and teach the world through giving! Demonstrate abandonment that is difficult to perform! Son of Good Family, just as I produce this means of helping you, so do I generate a mental continuity influenced by abandoning for [the sake of] immeasurable beings whose consciousness is unobstructed for giving. Having planted roots of merit [in them] with regard to the Buddha, Dharma, Saṃgha, bodhisattvas and good friends, I incite them to supreme, perfect enlightenment.[43]

Since Mahādeva, 'the great god', is a title often associated with Śiva (see MW: 796), his offering treasures to a bodhisattva suggests another attempt by the narrator to incorporate non-Buddhist religiosity into the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s Mahāyānist vision of the spiritual path (see Chapter 4). Mahādeva's honouring of Sudhana with vast amounts of wealth, therefore, may represent a Buddhist polemic against a contemporary Śaivite movement.

Having made his injunction to Sudhana, Mahādeva directs our hero to seek out the earth goddess Sthāvarā (*km*#31) at the site of the Buddha's enlightenment in Magadha. When Sudhana arrives at the site of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*), he discovers Sthāvarā accompanied by a million other earth goddesses (V 169.1–2). The goddesses praise our hero, predict his enlightenment, and cause numerous miraculous events. Following this Sthāvarā says, 'Welcome to you, Son of Good Family! This is the spot of earth where you stood and planted roots of merit that I have witnessed. Do you wish to see that one spot with its fruits come to maturation'?[44] Sudhana replies, 'I wish it, Noble One'.[45] The goddess then strikes the earth with the soles of her feet, making it appear adorned with innumerable *koṭī*s of containers filled with *maṇi*-gems, and says,

> Son of Good Family, these hundreds of thousands of *niyuta*s of *koṭī*s of containers of *maṇi*-gems are your companions, your servants, to be used as you wish, produced as a result of your good actions, and protected by the strength of your good actions. Take from them and do that which should be done![46]

These two acts of giving by the god and goddess serve a dual function within the narrative: first, they demonstrate the importance of generosity; second, they highlight once more the idea that wealth is a sign of one's past good actions. Both sections are extremely short, containing very little content outside the usual formulas.[47] But the position of these encounters is significant:

Mahādeva is the last *kalyāṇamitra* Sudhana visits in the southern region (*dakṣiṇāpatha*) before he is directed to go to the site of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*) in the region of Magadha (*magadhaviṣaya*). In this way, our hero's movement from the god to the goddess marks a transition in geographical terms. The probable non-Buddhist origins of Mahādeva, his gift to Sudhana and his position as the final good friend of the southern region, all add significance to this section. Moreover, Mahādeva's statements to Sudhana exemplify how wealth should be used to advance on the spiritual path. Rather than being a hindrance to religious development, riches function as a means to perform acts of giving (*dāna*) and abandoning (*tyāga*). These actions generate merit and develop a detachment to worldly things. Once enough merit is generated, one becomes established in the Mahāyāna. This section, therefore, demonstrates the two attitudes toward wealth extolled in the narrative: generosity and detachment.

When the earth goddess strikes the ground, she shows Sudhana the results of his previous roots of merit. This event serves to highlight the role of riches as a sign of spiritual status. Next, she tells him to take the treasures and do what should be done. The assumption behind this statement is that Sudhana, as an advanced bodhisattva, would use the wealth appropriately for acts of generosity. We do not know whether Sudhana takes the treasures offered to him, nor is there any comment from our hero about these gifts. His silence appears to demonstrate the young bodhisattva's detachment towards wealth. Sudhana's introduction to the sacred space of the *bodhimaṇḍa* is also the last occurrence of such an act of giving from a good friend to our hero. In this way, both the role of wealth as a sign of religious status and the correct attitudes toward it are reinforced before the focus of the narrative shifts to Sudhana's visits to the sacred places of Buddhism (see the following chapter).

The centrality of wealth in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*

From our examination of the role of wealth in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we see that merit functions as a type of 'spiritual credit' that can be exchanged for treasures. This wealth, in turn, may be given away for more merit. As the first perfection (*paramitā*) of a bodhisattva, giving (*dāna*) generates merit for the giver and cultivates detachment. Therefore, if wealth is used skilfully, the good Buddhist may exchange it for 'karmic credit' (merit) on the path to enlightenment. Here we witness what Walsh (2007: 363) refers to as 'one of the wonderful ironies of Buddhism. In renouncing wealth through a series of metaphysical positions, one result is the accumulation of material wealth in abundance.' This ideology is a central theme in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* – the various manifestations of wealth in the narrative are more than mere 'glitter'; these descriptions are meant to indicate the ethical and ontological connections between material affluence and the religious life. As one progresses on the bodhisattva's path, one's store of merit increases and one's reality

transforms, leading to treasures magically appearing, and buildings, landscapes and entire cities transforming into jewelled paradises. The ultimate goal of the religious quest is to enter the Dharma realm, a world beyond all economic hardship, filled with countless treasures.

From our investigations thus far we have uncovered ideological links between political power and spiritual power (i.e. Buddha as Dharma King and the significant number of royal good friends), and between wealth and spiritual status. The themes of power and wealth are also connected to the narrative's conception of gender and the status of women. This association is the focus of the next chapter.

6 Women

As Diana Paul has noted in *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahāyāna Tradition* (1985), there is a wide range of attitudes expressed towards women in Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature. One of the more positive literary images of a woman is found in the *Śrīmālādevī-siṃhanāda-sūtra*, wherein we find queen Śrīmālā portrayed as a Buddhist heroine and powerful Dharma teacher.[1] However, I would suggest that, taken as a whole, there is an even more affirmative depiction of Buddhist women found in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Although the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is unquestionably an androcentric text (the hero, the most important good friends, and all buddhas and bodhisattvas mentioned by this title are gendered male), women characters appear to play a more significant and positive role in this *sūtra* than any other Mahāyāna text. Of Sudhana's 53 encounters, 21 are with female friends, which occupy approximately 51 per cent of the total text. Sudhana's visit to Gopā, the wife of the Buddha, is the second-longest section (only the Maitreya section is longer) and constitutes 8.9 per cent of the story. Sudhana's meetings with ten goddesses constitute about 30 per cent of the entire narrative. Moreover, the eight night goddesses relate a number of embedded narratives in the form of *avadāna*s about their past lives to our hero, which provide further information about the *sūtra*'s construction of gender.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, unlike the early Buddhist hagiographies and many Mahāyāna sources, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* possesses quite a positive attitude toward female beauty. Here we witness a clear example of the dominance of the Buddhist 'physiomoral' discourse over the 'ascetic discourse' (Mrozik 2007). In fact (also as mentioned in Chapter 2), there is no 'ascetic discourse' present in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* at all. Like wealth, physical beauty is the result of one's past good actions, and has both an ethical and ontological dimension. Although the highest ideal of physical perfection is portrayed as the male body possessing the 32 characteristics (*lakṣāṇa*) of the 'great man' (*mahāpuruṣa*), female beauty also plays a positive role and is used by a number of female friends as a means (*upāya*) to aid beings on the spiritual path. Paradoxically, this beauty does not inspire passion (*rāga*) in those that witness it, but dispassion (*virāga*). The ontological rationale for this attitude is located in the story's conception of the 'form body' (*rūpakāya*) and 'Dharma body'

(*dharmakāya*). The female good friends are form body manifestations of the enlightened activity of the Dharma body. Their physical beauty is the result of past good actions and serves as a tool to develop beings. Five of the female good friends are even said to possess the Dharma body.[2] This suggests the possibility of female participation at the highest level of enlightenment.[3]

The content of Sudhana's encounters with the female good friends reveals a number of 'ideal types'. Several female *kalyāṇamitra*s embody the ideal Buddhist laywoman, nun, courtesan, wife, mother etc. Particularly significant is the large percentage of female characters that are wealthy and/or of royal blood (queens or princesses). These characters' wealth and royal background indicate a high status within the *sūtra*'s imagined worldly hierarchy. Because wealth also functions in the story as a sign of spiritual status, its possession by a number of female characters suggests that they were also thought to enjoy a high spiritual rank as well. Moreover, the female good friends' royal status within the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s conceptualized temporal domain alludes to a possible target audience that included royal female patrons of Indian Buddhism (see Chapter 7).

Let us now investigate in detail the role of the female good friends in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

Queen Āśā

Wilson writes about queen Āśā that she 'is the embodiment of patience (*kṣānti*). As a socially ideal type in this world, she would be the Indian mother whose celestial prototype is the Goddess Earth (Bhū)' (Paul 1985: 138). However, there is no textual evidence in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to support this view. Nevertheless, as queen and laywoman, Āśā (*km*#8) is both the first royalty and the first female *kalyāṇamitra* visited by Sudhana. Moreover, as one of the longer sections of the *sūtra* (1.8 per cent of the total text) this encounter warrants our close investigation.

During Sudhana's meeting with queen Āśā we find one of the most elaborate descriptions of wealth in the story. When Sudhana arrives in the country of Samudravetālin, he enters a park and he sees that all of the objects in it are made of gems. Also within the park there are millions of mansions 'arrayed with turrets adorned with all types of great *maṇi*-gems',[4] peaked dwellings 'furnished with gold peaks and covered in gold',[5] palaces 'with interiors adorned with solar *maṇi*-gems',[6] lotus pools 'made from all types of gems',[7] etc. In the middle of the park is a palace called 'Manifold Banners' (*vicitradhvaja*) 'possessing a floor of gems from the depth of the ocean, adorned with pillars of lapis lazuli and *maṇi*-gems, with elevated peaks of gold',[8] and so forth. Next, queen Āśā's appearance is elaborated:

> Āśā, the laywoman, was seated on a very beautiful throne with a golden interior, and was adorned in a net of pearls from the depths of the ocean. She was wearing a crown, her arms were arrayed with armbands and

> bracelets of gold surpassing those of the gods, and her arms were brilliant with *maṇi*-gems emitting a multitude of glorious light rays. Her ear-rings were pendulous jewels of pure, very dark blue; her head was completely adorned with a net of great gems; a row of ornaments upon her ears were lion-pearl *maṇi*-gems,[9] and around her throat was a necklace of wish-fulfilling *maṇi*-gems. Her body blazed with a light from a net of all types of gems that completely covered her, and a multitude of a hundred thousand *niyuta*s of *koṭī*s of beings were bowed down before her.[10]

After this description, we learn that whoever comes to see Āśā becomes immediately cured of all physical and mental affliction (V 80.25–81.9). Following Sudhana's performance of his 'Approach' and 'Question' formulas, the queen says:

> Son of Good Family, I have attained the liberation of the bodhisattvas, 'Banner of Tranquillity Without Sorrow'. Son of Good Family, it is efficacious to see, hear, worship, dwell with, and remember me. Son of Good Family, I do not appear through manifesting a vision of myself to beings who have not planted the roots of merit, who have not embraced the good friends, and who are not focused on the supreme, perfectly enlightened buddhas. Son of Good Family, as soon as beings see me they become irreversible from [the path to] supreme, perfect enlightenment.[11]

This passage reinforces the conception (first introduced in the *Nidāna*) that only the spiritual elite (buddhas and bodhisattvas) has access to certain visionary experiences. Queen Āśā, her park, mansions, palaces and peaked dwellings are not visible to those who have not developed the necessary roots of merit (*kuśalamūla*), who have not embraced the good friends and who are not focused on the supreme, perfectly enlightened buddhas. But for those who have done these things, the mere sight of Āśā cures them of their afflictions and renders them incapable of back-sliding on the path to enlightenment. Moreover, since Āśā tells Sudhana that only irreversible bodhisattvas can see her, the implication is that he is both spiritually advanced enough to witness such a miraculous display, and that he is now irreversible in his progress towards enlightenment.

After queen Āśā finishes explaining her liberation to Sudhana, he asks her, 'Noble One, how long ago did you produce the thought [to attain] supreme, perfect enlightenment?'[12] This question introduces a brief character-bound embedded narrative by the queen wherein she tells Sudhana about a number of past lives in which she remembers serving, honouring and worshipping previous buddhas (V 81.29–82.9). Āśā's narrative is in the first person,[13] and constitutes little more than a list of *tathāgata*'s names. However, Sudhana's same question later in the narrative causes the good friends to respond with lengthy *avadāna*s. These embedded narratives are especially prominent

during Sudhana's encounters with the night goddesses and often concern female royalty (see below).

When we examine the narrative structure of this section, we witness that the sequence used to introduce the queen parallels Sudhana's introduction. For both, the external narrator first describes their fabulous wealth, and then their spiritual attainment. This temporal ordering strengthens the association between wealth and spiritual power. Also, the gender and social status of Āśā are significant. As female royalty she represents a particularly wealthy and powerful segment of the *sūtra*'s imagined mundane society. The fact that Āśā is only visible to advanced bodhisattvas demonstrates that the queen possesses an elevated status within the spiritual society of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Thus, the figure of Āśā combines political, economic and spiritual power in one character.

Women with looks and money

The second, third and fourth female *kalyāṇamitra*s are Maitrāyaṇī (*km*#11), Prabhūtā (*km*#14) and Acalā (*km*#20). These characters possess four traits worthy of mention: 1) The first two friends are endowed with inconceivable wealth; 2) all three are described as physically attractive; 3) Maitrāyaṇī and Acalā embody the Buddhist virtues of generosity and chastity; and 4) Maitrāyaṇī and Acalā are both connected to royalty.

While in the city Siṃhavijṛmbhita, Sudhana learns that the princess Maitrāyaṇī[14] is teaching the Dharma on the top of the palace of king Siṃhaketu. Sudhana enters the palace and sees that it is made of lapis lazuli, diamonds, gold and countless gems and jewels (V 96.18–21). The beautiful princess is described as having 'very dark eyes, long, very dark hair and skin the colour of gold'.[15] Following Sudhana's 'Question' formula, Maitrāyaṇī tells our hero to look at her abode. Focalization shifts as Sudhana sees reflected in each and every object the *tathāgata*s within the *dharmadhātu* along with the key moments in their spiritual careers: their initial thought of enlightenment, the range of their course of conduct and vows, the arrays of their going forth to homelessness, the miracles of their enlightenment, their setting in motion the wheel of Dharma and their final extinctions (V 96.27–31).[16]

Three encounters later, when Sudhana arrives at the city Samudrapratiṣṭhāna, he finds Prabhūtā's house covered with innumerable gems.[17] The narrator explains that this building 'came into existence as the result of [Prabhūtā's] inconceivable meritorious actions'.[18] When Sudhana enters, he discovers the laywoman sitting on a jewelled throne. Focalization shifts as the appearance of Prabhūta is described:

> [Sudhana] saw seated on a jewelled seat the laywoman Prabhūtā, young, thin, fresh, appearing in her first youthfulness, beautiful, pleasant, good looking, endowed with a richness of colour that was extremely bright, her long hair loose, her body without ornaments, and wearing pure white

> garments. Except for buddhas and bodhisattvas, no being enters that house who she does not overcome with her body, mastery of mind, splendour, colour or radiance. Whatever beings see the laywoman Prabhūtā, whether gods or humans, all perceive her as a teacher.[19]

The young and beautiful Prabhūtā tells our hero that she has attained a liberation of the bodhisattvas that allows her to serve food to countless beings from a single vessel (V 106.11 ff.).

Six encounters later, Sudhana reaches the city of Sthirā in search of the good friend Acalā. People tell him that Acalā lives at home with her parents and relatives, where she is teaching the Dharma to a gathered crowd.[20] Approaching the house, our hero sees a golden light coming from the building, which upon contact causes him to enter 500 *samādhi*s (V 132.6–9). Next, our narrator describes Acalā as the most beautiful being in the world. Only buddhas and bodhisattvas who have obtained the stage of 'anointing' (*abhiṣeka*) surpass her in form, complexion, proportions, aura etc. (V 132.16 ff.).[21] This is followed by the statement that,

> There is not a being within the collection of beings found in the world, with its ten directions, who is able to look at Acalā, the laywoman, with a mind of lust. There is not a being within the collection of beings found in the world with its ten directions whose mental afflictions would not end immediately upon beholding Acalā, the laywomen.[22]

When Sudhana asks Acalā about the range (*viṣaya*) of her attainment, narration shifts from the external to character-bound as the laywoman tells our hero an embedded narrative about one of her past lives as the daughter of a king named Vidyuddatta (V 133.30–134.1). One night, when everyone was asleep, she had a vision of the buddha of that age in the sky. When this buddha spoke to her, he inspired her to seek omniscience. In the midst of listing her various spiritual attainments that resulted from this visionary experience, Acalā says:

> Son of Good Family, beginning from that time, I do not recall the arising of a thought of enjoying sexual desires even for as many eons as atoms in the continent of Jambudvīpa – who could speak of having a thought of enjoying sexual intercourse?[23]

In sum, these three meetings detail for the first time a connection among female beauty, wealth and power. Long dark hair, dark eyes and golden skin make Maitrāyaṇī beautiful. Prabhutā's youth, slimness, long rich hair and bright colour make her irresistible to all but buddhas and bodhisattvas. Rather than distracting beings from the spiritual path, her good looks attract their attention in a positive way, so that all who see her consider her a teacher. Similarly, Acalā's appearance does not inspire lust, but immediately relieves

those that see her of all mental afflictions. In other words, these women's beauty is a skilful means (*upāya-kauśalya*) that aids beings in their search for enlightenment. Moreover, the description of Prabhūtā's bejewelled house and the fact that it is the result of her 'inconceivable meritorious action' demonstrate, yet again, that wealth functions as a sign of religious status. Her feeding of countless beings by means of her magic vessel indicates that Prabhūtā embodies the perfect generosity of a Buddhist laywoman. Acalā represents both the ideal of female beauty and perfect chastity. Since the moment eons ago when she first saw the buddha of that age, she has not even had a thought of sexual indulgence. The *avadāna* about her past life as a princess once again strengthens the association between female royalty and the Buddhist path.

The nun and the courtesan

The fifth and sixth female friends Sudhana meets are the nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā (*km*#25) and the courtesan[24] Vasumitrā (*km*#26). The nun and courtesan represent opposites – one is celibate, the other makes a living through sex. But both represent a category of 'other' to the traditional female roles of wife, mother and daughter.[25] Their depictions in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* demonstrate idealized visions of the perfect Buddhist nun and courtesan. Although these encounters are short,[26] they feature three aspects that warrant our attention. First, Siṃhavijṛmbhitā is a particularly powerful Dharma teacher. Second, the inhabitants of Vasumitrā's city express an attitude towards her that reveals important information about the nature of the spiritual hierarchy of *kalyāṇamitra*s in relation to the *sūtra*'s conceived mundane world. Third, Vasumitrā's use of her good looks is highly suggestive of proto-Tantric elements within the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In short, these two sections further develop the notion of 'woman' and the attributes of power, beauty and wealth.

When Sudhana arrives in the city of Kaliṅgavana in search of Siṃhavijṛmbhitā, the citizens tell our hero that the nun dwells in the great park, Sūryaprabha (V 148.1–8). Characteristically, the park is described as adorned with manifold trees made of countless jewels. Beneath each tree is a lion throne (*siṃhāsana*) made of different gems, jewels, gold, lapis lazuli etc., covered with parasols, perfumed with incense and so forth. Innumerable gems cover the ground and thousands of jewelled towers are everywhere. Sudhana is able to see such a miraculous park 'by receiving the strength and might of the great inconceivable psychic powers (*ṛddhi*) of the nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā'.[27] The external narrator then provides an argumentative passage about the nature of the park:

> Then Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, looking all around saw in this way these arrays of the great park, gathered together through infinite, inconceivable good qualities, completely perfected as the result of the bodhisattva's actions, produced through vast transcendental roots of merit,

> arisen as the natural result of worshipping and waiting on inconceivable numbers of buddhas, unable to be collected by the remaining roots of merit existing in all worlds, sprung forth from the essence of illusory phenomena, arisen as the result of pure and vast good deeds, arisen through the implementation of the strength, which was the result of the previous good deeds and conduct of the nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā; unique, [the arrays of this park] could not be collected together by the auditors or solitary buddhas, could not be destroyed by all the heretics and false teachers, and could not be seen by all those whose conduct followed the path of the Evil One, or all the ignorant, worldly people.[28]

This passage indicates yet again that the ontological appearance of wealth is the result of one's past good needs. As we have seen, the more fabulous the description of wealth, the greater the merit of the one generating it. Sudhana is able to see this park due to his own previous merit, but also through the strength of Siṃhavijṛmbhitā's psychic powers (*ṛddhi*). A common sequence within the narrative is repeated in this section: first a miraculous jewelled scene is described, followed by an argumentative passage explaining it as the result of a *kalyāṇamitra*'s vast merit.

Next, Sudhana perceives the nun sitting on each and every 'great lion throne' (*mahāsiṃhāsana*) teaching the Dharma to various beings (V 149.24–151.8). This ability to multiply one's body is part of a standard list of psychic powers (*ṛddhi*) said to be attainable through meditation.[29] Siṃhavṛjimbhitā's power to multiply her form functions as further proof of her high spiritual status. The nun's audience reinforces this point: she teaches bodhisattvas established in all ten stages (*bhūmi*) of the bodhisattva's path and even 'holders of the thunderbolt' (*vajrapāṇī*). This suggests that the nun has attained at least the tenth stage in order to teach bodhisattvas at this advanced level.

The narrator then supplies us with the most definitive passage about Siṃhavijṛmbhitā's high religious status:

> The nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā realized innumerable hundreds of thousands of entrances into the ten perfections of wisdom, beginning with: the equanimity of the universal eye, elucidations of all the teachings of the buddhas, the dividing the levels of the Dharma realm, the destruction of all the multitudes (*maṇḍala*) of obstructions, the origination of the thought of merit in all beings, the superior arrays, the container of unobstructed principles, the multitudes within the Dharma realm, the storehouse of thought and the container of universal brilliant realizations. And of those bodhisattvas and other beings who came to the great park Sūryaprabha in order to see the nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā or hear the Dharma, all of those the nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā first urged them with regard to the elements (*dharma*) of the roots of merit they should acquire and then made them irreversible from [their path toward] supreme, perfect enlightenment.[30]

Here we have a reference to the 'ten perfections of wisdom' (*daśa-prajñāpāramitā*), but without any mention of the traditional list of ten.[31] Rather, the narrator lists ten aspects of hundreds of thousands of entrances (*mukha*) into these ten. This suggests that 'the perfections of wisdom' are being applied in a less technical manner than in the commentarial literature.[32] Nevertheless, the point of this passage is clear: the nun commands an impressive portfolio of spiritual accomplishments.[33]

On the advice of the nun, Sudhana arrives in Ratnavyūha in the country of Durga in search of the courtesan Vasumitrā. There he meets two types of people. The first, who do not know of Vasumitrā's virtues (*guṇa*) or the scope of her knowledge think the following about Sudhana:

> One whose senses are calm and restrained in this way, who is thoughtful in this way, who is composed in this way, whose mind is not frustrated in this way, whose gaze in kept down[34] in this way, whose thoughts are not overcome by sensations in this way, who is grasping at the causeless, whose eye has rejected all forms in this way, whose mind is not agitated, whose behaviour is profound, who is handsome, whose manner is like the ocean, whose mind is imperturbable and not downcast – what would this one do with the lady Vasumitrā? For such people do not delight in passion, nor are their minds perverted (*viparyasta*). The conception of foul things does not course within such people. Such people are not slaves to desire. Such people are not in the power of women. Such people do not course in the range of the Evil One. Such people do not inhabit the domain of the Evil One. Such people do not sink into the mud of desire. The snares of the Evil One do not bind such people. They are not doers of what should not be done.[35]

But those who know of the excellence (*viśeṣa*) of her virtues and the scope (*gocara*) of her knowledge say to our young hero:

> Very Good, Son of Good Family! You, who think that the lady Vasumitrā should be questioned, have made good gains! Surely you desire buddhahood! Surely you desire to make yourself into a resource for all beings! Surely you desire to extricate the spear of passion for all beings! Surely you desire to produce beneficial cognition![36]

These two passages clearly represent the important distinction between the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s imagined mundane and spiritual societies first discussed in Chapter 2. The first group of people cannot understand why Sudhana wants to visit Vasumitrā. This group represents a traditional (mainstream) Buddhist notion that someone like Sudhana whose senses are calm etc., would have nothing to do with a courtesan. These people are members of the story's imagined mundane society who lack the necessary roots of merit (*kuśalamūla*) and therefore the spiritual insight to see that Vasumitrā is actually a *kalyāṇamitra*.

But the second group is extremely pleased that Sudhana wants to see her and recognizes this as a sign of his own advanced spiritual status. Moreover, the second group's attitude expresses the opinion that a courtesan's occupation does not exclude her from being an advanced Buddhist practitioner.[37] Paradoxically though, the acceptance of this type of woman is not an endorsement of passion (*rāga*) or desire (*kāma*), as the first group assume. The second group makes this clear when they say to Sudhana: 'Surely you desire to extricate the spear of passion (*rāga*) for all beings!' This paradox is elaborated when Vasumitrā explains her unique method of teaching Dharma.

When our hero approaches Vasumitrā's house, he sees that it and the surroundings are made of jewels, gold, diamonds, *maṇi*-gems, lapis lazuli and so forth. The courtesan is described as,

> beautiful, pleasant, attractive, endowed with the supreme excellence of a beautiful appearance; with skin the colour of gold, long very dark hair, a body with well proportioned limbs, brilliant with regard to her colour, form and appearance, which each exceeded all the gods and humans in the realm of desire; with a voice surpassing Brahmā's . . .[38]

She is also said to be skilled in languages, the arts and sciences and the means (*upāya*) of bodhisattvas. Her jewellery is made of diamonds, *maṇi*-gems, wish-fulfilling gems and other precious substances. Additionally, Vasumitrā possesses a number of physical attributes (golden skin, long dark hair, well proportioned limbs) characteristic of the story's ideal of female beauty, as well as the wealth common to *kalyāṇamitra*s of her status.

When our hero asks about her attainment, Vasumitrā tells Sudhana that she has achieved a liberation know as 'Ultimate Dispassion' (*virāga koṭīgata*). Through it she is able to assume the female form of any being to teach them the Dharma and lead the lustful to a state of dispassion. Those that come to her attain this state through various means: seeing her, talking to her, holding her hand, dwelling with her, embracing (*ālińgana*) her and kissing (*paricumbana*) her. Vasumitrā concludes by stating that 'any beings that approach near with devotion, all of those, on this very spot, I establish in Ultimate Dispassion, this liberation of the bodhisattvas directed towards the stage of unobstructed omniscience'.[39]

Vasumitrā's description of her attainment once again demonstrates the paradox of female beauty in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*: rather than inspiring passion (*rāga*), it is utilized to lead beings to dispassion (*virāga*) and advance them on the spiritual path. The courtesan's method of teaching the Dharma is particularly striking, and foreshadows later Buddhist developments in the application of Tantric sexual yoga.[40]

The goddesses

Let us now skip ahead to Sudhana's encounters with the goddesses. The ten goddesses (*kms*#31–40) visited by Sudhana constitute the largest single

group of *kalyāṇamitra*s and the narration of these encounters occupies an impressive 30 per cent of the total text. The position of these meetings in the middle third of the story,[41] as well as their geographical location, both highlight their narrative significance. Eight goddesses dwell at the Buddha's site of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*), one is above the city of Kapilavastu, and one is at the Lumbhinī Grove. As important sites of the Buddha's life and teaching these locations function as 'thematized' sacred space, thereby enhancing the importance of these encounters.

Following Sudhana's meeting with the earth goddess Sthāvarā,[42] he meets eight night goddesses (*rātridevatā*). Although the description of these visits is too lengthy to discuss in detail, three narrative features call for special attention. First, the number of night goddesses and their arrangement around the site of the Buddha's enlightenment suggest a *maṇḍala* similar to the one described in the introduction of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Second, the descriptions of the goddesses' bodies in relation to the Dharma body (*dharmakāya*) reveal their advanced spiritual attainment. Third, six goddesses tell Sudhana *avadāna*s about their previous lives. The heroes and heroines of these embedded narratives supply additional evidence that wealthy and royal patrons may have been the narrator's target audience (see Chapter 7).

When we examine the locations of the night goddesses an intriguing pattern emerges. Sudhana sees the first night goddess, Vāsantī, 'above the great city of Kalipavastu on a platform in the sky within a peaked dwelling of multicoloured matchless jewels, seated on a lion throne of great gems within a lotus of all the finest fragrances . . .'.[43] At the conclusion of this visit, the goddess sends Sudhana to see Samantagambhīraśrīvimalaprabhā (*km*#33) at the site of enlightenment (V 180.28–30). This goddess tells our hero to see Pramuditanayanajagadvirocanā (*km*#34) right next to her on the right at Vairocana's site of enlightenment.[44] Pramuditanayanajagadvirocanā sits 'upon a lion throne in a flower within the Lord's assembly-*maṇḍala*'.[45] She instructs Sudhana to go to Samantasattvatrāṇojaḥśrī (*km*#35), who sits right next to her in 'the assembly-*maṇḍala* of the *tathāgata*'.[46] Similar statements are made for the next two goddesses, Praśāntarutasāgaravatī (*km*#36) and Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhavatejaḥśrī (*km*#37).[47] Then Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhavatejaḥśrī tells Sudhana to go to Sarvavṛkṣapraphullanasukhasaṃvāsā (*km*#38) sitting next to her 'at the base of the feet of the Lord Vairocana'.[48] Finally, this goddess instructed our hero to see Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā (*km*#39) who was 'near the Lord' (*bhagavato sakāsam*) (V 264.26).

These statements indicate a circular, symmetric pattern around a central point resembling a *maṇḍala*. The goddesses themselves indicate this with references to the assembly-*maṇḍala* (*parṣanmaṇḍala*) of the Lord (*bhagavān*) or *tathāgata*. Sudhana's encounter with the first goddess in the sky above Kapilavastu is his entry point into this three dimensional *maṇḍala* around the *bodhimaṇḍa*. The seven goddesses following are positioned next to each other, each to the other's right, so that our hero performs a circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇa*) around the site of the Buddha's enlightenment. The numeral

eight suggests that each goddess faces a primary or secondary direction (north, northeast, east, southeast, south etc.) around the *bodhimaṇḍa*. Statements that a goddess is 'at the base of the feet of the Lord Vairocana' and 'near the Lord' demonstrate the belief that the Buddha in some sense is always present at the site of his enlightenment. The night goddesses surround the Buddha in the same way that consorts encircle buddhas on Tantric *maṇḍala*s.[49] Within the metaphor of kingship, the goddesses represent Vairocana's inner circle of harem women. Thus the goddesses' arrangement in a *maṇḍala* once again thematizes space as 'sacred space', while their metaphorical role as consorts to Vairocana enhances their spiritual status.

The goddesses' advanced level of attainment is corroborated by several statements about their bodies. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that the night goddess Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā's physical form is said to come from the Dharma body (*dharmakāya*) and that its pure essence (*svabhāva*) has arisen through the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the non-abiding *tathāgata*s (V 265.15–16). Speaking of her own attainments, the goddess Vāsantī proclaims, 'My Dharma body is transcendentally pure, and abides everywhere within all three times'.[50] Moreover, Sudhana recites about the goddess Praśāntarutasāgaravatī: 'Your body resides within the Dharma body, and your unobstructed mind is made of knowledge'.[51] Moreover, the narrator tells us that the goddess Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhavatejaḥśrī has a body that faces all beings, is equal in all worlds and shares its essence (*svabhāva*) with the *tathāgata*s (V 233.9–12).

In Chapter 2, I discussed at some length the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s distinction between form bodies (*rūpakāya*) and the Dharma body (*dharmakāya* or *dharmaśarīra*). Form bodies are the magical manifestations of the buddhas and bodhisattvas appearing in all worlds for the sake of beings. The Dharma body is co-extensive with the Dharma realm (*dharmadhātu*) and, therefore, is immeasurable, infinite, boundless, inherently pure etc. (see list in Chapter 2). The ultimate religious goal according to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is the acquisition of the Dharma body, which is equivalent to entry into the Dharma realm. According to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, through purifying the Dharma body one realizes omniscience and attains supreme, perfect enlightenment. Thus, the goddesses' possession of the Dharma body suggests that they have achieved a very advanced stage of religious development.

Another distinctive feature of the goddess-encounters is their method of teaching Sudhana by telling stories about their previous lives (*avadāna*). Each goddess begins her tale after Sudhana enquires about her special attainment. For example, Sudhana asks Vāsantī, 'Goddess, how long ago did you set forth for supreme, perfect enlightenment? How long ago did you obtain this liberation from the attainment of which you arrived at activity for the sake of beings with this form'?[52] The beginning of Vāsantī's reply employs a standard formula:

> Son of the Conqueror, formerly in a bygone time, eons ago equal in number to the atoms within Mount Sumera, was an eon called Praśāntaprabha

> in which there arose five hundred *koṭī*s of buddhas. In that eon there was a world realm called Ratnaśrīsaṃbhava. Moreover, in that world realm the middle four continents were called Ratnacandrapradīpaprabhā. The capital city there was called Padmaprabhā. In that capital city was a king name Sudharmatīrtha, a follower of Dharma, a Dharma king, a world-turning monarch, lord of the four continents, endowed with the seven gems [of kingship].[53]

This standard formula usually includes the names of the eon, the world realm, the four continents, the capital city, the king and often (not included in this passage) the name of the buddha of that age. The vast spans of time involved are probably meant to impress the audience with the Dharma realm's infinite expanse and the bodhisattva's endless commitment to enlightenment. Specifying the names of the ages, places and characters is common practice in *avadāna* literature, and adds authenticity to the goddesses' narratives.[54]

Continuing with her story, Vāsantī tells Sudhana about the queen Dharmamaticandrā, wife of the king Sudharmatīrtha, who is visited by the night goddess Suviśuddhacandrābhā and instructed to seek out the buddha of that age and worship him. As is standard for *avadāna* literature, at the narrative's conclusion, Vāsantī reveals her identity with one of the story's characters (in this case the queen). Following this narrative, the goddess tells our hero another *avadāna* in which she is a daughter of a merchant-banker named Prajñāvabhāsaśrī. During this life, the night goddess of her former life appears to her again and shows her the buddha of that eon, which leads to the realization of her bodhisattva-liberation (V 179.13 ff.).

The night goddess Pramuditanayanajagadvirocanā narrates an *avadāna* similar to Vāsantī's in which she is a queen named Bhadramati (V 196.7 ff.). Her husband, a world-ruling monarch (*cakravartin*), is Mañjuśrī and the night goddess who showed her the buddha is a magical projection (*nirmita*) of Samantabhadra. In Samantasattvatrāṇojaḥśrī's *avadāna*, she is a princess named Padmabhadrābhirāmanetraśrī (V 207.1 ff.). Her father, a *cakravartin*, is the bodhisattva Maitreya,[55] and her mother is Praśantarutasāgaravatī, the night goddess sitting right next to her at the *bodhimaṇḍa* (V 215.19–23). In Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhavatejaḥśrī's *avadāna*, she is a nun who is the daughter of a world-ruling monarch (Samantabhadra in a previous life) (V 235.20–236.27). The goddess Sarvavṛkṣapraphullanasukhasaṃvāsā narrates a story in which she is a daughter of a merchant-banker, who receives a jewel from a *cakravartin* (V 249.6–262.24). At the end of the *avadāna*, she reveals that this king is Vairocana in a previous life and his mother and father are now queen Māyā and king Śuddhodana (his parents in his final birth). Finally, in Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā's *avadāna*, she is a prince named Vijitavīn, who is endowed with 28 of the 32 characteristics of a great man (V 272.26 ff.).[56]

A striking characteristic of these embedded narratives is the large number of characters that belong to the royal and merchant-banker classes. In

seven *avadāna*s, two of the goddesses are queens, two princesses, two daughters of merchant-bankers and one a prince. The 'moral' of these stories seems to be that good Buddhist queens, princesses, and merchant-bankers' daughters eventually are reborn as night goddesses. Another interesting feature of these embedded narratives is the number of world-ruling monarchs who are previous births of Vairocana, Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī or Maitreya. The depiction of righteous Buddhist rulers of distant ages and world realms being reborn as rulers of the eternal Dharma realm strengthens the metaphorical connection in the *sūtra* between political and spiritual power, while asserting the superiority of the latter.

The female royalty of the Dharma realm

Now let us turn to the two most important female friends in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. As wife of the Buddha (*śākyakanyā*), Gopā metaphorically represents the queen of the Dharma realm, and the ideal Buddhist wife. Sudhana's visit to her is the second-longest section in the entire *sūtra*, occupying 8.9 per cent of the total text (V 300–338). Based on weight alone, Gopā qualifies as the second most important *kalyāṇamitra* after Maitreya.[57] But based on position and content, Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī may be considered slightly above Maitreya,[58] and Māyā above Gopā within the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s spiritual hierarchy. Gopā, then, is the fifth most important good friend, and the second most important female friend. Both her position after the goddesses and before Māyā (the Buddha's mother), and her geographical location at Kapilavastu support this high status. A significant portion of this section is occupied by her *avadāna* about her previous life as a courtesan's daughter when she and the Bodhisattva[59] met for the first time. The poetry within this embedded narrative indicates that Gopā (as the courtesan's daughter) represents the ideals of female beauty and virtue, traits found in several of the *kalyāṇamitra*s already encountered, but perfected in her.

While searching for Gopā, our hero enters the palace for the bodhisattvas' assembly and sees her seated on a jewelled lotus surrounded by 84,000 women. Sudhana approaches the Buddha's wife and asks her how bodhisattvas perfect the Dharma body, produce infinite form bodies and manifest bodies with the appearance of all beings. Gopā responds by describing her own liberation called 'The Sphere Seeing All Principles of the Oceans of the Liberations of Bodhisattvas.'[60] Through this liberation, she is able to enter into limitless ages in this world, and know all beings in all conditions of existence. Moreover, she is also able to enter into all the ages of all other worlds, and know all beings within them including the names and attainments of all bodhisattvas and buddhas (V 305.23–308.24).

When Sudhana asks how long ago Gopā attained this liberation, she tells our hero an *avadāna* about her past life as Sucalitaratiprabhāsaśrī, the daughter of a royal courtesan named Sudarśanā. During this life she meets and falls in love with a prince named Tejodhipati. Physical attractiveness is

a primary concern of this *avadāna*. The prince is 'handsome, pleasant, attractive, and his body is adorned with the 32 characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of a great man'.[61] As I discussed in Chapter 2, the 32 *lakṣaṇa*s represent the perfection of beauty that only men can possess. The narrator follows this statement with a list describing each *lakṣaṇa* (V 309.24–311.26). This serves to highlight, once more, the superiority of masculine beauty. Next, the courtesan's daughter is said to be,

> beautiful, pleasant, attractive, not too tall, not too small, not too large, not too thin, not too light, not too dark; with very dark blue eyes, long dark hair, a pleasing face, a voice like Brahmā's; her speech was sweet and pleasant . . . .[62]

Much of this embedded narrative consists of recitations by the prince, the courtesan and her daughter about the young couple's virtues, beauty and love for each other. Such poetry seems more appropriate for women of a royal court than a gathering of monks, and our external narrator may have had such an audience in mind. For example, Sudarśanā recites these verses about her daughter:

> This gem of a woman appeared in the human world,
> Her purity of virtue supreme.
> This is the fruition of good conduct in the past;
> For actions done are not destroyed.[63]
>
> She has very dark hair, lotus-blue eyes,
> A voice like Brahmā's, a colour pure as gold.
> Well dressed and adorned in garlands,
> She is pure like the goddess Śrī sprung from the lotus.[64]
>
> Her limbs are pure and full;
> Her body, well proportioned and her figure shapely.
> Illuminating all directions, she shines
> Like a golden orb covered with gems.[65]
>
> The regal fragrance of sandalwood arisen from her body,
> Pervades the directions and rises up.
> The sound she utters is divinely sweet;
> And when she speaks a fragrance wafts
> From her mouth like the scent of a blue lotus.[66]

But Sucalitaratiprabhāsaśrī is not just another pretty face. The courtesan describes her as not jealous, envious, lustful or ill-tempered, and as honest, gentle, intelligent and free from anger or harshness. She is always mindful, diligent, well behaved, obedient, respectful and compassionate (V 320.3–14). In fact, her mother says her daughter is the best woman in the entire world

by virtue of her conduct, intellect and other good qualities (V 325.12–13). In defence of Sucalitaratiprabhāsaśrī's social status, the courtesan states that 'one who speaks about caste could not disgrace her, because she was produced from a lotus and therefore is stainless'.[67] Not only is she virtuous, but her extremely soft limbs cure the sick on contact, her pure fragrance makes all men who smell it pure of conduct, and the sight of her golden body converts the angry and cruel to kindness (V 325.18–29).

We see in this *avadāna* that Sucalitaratiprabhāsaśrī possesses a beauty that is both the karmic result (*phala*) of her past good actions and a means (*upāya*) of spiritually helping others. This attitude toward female beauty in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is related to the wider 'physiomoral discourse' (Mrozik 2007) found within Indian Buddhism, and specifically to the narrative's conceptions of power. Physical attractiveness is a type of power to influence beings for good or ill. Because the female good friends are form body manifestations of the Dharma body, this power derives from their past good actions and is used for beings' spiritual benefit.

Gopā concludes her story by stating that she was Sucalitaratiprabhāsaśrī and that Śākyamuni, the Buddha Vairocana of the present world age, was prince Tejodhipati (V 329.24–330.15). Since that lifetime they have been husband and wife in every rebirth, and have worshipped countless buddhas in innumerable worlds as they progressed along the spiritual path together. Thus Gopā represents both the highest ideal of female beauty and the ideal Buddhist wife. With perfect devotion, she aided the Bodhisattva on his quest for enlightenment through countless lifetimes until he attained buddhahood. Within the metaphor of kingship, her role in the story as the wife of the Buddha is analogous to the queen of the Dharma realm.

At the conclusion of his encounter, Gopā tells Sudhana to 'Go and Ask' Māyā, the mother of the Buddha. Queen Māyā metaphorically represents the queen mother of the Dharma realm and is the most important female *kalyāṇamitra* in the entire *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Sudhana's visit with her is much shorter than his visit with Gopā,[68] but position, geographic location and content establish her as the highest ranking female *kalyāṇamitra*, and the fourth ranking good friend overall.[69] Gopā describes Māyā as 'sitting at the base of the feet of Vairocana' (V 334.6–7). According to traditional Buddhist mythology, Māyā dies shortly after the birth of the Buddha and is reborn in a heaven.[70] In the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the mother of the Buddha magically appears at the *bodhimaṇḍa* within a peaked dwelling. Statements about the queen's form (*rūpa*) and her special attainment establish her not only as a temporal queen and mother of the Buddha, but also as a cosmic mother of all bodhisattvas in their final birth.

At the end of their meeting Gopā directs Sudhana to return to the Buddha's site of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*). Once there, our hero meets Sunetra, the lord of the *rakṣasa*s and practices meditation according to his instructions. Focalization shifts as Sudhana sees arise before him a great jewelled lotus. Within the lotus there is a wondrous peaked dwelling called 'Containing the Assemblage of Directions within the Dharma realm'

(*dharmadhātu-diksamavasaraṇa-garbha*) made of wish-fulfulling gems, jewels, diamonds etc. (V 342.10–17). And in the middle of the peaked dwelling is a throne containing a lotus made of wish-fulfilling gems adorned with countless gems, jewels, banners, flags, nets and so forth, reflecting manifestations of all buddhas of the three times, emanating sounds of the teachings, emitting magical projections of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra that pervade the entire Dharma realm, etc. (V 342.17–343.4).

On this throne Sudhana sees queen Māyā. The description of her form (*rūpa*) that follows indicates that the queen transcends her traditional role of mother of the historical Buddha. Her form is said to go beyond the triple world and all states of being. It is unoriginated, not real, has attained suchness, is not in motion, not annihilated, indefinable, uniform, like a reflection, like magic, dream-like and pervades the Dharma realm in each instant. It is also infinite, measureless and non-conceptual. Being produced from the Dharma realm, it is indestructible; born of the knowledge of the vows of the bodhisattvas, it is without self-nature. Finally, 'having arrived at the state of supreme coolness of the Dharma body,'[71] her form bodies appear to beings according to their intentions (V 343.5–343.26). As if these attributes of Māyā's, particularly the references to the Dharma body and her form bodies, are not enough to establish the exalted rank of the queen, the external narrator continues his description of Māyā. He declares that 'within her body she has accumulated the good deeds needed for omniscience',[72] she is 'endowed with the vows for the purification of the ocean of all lands',[73] she 'purified the supreme Dharma body and manifested an infinite number of form bodies'.[74] Moreover, she 'undertook the vow to be the mother of all bodhisattvas and conquers'.[75]

Having beheld this cosmic vision of the Buddha's mother, Sudhana makes his body as extensive as Māyā's and facing every direction bows to the queen, which causes him to enter an infinite number of trances (V 344.28–30). Māyā then tells Sudhana that she has attained the liberation 'Array within Illusion through the Knowledge of the Great Vow'.[76] At one point in her discourse she declares,

> Son of Good Family, as I receive the Bodhisattva into my womb in Jambudvīpa within this blessed [world realm of] four continents, in the same way I receive him in all the Jambudvīpas [in the world realms of] four continents within this world realm of three thousand, great thousand [worlds], by means of this miraculous array. This body of mine is neither dual nor nondual; nor does it assume the form of a unity or plurality – just as if it were from the eloquence of the liberation of the bodhisattvas within Illusion through the Knowledge of the Great Vow. Son of Good Family, just as I was the mother of the Lord Vairocana, so also I was the mother of infinite previous *tathāgata*s.[77]

After listing the three buddhas previous to Vairocana,[78] Māyā states that she will be the mother of all future buddhas of the 'Good Eon'.[79] Then beginning

with Maitreya, the Queen lists about 190 future buddhas.[80] Finally, Māyā declares that she will be the mother of all the buddhas in all worlds and all eons (V 347.11–15).

In the descriptions of queen Māyā's form and body, and her statements about her special liberation, we witness the transformation of the worldly queen and mother of Vairocana into the cosmic genetrix of all buddhas throughout all of spacetime.[81] As the source of all enlightened beings, Māyā possesses a very high status in the narrative immediately after the final three bodhisattvas, Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya.

The royal and wealthy women of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*

In this chapter we have uncovered several distinctive features about the female good friends of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. A number possess unimaginable beauty. This physical attractiveness is both the result of their past good actions and a means of helping other beings. Likewise, several possess vast wealth characteristic of high spiritual status. The strong association of these female characters with royalty is particularly striking. The first female spiritual guide Sudhana meets is a queen (Āśā), the second is a princess (Maitrāyaṇī), and the fourth tells a story of a past life when she was a princess (Acalā). Of the ten goddesses Sudhana visits, five relate past lives as royalty. Finally, Gopā as the wife of the Buddha and Māyā as his mother are not only temporal royalty, but metaphorically represent the queen and queen mother of the Dharma realm ruled by the Buddha. As mentioned above, Sudhana's visit with Gopā constitutes the second-longest section in the entire *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Moreover, Gopā's tale about Sucalitaratiprabhāsaśrī, the daughter of a royal courtesan, with its lengthy verses devoted to romantic love and physical beauty, seems much better suited for a royal, female audience than a gathering of male monastics.

Although it is difficult (if not impossible) to assess the actual political power of queens during the time of the composition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we know from inscriptions that the female royalty of a number of dynasties were important donors to Buddhist monastic institutions. The possible social context of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s Indian origin and its relation to urban social elites is the subject of the next chapter.

7 The Indian context

In this chapter we move from the text of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to its ancient Indian context, or from the 'inside' world of the story to the 'outside' world of ancient India. Here I am attempting to move from the 'what' of the narrative – its content – to the 'why' of the narrative. To answer this 'why', I will first address what we know of when, where, by whom and for whom the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was composed in order to reconstruct its original social context. This attempt will necessarily be speculative and wrought with difficulties. However, I feel we know enough about the narrative and its possible context to illuminate at least partially the connections between the two.

Dates of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*

As we discussed in the Introduction, our oldest evidence for the narrative is its partial translation into Chinese (T 294) at the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century CE. The first Tibetan translation was not until about the ninth century, while the oldest extant Sanskrit manuscript dates from the twelfth century. Nevertheless, in addition to a number of (relatively late) references to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in Indian literature,[1] there is some evidence internal to the text itself that suggests a rough approximation of its temporal and geographic location within India.

Louis Gómez (1967: lxviii–lxxiv) has discussed the dates of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* at some length. He places the possible end-date for its composition (*terminus ad quem*) in the second half of the third century CE, based on quotations from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* found in the *Upadeśa*. Since Lamotte (1973) has argued persuasively that the *Upadeśa* is a composite text, a more conservative end-date would be prior to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s first Chinese translation in the late fourth or early fifth century. For the earliest possible date (*terminus a quo*), Gómez (1967: lxxiv) states that the work 'probably belongs to a period shortly after the beginning of our era'. We know with certainty that the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, like the *Aṣṭa* and many other Mahāyāna works, continued to change and expand for several centuries after its first Chinese translation, and this probably represents a trend that was in progress long before this time. Therefore, the text may have evolved over several centuries. However, before attempting

to delimit a general period for the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s development, we must first address some problems in dating Mahāyāna texts.

The origins of the Mahāyāna have long been debated in modern scholarly discourse. Edward Conze (1978: 1) considered the *Aṣṭa* and its verse summary, the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcaya-gāthā*, as the basic text of the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus and dates its development between 100 BCE and 100 CE. Assuming that Conze is correct, this date would position the *Aṣṭa* as one of, if not the oldest, Mahāyāna *sūtra*. Although this view has not remained unchallenged, it has had a lasting impact on studies into the origins of the Mahāyāna.[2] However, the earliest recorded date of the first Chinese translations of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s is not until the late second century CE (Harrison 1987: 68–72). Paul Harrison (1995: 56) refers to nine Mahāyāna texts, translated by the Indo-Scythian Lokakṣema at Luoyang at the end of the second century CE, as representing 'the *early middle* period' of the Mahāyāna. Although these translations constitute our earliest dateable evidence of the Mahāyāna, general introductory works on Buddhism continue to place the origins of the Mahāyāna at sometime in the first century BCE.[3]

Early scholars, such as Edward Conze, Étienne Lamotte, Nalinaksha Dutt and Akira Hirakawa, associated the Mahāyāna with lay Buddhist concerns and aspirations.[4] A number of these scholars also connected the origins of the Mahāyāna to the Mahāsāṅghika school and attempted to locate this movement in the south or northwest of India.[5] In an influential article, Hirakawa (1963) argues that the *stūpa* cult was a lay movement that formed 'the institutional basis from which Mahāyāna Buddhism arose'. However, more recent scholarship has moved away from associating the Mahāyāna with lay concerns, the Mahāsāṅghika school, or any specific geographical location. In fact, scholars such as Gregory Schopen, Paul Harrison, Jonathan Silk, Jan Nattier and Ulrich Pagel, have noticed strong monastic, ascetic and conservative tendencies in the Mahāyāna sources they have studied. In Schopen's now famous article on the cult of the book in Mahāyāna, he argues (in direct opposition to Hirakawa's thesis) that early Mahāyāna may have began as a 'loose federation of a number of distinct though related cults . . . each associated with its specific text' (1975: 181). Elsewhere, he states that, 'from its first appearance in inscriptions Mahāyāna was a monk dominated movement' (1985: 26). Harrison (1995: 56) believes that it is 'hopeless' to determine a sectarian affiliation of early Mahāyāna, since it was a 'pan-Buddhist movement – or, better, a loose set of movements'. Both Harrison and Nattier suggest that an institutional basis of the early Mahāyāna may have been a meditational movement instigated not by laypeople, but by ascetic, forest monks searching for Buddhahood.[6] Silk and Pagel have demonstrated in their own studies the overwhelming monastic concerns of such texts as the *Ratnarāśi-sūtra* (Silk 1994) and the *Bodhisattva-piṭaka* (Pagel 1995). Additionally, Schopen (1999) has pointed out the conservative or even reactionary monastic values found in the *Maitreya-mahāsiṃhanāda-sūtra*. Thus the conclusions about early Mahāyāna Buddhism

made by recent scholarship are very different from the ones of the older generation of scholars.[7]

So how do we account for such different interpretations on the origins of the Mahāyāna? Some of the differences may be attributed to poor method by the earlier thinkers. Schopen (1985: 23) accuses previous scholars of using 'textual sources as if they were somehow descriptions of actual behavior'. This critique is mirrored in Harrison's statement that 'we should not read these sources uncritically, or mistake their rhetorical and mythical flourishes . . . as sociological or historical facts' – a fault Harrison finds with Hirakawa's study.[8] Much of the earlier views on the origins of the Mahāyāna can be traced to this uncritical approach to texts.

Another explanation of the radically different theories on early Mahāyāna is that different sources lead to different conclusions. Studying such texts as the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* or *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, for example, gives a different impression about Mahāyāna Buddhism than one derived from the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*, *Rāṣṭrapāla-paripṛccha*, *Ratnarāśi* or *Bodhisattva-piṭaka*. Because Mahāyāna literature is so vast and largely unstudied,[9] the theories on the origins of the Mahāyāna may be compared to the blind men's descriptions of the elephant in the famous Indian parable – one's conclusions about the nature of an elephant (origins of the Mahāyāna) depends on what part of the elephant (literature) is touched (studied). Of course, the crucial difficulty for comparing these sources is always one of dating.

Since the only evidence we possess for the early existence of the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s are the dates of their first Chinese translations, we are merely able to determine the date that some form of the Indian text must have existed (*terminus ad quem*). And this does not indicate whether or not the translated text is older than texts that were translated after it. In other words, simply because the Chinese translated a certain text in the second century and another in the fifth century, does not mean the first is necessarily older than the second. The fact of the matter is that we have no idea if an Indian text translated into Chinese in the fifth century is younger or older than one translated in the second century. For instance, during Lokakṣema's lifetime in the second century CE, there may have been hundreds of Mahāyāna *sūtras* in India he could have translated into Chinese, but he just happened to translate those nine. In other words, the historical idiosyncrasies and accidents involved in the Chinese reception of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism may supply the *terminus ad quems* for texts, but they cannot be used to establish a chronology of Indian Mahāyāna *sūtra*s.

One way to possibly surmount this difficulty is to establish a relative chronology of texts based on doctrinal content. This, however, involves an important and somewhat questionable assumption: that Mahāyāna sources that possess doctrinal positions closer to 'Mainstream Buddhism'[10] are earlier than those that express more doctrinal innovation. This assumption, when combined with the dates of the Chinese translations, has lead to the general position that if a text was translated before another *and* it represents a

doctrinal position closer to the mainstream, then it may be considered earlier.[11] Unfortunately, we cannot assume that doctrinal developments occur in anything like a linear fashion. Changes in doctrine can arise through sudden innovations, transformations, modifications and so forth, in relation to any number of social, political, geographic and historical reasons. Fundamentalist and reactionary groups often maintain doctrinal stances that seem anachronistic when compared to other more 'mainstream' positions. Minority groups threatened by majorities often seek to 'return' to 'authentic' or 'original' doctrine. Patronage and target audience affect religious ideology both in obvious and subtle ways. Countless examples could be provided, but are unnecessary to make what seems to me an obvious point: the belief that religious doctrines develop in a linear progression through time is flawed.

Since attempting to date Mahāyāna *sūtra*s according to their Chinese translations and doctrinal development is not sound, we are unable to provide a definitive date for the composition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In other words, we have no basis for establishing the *terminus a quo* of the text, or any other Mahāyāna *sūtra* for that matter. Moreover, we cannot assume that more ascetic or conservative texts predate other texts such as the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and thereby presuppose that it represents a 'middle' or 'late' Mahāyāna text. However, we know that at least one version of Sudhana's story existed in its basic form by the time Buddhabhadra translated it into Chinese in the early fifth century. The text or portions of the text may have been composed several centuries earlier than this. In any event, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the formative period of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* falls sometime between 0–400 CE.

Geographical origin of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*

When attempting to locate the place of origin for the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we find that there is no external evidence for the geographical origin of the *sūtra*. The text's narrative, however, possesses two significant internal clues for its original location. As Mitra and Ehman point out,[12] the narrative action of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* takes place in two primary areas: the 'southern region' (*dakṣiṇāpatha*) and the 'domain of Magadha' (*magadhaviṣaya*). As the area where the Buddha lived and taught, the northeast of India has always been a special place for Buddhists. Therefore, the reason for the Magadhan portion of the story seems clear: Sudhana visits various good friends at the site most sacred to all Buddhists, the *bodhimaṇḍa*, and also travels to other important Buddhist locales nearby, such as Lumbhinī Grove and the city of Kapilavastu. But the vast majority of the narrative takes place in the south. This fact by itself does not indicate a southern origin of the text. However, there is another piece of evidence when viewed with it that definitely suggests the south as the geographical source of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

Dhanyākara is the name of Sudhana's hometown (V 39.5).[13] As the place of origin for the story's protagonist, and the place where his journey begins,

this city seems a possible candidate for the birthplace of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. As Afshar noted in his study of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s geographical appellatives, both Lamotte and Dutt equate Dhanyākara with Dhānyakaṭaka/Dharaṇīkoṭa,[14] an ancient city on the banks of the Kṛṣṇā River in the southern region of Andhra. If Dhanyākara may be equated with Dhānyakaṭaka, then we have a likely place for the origin of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In the third century CE, Dhānyakaṭaka was the thriving city in the Ikṣvāku Dynasty near to both Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa.[15] I shall discuss the implications of this identification after I outline some features of Indian Buddhism during its Middle Period.

The Middle Period

Gregory Schopen (1995a: 476) refers to the history of Buddhism in India between the beginning of the Common Era and 500 CE as the 'Middle Period'. Schopen is primarily concerned with these five centuries because they roughly demarcate the formative period of both the Buddhist *vinaya* collections and Mahāyāna *sūtra*s (*ibid.*). His studies on the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* shed light on many important and neglected aspects of Buddhist monasticism during this period. When this information is juxtaposed with archaeological, epigraphical and textual sources, a number of interesting features of Buddhist monasteries and their patronage emerge. Some of these are particularly relevant for our understanding of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s cultural context.

In an article titled 'Early Buddhism, Trade and Empire' James Heitzman compares locational aspects of Buddhist monastic sites, trade routes and non-monastic sites in South Asia between 500 BCE and 300 CE. Heitzman (1984: 121) concludes that Buddhist monastic sites grew up around permanent settlements connected by long-distance trade routes and served 'as symbolic structures mediating social hierarchy within a new urban complex'. According to Heitzman 'the threefold union of Buddhism, trade, and empire continued into the Christian era' (*ibid.*: 131). Particularly intriguing in relation to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are the specific material goods being traded in this period. In her monograph *Ancient India and Ancient China*, Xinru Liu (1988: 101) states,

> The transport of pearls, coral, glass objects and precious stones from India to China and Chinese silk to India and the West stimulated the standardization of the *sapta-ratna* [seven treasures] concept and of other necessities for Buddhist ceremonies. Simultaneously, the identification of the concept of the seven treasures as symbols of the Buddhist ideal world increased the demand for luxury goods not related to daily life.

Thus the very same 'seven treasures' featured so prominently in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* were the primary luxury goods traded from India to China during this period. Heitzman (*ibid.*: 133) explains this symbiotic relationship between Buddhism and mercantilism with these words:

> From one standpoint, Buddhist diffusion was closely dependent on the patronage of urban elites; Buddhist monasticism appears as an appendage to centralized organizations in the early middle period. On the other hand, the simultaneous spread of religious establishments alongside political and mercantile organizations suggests the necessity for the symbolic ordering performed by Buddhism in the successful operation of early Asian urban institutions.

This 'symbolic ordering' which Buddhism provided was an opportunity for members of urban society to express and confirm their position within the social hierarchy through the 'ostentatious display' of their wealth with donations to Buddhist monastic institutions (*ibid.*: 132). More recently, Ronald Davidson (2002: 77) points out the strong connection between Indian Buddhism and trade:

> Buddhist institutions may have received their great impetus from Aśoka, but their capacity to spread through multiple languages and ethnic groups and their ability to elicit patronage generation after generation depended as much on their symbiotic relationship with the guilds of Indian tradesman and merchants as on their attractiveness to princes needing access to the advances of Indic culture.[16]

Given the close connection between urban trade centres and Buddhist monasteries in the Middle Period, it is not surprising to discover that the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, a Buddhist monastic code probably from this period, contains many detailed passages concerned with the correct handling and use of money. Schopen (1994, 1995b, 2000) demonstrates that this *vinaya* contains many rules for lending money on interest and written loan contracts, as well as rules that presuppose that monks possessed personal wealth and continued to have the right to inherit family property after becoming monks. A large number of inscriptions from this period, which mention monks and nuns as donors to Buddhist institutions, confirm that individual monks and nuns held considerable private wealth.[17]

Patronage of Buddhism in the Middle Period has been discussed in a number of important studies on the subject. In an article on the reciprocal relationship between Buddhist monastics and laypeople, Schopen (1996) demonstrates that monasteries 'given' to monastics by laypeople continued to belong to their lay donors. Monks receiving dwellings or any other items were thereafter *obligated* to use such things that were given to them so that their sponsor (who still 'owned' them) would continue to acquire merit from the gift. In this way, laypeople took care of the monastics' material well-being through donations, in exchange for the monastics' maintenance of the laypeople's spiritual well-being by their use of those donations.

In a study of the numerous inscriptions at such sites as Sanchi, Karle and Mathura, Vidya Dehejia (1992) argues that Buddhist patronage of art

between 100 BCE and 250 CE was characterized by its collective and popular basis. Dehejia notes that of the 631 donative inscriptions at Sanchi, 200 were from monks and nuns, and about 300 were from 'diverse donors' consisting of householders (*gahapati*) and housewives (*ghāriṇī*), bankers (*seṭhi*), merchants (*vāṇija*), weavers (*sotika*), cloak-sellers (*pāvārika*), artisans (*kamika*) and the like (*ibid.*: 36–37). According to Dehejia, this collective patronage was a 'pan-Indian phenomenon' up to 250 CE, but is not found in Indian art in its later history (*ibid.*: 44). After the mid-third century, patronage of Buddhist art became progressively the domain of royalty. Dehejia attributes this to the monarchs' dual ambition for worldly prestige and religious merit (*ibid.*: 45).

Particularly significant is the extensive involvement of women in the patronage of Buddhism up to the fourth century. Schopen (1997a: 250) argues that before the fourth century, 'nuns, indeed, women as a whole, appear to have been very numerous, very active, and, as a consequence, very influential in the actual Buddhist communities of early India'. Textual evidence also seems to support this conclusion. From her study of the Pāli sources, Janice Willis (1992: 48) states, 'It appears in fact that from his earliest days as a teacher, the Buddha was supported by a number of wealthy women – by women merchants, wealthy courtesans, and queens'.[18]

Epigraphical records confirm the involvement of royal women and men in the patronage of Buddhism from an early period. During the reign of the Śaka Satrap Rājula (*c.* 120 BCE?), we find the following inscription on the Mathūra Lion-Capital (translated by F. W. Thomas):

> By the Chief Queen of the Great Satrap Rājula, daughter of Āyasi Komūsā, mother of the Heir Apparent Kharaosta, Nandasi-Akasā (by name), together with her mother Abuholā, her paternal grandmother Pispasi, her brother Hayuara, her daugher Hana, her household and court of *horakās* (ladies), a relic was deposited in this piece of land in a *stūpa* with the thought: 'May it be for the eternal . . . of the Holy Śākya sage Buddha.' And the *stūpa* and the monastery are for the acceptance of the universal *Saṅgha* of the Sarvāstivādins.
>
> (*EI* IX, 141)

In this inscription we find early evidence of royal women patronizing Buddhism. Moving from Mathūra to Nāsik, we find three inscriptions from the Nāsik caves that provide further proof of royal female involvement in donative activity toward the Buddhist *saṅgha*. The first is the gift of a meditation cell at the caves from a princess, the daughter of the Kṣaharāta Satrap Nahapāna (ruled *c.* 119–124 CE). It reads, 'This cell, a gift of Dakhamitā, wife of Uṣavadāta, daughter of king Nahapāna, the Kṣaharāta Kshatrapa' (Hazra 1995: 75). The second is an inscription on the Nāsik Cave, number 3, indicating that the Sātavāhana king, Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi (*c.* 106–130 CE), and the king's mother, Mahādevī Jīvasutā Rājamātā, made a land grant to

monks dwelling in the caves of the Govardhana district (*ibid.*: 51). The third, is an epigraph from the Nāsik caves dated to the regnal year 19 of the following Sātavāhana king, Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvī (*c.* 130–159 CE), stating that the king had a cave constructed on mount Tiranhu, which was offered to the monks of the Bhaddayāniya sect by his mother Mahādevī Gotamī Balaśrī (*ibid.*).

Probably the most well known and extensive epigraphical evidence of royal female patronage of Buddhism in the Middle Period is the archaeological site of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa dated to the rule of the Ikṣvākus in the third century CE. According to Lamotte (1988: 348), Nāgārjunikoṇḍa owes practically everything to this dynasty. Inscriptions from this site share two distinctive features: they rarely record monastic donors,[19] and frequently mention donations from female Ikṣvāku royalty and wealthy laywomen. About the Ikṣvākus Dynasty, Nilakanta Sastri writes:

> Almost all the royal ladies were Buddhist: an aunt of Vīrapurisadāta built a big stupa at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa for the relics of the great teacher, besides apsidal temples, *vihāras*, and *maṇḍapas*. Her example was followed by other women of the royal family and by women generally as we know from a reference to a Bodhisiri, a woman citizen.[20]

Both Lamotte's and Sastri's statements are based on a set of inscriptions from Nāgārjunikoṇḍa that have been studied, transcribed and translated by Vogel (*EI* XX: 1–45). Whereas the kings and princes of the Ikṣvākus were primarily sponsors of Brahmanical religion, the queens and princesses patronized Buddhism (*ibid.*: 4). Of the 19 inscriptions studied by Vogel, several royal women are mentioned such as: Cāṃtisiri, the sister of king Siri-Cāṃtamūla and paternal aunt of king Siri-Vīrapurisadata; Aḍavi-Cāṃtisiri, the daughter of king Siri-Cāṃtamūla; Haṃnasiriṇikā, another sister of Siri-Cāṃtamūla; and her two daughters Bapisiriṇikā and Chaṭhisiri who both married the reigning monarch (their cousin) and became queens (*ibid.*: 4–5). These and other prominent women donated pillars, shrines, *caitya*-halls, *stūpa*s and monasteries to Buddhist monks in the area. In this manner, Buddhism thrived under Ikṣvāku rule largely through the generosity of its royal and wealthy female patrons.[21]

Let us briefly summarize this overview of the Middle Period. Scholarly consensus suggests that Buddhism in these centuries was characterized by highly developed urban monasteries, which benefited from the generous patronage of wealthy urban elites. Monasteries were powerful multi-purpose institutions that functioned as academies, libraries, hospitals, hospices and banks.[22] Monks, nuns, laymen and women from all social classes and stations donated to these monasteries up until about 250 CE, when patronage became progressively more the domain of royalty. The interaction between monastic institutions and lay patrons functioned as a symbolic exchange whereby individuals both gained religious merit for their future lives and reinforced

their social status within the urban hierarchy through the conspicuous display of their wealth (Heitzman 1984). Moreover, the archaeological evidence points to a growth of urban monastic institutions during the early Middle Period throughout India within the great empires of the Kuṣānas and Sātavāhanas (*ibid.*). These institutions continued to thrive during the later Gupta and Vākāṭaka dynasties.[23] The short-lived rule of the Ikṣvākus in the third century was a particularly fertile period for the spread of Buddhism and its royal and/or wealthy laywomen provided generous patronage to Buddhist monasteries.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* in the middle period

In the Introduction, I suggested that written texts exist as sets of both bibliographic and linguistic codes. Although some scholars assert that the Mahāyāna began as a written literary movement,[24] there is no conclusive evidence connecting the origin of the Mahāyāna to writing. However, Chinese sources indicate that by the second century CE, at least, some Mahāyāna *sūtra*s had been composed in written form.[25] Unfortunately, no manuscripts of these *sūtra*s survive from the Middle Period.[26] As stated in the introduction, the earliest extant manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is Hodgson 2 (A), the Nepalese manuscript dated 1166 CE. So, although the *Gaṇḍavyūha* existed as a written text in the Middle Period, we possess no definite bibliographic details about it. Writing materials,[27] ornamentation and script[28] used in the composition of a written *Gaṇḍavyūha* can only be conjectured from other sources. As a set of linguistic codes, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* of the extant Sanskrit manuscripts falls into Franklin Edgerton's second class of Buddhist texts that feature hybridized verse and prose of relatively standard classical Sanskrit (*BHSG*: xxv). Both hybrid Sanskrit and classical Sanskrit are well attested from inscriptions in the Middle Period beginning with the Kṣatrapas (*c.* 78–200 CE) in the Mathūra region and spreading southward by the third century.[29] In fact, the first significant amount of southern Sanskrit inscriptions originates from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and most of these date from the time of the later Ikṣvāku king Ehavala Cāntamūla (Salomon 1998: 90).

As literature, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* existed in the Middle Period within a particular social system. In order to understand this system, we must attempt to uncover who composed the *sūtra* and for whom. On this issue, Jonathan Silk (2002: 374) argues persuasively for the monastic origins of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s:

> Because the content of Mahāyāna texts shows a very high degree of familiarity – we might say a total familiarity – with virtually all aspects of Sectarian Buddhist thought and literature, it is very difficult to believe that the authors of these texts, the de facto representatives of the Mahāyāna communities, were other than educated monks. It is difficult to imagine that the Mahāyāna sūtras could have been written by anyone other than such monks or, more likely, communities of such monks.

Urban monastic institutions were the centres of Buddhist learning and scholarship during the Middle Period, and monks were primarily responsible for the preservation, through memorization and copying, of the 'Buddha's words' (*buddhavacana*).[30] As a *sūtra* relating the story of Sudhana, who was thought to live during the lifetime of the Buddha, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* would have been considered *buddhavacana*, and therefore the responsibility for its care and maintenance would probably fall upon the monastic institutions. Such care and maintenance requires money and therefore patronage.

Given the large numbers of wealthy monk and nun donors during the Middle Period, it is easy to imagine that many of the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s were composed by monastics for monastics.[31] As Lefevere points out, patronage has both an economic and ideological effect upon literature.[32] For a text to survive its ideology cannot directly oppose the views of its patrons. Based on the volume of Chinese translations produced during and shortly after the Middle Period, we know that this was a time of tremendous literary output for Mahāyāna Buddhism. Such a large volume of texts would have required an army of scribes and vast amounts of materials, which both cost considerable money. Without substantial amounts of wealth from rich patrons the enormous Mahāyāna literary corpus would never have survived to be translated into Chinese and Tibetan. Because of this relationship between textual survival and patronage, we would expect to find a correlation between the ideological concerns of texts and the patrons of those texts.

Does the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s ideology reflect the pattern of patronage found at its time and place of origin? If we accept a formative period for the *Gaṇḍavyūha* sometime during the Middle Period and Dhānyakaṭaka as a possible location for its origin, then to a significant extent it does.

Let us return to the epigraphical evidence at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. We have seen that the Nāgārjunikoṇḍa inscriptions are distinctive for two reasons: first, the rarity of monastic donors, and second, the predominance of royal and wealthy female donors. These features of Ikṣvāku patronage have not passed unnoticed by previous scholars: Lamotte as well as Alex and Hideko Wayman associate this dynasty with different Mahāyāna *sūtra*s. Lamotte (1988: 348) points out that a prophecy in the *Mahāmegha-sūtra* (T 387, ch. 6: 1107a) appears to serve the 'glorification' of the Ikṣvākus' 'pious wives'. He quotes the following passage from a Chinese translation of the *sūtra*:[33]

> Seven hundred years after my Nirvāṇa, in South India, there will be a small kingdom called Lightless (*Wu ming*, Andha, the Prākrit form of Andhra); in that kingdom, there will be a river called Black (*Hei an*, Kṛṣṇā, modern Kistna) and, on the South Bank of the river, a town named Ripe Grain (*Shu ku*, Dhānya[kaṭaka], present day Dharanikōt); in that town, there will be a king named Even-Vehicle (Śātavāhana). The wife of the king will give birth to a daughter named Growth (*Tsêng chang*, in Tibetan *Dpal ḥphel*, in Skt. *Śrīvṛddhi*); she will be so beautiful that

> everyone will love her; she will observe the religious prescriptions; her goodwill will be inexhaustible.
>
> (Lamotte 1988: 348–349)

The primary evidence of this passage, of course, depends on Lamotte's identification of Sanskrit toponyms for the Chinese terms. If we accept his interpretations, this passage connects the *Mahāmegha-sūtra* to the Ikṣvākus (or possibly to the Sātavāhanas).

Alex and Hideko Wayman also attempt to locate the origin of *Śrīmālā-siṃhanāda-sūtra* (*Śrīmālā*) during the rule of the Ikṣvākus. Their primary argument for placing the origin of the *Śrīmālā* during the Ikṣvāku reign is that the text glorifies its main character, the Buddhist queen, Śrīmālā, and stresses 'good daughter of the family' side by side with 'good son of the family'.[34] They claim that this evidence 'points to a period when the prosperity of the Buddhist congregation depended heavily on the patronage of one or more Buddhist queens and contributions by ladies of high social rank' – in other words, the Ikṣvāku dynasty (Wayman and Wayman 1974: 1). Although the Waymans' evidence is not substantial, it highlights a possible relationship between the *Śrīmālā* and female royalty.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* gives much greater prominence to its female characters than the *Śrīmālā-siṃhanāda-sūtra*. As we have seen, half of the text is devoted to the female *kalyāṇamitra*s (21 in total), many of whom are queens, or have been queens in previous lives. Could this indicate that royal and wealthy women were patrons of the text?

At this stage one might argue that even if wealthy laywomen were patrons of Buddhism during the Middle Period, we have no proof that they could or did read Buddhist texts; hence, there is no reason why texts originating from monastic institutions would reflect their ideological concerns. But, in fact, we do have at least one piece of evidence that laywomen read Buddhist texts. A passage from the *Mākandikāvadāna* in the *Divyāvadāna* refers to upper class Buddhist women studying *buddhavacana* in their own homes (Tatelman 2000: 12). Tatelman translates the passage as follows: 'Moreover, at night these young women study the Buddha's Word by lamplight for which [activity] is required birchbark, pen and ink as well as oil and wick [for the lamp]'.[35] The *Divyāvadāna* is thought to date from the third or fourth century.[36] If this literary source provides historically accurate information, then we have evidence that laywomen read Buddhist scriptures in the Middle Period.[37]

Since we have learned from a number of epigraphical sources throughout India that laywomen were important patrons of Buddhism during the Middle Period, and that they may have read *buddhavacana*, I think it reasonable to assume that monks composed at least some Mahāyāna *sūtra*s with these women in mind as a part of their target audience.[38] From our investigations in the previous chapter on the female good friends in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we have uncovered strong textual evidence that this narrative may have been

composed with royal and wealthy women in mind. Moreover, the story's governing paradigm of spiritual power – Buddha as Dharma King – and its emphasis on wealth as a sign of spiritual status would both be well-suited for an audience of wealthy merchants and kings. From what we know of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s content and Indian context, it would appear that the story was tailor-made to appeal to the political and economic elite of Buddhism's Middle Period. This possible target audience is the focus of our final chapter.

8 Conclusion

This study has investigated the conceptions of power, wealth and women in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* using textual theory, worldview analysis and structural narratology. I make two presuppositions with regard to such an approach: that literature exists within a social system, and that the production of texts as material objects requires patronage. Given these assumptions, I have interrogated this Buddhist scripture for its ideologies concerning such topics as reality, society, the individual, power, material wealth and gender. This interpretation assumes that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (like other texts) is ideologically 'overcoded' (Eco 1979). In other words, the *sūtra* contains an over-abundance of information encoded about its authors' and assumed audiences' worldviews, which may be uncovered through novel readings. Let us now summarize the conclusions drawn from this approach.

Summary of findings

In Chapter 1, I briefly discuss textual ontology or what it means for a text 'to exist'. I argue that we must view texts as sets of both linguistic and bibliographic codes. In other words, we must consider the materiality of texts. As a cultural and material product, literature is embedded in a social system. This 'systems approach' plays a key role in my analysis of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Next, I trace the historical development of the *sūtra* and summarize the contemporary scholarship on the text. The introduction concludes with a chapter outline.

In Chapter 2, I define a worldview as a theory of existence that constructs meaning out of experience through delineating the relationships among reality, society and the individual. Next, I examine in some detail notions about reality, society and the individual in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in order to outline the narrative's assumed worldview. As a Buddhist text emerging out of an ancient Indian context, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* reflects an idealized and spiritualized view of this context. This chapter demonstrates a fundamental bifurcation in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* between a conventional and spiritual level of experience. Reality is divided into the world realms (*lokadhātu*) and the Dharma realm (*dharmadhātu*); society into mundane society and the society of good friends

(*kalyāṇamitra*); and the spiritually advanced individual into form bodies (*rūpakāya*) and the Dharma body (*dharmakāya*). The *Gaṇḍavyūha* asserts a devotional path wherein the highest goal of any individual is to become a member of the spiritual society through visiting and worshipping the good friends. Such activities eventually lead to entry into the Dharma realm, which is synonymous with obtaining the Dharma body.

Chapter 3 elaborates important theoretical groundwork needed to investigate the broader themes within the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in the following chapters. Specifically, I examine the genre of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, its narrative structures, and the story's employment of a number of stock formulas. I argue that the story appears to combine the styles of a Mahāyāna *sūtra* and a Buddhist 'glorious tale' (*avadāna*). Next, by outlining the structural narratology of Mieke Bal (1997), I develop a vocabulary and set of analytical tools for examining the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s basic narrative structures, which I employ throughout the remainder of the study. And finally, by highlighting and labelling five stock formulas that occur during each of Sudhana's encounters, I provide a sense of the primary narrative frames used to divide the lengthy prose of the story.

Chapter 4 demonstrates that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* hierarchically arranges the good friends according to their spiritual power. This hierarchy is based upon a metaphor of kingship in which Vairocana represents the King of the Dharma realm, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra correspond to his chief ministers and Maitreya symbolizes the crown prince. I employ three criteria discussed in the previous chapter to determine the relative spiritual status of the good friends: the 'weight' of the section dealing with Sudhana's visitation to the good friend (as a percentage of the total text), the position of the good friend's appearance in the narrative, and the content of the section (how the narration describes the qualities of the good friend). These criteria allow me to judge the importance of the *kalyāṇamitra*s in relation to each other. Moreover, in this chapter I examine the relationship between the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s idealized spiritual society of the good friends and the economic and political hierarchies of the story's imagined mundane society.

After a detailed discussion of the *sūtra*'s introductory section (*Nidāna*), I argue in Chapter 4, that Sudhana's encounters with the first three monk *kalyāṇamitra*s contain important information about spiritual authority. Given the likely monastic authorship of the narrative, the position of the monks after Mañjuśrī and before the first lay good friends, may be the narrator's attempt to maintain the religious authority of monastic *kalyāṇamitra*s over lay teachers. Next, I examine Sudhana's meetings with (outwardly appearing) non-Buddhist good friends, the sage Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa and the brahmin Jayoṣmāyatana. I maintain that the inclusion of these *kalyāṇamitra*s may be an attempt to ideologically 'encompass' brahmanical religious practices by portraying the sage and brahmin as crypto-Buddhists. This suggests that the text may have been written in a highly competitive religious environment. Chapter 4 concludes with an account of Sudhana's visionary experience of

Samantabhadra. As the embodiment of the bodhisattva's course of conduct (*bodhisattva-caryā*), Samantabhadra resides at the top of the spiritual hierarchy of good friends. Samantabhadra as Vairocana's chief minister possesses all of his lord's power and authority. Sudhana's entry into the bodhisattva's body at the conclusion of the story indicates that he has become, like Samantabhadra, the perfect devotee and saviour.

Chapter 5 demonstrates that descriptions of fabulous wealth are extremely common in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Almost every page contains some reference to precious substances, such as the 'seven treasures' (*saptaratna*), as well as diamonds (*vajra*), gems (*ratna*), jewels (*maṇi*), and '*maṇi*-gems' (*maṇiratna*). In this chapter, I argue that the material wealth described in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (and many other Mahāyāna *sūtra*s) should not be understood as purely visual metaphor, or merely as 'glitter'. Rather, I assert that the narrator of the story was deeply concerned with 'real' material wealth, and its relation to the spiritual path and the very nature of reality. I show that the appearances of wealth in the story reveal an ideological position central to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s view of the religious path. Beings who own fabulous treasures are often said to possess them as a result of their previous 'roots of merit' (*kuśulamūla*) or past good deeds (*puṇya*). Hence, wealth functions as a sign of one's ethical development. The magical appearance of treasures and the transformation of mundane landscapes serve to indicate spiritual power (*adhiṣṭhāna*). This idea is introduced at the very beginning of the *sūtra* when Vairocana transforms his *kūṭāgāra* and the Jeta Grove into an infinitely vast paradise adorned with countless, priceless objects. This miraculous event sets the stage for a theme that runs throughout the entire story: wealth functions as a sign of spiritual status. The hero Sudhana's very name, 'Good Wealth', his title as the 'merchant-banker's son', and the description of his miraculous conception and birth reinforce this ideology.

The most definitive statements about wealth in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are found when Sudhana encounters the kings Anala and Mahāprabha. After revealing to our hero the inconceivable riches of his palace, Anala asks Sudhana, 'would such a karmic result arise for evil doers?'[1] This is the clearest indication that wealth functions as proof of one's goodness (ethical aspect). During Sudhana's visit to Mahāprabha, the narrator informs us that our hero is not at all distracted by the king's wondrous bejewelled city. Sudhana's reaction here is prescriptive for would-be bodhisattvas: the correct attitude toward wealth is detachment. Later in this section, Mahāprabha explains that only the spiritually advanced see the jewelled city; others experience a city of clay and mud. Here we find the most explicit connection between wealth and spiritual attainment on the ontological level. The jewelled city represents the Dharma realm divided into levels; while the city of clay and mud exists within the mundane world realm.

Chapter 6 investigates the role of women in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The strong presence of female good friends in the narrative is indicated by the combined weight of Sudhana's encounters with them – 51 per cent of the total text.

Several of the female characters in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* play an important role as Sudhana's teachers and possess a high spiritual status. A number of them represent idealized types (generous and chaste Buddhist laywoman, nun, courtesan, wife and mother). Their wealth and royal status establish their important social positions within the imagined mundane sphere. Their beauty and spiritual attainments signify their importance within the spiritual society of good friends. A full third of the narrative is occupied with Sudhana's encounters with goddesses. Several of these recount their previous lives as royalty, reinforcing the connection between spiritual and worldly power in the *sūtra*. Gopā's and Māyā's particularly high ranks as queen and queen mother of the Dharma realm demonstrate the centrality of the metaphor of kingship within the story's conception of power.

Chapter 7 addresses when, where, by whom and for whom the *Gaṇḍavyūha* may have been composed. I begin by addressing the date of origin for the *sūtra*. Since existing chronologies of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s are tentative at best, I conclude that we cannot determine a definitive date of origin for the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. However, we know that one version of the story existed in its basic form by the time of Buddhabhadra's Chinese translation in the early fifth century. Based on this evidence, I conclude that the formative period of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* most likely falls sometime between 0–400 CE. Next, I examine internal evidence in the *sūtra* that suggests its south Indian origin. Following this, I outline some trends in Indian Buddhist society during its Middle Period (0–500 CE) based on the archaeological, epigraphically and textual research of such scholars as Gregory Schopen, Jonathan Silk, Ronald Davidson and others. I then relate the themes discussed in earlier chapters to this context. From my investigations, I demonstrate that Buddhism in these centuries was characterized by highly developed urban monasteries that benefited from the generous patronage of wealthy urban elites, including royal and wealthy women, and that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* may have been composed by monastics for these patrons.

The target audience

Throughout this study, I point out clues indicating an original target audience for the *Gaṇḍavyūha* consisting of wealthy merchants, and royal men and women. Our first clue is Sudhana's name, 'Good Wealth', and his title as the 'merchant-banker's son' (*śreṣṭhidāraka*). The central theme of wealth as a sign of one's spiritual status is our second clue that the rich were among the early target audience for the *sūtra*. The high status and important roles played by wealthy and royal female *kalyāṇamitra*s provide additional evidence that the composers of the story had female royalty in mind. Finally, the non-Buddhist and king *kalyāṇamitra*s, the *cakravartin*s in the night goddesses' *avadāna*s and the metaphor of kingship itself, all suggest that kings and princes were among the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s original target audience.

Given the ideological influence of patronage upon literature, our textual evidence from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is consistent with what we know about the approximate time and place of the *sūtra*'s composition in ancient India. Buddhist monasticism during the Middle Period was an institution dependent on the patronage of the rich and powerful for survival. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* most likely emerged from a monastic context at a time when Buddhist monasteries were not only places of study and contemplation, but also repositories of tremendous wealth donated by the rich and powerful men and women of the day. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a narrative read by (or possibly recited to) these men and women exalts its wealthy, male and female characters as important spiritual teachers. Within its governing paradigm of spiritual power (the metaphor of kingship), Vairocana, Maitreya, Gopā and Māyā are the royal family of the Dharma realm, and Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī are its chief ministers. In this way, Sudhana's union with Samantabhadra at the narrative's conclusion symbolically represents his ascent to chief minister of the Dharma realm.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is not the only Mahāyāna *sūtra* to employ the metaphor of kingship, exalt its royal and wealthy characters, or contain powerful female figures.[2] It did, however, become one of the most popular Mahāyāna *sūtra*s throughout Asia, and as a progressive quest narrative, it provided religious and artistic inspiration for generations of Buddhists. For example, the Empress Wu of China adopted the Huayan school of Buddhism and its emphasis on the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* in the seventh century (Williams 1989: 129). Also, as mentioned earlier, the king of Orissa gave his own personal copy of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* to the emperor of China at the end of the eighth century. Moreover, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* holds pride of place of those narratives depicted on the gallery walls of Barabuḍur, the largest Buddhist monument in the world, built in central Java by the Śailendra dynasty in the eighth or ninth century. In the tenth century, the Tibetans painted images of Sudhana's visits accompanied by a redacted text on the walls of the central shrine of Tabo monastery in western Tibet.[3] This short summary of only a sample of the evidence demonstrates how successful the *sūtra*'s composers were at capturing the imagination of its target audience – the wealthy and royal patrons of Buddhism.

There is still much we do not know about Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism. The approach of this study has been to avoid the imposition of a simplistic relative chronology or the application of labels such as 'early Mahāyāna'. Instead, I have taken a 'systems approach' that views the Mahāyāna as a literary movement occurring within a social system, and used the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as my case study. I hope that my analysis of power, wealth and women in relation to the text's social context demonstrates the utility of addressing issues of patronage and target audience with regard to our study of Indian Mahāyāna.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* appears to have emerged out of a type of 'courtly culture' within ancient Indian urban society consisting of rich laymen[4] and laywomen, wealthy merchants and royalty. It seems likely that monks during Buddhism's

Middle Period composed the *sūtra* with this particular audience in mind. Conversely, several recent studies demonstrate a strand of Indian Mahāyāna concerned with forest asceticism. I suggest that monks composed this different strand of literature for other monks or perhaps to persuade wealthy laymen to become monks. Thus, the differences we are seeing reflected in Indian Mahāyāna literature may represent different target audiences, without any necessary implications of a chronological stratification of texts. In other words, there is no reason to assume that ascetically orientated texts represent an earlier Mahāyāna than those that are devotionally orientated. Further research into patterns of Indian Buddhist patronage may allow us to begin to develop more links between texts, times and specific locations. Much work remains to be done before a clearer picture can emerge. However, one obvious implication of this study is that, as literature, the Mahāyāna in the Middle Period does not fit neatly into either a popular lay movement, or an elite ascetic movement. Written texts as linguistic codes assume literacy, and as bibliographic codes assume material wealth necessary to reproduce them. Thus, by definition a literary movement is a socially elite movement, and therefore, the Indian Mahāyāna as such a movement (and we have no evidence that it was anything else until the fourth century) must be seen as elitist.

Power, wealth and gender are perennial concerns of every society. Buddhism's answer to these concerns is and has always been based on the ideology of merit. As Walsh (2007: 374) put it in his discussion of Chinese Buddhism, 'Buddhist merit exchange resulted in, at least, the following: a social hierarchy, behavioral codes, power distribution, capital, legitimacy, wealth, transcendence, domination, subversion, happiness, social status, and so forth'. The genius of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* lies in its depiction of this merit ideology garbed in the entertaining story of a young hero's quest for enlightenment. By practising the bodhisattva's path, the audience of this *sūtra* is promised the attainment of a transcendental reality, society and body beyond the physical, psychological and economic vicissitudes of daily life. Thus the 'noble *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the royal gem among Mahāyāna *sūtra*s'[5] is not only the story of a young man's spiritual journey, but also of a ruling class's dream for eternal wealth and power.

Appendix A

List of *Kalyāṇamitras*[1]

Name (Skt)	*G*[2]	*Title*	*V*[3]	*%*[4]
1. Mañjuśrī	M	bodhisattva	36–47	2.8
2. Meghaśrī	M	bhikṣu	48–50	.69
3. Sāgaramegha	M	bhikṣu	51–54	.92
4. Supratiṣṭhita	M	bhikṣu	55–58	.92
5. Megha	M	dramiḍa	59–62	.92
6. Muktaka	M	śreṣṭhin	63–67	1.1
7. Sāradhvaja	M	bhikṣu	68–78	2.5
8. Āśā	F	upāsikā	79–86	1.8
9. Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa	M	ṛṣi	87–89	.69
10. Jayoṣmāyatana	M	brāhmaṇa	90–95	1.4
11. Maitrāyaṇī	F	kanyā	96–98	.69
12. Sudarśana	M	bhikṣu	99–101	.69
13. Indriyeśvara	M	dāraka	102–104	.69
14. Prabhūtā	F	upāsikā	105–109	1.1
15. Vidvān	M	gṛhapati	110–113	.92
16. Ratnacūḍa	M	dharmaśreṣṭhin	114–116	.69
17. Samantanetra	M	gāndhikaśreṣṭhin	117–119	.69
18. Anala	M	rājan	120–123	.92
19. Mahāprabha	M	rājan	124–130	1.6
20. Acalā	F	upāsikā	131–136	1.4
21. Sarvagāmin	M	parīvrājaka	137–139	.69
22. Utpalabhūti	M	gāndhikaśreṣṭhin	140–142	.69
23. Vaira	M	dāśa	143–144	.46
24. Jayottama	M	śreṣṭhin	145–147	.69
25. Siṃhavijṛmbhitā	F	bhikṣuṇī	148–153	1.4
26. Vasumitrā	F	bhagavatī	154–156	.69
27. Veṣṭhila	M	gṛhapati	157–158	.46
28. Avalokiteśvara	M	bodhisattva	159–164	1.4
29. Ananyagāmin	M	bodhisattva	165–166	.46
30. Mahādeva	M	deva	167–168	.46
31. Sthāvarā	F	pṛthidevatā	169–170	.46
32. Vāsantī	F	rātridevatā	171–182	2.8
33. Samantagambhīraśrī-vimalaprabhā	F	rātridevatā	183–187	1.1
34. Pramuditanayanajagadvirocanā	F	rātridevatā	188–202	3.4
35. Samantasattvatrāṇojaḥśrī	F	rātridevatā	203–219	**3.9**
36. Praśāntarutasāgaravatī	F	rātridevatā	220–232	3.0

Name (Skt)	*G*[2]	*Title*	*V*[3]	*%*[4]
37. Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhava-tejaḥśrī	F	rātridevatā	233–242	2.3
38. Sarvavṛkṣapraphullana-sukhasaṃvāsā	F	rātridevatā	243–264	**5.0**
39. Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhāna-vīryaprabhā	F	rātridevatā	265–284	**4.6**
40. Sutejomaṇḍalaratiśrī	F	lumbhinīvanadevatā	285–299	3.4
41. Gopā	F	śakyakanyā	300–338	**8.9**
42. Māyādevī	F	bodhisattvajanetrī	339–349	2.5
43. Surendrābhā	F	devakanyā	350–351	.46
44. Viśvāmitra	M	dārakācārya	352–352	.23
45. Śilpābhijña	M	śreṣṭhidāraka	353–354	.46
46. Bhadrottamā	F	upāsikā	355–355	.23
47. Muktāsāra	M	hairaṇyaka	356–356	.23
48. Sucandra	M	gṛhapati	357–357	.23
49. Ajitasena	M	gṛhapati	358–358	.23
50. Śivarāgra	M	brāhmaṇa	359–359	.23
51. Śrīsaṃbhava & Śrīmatī	M&F	dāraka & dārikā	360–367	1.8
52. Maitreya	M	bodhisattva	368–418	**11.7**
1. Mañjuśrī	M	bodhisattva	419–419	.23
53. Samantabhadra	M	bodhisattva	420–436	**3.9**

Notes

[1] For similar lists see V XII–XVII, and Thakur 2006.

[2] (G)ender is either (M)ale or (F)emale.

[3] Page numbers in the Vaidya edition (1960).

[4] This is a percentage of the total text arrived at through dividing the number of pages in a section by 436 (the total number of pages in the Vaidya edition), multiplying by 100, and rounding off to one or two decimal places. The top five percentages have been put in **bold** type.

Appendix B

Concordance of Sanskrit editions and MS A

Name of kalyāṇamitra *(Skt)*	*V*[1]	*SI*[2]	*A*[3]
1. Mañjuśrī	36	46	24v
2. Meghaśrī	48	59	31r
3. Sāgaramegha	51	62	33r
4. Supratiṣṭhita	55	67	36r
5. Megha	59	72	38v
6. Muktaka	63	77	41r
7. Sāradhvaja	68	84	44v
8. Āśā	79	100	53r
9. Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa	87	111	59r
10. Jayoṣmāyatana	90	115	61v
11. Maitrāyaṇī	96	123	65v
12. Sudarśana	99	127	67v
13. Indriyeśvara	102	131	70r
14. Prabhūtā	105	136	72v
15. Vidvān	110	142	76r
16. Ratnacūḍa	114	147	79r
17. Samantanetra	117	151	81r
18. Anala	120	155	83r
19. Mahāprabha	124	160	86r
20. Acalā	131	170	91r
21. Sarvagāmin	137	179	95v
22. Utpalabhūti	140	182	97r
23. Vaira	143	186	99r
24. Jayottama	145	189	101r
25. Siṃhavijṛmbhitā	148	192	103r
26. Vasumitrā	154	201	107v
27. Veṣṭhila	157	205	110r
28. Avalokiteśvara	159	208	111v
29. Ananyagāmin	165	216	115v
30. Mahādeva	167	218	117v
31. Sthāvarā	169	221	118r
32. Vāsantī	171	223	119r
33. Samantagambhīraśrīvimalaprabhā	183	236	126r
34. Pramuditanayanajagadvirocanā	188	241	128v
35. Samantasattvatrāṇojaḥśrī	203	262	138r

Name of kalyāṇamitra *(Skt)*	*V*[1]	*SI*[2]	*A*[3]
36. Praśāntarutasāgaravatī	220	286	151r
37. Sarvanagararakṣāsaṃbhavatejaḥśrī	233	303	159v
38. Sarvavṛkṣapraphullanasukhasaṃvāsā	243	317	166v
39. Sarvajagadrakṣāpraṇidhānavīryaprabhā	265	341	179v
40. Sutejomaṇḍalaratiśrī	285	365	192v
41. Gopā	300	385	203r
42. Māyādevī	339	429	226r
43. Surendrābhā	350	446	233r
44. Viśvāmitra	352	448	236r
45. Śilpābhijña	353	448	236r
46. Bhadrottamā	355	451	238r
47. Muktāsāra	356	452	238v
48. Sucandra	357	453	238v
49. Ajitasena	358	453	239r
50. Śivarāgra	359	454	239r
51. Śrīsaṃbhava & Śrīmatī	360	455	239v
52. Maitreya	368	466	245v
1. Mañjuśrī	419	529	278v
53. Samantabhadra	420	529	278v

Notes
[1] First page number of the section in the Vaidya edition (1960).
[2] First page number of the section in the Suzuki and Idzumi edition (1949).
[3] First page number of the section in MS A ('Hodgson 2', Royal Asiatic Society, London). The numbering is based on the Newari (see Cowell and Eggeling 1875: 50): 'r' represents recto, 'v' verso of the folio.

Appendix C

Concordance of three Tibetan editions

Name of kalyāṇamitra *(Tib.)*[1]	*D*[2]	*P*[3]	*T*[4]
	ga	*si*	*ca*
1. 'Jam dpal	313v	85v	75r
2. Sprin gyi dpal	324v	96v	89r
3. rGya mtsho'i sprin	328r	101r	93v
4. Shin tu brtan pa	332v	105v	99v
5. Sprin	337v	110v	105v
6. bTang brjod	342r	115r	111v
7. rGya mtsho'i rgyal mtshan	349r	123r	121v
8. Yid bzhin	364r	138v	141v
9. 'Jigs mchog dbyangs	375r	150v	157v
10. rGyal ba'i drod kyi skyem ched	380r	154v	163v
11. Byams ma	387r	162v	172v
12. blTa na sdug pa	392r	166v	177r
13. dBang po'i dbang phyug	**a**.1v	170v	182r
14. Phul du byung ba	5v	175r	187r
15. mKhas pa	11r	181r	194v
16. Rin chen gtsug phud (T: pud)	16r	186v	201v
17. Kun tu blta ba (T: lta ba)	19r	190r	205r
18. Me	22v	193v	209r
19. 'Od chen po	27r	199r	215v
20. Mig yo ba	35v	209r	227r
21. Thams cad du 'gro ba	43r	217v	236r
22. Longs spyod ut pa la (P: ud pa la)	45v	221r	240r
23. mNyam pa dpa' bo	48v	224r	244r
24. rGyal ba dam pa	51r	227v	247v
25. Seng ge rnam par bsgyings pa	54v	231r	252r
26. lHa' bshes gnyen ma	62r	239r	262r
27. Nan khugs	65v	243r	267r
28. sPyan ras gzigs kyi dbang po	68v	246r	270v
29. gZhan du mi 'gro ba	73v	251r	277r

Name of kalyāṇamitra *(Tib.)*	*D*	*P*	*T*
	a	*si*	*ca*
30. lHa chen po	75v	252v	279r
31. brTan ma (P,T: pa)	77v	254v	282r
32. dPyid dang ldan pa	79v	256v	284r
33. Kun tu zab pa'i dpal dri ma med pa'i od	91r	268r	299r
34. Rab tu dga' ba'i mig 'gro bar rnam par snag ba	95v	273v	304v
35. Sems can kun tu skyong ba'i gzi brjid dpal	113r	**hi.**1r	325v
36. sGra rgya mtsho rab tu zhi ba dang ldan pa	133v	22v	**cha**.1
37. Grong kyher thams cad bsrung ba 'byung ba'i gzi brjid dpal	147v	37r	22v
38. Shing thams cad gyi me tog rgyas pa bde bar gnas pa	159r	49r	38r
39. 'Gro ba thams cad bsrung ba'i smon lam la brtson pa'i 'od	179v	69v	64r
40. gZi brjid kyi dkil 'khor bzang pos dga' ba'i dpal	201v	92v	93v
41. Go pa	219r	112v	119r
42. lHa mo sgyu ma	255v	149v	167r
43. lHa dbang 'od	271v	165v	188v
44. Kun gyi bshes gnyen	273r	167v	190v
45. bZo mngon pa shes pa	273v	167v	191r
46. bZang mo'i mchog	276r	170v	195r
47. gCes pa gtong ba	277r	171r	196r
48. Zla ba bzang po	277v	171v	196v
49. Mi 'pham sde	278r	172r	197r
50. 'Dzin mchog	278r	172v	198r
51. dPal 'byung ba & dPal gyi blo gros ma	279r	173r	198v
52. Byams pa	288v	183r	212r
1. 'Jam dpal	344v	236r	286v
53. Kun tu bzang po	345r	237r	287v

Notes

[1] Tibetan names are based on the Derge. Variations are in brackets indicating the edition and different spelling.

[2] First page number of the section in the Derge Kanjur edition (Tibetan numbering). For details, see *Tibetan Tripitaka: Taipei Edition* (1991) in the Bibliography.

[3] First page number of the section in the Peking Kanjur edition, vol. 26 (Tibetan numbering). See Suzuki 1956–61 for details.

[4] First page number of the section in Tog Palace Kanjur, vols 33 (ca) and 34 (cha) of the Phal po che (Tibetan numbering). For details, see *Tog Palace Manuscript of the Tibetan Kanjur* (1975–80) in the Bibliography.

Notes

1 Introduction

1 Here I am using 'women' (as I do throughout this study) as shorthand for the socially constructed gender role. Most traditional societies and classical religious texts such as the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are androcentric in outlook. Thus, gender roles are more often than not defined in terms of the masculine enquiry into the nature and role of women, and the awareness of 'maleness' in opposition to this view.
2 In Chapter 7, I address in detail the possible time and place of origin of the *sūtra*.
3 This question (originally: 'If the *Mona Lisa* is in the Louvre, where are *Hamlet* and *Lycidas*?'), first raised by F. W. Bateson, is now well known among contemporary theorists of textual ontology (see Greetham 1994: 342).
4 McGann writes, 'For the past six years I have been exploring a different distinction by calling attention to the text as a laced network of linguistic and bibliographical codes' (1991: 13; see also McGann 1992).
5 The *locus classicus* for modern textual criticism is Maas 1958. For further developments in this method see West 1973.
6 For one developed theory of 'reader response', see Eco 1979. See also Culler (1981: 119–31).
7 Although I maintain that the meaning of a text is produced in its reading, I do not claim that meaning is merely an idiosyncratic response of the reader. Readers learn how to read through a conventional system of decoding. Texts as linguistic codes limit the infinite range of possible interpretations through literary conventions, grammar and syntax. Thus a dialectic or dialogue between text and reader functions as the space where meanings emerge.
8 Oral texts, although they lack bibliographical codes, play a similar role through conventions and limitations on who is able to memorize them, when and where memorization takes place, appropriate time, place and audience for recitation and other such conditions.
9 See Lefevere 1982. The following discussion is from a reprint of this article in Venuti (2000: 233–49).
10 The following information on the Chinese sources and translations is from Gómez (1967: xxiii–xxix). The catalogues consulted by Gómez are themselves part of the Chinese Buddhist canon and are numbered T 2145–49, 2151, 2153–54 and 2157.
11 In his dissertation (1967: xxiv), Gómez indicates four ways in which this text differs from the Sanskrit. First, it lacks the verses from the introductory section (the *Nidāna-parivarta*) and the first nine good friends found in the Sanskrit text. Second, instead of the 27th *kalyāṇamitra*, the householder Veṣṭhila, this translation has a bodhisattva named *Pu chiao kao kuei te wang*. Third, the following section describing Sudhana's encounter with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara lacks the 22 verses

found in the Sanskrit text. Finally, this translation ends abruptly after the 34th good friend, the night goddess Pramuditanayajagadvirocanā.

12 The Chinese title *Ru fajie pin* 入法界品 corresponds to the Sanskrit **Dharmadhātu-praveśana-parivarta*.

13 This version contains the Veṣṭhila section but without its two final verses, and the Avalokiteśvara section still lacks its verses. Also missing are the final 62 verses of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* found in the section of Sudhana's encounter with the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. These verses collectively known as the *Bhadracarī* are found in all extant Sanskrit manuscripts, at the end of the final Chinese translation (T 293; see below for details) and as an independent text twice in the Chinese Buddhist canon (T 296 and 297). In Buddhabhadra's translation instead of the *Bhadracarī*, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* ends with verses of praise to 'all bodhisattvas in the universe' (Gómez 1967: xxvi).

14 T 279. This translation is known as the '*Huayan* in 80 *chuan*', in order to distinguish it from the Buddhabhadra's translation in 60 *chuan*.

15 Three important exceptions are that the final two verses of the Veṣṭhila section have been added, the name of Avalokiteśvara's mountain has changed from *Prabha to Potalaka and a short verse greeting has been added in the final section (T 279, 442b–c). See Gómez (1967: xxvi–xxvii).

16 Ch. *Ru bukesiyi jietuo jingjie Puxian xing yuan* 入不思議解脱境界普賢行願 (Skt **Acintyavimokṣa-gocarapraveśana-samantabhadracaryā-praṇidhāna*).

17 The colophon to the Chinese translation contains a letter from the king to the Emperor (see T 293, 848b–c; and Gómez 1967: xxvii).

18 These verses appear to share a close affinity to the Avalokiteśvara verses found in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* (Kern and Nanjio 1912: 452–55). According to Gómez (1967: xxviii), the relationship between these two has been addressed in a paper by Hokei Idzumi titled 'Bonbun Kegonkyō ni okeru Kanjizai-bosatsu' (*Seigo Kenkyū*, No. 1, August 1933).

19 Although the *Bhadracarī* does not become part of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* until Prajñā's translation, according to the Buddhist Text Translation Society, 'Nowadays it [the *Bhadracarī*] is often incorporated at the end of the 80 role New Version [Śikṣānanda's translation] of the *Avataṃsaka* . . .' (*The Flower Adornment Sutra 39–1: Entering the Dharma Realm* 1980: xxi–xxii). The Society does not specify exactly when this addition was made, but this statement does offer an explanation as to why Thomas Cleary includes the *Bhadracarī* at the end of his English translation of Śikṣānanda's translation (see Cleary 1993: 1511–1518).

Why the *Bhadracarī* would come to replace the final verses at the end of Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Avataṃśaka* is not clear. There is the Mahāyāna Buddhist belief that many *sūtra*s are only partial renditions of much longer works existing in celestial planes (see Obermiller 1986: 170). When the *Bhadracarī* became important as a liturgical text sometime between the end of the seventh and end of the eighth centuries it may have been incorporated as the final verses of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (which seems to have maintained the status of an independent *sūtra* from the *Avataṃsaka* in India). When the Chinese discovered this new ending of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, in a desire for a more complete *Avataṃsaka*, they may have replaced the older verses in Śikṣānanda's translation with the *Bhadracarī*.

20 Cleary translates a number of these amplifications into English from the Muktaka, Śilpābhijñā, Sucandra and Śivarāgra sections (Cleary 1993: 1535–41).

21 The Tibetan title of the *Avataṃsaka* is *Sangs rgyas phal po che* (Skt *Buddhāvataṃsaka*). The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is called *sDong pos brgyan pa*.

22 See Skilling (1997a: 90); Steinkellner (1995: 14–15); Harrison (1996: 72–73); and Gómez (1967: xxx–xxxi).

23 The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is only found in the Tibetan canon as part of the *Avataṃsaka*. Although the date of the Tibetan translation (early ninth century) is about

contemporaneous with Prajñā's translation (end of the eighth century), the surviving Kanjur versions of the Tibetan correspond almost exactly with the surviving Nepalese Sanskrit versions and not Prajñā's version (see below for more details). This difference between the Tibetan translation and final Chinese translation, which were both translated at about the same time, may lend evidence for a separate lost Orissan recension of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

24 See Steinkellner (1995: 14–15). Contrary to the predominate view the Narthang and Mongolian Kanjurs list Surendrabodhi and Vairocana as translators, while Bu ston and the Lhasa Kanjur mention only Vairocana (Tarthang Tulku 1982: 189).

25 Skilling attributes the beginning of this policy of including only one translation to Bu ston (see Skilling 1997a: 100, n. 96).

26 See Eimer (1992), Harrison (1992c) and Skilling (1997a). Through his detailed and comprehensive work on the *Mahāsūtra*s (1997b), Peter Skilling has developed the most recent and probably the most reliable stemma representing the genealogical relationships of the various Kanjurs (Skilling 1997a: 107). Following Eimer (1992), Skilling identifies two main branches of transmission, the Tshal pa and Them spangs ma, and indicates a number of Kanjurs that seem to have developed independently from these branches, such as the Lahul, Tabo, Newark Batang and Phug brag (*ibid*.).

27 By comparing the variant readings of a text as found in the Kanjurs, a stemma can be developed and a critical edition of a work produced that attempts to reproduce the lost, original translation. Of course several centuries of copying, revising and conflating different versions between the first translations in the early ninth century and the beginning of the first Kanjurs in the early fourteenth century add an unavoidable level of uncertainty to any attempt at definitive critical editions. Nevertheless, modern textual criticism has been successfully practised on works in the Tibetan canon to produce editions that demonstrate both the historical development of the texts through their various Kanjur incarnations, and give us a best guess at the earliest versions of the Tibetan translations. For examples of this method, see Harrison (1978, 1992a) and Skilling (1994, 1997b).

28 Because the redactors of the Derge also consulted sources from the Them spangs ma branch, from a text critical point of view, it is less useful than other less 'contaminated' versions. I have included it in this study because it is one of the most available versions for scholarly study.

29 See Cowell and Eggeling (1875: 1–4, 51), for the manuscript details that follow.

30 For the most complete list in English, see Jastram (1975: lxxvii–lxxxv). Jastram give details of 16 manuscripts and mentions the possibility of the existence of several others.

31 These manuscripts were: Hodgson 2; two paper manuscripts from Cambridge University; a paper manuscript from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; a paper manuscript from Tokyo Imperial University; and a paper manuscript from Kyoto Imperial University. These manuscripts are listed in the 'Note' section of the revised Suzuki and Idzumi edition (1949). A more detailed account of them may be found in Gómez (1967: xviii–xix); and Jastram (1975: lxxix–lxxxi).

32 A revised edition with corrections was published in 1949.

33 The Baroda manuscript is numbered 13208, has 218 folios (61.5 cm by 27.2 cm with nine lines to a page), is modern, and the script is of the Kuṭila type (see Vaidya 1960: ix; and Gómez 1967: xx).

34 See (Gómez 1967: xxi) and Jastram (1975: xx–xxi).

35 See, for example, Ehman (1977), Gómez (1977), Griffiths (1981), Paul (1985) and McMahan (1998).

36 For Hodgson 2 (A), I have consulted both the original manuscript and a microfilm copy.

37 The following information concerning the work of Hodgson, Mitra and Kern is summarized in Ehman (1977: 7–20).
38 See Kern (1882: 512), cited in Ehman (1977: 16).
39 By this criticism I am not implying that there is necessarily a 'correct' reading for the text based on 'the text itself'.
40 See Suzuki (1953: 71–102 and 124–217).
41 See V 407–18 and SI 510–28, for the description of Maitreya's peaked dwelling in the Sanskrit text.
42 Even though Edgerton's volumes have been aptly criticized by Brough (1954) for their lack of attention to the orthographic peculiarities of the Nepali scribes, *BHSG & D* still stands as the single greatest accomplishment in Buddhist Sanskrit philology of the modern era.
43 Gómez agrees with Vaidya: 'This edition [V] nevertheless improves over the previous one considerably' (Gómez 1967: xxi).
44 Although possibly an improvement over SI, V lacks a critical apparatus and suffers from its own errors, and therefore a true critical edition of the Sanskrit *Gaṇḍavyūha* with complete apparatus remains a *desideratum*.
45 See Gómez (1977: 221–61).
46 See Gómez (1977: 230 ff.). This is a decidedly more metaphysical interpretation of '*dharmakāya*' than Harrison's understanding (1992b). As I demonstrate in Chapter 2, Gómez's comprehension of the term as it is used in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is completely warranted.
47 See Gómez (1977: 230 ff.). The *Gaṇḍavyūha* makes no mention of the 'enjoyment body' (*saṃbhogikakāya*) of the *trikāya* systems.
48 See Guenther (1977: 3–35). Guenther does not specify from which text he is translating.
49 A second edition of *Women in Buddhism* was published 1985. See Paul 1985: 98–102, 138–144, 146–155 and 156–162 for Wilson's translations. These pages correspond to V 148.1–153.11, 79.1–85.25, 104.24–109.5 and 154.8–156.10.
50 See Paul 1985: 94–97, 134–138, 144–146 and 155–156. Wilson's analysis contains a number of inaccurate statements and questionable interpretations.
51 Cleary's translation was first published in three volumes between 1984 and 1989. References to Cleary's translation in this study are from the single-volume edition published in 1993.
52 I strongly disagree with Paul Griffiths' statement that 'it is surely clear that a translation of such a work [the *Gaṇḍavyūha*] could have no scholarly purpose' (1981: 25).
53 Translated by Yuichi Kajiyama *et al.* in two volumes (Tokyo: Chuokoron Shinsha, 1994).
54 I find the major weakness of Gombrich's argument to rest on his *a priori* assumption that there could not possibly be another institutional basis outside the traditional *saṅgha* to support an alternative oral tradition. Gombrich assumes that the ancient *saṅgha* was a monolithic institution that did not tolerate the existence of fringe elements within its ranks. I disagree that it takes a large organized body of people to orally transmit a sacred text. A small fanatical group, I imagine, could be quite successful at it. Also, the assertion that the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s would not have survived without being written down is a *post hoc, propter hoc* fallacy: Mahāyāna *sūtra*s were written down; they survived; therefore they survived because they were written down.
55 For a developed treatment of the royal metaphor in Indian Esoteric Buddhism, see Davidson (2002: 113–168). Donaldson refers to the concept as the 'imperial metaphor'.
56 For a useful bibliography of recent Japanese scholarship on the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, see Kimura (2007).
57 Hikata (1960), Fontein (1967) and Gómez (1981), are some of the exceptions.

2 Worldview

1 For the basic outline of my interpretation and use of 'worldview' see Osto (1999: 36–39). The inspiration for the use of this term comes from Ninian Smart's *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs* (1983; 3rd edn 1995). In this work, Smart uses 'worldview' to refer to both traditional religions and secular ideologies. Employing the image of a triangle to describe worldview structure, Smart states that the apex of the triangle represents a notion of the cosmos and the two corners at the base represent the self and society (1983: 54 and 1995: 48). Smart's approach of 'structured empathy' in his analysis of worldviews maintains a strong affinity to Husserl's phenomenological *epoche* or 'bracketing' of one's own beliefs when studying the beliefs of others (see Smart 1995: 13–21). While also employing a tripartite model (reality, society and individual), my understanding and use of worldview varies considerably from Smart's position (see below).
2 See Foucault (1972b: 131–133), cited in Cahoone (1996: 380).
3 Both the construction of personal identity and reality involve the use of narrative. For example, Oliver Sacks writes, 'We have, each of us, a life-story, an inner narrative – whose continuity, whose sense, *is* our lives. It might be said that each of us constructs and lives, a "narrative", and that this narrative *is* us, our identities' (1986: 105). The function of personal histories within the development of personal identity is analogous on a micro-level to the use of myth or history in a worldview at a macro-level. Although the role of narrative in the construction of the 'self' is beyond the scope of this present work, the interested reader will find much written on the topic in the field of narrative therapy. See Chapter 3 below, for more on the relation between narrative and worldview.
4 'The body is not opposed to culture, a resistant throw-back to a natural past; it is itself a cultural product, *the* cultural product' (Grosz 1994: 23).
5 An eon was thought to be between 1,344,000 and 1,280,000,000 years. Thinkers disagreed about its exact length (Conze 1975 [1951]: 49).
6 'According to Hindu cosmology, a beginningless series of worlds pass through cycles within cycles forever' (Stutley 1985: 44). See also Koller 1982: 252.
7 However, in Pāli one does find something like a myth of origins in the *Aggañña-sutta* (see Gombrich 1992, and Collins 1993). Also, the Hindu *bhakti* traditions develop a number of cosmogonic myths found in the Purāṇas.
8 See Gethin 1998: 114. Vasubandhu puts the total at 1,000,000,000 (*ibid.*).
9 See discussion below on the Sanskrit term '*trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu*.'
10 *PED*: 587.
11 I first discussed this term in Osto (1999: 81, n. 5).
12 Other attempts have been: 'The Great Trichiliocosm' (Conze 1973a: 323), 'Three-thousandfold, multi-thousandfold world system' (Gómez 1977: 242), 'world system of three thousand great thousand worlds' (Schopen 1989: 123) and 'Trichiliomeghachiliocosm' (Harrison 1990: 13).
13 The previous note refers to the term's occurrence in the *Aṣṭa* (Conze 1973a: 323), the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (Gómez 1975: 242), the *Vajracchedikā* (Schopen 1989: 123) and the *PraS* (Harrison 1990: 13). For two other examples in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, see V 420.1 and V 424.2. For occurrences in other Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, see *BHSD*: 259.
14 Recent descriptions of this structure may be found in Lopez (1995: 12–16, 2001: 21–39) and Gethin (1998: 115–119). See Gómez (1996: 257–258) for diagrams of a single-world realm.
15 Some descriptions leave out the demigods (*asura*).
16 The Sanskrit term for these beings is *preta* ('deceased'). 'Hungry ghost' seems to come from an English translation of a Chinese term for them (see Soothill and Hodous 1977 [1937]: 454).

17 For a graphic description of these hells in a Mahāyāna *sūtra*, see the *Dizang pusa benyuan jing* 地藏菩薩本願經 (T 412.13.777–790). This text was translated from the Chinese into English by Upasaka Tao-tsi Shin as *The Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows* (Sutra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada, no date). For another description from a quasi-Mahāyāna source, see the *Mahāvastu* (see Jones 1949: 6–21, for English translation).

18 See the *Vibhaṅga* 422–426; *Visuddhimagga* vii. 40–44, xiii 29–65, and the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha* 22–24.

19 See *BHSD*: 401 for a discussion of the term. As Edgerton points out, '*buddhakṣetra*' occurs often in the *Mahāvastu*, and therefore cannot be considered a strictly Mahāyāna notion.

20 See Gómez (1996: 262), for a table of the different types of buddha lands. The most popular and detailed buddha land for Mahāyāna Buddhists throughout Asia seems to have been Amitābha's Sukhāvatī described in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtra*s (for the Sanskrit texts, see Vaidya 1961. See Gómez (1996), for the most recent study and translation).

21 See for example the *Akṣayamati-nirdeśa* (see Braarvig 1993: 24–26, for English translation), the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, chapter 23 (for the Sanskrit, see Vaidya 1960: 244 ff.; for English translation, see Kern 1963 [1884]: 394 ff.); the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (see the Sanskrit text (2006), chapter 9; for English translation, see Thurman 1976: 79); and the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (Vaidya 1967: 67).

22 See Gethin 1998: 119; emphasis in original.

23 For the Sanskrit versions of the longer and shorter *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, see Vaidya (1961). For a recent English translation, see Gómez (1996).

24 Important *sūtra*s expressing this 'idealist' trend in Mahāyāna include the *PraS* (English translation by Harrison 1990), the *Avataṃsaka* (English translation by Cleary 1993), the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* (English translation by Powers 1995) and the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (for Sanskrit edition, see Vaidya 1963; for English translation, see Suzuki 1973). For a recent and detailed study of Yogācāra as a type of Buddhist phenomenology, see Lusthaus (2002).

25 For example from the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (Vaidya 1963: 31), we read that 'bodhisattvas . . . hear the teaching of the Dharma that all phenomena are void of non-origination, decay, permanence and annihilation just like the state of illusions, dreams, appearances, reflections or the moon in water' (*bodhisattvāś . . . māyāsvapnapratibhāsapratibimbodakacandragatisamānutpāda bhaṅgaśāśvatocchedarahitān sarvadharmān . . . dharmadeśanāṃ śṛṇvanti*).

26 For a discussion of these powers in the Mahāyāna, see Dayal (1932: 122 ff.), and Pagel (1995).

27 In some respects Buddhist cosmology demonstrates a striking similarity to modern, western cosmology. As Edward Conze (1975 [1951]: 50) pointed out over 50 years ago, the Indian Buddhist notion of innumerable world realms, some possessing many thousands of worlds, is analogous to modern astronomy's description of a universe filled with billions of galaxies each with billions of stars.

28 Tibetan: *chos kyi dbyings*; in Chinese often rendered as *fajie* 法界 (see Soothill 1977 [1937]: 271). Both D. T. Suzuki (1953) and L. Gómez (1967) have discussed the importance of the concept of *dharmadhātu* in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

29 Examples are legion. For a few, see the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Kimura 1986), the *Aṣṭa* (Vaidya 1960: 78–105), and *the Samādhirāja-sūtra* (Vaidya 1961: 13.20 and 29.20).

30 See, for example, V 234.10–20, 272.20, 288.6, 289.28, 342.13, 353.11, 368.31, 369.11, 370.6–11, 372.32, 375.25, 378.30, 382.1, 382.11, 384.1, 385.23, 386.30, 387.11, 396.5, 420.12, 421.9–29, 423.10–32, and 424.20–425.7. Note that all of these examples are from the second half of the text and most are from the Maitreya

and Samantabhadra sections. This pattern reflects the *dharmadhātu*'s significance as a soteriological goal. As Sudhana travels further on his quest, he gets closer to attaining enlightenment, which the *Gaṇḍavyūha* equates with entry into the *dharmadhātu*. See below.

31 Both Suzuki (1953) and Gómez (1967) have suggested that Maitreya's dwelling represents the *dharmadhātu*.

32 For *dharmadhātutalabheda*, see V 368.31 and 384.1 (at V 353.11, there is '*dharmadhātutala-saṃbheda*'). For *asambhinna-dharmadhātu*, see V 272.20. At V 370.6, Maitreya's dwelling is called the 'undivided abode of the *dharmadhātu*' (*dharmadhātv-asaṃbheda-vihāra*).

33 V 375.25.

34 V 288.6.

35 For another recent discussion of this passage, see Thakur (2006: 10–13).

36 Following the introduction of a new character in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, I provide his/her number in the order of *kalyāṇamitra*s as they are encountered by Sudhana (abbreviated as '*km#*'). For a complete list, see Appendix A.

37 *manojñarutagambhīravikurvitapraveśa* (V 233.24).

38 For the list of ten, see V 234.10–18. See also SI 305.2–13; D a149v.3–150r.5. Citations of the Derge are from (1991) *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Taipei Edition, Volume VIII. bKa' 'Gyar*, Taiwan: SMC Publishing Inc. References to the Derge are abbreviated D for 'Derge' and are followed by the Tibetan volume ('ga' or 'a' of the Phal po che), folio number (Tibetan numbering system), r or v (for 'recto' or 'verso') and the line number). See also C 1340.

39 The compound '*ekotībhāvagata*' is difficult to explain here. Monier-Williams, citing the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, gives 'having one and the same object of desire or aim (course), tending to one single purpose', as a definition for '*ekoti*' (MW: 230). For '*ekotibhāva*', he cites Buddhist literature with a meaning of 'state of concentration on one single object, tranquillity, blissful serenity (state of mind, following after conversion)' (*ibid.*). Edgerton records '*ekoti-(*tī)bhāva*' to mean 'the becoming concentrated, concentration'; and reads '*ekoti*' as *eka* + *ūti* (*BHSD*: 154); with *ūti* here meaning 'web' from the verbal root *ve-*, 'to weave' (MW: 221, 1013). Although Edgerton cites this particular instance in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (SI 305.7), he does not explain how it could mean 'concentration' in this context. The term '*ekodibhāva*' occurs in Pāli with the same meaning of 'concentration', but Rhys Davids and Stede take *ekodi* to be from *eka* + *odi* for *odhi* ('limit') (*PED*: 160, 167). Following Edgerton's interpretation of *eka* + *ūti*, a literal rendering of the compound would be something like '(the *dharmadhātu*) being in a state which is a single web or weave'. This interpretation is supported by the Tibetan which reads, *chos kyi dbyings ni rgyud kyi tshul gcig tu gyur bar* – literally 'as for the Dharma realm, its nature is of a string that has become one' (D a149v.7–150r.1). Although it is easy to see how *ekotībhāva* in the right context means 'concentration', in this instance I have opted for 'unity'. Both Cleary and Dio have translated the Chinese this way: Cleary simply writes 'the reality realm is one' (C 1340); and Dio translates 'der Kosmos der eine und der derselbe ist' (Dio 197).

40 The text here reads slightly differently from the other aspects: 'I penetrate the entire *dharmadhātu* which is a single ornament' (*ekālaṃkāraṃ sarvadharmadhātuṃ avatarāmi* (V 234.17)). I interpret this inclusion of *sarva* in the compound to indicate that the *dharmadhātu* is a single seamless unity. Another possible interpretation of *sarvadharmadhātu* is, 'the realm of all dharmas'.

41 See Gómez (1967: lxxviii–xcii).

42 The other is *dharmakāya*, or the 'Dharma body' (see below).

43 This scene is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 below.

44 A more detailed account of this section is found in Chapter 4 below. See also Eckel 1992: 19–21.

45 Note that this is the same term used to describe the Buddha's *kūṭāgārā* in the opening passage of the *sūtra*.
46 *mahākūṭāgāra vairocanavyūhālaṃkāragarbha* (V 369.4).
47 *dharmadhātvasaṃbhedavihāravihāriṇāṃ* (V 370.6).
48 *samantamukhadharmadhātuspharaṇopāya-* (V 370.11).
49 *ekakalpasarvakalpasarvakalpaikakalpānupraveśavihāravihāriṇaḥ* (V 370.15).
50 *ekakṣetrasarvakṣetraikakṣetrāsaṃbhedavihāravihāriṇaḥ* (V 370.15–16).
51 *ekadharmasarvadharmasarvadharmaikadharmāvirodhavihāravihāriṇaḥ* (V 370.16).
52 *dharmadhātu vicaranti asajjamānā* (V 372.5).
53 *dharmadhātugagane śaśisūryabhūtā vicaranti* (V 374.1–2).
54 *eṣo asaṅgamatināṃ anāvaraṇadharmadhātucaraṇānam . . . viharu* (V 375.25).
55 This association was previously noticed by Suzuki and Gómez (see Introduction).
56 See Introduction and Suzuki (1953: 87).
57 See Vaidya 1960: xxiv–xxix, for a list of these attainments. See also Murukami's recent study (2006) on the term *vyūha* in Mahāyāna *sūtra*s.
58 I interpret the *sūtra*'s title as a reference to the *dharmadhātu*. The translation of *gaṇḍa* as supreme is based on the term's use in compounds to mean something like 'chief, main, primary, or great' (for examples, see MW: 344). I am currently preparing an article for future publication providing a detailed argument in favour of this interpretation.
59 V 114.19–115.11.
60 *pratiśrutkopamakṣānti-* (V 115.3). I am not sure what this means (for *kṣānti* as 'intellectual receptivity', see *BHSD*: 199). The Tibetan, *sgra brnyan lta bu'i bzod pa* (D a17v.4), is a literal translation and not particularly helpful.
61 *Tathāgata* means 'One Gone Thus', or 'One Come Thus' and is a common epithet of buddhas. In this study, I have left the term untranslated.
62 *sarvatathāgatānāṃ saprathamacittotpādacaryāniryāṇapraṇidhānasāgarān sarvabuddhadharmavikurvitaviśayān sarvabuddhakṣetraparṣanmaṇḍalān sarvabuddhadharmacakranirghoṣān sarvasattvavinayādhiṣṭhānavyūhān adrākṣīt* (V 115.9–11; SI 149.22–25; D a18r.1–3; C 1239).
63 See V 118.2–11 for a list of all ten.
64 The Tibetan name for this monk is rGya mtsho'i rgyal mtshan (see D ga349r.4), which would translate into Sanskrit as **sāgaradhvaja* ('ocean-banner'), not *sāradhvaja* ('best banner').
65 *dharmadhātunayapratibhāsamaṇijālasaṃchāditaśarīrāṃ* (V 265.4).
66 *sarvacandrasūryajyotirgrahatārānakṣatrapratibhāsasaṃdarśana-* (V 265.5). As V 265, n.1 indicates, SI 341.16 omits *–tārā-*. This appears to be a mistake. A 179v.5 supports the reading in V.
67 *anantamadhyāvabhāsasarvadikspharaṇa-* (V 265.11).
68 *. . . dharmakāyābhedyasāravatīdhātuniryātāṃ apratiṣṭhitatathāgatādhiṣṭhānaprakṛtyasaṃkliṣṭasvabhāvanirmaladharmatāśarīraviśuddhakāyām* (V 265.15–16; SI 342.2–4; D a180r.4–5; C 1364).
69 See list above (from V 234.15).
70 V 272.20.
71 See Appendix A for a complete list of *kalyāṇamitra*s.
72 This will become more obvious in the following chapters, when I discuss several *kalyāṇamitra*s in some detail. For now let me point out that the four householders (*gṛhapati*s) and two laywomen (*upāsikā*s) mentioned in this list do not represent the medieval Indian equivalent of your average income households – the *Gaṇḍavyūha* goes to some length to describe their fabulous wealth and generosity. Notice also that if we include the past life stories of the goddesses we have a total of ten royal women represented in the narrative.
73 This is Ñāṇamoli's translation from Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (Ñāṇamoli 1991: 98). Buddhaghosa is quoting from *Saṃyutta Nikāya* i, 88.

74 See Ñāṇamoli (1991: 98), as cited in Collins (1987: 58).
75 Collins (1987: 62). See also the *Visuddhimagga*'s discussion on taking a meditation subject (Ñāṇamoli 1991: 85–117).
76 *kalyāṇamitra-parigrahasampad* (as quoted in Dayal 1932: 63).
77 This is from the *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* as paraphrased in Dayal (1932: 63).
78 This quote is from Bendall and Rouse's translation of Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (1922: 43).
79 *sādhu sādhu kulaputra yas tvam anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau cittam utpādya kalyāṇamitraṇy anubadhnāsi. bodhisattvacaryāṃ pariprasṭavyāṃ manyase bodhisattvamārgaṃ paripūrayitukāmaḥ. eṣa hi kulaputra ādiḥ eṣa niṣyandaḥ sarvajñatāpariniṣpattaye yaduta kalyāṇāmitrāṇāṃ sevanaṃ bhajanaṃ paryupāsanam. tasmāt tarhi kulaputra aparikhinnena te bhavitavyaṃ kalyāṇamitraparyupāsanatāyai* (V 46.12–15; SI 56.24–57.3; D ga322v.5–323r.1; C 1178).
80 See for example the *Visuddhimagga* (Ñāṇamoli 1991), the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛccha* (Finot 1970) and the *Ugraparipṛccha* (Nattier 2003).
81 Since these two are an inseparable pair who speak with a single voice, I have counted them both as *km*#51.
82 *sa te . . . kalyāṇamitro >bhiṣyandayiṣyati sarvakuśalamūlāni vivardhayiṣyati* (V 361.16–17).
83 *kalyāṇamitrādhīnāḥ . . . bodhisattvānāṃ sarvabodhisattvacaryāśravāḥ* (V 363.26).
84 *kalyāṇamitrapratibaddhāḥ sarvabodhisattvaśikṣāpratipattayaḥ* (V 363.30).
85 *kalyāṇamitrasaṃjanitāḥ sarvabodhisattvajñānālokāḥ* (V 364.4).
86 *kalyāṇamitrārādhanapratilabdhā sarvabuddhabodhiḥ* (V 364.10–11).
87 *kalyāṇamitrasaṃdhāritāḥ . . . bodhisattvā na patanti durgatiṣu* (V 364.16).
88 *kalyāṇamitraparigṛhītā bodhisattvā na nivartante mahāyānāt* (V 364.17).
89 *mātṛbhūtāni kalyāṇamitrāṇi . . . pitṛbhūtāni kalyāṇamitrāṇi . . . dhātrībhūtāni kalyāṇamitrāṇi* (V 365.10–11).
90 The same enlightening source is the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the buddhas and the bodhisattvas. See Chapter 4 below.
91 This is the essence (*svabhāva*) of the *dharmakāya* / *dharmadhātu*. See below.
92 *sadā ahaṃ deveṣu devamāhātmyaṃ pratilabhya manuṣyeṣu manuṣyamāhātmyaṃ na jātu kalyāṇamitravirahitā abhūvaṃ yaduta buddhabodhisattvaiḥ* (V 179.9–10; SI 233.7–9; D a88r.7–88v.1; C 1292).
93 These five are: Mañjuśrī (*km*#1), Avalokiteśvara (*km*#28), Ananyagāmin (*km*#29), Maitreya (*km*#52) and Samantabhadra (*km*#53).
94 Meghaśrī stated, 'how am I to know the course of conduct of bodhisattvas who are purified within the circle of endless knowledge, or explain its virtues?' (*kiṃ mayā śakyaṃ bodhisattvānām anantajñānamaṇḍalaviśuddhānāṃ caryā jñātum guṇān va vaktum* (V 49.16–17)). See Chapter 3 for more about this statement of ignorance and other stock formulas used in the narrative.
95 Meghaśrī's statement of his ignorance is repeated in various forms by every good friend except five: Viśvāmitra (*km*#44), Ajitasena (*km*#49), Maitreya (*km*#52), Mañjuśrī (*km*#1) and Samantabhadra (*km*#53). The omission of this confession for the first two seems to be an oversight. Given the high status of the last three and their position within the narrative, this omission seems to be intentional (see Ehman 1977: 215, n. 17; see also Osto 1999: 23, n. 22).
96 These are the brahmin Jayoṣmāyatana (*km*#10) and the king Anala (*km*#18). See V 90.27–93.23, and V 121.26–122.5. I discuss Sudhana's visits to these good friends in Chapters 4 and 5 below.
97 See Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion.
98 At V 12.26–13.7, the great *śrāvaka*s cannot see the magical transformation of Vairocana's *samādhi* because they lack the 'corresponding roots of merit' (*kuśalamūlāsabhagatayā*). See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion.

99 This idea is suggested by Sudhana's statement that Maitreya, 'has obtained the leadership of the secret circle of all bodhisattvas' (*sa mūrdhaprāptaḥ sarvabodhisattvaguhyamāṇḍalasya*, V 393.30).
100 See *Aṅguttara Nikāya* 4: 386–87.
101 See, for example, the Gandhāran Buddha and bodhisattva statues in Errington and Cribb (1992), and Errington and Bopearachchi (2000).
102 See, for example, the *Mahāvastu* (Jones 1952: 72 ff.) and the *Buddhacarita* (Johnston 1972). For a detailed examination of the manliness of the Buddha in the biographical accounts, see Powers (forthcoming).
103 The *Anavatapta-gāthā*, or 'Songs of Lake Anavatapta' are extant in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, and Gāndhārī. The Gāndhārī version is from the recently discovered Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts (Salomon 1999). These manuscripts, written on birch bark in the Kharoṣṭhī script are thought to date from the first century CE. The following is a summary of the recitation of the Buddhist saint Yaśas based on my own study of his verses from fragment number 1 of the Gāndhārī, with the help of the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. The verses are fragmentary and I have relied heavily on the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions to reconstruct the story. For the Sanskrit text, see Wille (1990: 70–107). For the Tibetan with French translation, see Hofinger (1982: 72–76, 220–224). Richard Salomon is currently producing a complete transliteration and translation of the Gāndhārī *Anavatapta-gāthā* (Gāndhārī Buddhist Texts 5). I would like to thank him for permission to summarize the Gāndhārī version, and for his invaluable comments. See Osto (2006), where I discuss the story of Yaśas at greater length and compare it to Gopā's story in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (see Chapter 6 below).
104 G *istrikunavu*; Skt *nārīkuṇapam*; Tib. *bud med kyi ni ro*.
105 This ancient meditation practice on the foulness of the human body is described at some length by Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga* (see Ñāṇamoli 1991: 173–190).
106 G. *udaru tasa phaṭiṣ[u]*; Tib. *de yi lto rdol* (the Skt is missing the first half of the verse).
107 G. *gramu prav[i]kṣe bhuyaṇath[i]*; Skt *grāmaṃ praviśan bhojanārthikaḥ* (from Gilgit XI. 145); Tib. *grong khyer du zas kyi ched du zhugs pa*.
108 See Paul (1985: 169–170), and Gómez (1996).
109 See Paul (1985: 166–211).
110 Bendall and Rouse (1922: 77).
111 Bendall and Rouse (1922: 83).
112 Some exceptions to this negative attitude may be found in the *Śrīmālā* (Wayman and Wayman 1974) and in Śariputra's encounter with the goddess in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (Thurman 1976: 56–63).
113 Another possible translation would be 'princely'. See *BHSD*: 187.
114 McMahan's reference (2002: 125) to a female bodhisattva, 'Ananyagāmī', in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is an error based apparently on his misreading of the Sanskrit nominative, masculine *-in* stem for the feminine *-ī* stem. For the Sanskrit text, see V 165.
115 See *BHSD*: 458–460, for a lengthy discussion of these marks and references to them in Buddhist sources.
116 For more about Acalā and Vasumitrā, see Chapter 6 below.
117 See Gómez (1977: 230 ff).
118 *Ibid. Contra* McMahan (2002: 120), the *Gaṇḍavyūha* makes no mention of the 'enjoyment body' (*sāṃbhogikakāya*) of the *trikāya* systems.

3 Narrative

1 The story is 436 pages in the Vaidya edition and 548 pages in the Suzuki and Idzumi edition.

2 *āryagaṇḍavyūho mahāyānasūtraratnarājaḥ samāptaḥ* (V 436.28).
3 Some examples of this blend of narrative and didactic discourse may be found in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Laṅkāvatāra*, *Kāraṇḍavyūha* and *Samādhirāja sūtra*s (for a discussion of Buddhist narratives, see Ruegg 1999: 211).
4 A possible exception may be the *Lalitavistara*, which the Tibetan Kanjurs classify as a Mahāyāna *sūtra* (Ruegg 1999: 203).
5 For the Sanskrit, see the *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita*, chapters 30–32 in Vaidya (1960). For an English translation of this story, see Conze (1973a: 277–300).
6 I first discuss this in my MA thesis (see Osto 1999: 17–18).
7 By this statement I do not mean to assert the direct influence of Sadāprarudita's story upon Sudhana's story, but merely that a comparison of the two suggests a development of certain motifs important to Indian Mahāyāna Buddhists.
8 Both Ruegg (1999: 203) and Fontein (1981: 106) point out the loose boundary between *jātaka* and *avādana* – the term *bodhisattvāvadāna*, applied to the *jātaka*s such as those found in the *Jātakamāla*, indicate that *jātaka*s were considered a special type of *avadāna* involving the Buddha in a previous life. Also worth noting is that the *Mahāvastu*, which largely contains biographical information about the Buddha, has *avadāna* as part of its title (Ruegg 1999: 203).
9 See Tatelman (2000).
10 See V 115.19–29, 133.30–134.21, 156.8–18, 178.16–179.28, 196.1–202.7, 207.1–217.4, 235.20–239.14, 249.6–263.2, 272.26–283.30, 295.9–296.16, 309.1–332.8, and 348.16–349.12.
11 These stories are not just told by female good friends – the story at V 115.19–29 is by Ratnacūḍa (*km*#16).
12 In the *Divyāvadāna* there is a story about a prince (the Buddha in a former life) named Sudhana called the *Sudhanakumārāvadāna* (see Cowell and Neil 1886: 441 ff.; see also Tatelman 2005: 219–307). There is also a similar story of a prince Sudhanu in the *Mahāvastu* (see Jones 1952: 95 ff.). These two seem to be the same prince, but different from Sudhana, the merchant-banker's son, the hero of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.
13 For an overview, see Onega and Landa (1996: 1–41).
14 Taken from Roland Barthes (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath, New York: Hill & Wang, pp. 79–117, cited in Onega and Landa (1996: 45).
15 See Gibson (1996) and Currie (1998).
16 See Culler (1975) and (1981).
17 Ānanda is never mentioned in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, nor does the text tell Sudhana's story as if it were a discourse of the Buddha.
18 The category of 'fabula' was first used by the Russian formalists (Onega and Landa 1996: 23). Although the terminology differs among theorists, the general assumption that narratives may be divided into discrete levels of analysis that distinguish between a series of events and their presentation is a fundamental presupposition of structural narratology. In a brilliant essay, Jonathan Culler points out a 'contrary logic' that exists between these two levels that cannot be synthesized (1981: 169–187). But rather than discarding analysis in the face of this 'self-deconstructive' aspect of narrative, Culler suggests a flexibility that allows one to shift perspectives from one level to the next and back again (*ibid.*: 187).
19 There are five good friends who do not (see Chapter 2 above).
20 I determine the percentage by taking the total number of pages in the Vaidya edition (436) and dividing by the number of pages devoted to the good friend.
21 See Appendix A for a list of *kalyāṇamitra*s with their percentages.
22 Both Vaidya (1960: xxiv–xxix) and Thakur (2006: 129–134) provide useful lists of each *kalyāṇamitra*, their place of residence, vocation and special attainment. See also my Appendix A.
23 Jayoṣmāyatana (*km*#10).

24 *kms*#34–39 are night goddesses.
25 Bal states that, 'Sometimes, the hero can also be equated, in many ways, with the actantial subject' (1997: 132). Unless I have misunderstood her analysis of the actors in a fabula, it seems to me that the hero would most often be equated with this subject.
26 *svadeśe* (V 419.13). See Chapter 4 below.
27 Focalization is probably Bal's most significant single contribution to the field of structural narratology.
28 This abundant verbiage has been commented on, somewhat disparagingly, by Griffiths (1981).
29 See also my Appendix B (a concordance of V, SI, and A), and Appendix C (a concordance of the Derge, Peking and Tog Palace Tibetan Kanjur versions of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*).
30 On orality in Buddhism, see Allon (1997); Collins (1992); Cousins (1983).
31 See Chapter 7, where I discuss this issue in relation to the views of Gombrich (1990) and McMahan (1998).
32 For a detailed study of these formulas in the Pāli Canon, see Allon (1997).
33 *yad ārya vistareṇa kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryāyāṃ śikṣitavyam? kathaṃ pratipattavyam? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā prārabhyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryāyāṃ caritavyam? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā paripūrayitavyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā pariśodhayitavyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā avatartavyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā abhinirhartavyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā anusartavyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā adhyālambitavyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryā vistartavyā?* (V 46.16–22; SI 57.3–10; D ga323r.1–5; C 1178).
34 Most sections have the imperative verb 'go' (*gaccha*), instead of the verb to be (*asti*) in this position.
35 *asti kulaputra ihaiva dakṣiṇāpathe rāmāvarānto nāma janapadaḥ. tatra sugrīvo nāma parvataḥ. tatra meghaśrīr nāma bhikṣuḥ prativasati. tam upasaṃkramya paripṛccha – kathaṃ bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryāyāṃ śikṣitavyam, kathaṃ prayoktavyam? kathaṃ bodhisattvacaryā prārabhyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvacaryāyāṃ caritavyam? kathaṃ bodhisattvacaryā paripūrayitavyā? kathaṃ pariśodhayitavyā? kathaṃ avatartavyā? katham abhinirhartavyā? katham anusartavyā? katham adhyālambitavyā? kathaṃ vistārayitavyā? kathaṃ bodhisattvasya paripūrṇaṃ bhavati samantabhadracaryāmaṇḍalam? sa te kulaputra kalyāṇamitraḥ samantabhadracaryāmaṇḍalam upadekṣyati* (V 47.18–24; SI 58.16–24; D ga324r.3–7; C 1179).
36 *atha khalu sudhanaḥ śreṣṭhidārakas tuṣṭa udagra āttamanāḥ pramuditaḥ prītisaumanasyajāto mañjuśriyaḥ kumārabhūtasya pādau śirasābhivandya mañjuśriyaṃ kumārabhūtam anekaśatasahasrakṛtvaḥ pradakṣiṇīkṛtya anekaśatasahasrakṛtvo >valokya kalyāṇamitrapremānugatacittaḥ kalyāṇamitrādarśanamasahamāno >śrumukho rudan mañjuśriyaḥ kumārabhūtasyāntikāt prakrāntaḥ* (V 47.25–28; SI 58.24–59.3; D ga324r.7–324v.2; C 1179–1180).
37 The additional elements included in this first occurrence of the 'Departing' formula, such as the strong emotional element of shedding tears, I attribute to the particular importance of Mañjuśrī in the narrative. As one of Vairocana's primary 'helpers' and the one that sends Sudhana on his quest, this bodhisattva has a special relationship with our hero, not unlike the *iṣṭadevatā*s of the later Tantric tradition, or the patron saints of medieval Christianity.
38 *sa yena meghaśrīr bhikṣus tenopasaṃkramya meghaśrīyo bhikṣoḥ pādau śirasābhivandya meghaśriyaṃ bhikṣuṃ pradakṣiṇīkṛtya purataḥ prāñjaliḥ sthitvā etad avocat:..* (V 48.8–9; SI 59.12–14; C 1180).
39 *asyā ahaṃ kulaputra samantamukhasarvārambaṇavijñaptisamavasaraṇālokāyā-buddhānusmṛter lābhī. kiṃ mayā śakyaṃ bodhisattvānāṃ anantajñānamaṇḍalaviś-uddhānāṃ caryā jñātum, guṇān va vaktum, ye te samantāvabhasamaṇḍalabuddhān-*

usmṛtimukhapratilabdhāḥ sarvatathātamaṇḍalasarvabuddhakṣetrabhavanaviśuddhivyūhābhimukhapaśyanatayā (V 49.15–18; SI 61.6–10; D ga326v.1–3; C 1181).

4 Power

1 One of these is with the brahmin Jayoṣmāyatana (see below), and the other is with king Anala (see Chapter 6).
2 In his edition, Vaidya ends the *Nidāna* after the last of the directional bodhisattvas recites his verses (V 24). The next chapter he calls 'Samantabhadraḥ', which constitutes Samantabhadra's discourse and verses, the Buddha's emission of the light-ray, Mañjuśrī's verses and the bodhisattvas' sending out of magical creations (V 25–34). Because all of these events take place in the same location, I think Vaidya's division into two chapters is somewhat artificial. I treat these events as part of the *Nidāna*.
3 See Chapter 7 for a discussion of the Middle Period.
4 *evaṃ mayā śrutam. ekasmin samaye bhagavān śrāvastyāṃ viharati sma jetavane >nāthapiṇḍadasyārāme mahāvyūhe kūṭāgāre sārdhaṃ pañcamātrair bodhisattvasahasraiḥ samantabhadramañjuśrī bodhisattvapurvaṃgamaiḥ* (V 1.1–3; SI 2.11–13; D ga274v.7–275r.1; C 1135).
5 In an article titled 'If You Can't Remember, How to Make It Up: Some Monastic Rules for Redacting Canonical Texts' (1997b: 571–582), G. Schopen discusses a passage from the *Kṣudrakavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* that gives detailed instructions for deciding the location of the Buddha's discourses, names of kings, householders etc. when a monk cannot remember. These rules clearly favour Śrāvastī and studies done by Schopen and others indicate that this city occurs as the setting of the Buddha's discourses in a very high percentage of texts from the Chinese *Madhyama-āgama*, the Pāli *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*.
6 These names may be arranged into 15 groups of ten according to their final elements. The three extra names are the result of the fifth group containing 12 names and the eighth group possessing 11. Ehman (1977: 219, n. 4) see these as errors in the listing. I am inclined to agree with his opinion.
7 *pañcabhiśca śrāvakamahārddhikaśataiḥ sarvaiḥ* (V 3.26).
8 *lokendraiśca pūrvajinakṛtādhikāraiḥ* (V 3.29).
9 – *na sakyaṃ sadevakenāpi lokena tathāgataviṣayaṃ tathāgatajñānagocaraṃ tathāgatādhiṣṭhānaṃ tathāgatabalaṃ tathāgatavaiśāradyaṃ tathāgatasamādhiṃ tathāgatavihāraṃ tathāgatādhipatyaṃ tathāgatakāyaṃ tathāgatajñānam avagantuṃ vā avagāhituṃ vā adhimoktuṃ vā prajñātuṃ vā vijñātuṃ vā vicārayituṃ vā vibhāvayituṃ vā vibhājituṃ vā prabhāvayituṃ vā parasattvasaṃtāneṣu vā pratiṣṭhāpayituṃ, anyatra tathāgatādhiṣṭhānena tathāgatavikurvitena tathāgatānubhāvena tathāgatapūrvaprāṇīdhānena pūrvabuddhasukṛtakuśalamūlatayā kalyāṇamitraparigraheṇa śraddhānayanajñānapariśuddhyā udārādhimuktyavabhāsapratilambhena bodhisattvādhyāśayapariśuddhyā adhyāśayasarvajñatāpraṇidhānaprasthānena* (V 4.5–12; SI 5.7–15; D ga277v.1–4; C 1137).
10 *apyeva nāma bhagavān asmākaṃ yathāśayānāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ sarveṣāṃ ca sattvānām āśayavimātratayā adhimuktinānātvatayā pratibodhanānātvatayā vacanasaṃketanānātvaprāptānāṃ nānādhipateyabhūmipratiṣṭhitānāṃ nānendriyaviśuddhānāṃ nānāśayaprayogānāṃ nānācetanāviṣayāṇāṃ nānātathāgataguṇaniśritānāṃ nānādharmanirdeśadigabhimukhānāṃ pūrvasarvajñatāprasthānaṃ ca saṃdarśayet* (V 4.12–15; SI 5.15–20; D ga277v.5–278r.1; C 1137).
11 *pūrvabodhisattvapraṇidhānābhinirhāraṃ* (V 4.15–16).
12 *pūrvabodhisattvapāramitāmaṇḍalaviśuddhiṃ* (V 4.16).
13 *pūrvabodhisattvabhūmyākramaṇavikurvitaṃ* (V 4.17).
14 *pūrvabodhisattvacaryāmaṇḍalābhinirhāraparipūrīṃ* (V 4.17–18).

15 *pūrvabodhisattvayānābhirhāravyūhāvabhāsaṃ* (V 4.18).
16 See the next chapter for a description of *maṇi*-gems.
17 *aparājitavajradharaṇītalavyūhaḥ sarvamaṇiratnarājajālasaṃsthitabhūmitalam anekaratnapuṣpābhikīrṇo mahāmaṇiratnasuvikīrṇo vaiḍūryastambhopaśobhito jagadvirocanamaṇirājasuvibhaktālaṃkāraḥ sarvaratnayamakasaṃghāto jāmbūnadamaṇiratnakūṭopaśobhitaḥ sarvaratnaniryūhatoraṇaharmyagavākṣā saṃkhyeyavedikāviśuddhavyūhaḥ sarvalokendrasadṛśamaṇiratnavyūho jagatsāgaramaṇiratnavyūhaḥ sarvamaṇiratnasaṃchāditaḥ samucchritacchatradhvajapatākaḥ sarvadvāratoraṇavyūhamukhair dharmadhāturaśmijālapramuktaspharaṇavyūho bahiranabhilāpyaparṣanmaṇḍalabhūmitalavedikāvyūhaḥ samantadiksopānamaṇiratnakūṭaḥ paramasuvibhaktopaśobhitaḥ* (V 5.2–8; SI 6.15–23; D ga278v.7–279r.4; C 1138).
18 *tathā hi tad acintyaṃ tathāgatakuśalamūlaṃ, acintyas tathāgataśukladharmopacayaḥ, acintyaṃ tathāgatabuddhavṛṣabhitādhiṣṭhānam, acintyaṃ tathāgatasarvalokadhātvekakāyaspharaṇavikurvitaṃ . . . yathā ca jetavanam evaṃrūpayā buddhakṣetrapariśuddhyā pariśuddhaṃ saṃsthitaṃ . . .* (V 5.28–6.5; SI 7.21–8.4; D ga280r.5–280v.3; C 1139).
19 This term has often been rendered as 'concentration' (see Ñāṇamoli 1991: 85 ff.; Conze 1973a, 1973b; *BHSD*: 568; *PED*: 685). Because *samādhi* in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a mental state that transforms reality, rather than a one-pointed focusing of the mind, I prefer 'trance' to 'concentration'.
20 As I mention in Chapter 2, I am currently completing an article that provides a detailed argument for this translation of *gaṇḍa-vyūha*.
21 Some translations of *adhiṣṭhāna* are 'sustaining power' (Suzuki 1953: 79–82), 'résolution déterminante' (Ruegg 1969: 45), 'authority' (Conze 1973a: 312) and 'empowerment' (Harrison 1990: 191).
22 *sarvamaṇiratnarājajāla-* (V 5.2).
23 *-rājasuvibhaktā* (V 5.4).
24 We find an explicit statement of the connection between buddhahood and kingship in the *Akṣayamati-nirdeśa-sūtra*, when Śakyamuni Buddha refers to a buddha called Samantabhadra in a distant world-realm: 'There in that world-sphere there is no other king apart from the peerless king of religion, that Tathāgata worthy of offerings, the perfectly awakened one Samantabhadra (*tatra lokadhātau tathāgatam arhantaṃ samyaksaṃbuddhaṃ samantabhadram anuttaraṃ dharmarājaṃ sthāpayitvā nāsti anyo rājā kaścit*)' (Braarvig 1993: 50).
25 This is called 'the domain of the *tathāgata*' (*tathāgataviṣaya* – see V 4.5) or 'the domain of the Buddha' (*buddhaviṣaya*). Both of these terms would be synonyms for the *dharmadhātu*.
26 *Adhiṣṭhāna* also has an economic component. Notice that Vairocana's *vyūha* is constructed out of objects of unimaginable wealth. Gold, jewels, gems, and lapis lazuli cover the turrets, archways, mansions, windows, banners, flags etc. This conspicuous display of wealth is the central focus of the transformation caused by the Buddha's trance. In this way, the *dharmadhātu* is depicted as the infinite bejewelled reality beyond all the economic vicissitudes of *saṃsāra*. I return to this idea in more detail in the next chapter.
27 The presence of this three-dimensional *maṇḍala* provokes in me a number of questions: were sections of the text used for visualization purposes? Does this depiction represent a proto-Tantric element in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*? If so, what are the implications for a relative chronology of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s and the development of Buddhist Tantra in India? Although speculative, this line of enquiry may be a useful approach to developing a set of relations between texts (see Silk 2002). See also Osto (forthcoming).
28 Compare this scene to a description of the political structure of the Gupta empire:

> From the very beginning, the Gupta empire revealed a structure which it retained even at the height of its expansion . . . and which served as a blueprint for all medieval kingdoms of India. The centre of the empire was a core area in which Samudragupta had uprooted all earlier rulers in two destructive wars. . . . This area was under direct administration of royal officers. Beyond this area lived the border kings some of whom Samudragupta even reinstated after they had been presumably subdued by some of their rivals. These border kings paid tribute and were obliged to attend Samudragupta's court.
>
> (Kulke and Rothermund 1997: 88)

By this comparison I am not making the strong argument that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was developed during the Gupta dynasty. The point of this comparison is to demonstrate that buddhahood and monarchy are metaphorically related in a general way during the Indian Buddhist Middle Period, rather than definitely connecting the text to a particular dynasty. See Chapter 7 below.

29 *na ca te mahāśrāvakāḥ . . . jetavane tathāgatavikurvitam adrākṣuḥ* (V 12.26–27). The narrator lists ten of these *mahāśrāvaka*s by name: 1) Śāriputra, 2) Maudgalyāyana, 3) Mahākāśyapa, 4) Revata, 5) Subhūti, 6) Aniruddha, 7) Nandika, 8) Kapphina, 9) Kātyāyana and 10) Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra (V 12.26).

30 *na ca tān buddhavyūhān buddhavṛṣabhitāṃ buddhavikrīḍitaṃ buddhaprātihāryaṃ buddhādhipateyatāṃ buddhacaritavikurvitaṃ buddhaprabhāvaṃ buddhādhiṣṭhānaṃ buddhakṣetrapariśuddhim adrākṣuḥ. nāpi tam acintyaṃ bodhisattvaviṣayaṃ bodhisattvasamāgamaṃ bodhisattvasamavasaraṇaṃ bodhisattvasaṃnipātaṃ bodhisattvopasaṃkramaṇaṃ bodhisattvavikurvitaṃ bodhisattva prātihāryaṃ bodhisattvaparṣanmaṇḍalaṃ . . .* (V 12.27–13.1; SI 17.24–18.2; D ga290r.6–290v.2; C 1146).

31 *tat kasya hetoḥ? kuśalamūlāsabhāgatayā* (V 13.7).

32 See *Majjhima-Nikāya* 1.47 and 489.

33 See the *Dharmasaṃgraha* section 15, where a specifically Mahāyāna list of three qualities is mentioned: 'the production of the thought of enlightenment' (*bodhicittotpāda*), 'purification of the mental dispositions' (*āśayaviśuddhi*) and 'abandoning "I"-making and "my"-making' (*ahaṃkāra-mamakāra-parityāga*) (cited in *BHSD*: 188).

34 *na ca taiḥ pūrvaṃ saṃsāre saṃsaradbhir anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau sattvāḥ pāramitāsu samādāpitāḥ. na ca tair bodhicittotpādaḥ parasaṃtāneṣu pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ . . . na ca taiḥ sarvajñatāsaṃvartanīyaṃ kuśalamūlam upacitam* (V 13.10–14; SI 19.14–19; D ga291r.2–5; C 1146).

35 Except for the last bodhisattva who recites 11 (cf. V 24.19–20).

36 *atha khalu bhagavān bhūyasya mātrayā teṣām bodhisattvānām atraiva siṃhavijṛmbhite buddhasamādhau saṃniyojanārthaṃ bhrūvivarāntarād ūrṇākośād dharmadhātusamantadvāravijñaptitryadhvāvabhāsaṃ nāma raśmiṃ niścāriyitvā anabhilapyabuddhakṣetraparamāṇurajaḥsamaraśmiparivārāṃ daśadiksarvalokadhātusamudreṣu sarvakṣetraprasarān avabhāsayati sma* (V 27.5–8; SI 34.25–35.3; D ga302v.7–303r.2; C 1161).

37 *atha khalu mañjuśrībodhisattvo buddhādhiṣṭhānena etāny eva sarvavikurvitāni saṃdarśayan daśa diśo vyavalokya tasyāṃ velāyām imā gāthā abhāṣata* (V 32.16–17).

38 *atha khalu teṣāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ buddhasamādhyavabhāsitasaṃtānānām ekaikasya bodhisattvasya anabhilāpyabuddhakṣetraparamāṇurajaḥsamāni mahākaruṇamukhāny avakrāntāni* (V 34.9–10).

39 Kauṭilya in his political treatise, the *Arthaśāstra*, places the highest importance on wealth. Drekmeier writes, 'Of the threefold ends of earthly life – dharma, artha, and kama (virtue, wealth, and enjoyment) – Kautalya assigns first importance to wealth and, anticipating the most outspoken of Western materialists,

proclaims that the condition of righteousness is wealth' (1962: 194). See also Sastri (1924–25: 12).

40 This is not the case for all Mahāyāna *sūtra*s – we have several texts that include nuns or laywomen in the Buddha's retinue. For instance, the Tibetan *PraS* states in its *Nidāna* that 500 monks and 30,000 nuns were present (Harrison 1990: 9). In the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, 1,200 monks, 6,000 nuns and an unspecified number of male and female lay devotees are mentioned (Kern 1963 [1884]: 3–7). The *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* refers to the 'fourfold community, consisting of bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, laymen and laywomen' (Thurman 1976: 12).

41 Although 2.8 per cent does not seem significant, it is within the top ten longest sections of the narrative (see Appendix A).

42 *buddhānubhāvena* (V 36.21). Here we find the term 'authority' (*anubhāva*) instead of 'power' (*adhiṣṭhāna*), but the general idea is the same: Śāriputra is able to see Mañjuśrī leaving because of the Buddha. Thus, this phrase reinforces the idea that Vairocana is 'the power' (in Buddhist terms), the true source of enlightenment.

43 The narrator mentions ten by name: Sāgarabuddhi, Mahāsudatta, Puṇyaprabha, Mahāvatsa, Vibhudatta, Viśuddhacārin, Devaśrī, Indramati, Brahmottama and Praśāntamati (V 36.27–29).

44 *aparikhedacittotpāda* (V 37.31).

45 *sarvabuddhavidarśanāsaṅgacakṣurviṣayaṃ* (V 38.15).

46 *Samantabhadra bodhisattva caryāpratiṣṭhitā* (V 38.29). This expression is a synonym for the *bodhisattva-caryā*, or *bodhisattva-mārga* in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and indicates that Samantabhadra functions in the text as a personification of the highest spiritual realization.

47 *bodhimārgam* (V 43.14, 18).

48 *yānarājyam* (V 44.8).

49 *agrayānam* (V 44.4, 16; 45.26).

50 *jñānayānam* (V 44.28).

51 *bodhiyānam* (V 43.26, 30; 45.6).

52 *dharmayānam* (V 44.20; 45.10, 14, 22).

53 *yatra te samabhirūḍhacakṣuṣā / jñānarājamakuṭābhyalaṃkṛtā // dharmapaṭṭavarabaddhaśīrṣayā / dharmarājanagaraṃ vilokayi //* (V 46.7–10; SI 56.21–22; D ga322v.4–5; C 1178).

54 V 46.11–15; see also Chapter 2, where I discuss this passage at length.

55 See Chapter 3, for a list of five standard formulas used in the narrative.

56 *. . . sarvadikkṣetrābhimukhāṃs tathāgatān paśyāmi* (V 48.26–27).

57 Monier-Williams states that a *koṭī* is 'the highest number in the older system of numbers (viz. a Krore or ten millions)' (MW: 312).

58 A *niyuta* is also a very large number defined usually as either a million or one hundred billion (see *BHS*: 298 and MW: 552).

59 *ahaṃ kulaputra pūrṇāni dvādaśa varṣāṇi iha sāgaramukhe dikpratyuddeśe viharāmi imaṃ mahāsāgaram ārambaṇīkṛtya āmukhīkṛtya, yaduta mahāsāgarasya vipulāpramāṇatām anuvicintayan vimalaprasannatāṃ ca gambhīraduravagāhatāṃ ca anupūrvanimnasusthitāṃ ca anekaratnākaravicitratāṃ. . . . tasya mama kulaputra evaṃ bhavati – asti na punar anyaḥ kaścad iha loke yo >smān mahāsāgarād vipulataraś ca vistīrṇataraś ca apramāṇataraś ca gambhīrataraś ca vicitrataraś ca. tasya mama kulaputra evaṃ yoniśaś cintāmanasikāraprayuktasya mahāsāgarasyādhastān mahāpadmaṃ prādurabhūt* (V 51.29–52.4; SI 64.7–16; D ga329v.2–6; C 1183–1184).

60 *aparājitamaṇiratnendranīlamaṇivajradaṇḍaṃ mahāvaidūryamaṇiratnāvataṃsakaṃ jāmbhūnadasurvarṇavimalavipulapatraṃ kālānusāricandanakalikāvyūham aśmagarbharatnakesaropetaṃ sāgaravipulavistīrṇapramāṇaṃ daśāsurendraśatasahasrasaṃdhāritadaṇḍagarbhaṃ daśamaṇiratnaśatasahasravicitraratnajālasaṃchannaṃ . . .* (V 52.4–7; SI 64.16–19; D ga329v.6–330r.2; C 1184).

61 *tathāgatalokottarakuśalamūlanirjātaṃ* (V 52.19).
62 *māyāgatadharmanirjātaṃ* (V 52.20).
63 *svapnasamadharmatāsamudācāraṃ* (V 52.21).
64 This section introduces, for the first time, a character-bound embedded narrative. Several important embedded narratives occur throughout the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, especially when Sudhana encounters the night goddesses (see Chapter 6). Also in this section, the external narrator describes a magical transformation involving the appearance of fabulous wealth. Like the narration of events that occur at Sudhana's conception and birth (see Chapter 5), there is an explicit connection between this vision of the lotus and spiritual merit. This is evident from Sāgaramegha's statement that the lotus was produced from the 'transcendental roots of merit of the *tathāgata*s'.
65 *ahaṃ kulaputra asaṅgamukhasya bodhisattvavimokṣasya labhī* (V 56.13).
66 *yeṣām ca sattvānām ābhāsam āgacchāmi, yaiḥ samāgacchāmi, te sarve niyatā bhavanty anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau* (V 57.27–28). A logical inference from this statement would be that Sudhana, since he has met the monk, is himself established in supreme, perfect enlightenment. This proclamation therefore functions obliquely as a confirmation of Sudhana's high spiritual status.
67 A brief quote from the *Mattavilāsa*, a satirical play composed in the early seventh century, illustrates the influence of the wealthy Buddhist monasteries. The context is a dispute over a missing skull-cup between a Kāpālika and a Buddhist monk. The Kāpālika's girlfriend complains:

> This Buddhist has behind him the wealth of many monasteries. He can fill the mouths of the officials of the court at will. But we are servants of the poor Kāpālika, whose wealth is merely a snakeskin and ash. With what wealth do we enter the court?
>
> (Lorenzen 2000: 93)

Although this play is from slightly later than the Buddhist Middle Period (*c.* 0–500 CE), I think it not unlikely that similar opinions were held by urban dwellers during this period.
68 Only 0.69 per cent of the total text for *km*#9 (V 87–89), and 1.4 per cent for *km*#10 (V 90–95).
69 These two good friends form a 'meaningful pair'. In other words, the external narrator couples certain good friends because they share a meaningful characteristic. Other such significant couplings are the kings Anala and Mahāprabha (*km*s#18 and #19; Chapter 5), the nun Siṃhavijṛmbhitā and courtesan Vasumitrā (*km*s#25 and #26; Chapter 6), the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Ananyagāmin (*km*s#28 and #29), and Gopā and Māyā (*km*s#41 and #42; Chapter 6).
70 *ahaṃ kulaputra aparājitadhvajasya bodhisattvasya vimokṣasya lābhī* (V 88.15–16).
71 *sudhana āha – ka etasya ārya aparājitadhvajasya bodhisattvavimokṣasya viṣayaḥ? tato bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa ṛṣiḥ dakṣiṇaṃ pāṇiṃ prasārya sudhanaṃ śreṣṭhidārakaṃ śirasi parimārjya dakṣiṇena pāṇinā paryagṛhṇāt* (V 88.16–18).
72 *taṃ bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa ṛṣir āha – smarasi kulaputra? āha – smarāmi ārya kalyāṇamitrādhiṣṭhānena* (V 89.13–14).
73 *sa āha – gaccha kulaputra, etaṃ kṣuradhāramārgaṃ parvatam abhiruhya atra agnikhadāyāṃ prapata. evaṃ te bodhisattvacaryā pariśuddhiṃ gamiṣyati* (V 90.25–26).
74 The second time occurs during Sudhana's encounter with King Anala (see Chapter 5).
75 *atyayam atyayato deśayāmy ārya yo >haṃ kalyāṇamitrājñāṃ prativāhayāmi* (V 94.17–18).

76 *pradakṣiṇaṃ ya bodhisattva ānuśāsti kurvatī / na kāṅkṣaye gurubhya ekadhā sthapitva mānasam // tato >sya sarva artha bhonti te >pi ca pradakṣiṇāḥ / prakakṣiṇaṃ ca buddhajñānu bodhimūli budhyate //* (V 94.19–22; SI 122.11–14; D ga387r.4–5; C 1222).
77 This same message will be repeated even more forcefully during Sudhana's visit to King Anala (see Chapter 5).
78 *jaṭāmakuṭadhāriṇam* (V 87.13).
79 This may also explain Sudhana's encounter with the god Mahādeva (*km*#30). Mahādeva, 'the great god', is a title often associated with Śiva. During Sudhana's encounter with Mahādeva, the god honours Sudhana as a great bodhisattva and bestows upon him vast amounts of wealth (see Chapter 5). This possibly symbolizes Buddhism's superiority to Śaivism, and therefore, may represent a Buddhist polemic against a contemporary Śaivite movement.
80 This idea is repeated in the Vasumitrā section (see Chapter 6).
81 In this way, the lack of female presence in the *Nidāna* and Sudhana's final encounters contextualizes the otherwise prominent role of the female good friends in the middle sections (see Chapter 6). This narrative structure indicates that the female *kalyāṇamitra*s are important Dharma teachers, but not the most important or spiritually advanced. These positions are reserved for the final three bodhisattvas.
82 This meeting is described in only 14 lines of the Vaidya edition on V 419.
83 This temporal *inclusio* may be expressed algebraically as: V-S-M (Vairocana-Samantabhadra-Mañjuśrī in the *Nidāna*) → M-S-V (in the final two sections). Thus the story is bracketed on either side by 'the power' and his two most important 'helpers'.
84 See for example Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (1988); Jan Nattier (1991); and Lewis Lancaster (1987).
85 *dharmadhātvasaṃbhedavihāra-* . . . (V 370.6).
86 *sarvadharmāsvabhāvavihāra-* . . . (V 370.9).
87 *samantamukhadharmadhātuspharaṇopāya-* . . . (V 370.11–12).
88 *iha so mahākaruṇa lābhi viśuddhabuddhir / maitreya maitraśiri lokahitābhiyuktaḥ // abhiṣekabhūmisthita jyeṣṭhasuto jinānāṃ / viharāti buddhaviṣayaṃ anucintayantaḥ //* (V 371.32–372.2; SI 472.23–26; D a294v.5–6; C 1457).
89 Thomas Cleary writes:

> *The Flower Ornament Scripture* [*Av*] is like a hologram, the whole concentrated in all of its parts, this very structure reflecting a fundamental doctrine of the scripture, that this is what the cosmos itself is like, everything interreflecting, the one and the many interpenetrating.
>
> (C 43)

90 The Maitreya section is the most often quoted one from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* by both ancient and modern commentators.
91 *uttiṣṭha kulaputra. eṣā dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā. aviṣṭhapanapratyupasthānalakṣaṇāḥ kulaputra sarvadharmā bodhisattvajñānādhiṣṭhitāḥ. evaṃ svabhāvāpariniṣpannā māyāsvapnapratibhāsopamāḥ* (V 415.27–29; SI 523.26–524.3; D a339r.7–339v.1; C 1498).
92 See Chapter 3 above.
93 *sarvalokadhātūpapattyantargatena kāyena* (V 417.23).
94 *mātā mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūto buddhakoṭīniyutaśatasahasrāṇām* (V 418.16).
95 *dūrāgatagocaro mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūtaḥ sarvavimokṣanayeṣu* (V 418.20–21).
96 *avatīrṇaḥ samantabhadrabodhisattvacaryāyām* (V 418.21).
97 *yāvanti tvayā sudhana kalyāṇamitrāṇi dṛṣṭāni, yāvanti caryāmukhāni śrutāni, yāvanto vimokṣanayā avatīrṇāḥ, yāvantaḥ praṇidhānaviśeṣā avagāḍhāḥ, sarvaṃ*

mañjuśriyaḥ kumārabhūtasyānubhāvo >dhiṣṭhānaṃ ca draṣṭavyam. sa ca mañjuśrī kumārabhūtaḥ paramapāramitāprāptaḥ (V 418.27–29; SI 528.20–24; D a344r.5–6; C 1502).

98 *samantabhadracaryāmaṇḍale* (V 419.13). This could be translated as, 'the *maṇḍala* of the universally good course of conduct'.

99 The meaning of Sudhana's 'own place' is unclear. It could be that Mañjusrī establishes Sudhana in his own place within the assembly of Samantabhadra. Alternatively, it could indicate that Mañjuśrī returns Sudhana to Dhanyākara, his hometown.

100 We have three datable Chinese translations of the *Bhadracarī*. The first was done by the translator Buddhabhadra between 418–20 CE (T. 296). The second was by Amoghavajra between 763–79 CE (T. 297). And the third was completed as the concluding section of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (T. 293) in 796–98 CE, by Prajñā. The *Bhadracarī* does not fit well with this section or the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a whole for two reasons. The first has to do with style. Although Samantabhadra is the supposed speaker of the *Bhadracarī*, in three verses (42, 50 and 55) he refers to himself in the third person. The second reason is the mention of the Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land in four verses (49, 57, 59 and 62). Nowhere else in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are there any references to Amitābha or rebirth in his Pure Land.

101 For a detailed analysis and English translation of this section, see Osto 1999.

102 *dṛṣṭaṃ te kulaputra mama vikurvitam? āha – dṛṣṭam ārya. api tu tathāgataḥ prajānan prajānīyāt tāvad acintyam idaṃ vikurvitam* (V 425.26–28). For this meaning of *prajānan*, see *BHSD*: 357.

103 *. . . atyantapariśuddho dharmakāyaḥ pratilabdhaḥ sarvatryadhvāsaṃbhinnaḥ. anuttaraś ca rūpakāyaḥ pariśodhitaḥ sarvalokābhyudgataḥ sarvajagadyathāśayavijñapanaḥ sarvatrānugataḥ sarvabuddhakṣetraprasṛtaḥ samantapratiṣṭhānaḥ sarvataḥ sarvavikurvitasaṃdarśanaḥ sarvajagadabhilakṣaṇīyaḥ* (V 426.31–427.2; SI 540.15–19; D a356r.5–356v.1; C 1510).

104 *ye khalu punaḥ kulaputra sattvā mama buddhakṣetrapariśuddhiṃ śṛṇvanti, te pariśuddheṣu buddhakṣetreṣūpapadyante* (V 427.15–16).

105 Thus, Samantabhadra represents the active embodiment of the Buddha's power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) in a way similar to the concept of Śiva's *śakti* (power) in the Śaiva tradition. Could the passive representation of the masculine Buddha in the Mahāyāna be influenced by this model in Śaivism (which in turn was influenced by the Sāṃkhyan duality of passive *puruṣa* and active *prakṛti*)? Are the roles of the 'celestial' bodhisattvas in the Mahāyāna a masculinization of the Śaiva *śakti*s? As intriguing as these parallels may be, further investigation along these lines of inquiry is beyond the current study.

106 *ye mamātmabhavapariśuddhiṃ paśyanti, te mamātmabhāve upapadyante. paśya kulaputra imāṃ mamātmabhāvapariśuddhim* (V 427.16–17).

107 *samantabhadrabodhisattvacaryāpraṇidhānasāgarasamatām* (V 428.16).

108 *sarvatathāgatasamatāṃ* (V 428.16).

109 *abhisaṃbodhivikurvitasaṃdarśanapāraṇasamatāṃ* (V 428.17).

110 *acintyabodhisattvavimokṣavikurvitasamatāṃ* (V 428.19).

111 These visits I discuss fully in the next two chapters.

112 See Chapter 6 for details.

5 Wealth

1 For English translations of some such descriptions, see Jones 1949: 41; Conze 1973a: 288; Conze 1964: 39; Kern 1963 (1884): 87; Braarvig 1993: 24, 50; Gómez 1996.

2 For examples in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, see V 40.13 ff., and V 124.17–19. The *saptaratna* are mentioned in the (quasi-Mahāyāna) *Mahāvastu* and numerous Mahāyāna *sūtra*s

such as the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa*, *Aparimitāyuḥ*, *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, *Bhaiṣajyaguru-vaiḍūrya-prabharājā*, *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, *Kaśyapaparivarta*, *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*, *Rāṣṭrapāla-paripṛcchā*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Samādhirāja*, *Saṃdhinirmocana,* *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhānavyūha*, *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (larger), *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (smaller), *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama* and *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa.* For the relationship between the *saptaratna* and international trade, see Chapter 7 below.

3 Monier-Williams cites this last term as a neuter noun meaning 'a jewel, gem' and states that 'with Buddhists "one of a sovereign's 7 treasures" (MW: 775). I interpret this compound as a *karmadhāraya* referring to a particular kind of gem. Therefore, I translate the compound (for lack of a better solution) as a '*maṇi*-gem'.

4 For a discussion of the magical properties of gem stones in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, see Granoff (1998).

5 For examples, see V 80.23, 399.27, 400.1 and 400.31.

6 I borrow this phrase from Derrida (2002: 19).

7 I use 'real' in quotations marks to indicate the provisional and problematic use of this term when applied to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Like many Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, the text contains a sophisticated and relativistic view of reality based on the notions of karma, emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and consciousness-only (*cittamātra*).

8 . . . *sudhanaṃ śreṣṭhidārakam avalokayām āsa* (V 40.12).

9 Vaidya, sensitive to this aside, places this sentence and the following passage in parentheses '(. . .)' in his edition.

10 *sudhanaḥ khula punaḥ śreṣṭhidārakaḥ kena kāraṇenocyate sudhana iti*? (V 40.12–13). Note the external narrator's use of the present tense 'is called' (*ucyate*) here. This is the first instance of a present tense rather than a past tense verb form and therefore also marks the following passage as particularly unusual and worthy of close attention.

11 I borrowed 'spans' from Cleary's translation (C 1173). The Skt is *hasta*, literally 'hands'. But Monier-Williams gives as one definition 'the fore-arm (a measure of length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, = 24 Aṅgulas or about 18 inches)' (MW: 1294). Therefore, the English 'spans' seems a useful (if somewhat vague) translation.

12 '*maṇi*-gems that give off light' is a gloss of the Skt compound *jyotir-dhvaja-maṇiratna*, which literally means something like, '*maṇi*-gems that are banners of light'.

13 Literally, '(These were) the five hundred jewelled vessels whose most excellent were these (*etat*)'. Against the editing of V and SI (53.4–5), I have separated this off from the following (*sahajātasya khalu sudhanasya* . . .) for three reasons. First, this short sentence seems to conclude and sum up the long list of vessels. Second, the genitive absolute phrase parallels the one that begins this passage (*sudhanasya khalu śreṣṭhidārakasya samanantarāvakrāntasya* . . .) and therefore should begin the sentence. Third, the use of the enclitic *khalu* ('indeed') tends to follow the first word in a sentence and appears to mark transitions in the text, therefore its inclusion here is further evidence that a new sentence begins with the word '*sahajātasya*'.

14 *sudhanasya khalu śreṣṭhidārakasya samanantarāvakrāntasya mātuḥ kukṣau tasmin gṛhe sapta ratnāṅkurāḥ prādurbhūtāḥ samantād gṛhasya suvibhaktāḥ. teṣāṃ ca ratnāṅkurāṇām adhaḥ sapta mahānidhānāni, yatas te ratnāṅkurāḥ samutpatya dharaṇitalam abhinirbhidya abhyudgatāḥ suvarṇasya rūpyasya vaiḍūryasya sphaṭikasya lohitamukteraśmagarbhasya musāragalvasya saptamasya ratnasya. sa yadā sarvāṅgapratyaṅgaiḥ paripūrṇo daśānāṃ māsānāmatyayājjātaḥ, tāda tāni sapta mahānidhānāni saptahastāyāmavistārodvedhapramāṇāni dharaṇitalād abhyudgamya vivṛttāni virocanti bhrājante sma. pañca ca bhājanaśatāni tasmin gṛhe prādurbhūtāni nānāratnamayāni, yaduta sarpibhājanāni tailabhājanāni madhubhājanāni navanītabhājanāni, pratyekaṃ ca sarvopakaraṇaparipūrṇāni. yaduta*

vajrabhājanāni sarvagandhaparipūrṇāni sugandhabhājanāni, nānāvastraparipūrṇāni śilābhājanāni, nānābhakṣyabhojyarasarasāgra paripūrṇāni maṇibhājanāni, nānāratnaparipūrṇāni suvarṇabhājanāni rūpyacūrṇaparipūrṇāni, rūpyabhājanāni suvarṇavarṇacūrnaparipūrṇāni, suvarṇarūpyabhājanāni vaiḍūryamaṇiratnaparpūrṇāni, sphaṭikabhājanāni musāragalvaparipūrṇāni, musāragalvabhājanāni sphaṭikaratnaparipūrṇāni, aśmagarbhabhājanāni lohitamuktā paripūrṇāni, lohitamuktābhājanāni aśmagarbhaparipūrṇāni jyotirdhvajamaṇiratnabhājanāni udakaprasādakamaṇiratnaparipūrṇāni, udakaprasādakamaṇiratnabhājanāni jyotirdhvajamaṇiratnaparipūrṇāni. etatpramukhāni pañca ratnabhājanaśatāni[.] *sahajātasya khalu sudhanasya śreṣṭhidārakasya gṛhe sarvakośakoṣṭhāgāreṣu dhanadhānyahiraṇyasuvarṇavividharatnavarṣāṇy abhipravarṣitāni. tasya naimittikair brāhmaṇair mātāpitṛbhyāṃ jñātivargeṇa ca vipulasamṛddhir asya jātamātrasya gṛhe prādurbhūteti sudhanaḥ sudhana iti nāmadheyaṃ kṛtam* (V 40.13–31; SI 52.11–53.8; D ga319r.5–320r.1; C 1173–1174).

15 'And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God"', Luke 6.20 (*The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972).

16 See, for example, Dehejia (1992: 37), where she states that at Sañchi 'Nineteen donations are from bankers (*seṭhi*) . . .'. Also, Schopen (1997a: 39) refers to a proto-Mahāyāna inscription that mentions the Buddha Amitābha. Schopen states that although the title of the donor is not given, 'his grandfather is called a *śreṣṭhin*, "banker" or the "head of a guild"'. See also Gokhale (1977: 128), and Neelis (2001: 496–499). Much of the difficulty in rendering this term into English stems from the fact that the Sanskrit encompasses some aspects of these different occupations that we distinguish in English. Therefore, in order to make the term as broad as possible, I translate it as 'merchant-banker'.

17 Gokhale (1977: 127) writes,

> the *seṭhis* enjoyed great power at court. The Pañcatantra has a story of a merchant who 'directed the whole administration' of a city. . . . Instances of deep friendship between princes and sons of *seṭhis* are on record and one story tells us that a *seṭhi* has power over the king because of some obligation that the merchant had conferred on the king in the past. There are also instances of rich merchants marrying their daughters to kings and princes and the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata prescribes an identical demeanor, mode of walk and gestures with hands and fingers in acting on stage for royal ministers and merchants . . . the interesting point here is that the merchant obviously is regarded here as of the same social standing as a royal minister.

18 *sudhanaḥ khalu śreṣṭhidārakaḥ pūrvajinakṛtādhikāro >varopitakuśalamūlaḥ udārādhimuktikaḥ kalyāṇamitrānugatāśayo >navadyakāyavaṅmanaskarmasamudācaro bodhisattvamārga pariśodhanaprayuktaḥ sarvajñatābhimukho bhājanībhūto buddhadharmāṇām āśayagamanapariśuddho >saṅgabodhicittaparinispannaḥ* (V 40.31–41.3; SI 53.8–12; D ga320r.1–3; C 1174).

19 . . . *madhyenagaraṃ śṛṅgāṭake dharmasāṃkathyāya siṃhāsane niṣaṇṇaṃ daśānāṃ prāṇisahasrāṇāṃ cakrākṣaraparivartavyūhaṃ nāma dharmaparyāyaṃ saṃprakāśayamānam* (V 59.6–8).

20 *atha khalu megho dramiḍo bodhisattvagauraveṇa tataḥ siṃhāsanād utthāya avatīrya sudhanasya śreṣṭhidārakasya sarvaśarīreṇa praṇipatya sudhanaṃ śreṣṭhidārakaṃ sarvapuṣparāśinā abhyavakirat. anarghaiś ca maṇiratnair udāracandanacūrṇaiś cābhiprākirat. nānācitraraṅgaraktaiś ca anekair vastraśatasahasrair abhicchādayām āsa. anekaiś ca nānāvarṇai rucirair manoramair gandhapuṣpair abhyavakīrya abhiprakīrya anyaiś ca vividhaiḥ pūjāprakāraiḥ pūjayitvā satkṛtya gurukṛtya mānayitvā pūjayitvā sudhanaṃ śreṣṭhidārakam etad avocat – sādhu sādhu kulaputra,*

yena te anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau cittam utpāditam (V 59.20–25; SI 73.14–21; D ga338r.7–338v.4; C 1189–1190).

21 *[a]nupūrveṇa dvādāśabhir varṣais taṃ vanavāsijanapadam anuprāptaḥ* (V 63.19).

22 *atha khalu muktakaḥ śreṣṭhī tasyāṃ velāyāṃ sarvabuddhakṣetrasamavasaraṇaṃ nāma anantāvartadhāraṇīmukhapūrvaṃgamaṃ bodhisattvasamādhimukhaṃ samāpadyata pūrvakuśalamūlabalādhānena tathāgatādhiṣṭhānena, mañjuśriyaś ca kumārabhūtasya samanvāhareṇa jñānālokopasaṃhāreṇa ca* (V 64.20–22; SI 79.8–11; D ga344v.2–4; C 1194).

23 The mention of Mañjuśrī here is significant. This is the first such occurrence since Sudhana's encounter with the bodhisattva. Given that Sudhana, the son of a merchant-banker, has a special relationship with Mañjuśrī, and that Muktaka himself is a merchant-banker, is the external narrator indicating that this bodhisattva was the Buddhist equivalent to a patron saint of *śreṣṭhin*s? Although the evidence is not conclusive, it is suggestive of a possible special relationship between Mañjuśrī and the wealthy merchant-banker class at the time of the story's composition.

24 *ahaṃ kulaputra asaṅgavyūhaṃ nāma tathāgatavimokṣam āyūhāmi niryūhāmi* (V 65.22).

25 There are four other merchant-bankers: Ratnacūḍa (*km*#16), Samantanetra (*km*#17), Utpalabhūti (*km*#22), Jayottama (*km*#24); and one merchant-banker's son, Śilpābhijña (*km*#46).

26 The Anala section is only 0.92 per cent of the total text (V 120–123). The Mahāprabha section is 1.6 per cent (V 124–130).

27 *so >nupūrveṇa janapadena janapadaṃ grāmeṇa grāmaṃ deśaṃ parimārgan yena tāladhvajaṃ nagaraṃ tenopasaṃkramya paripṛcchati sma – kutrānalo rājeti* (V 120.8–10). The toponym 'Tāladhvaja' is interesting – a *dhvaja* is a 'banner, flag, standard, characteristic, sign'; and *tāla* (among its several meanings) is a name of a hell in both the *Viṣṇu*- and *Śivapurāṇa*s (MW: 445). So we may translate Tāladhvaja as 'The Banner of the Tāla hell'. Moreover, the king's name, Anala, means 'fire' or the 'the god of fire', which is also suggestive of hell. The significance of these names will become clear shortly.

28 *. . . analaṃ rājānaṃ nārāyaṇavajramaṇivicitre asaṃkhyeyanānāvidhaprabhāsvararatnapāde anekaratnasuracitālaṃkārarucirabimbe kāñcanasūtrajālaśvetasupariniṣṭhite anekamaṇiratnadīpapradyotite vaśirājamaṇiratnamayapadmagarbhe anekadivyaratnavastrasuprajñapte vividhadivyagandhadhūpitopacāre ucchritaratnadhvajachatraśatasahasravirājite ratnapatākāśatasahasrodviddhopaśobhite vicitraratnapuṣpadāmakalāpābhipralambhitojjvalite vividhadivyaratnavitānavitate mahāratnasiṃhāsane niṣaṇṇaṃ . . .* (V 120.17–22; SI 155.20–26; D a23r.3–7; C 1243).

29 *ahaṃ ca sarvasattvahitasukhahetor anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃprasthito bodhisattvacaryāparimārgaṇatatparaḥ kalyāṇamitrāṇi paripṛcchāmi – kiṃ bodhisattvena kuśalaṃ kartavyaṃ, kim akuśalaṃ parivarjayitavyam iti. ayaṃ ca analo rājā kuśaladharmaparihīṇo mahāsāvadyakarmakārī praduṣṭamanaḥsaṃkalpaḥ parasattvajīvitoparodhāya pratipannaḥ parasattvotpīḍanatatparaḥ paralokanirapekṣo durgatiprapātābhimukhaḥ. tat kuto >smād bodhisattvacaryāśravo bhaviṣyatīti?* (V 121.27–32; SI 157.20–26; D a24v.6–25r.2; C 1244).

30 *upari gaganatale devatā ity evam ārocayām āsuḥ – na smarasi kulaputra jayoṣmāyatanasya ṛṣeḥ kalyāṇamitrānuśāsanīm iti?* (V 122.1–2). Notice that the divinities refer to Jayoṣmāyatana as a 'sage' (*ṛṣi*) and not a 'brahmin' (*brāhmaṇa*) as he is in his own section (V 90–95). There seems to be some confusion with regard to title between the brahmin Jayoṣmāyatana and the *kalyāṇamitra* directly before him, the sage Bhīṣmottaranirghoṣa. But it is clear from the context of this section that the gods are referring to Jayoṣmāyatana.

31 *mā tvaṃ kulaputra, kalyāṇamitrānuśāsanīṣu vicikitsām utpādaya. samyak samena kalyāṇamitrāṇi praṇayanti na viṣameṇa. acintyaṃ hi kulaputra bodhisattvānām upāyakauśalyacaryājñānam* (V 122.3–5; SI 158.4–7; D a25r.3–5; C 1244).

32 The *locus classicus* of the *upāyakauśalya* conception is chapter II of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* (see Kern 1963 [1884]: 30 ff.). For a discussion of the term as one of the ten perfections, see Dayal (1932: 248 ff.).

33 This emphasis on the absolute authority of the good friends hints at early murmurings of Tantric Buddhism in the Indian sub-continent. See Osto (forthcoming).

34 . . . *vyalokayasva kulaputra imaṃ mama gṛhaparibhogam iti* (V 122.18–19).

35 *tat kiṃ manyase kulaputra, api tu pāpakāriṇām evaṃrūpaḥ karmavipāko >bhinirvartate? evaṃrūpā ātmabhāvasaṃpat, evaṃrūpā parivārasaṃpat, evaṃrūpā mahābhogasaṃpat, evaṃrūpā mahaiśvaryādhipatyasaṃpat?* (V 122.28–30; SI 159.8–11; D a26r.3–4; C 1245).

36 . . . *no hīdam ārya* (V 122.30).

37 *nāhaṃ kulaputra kasyacit sattvasya viheṭhaṃ karomi kāyena vācā manasā vā. āparāntikāvīcikaduḥkhe saṃbhrāmayeyam* (V 123.12–16).

38 For an informative discussion of this tension in Theravāda Buddhism, see Collins (1998: 414–496).

39 *atha khalu sudhanaḥ śreṣṭhidārako ratnaparikhāsv ananunītacitto ratnaprākāreṣv avismayamāno ratnatālapaṅktiṣv arajyamāno ratnaghaṇṭākiṅkiṇījālaghoṣam anāsvādayan divyavādyarutasaṃgītimadhuranirghoṣeṣv asaktacittaḥ nānāvicitraratnavimānakūṭāgāraparibhogān amanasikurvan pramuditeṣu naranārīgaṇeṣu dharmārāmaratirato rūpaśabdagandharasaspharśarativiviktacetā dharmanidhyaptiparamo yathābhigatasattvakalyāṇamitranirantaraparipṛcchanatayā anupūrveṇa yena nagaraśṛṅgāṭakaṃ tenopajagāma* (V 125.27–31; SI 163.16–22; D a29v.5–30r.1; C 1247).

40 Other examples of this generosity may be found during Sudhana's encounters with Vidvān (*km*#15) and Ratnacūḍa (*km*#16) (see V 110–116).

41 *ye khalu punar kulaputra suprabhamahānagarābhyantaranivāsaninaḥ sattvāḥ, sarve te bodhisattvā mahāyānasaṃprasthitāḥ. teṣām yathāśayapariśuddhyā idaṃ suprabhaṃ mahānagaram ābhāsam āgacchati, yaduta keṣāṃcit parīttaṃ keṣaṃcid vipulaṃ keṣāṃcin mṛttikātalaṃ keṣā(ṃ)cid vaiḍūryamaṇiratnasaṃstṛtatalaṃ keṣā(ṃ)cin mṛttikāprākāraṃ keṣāmcid aparājitavastradhvajavastraratnamahāprākāraparikṣiptaṃ keṣāṃcid ākīrṇaśarkarakaṭhallamutkūlanikūlaṃ śvabhraprapātabahulam, keṣāṃcid anekamahāmaṇiratnasaṃstṛtatalaṃ kṛtopacāraṃ samapāṇitalajātam, keṣāṃcid asaṃkhyeyaratnabhavanavimānaprāsādakūṭāgāraharmyatalaniryūhagavākṣajālārdhacandrasiṃhapañjaramaṇivicitradarśanīyam ābhāsam āgacchati. bahirnagaranivāsaninām api śuddhāśayānāṃ kṛtakuśalamūlānāṃ paryupāsitabahubuddhotpādānāṃ sarvajñatābhimukhānāṃ sarvajñatāpratiśaraṇānāṃ ratnamayam ābhāsam āgacchati* (V 127.23–31; SI 166.14–24; D a32r.4–32v.2; C 1249).

42 . . . *asaṃkhyeyāni ca kanyākoṭiśatashasrāṇy* . . . (V 168.1).

43 *itaḥ kulaputra gṛhītvā dānāni dehi, puṇyāni kuru, tathāgatān pūjaya sattvān dānena saṃgrahavastunā saṃgṛhya tyāgapāramitāyāṃ niyojaya, dānena lokaṃ śikṣaya. duṣkaraparityāgatāṃ pradarśaya. yathaivāhaṃ kulaputra tavopakaraṇavidhim upasaṃharāmi, evam aparimāṇānāṃ sattvānāṃ dānacetanāniruddhānāṃ tyāgavāsitāṃ saṃtatiṃ karomi. buddhadharmasaṃgheṣu bodhisattvakalyāṇamitreṣu ca kuśalamūlāny avaropayitvā anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau samādāpayāmi* (V 168.1–6; SI 219.24–220.4; D a76v.4–7; C 1282).

44 *svāgataṃ te kulaputra. ayaṃ sa pṛthivīpradeśo yatra te sthitvā kuśalamūlāny avaropitāni yatrāhaṃ pratyakṣā. kim icchasi tad vipākaphalaikadeśaṃ draṣṭum*? (V 169.15–17).

45 *icchāmy ārye* (V 169.19).

46 *imāni kulaputra maṇiratnanidhānakoṭīniyutaśatasahasrāṇi tavānugāmīni, tava purojavāni, tava yathecchopabhogyāni, tava puṇyavipākanirjātāni, tava puṇyabalarakṣitāni. tebhyas tvaṃ gṛhītvā yatkāryaṃ tat kuruṣva* (V 169.21–23; SI 221.24–26; D a78r.6–7; C 1283).

47 Each is only two pages (0.46 per cent of the total text) in the Vaidya edition (V 167–168; V 169–170).

6 Women

1 For analysis, see Paul (1985: 281–301). Although Śrīmālā is certainly an important figure, I think Paul goes too far in suggesting that she is a 'female buddha'. For an English translation of the *Śrīmālā*, see Wayman and Wayman (1974).
2 See V 177.7, 195.16, 242.24, 265.15 and 343.30. At V 177.7 and 195.16, the variant form, *dharmaśarīra*, is used in place of *dharmakāya*.
3 This possibility exists only in theory, however. In the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, buddhas and bodhisattvas are always male, and no mention is made of the female good friends obtaining omniscience or supreme, perfect enlightenment. For a discussion about women's ability to attain enlightenment in mainstream Buddhism, see Wilson (1996); and for the Mahāyāna, see Paul (1985).
4 *sarvamahāmaṇiratnapratimaṇḍitaniryūhavyūhāni* (V 79.14–15).
5 *jāmbhūnadakūṭakanakacchadanopetāni* (V 79.15).
6 *vairocanamaṇiratnopaśobhitagarbhāṇi* (V 79.16).
7 *sarvaratnamayāni* (V 79.16).
8 *sāgaragarbharatnapṛthivītalasaṃsthānaṃ vaiḍūryamaṇiratnastambhopaśobhitaṃ jāmbhūnadasuvarṇasamudgatakūtaṃ . . .* (V 79. 24–25).
9 *cūḍaka* I am reading as BHS *cūḍā* = Skt. *cūḍāmaṇi* (see *BHSD*: 232; MW: 400). This is supported by the Tibetan translation (D ga366v.6) of *rgyan* ('ornament'). Cleary's translation does not include this compound. *siṃhamukha*, 'lion's face' or 'lion's mouth', also does not really fit the context. It may be a textual error for *siṃhamuktā*, 'lion-pearl', which occurs much later in the text (see *BHSD*: 595. Edgerton's reference to *Gv* 511.4 is from SI and may be found at V 407.17). The Tibetan (D ga366v.6) follows the Sanskrit and translates the term *seng ge'i gdong* ('face of a lion').
10 *. . . āśopāsikā kāñcanagarbhamahābhadrāsanopaviṣṭā sāgaragarbhamuktājālālaṃkṛtā avabaddhamakuṭā divyātirekakanakakeyūravalayabāhuvyūhā śrīkāyaraśmimaṇiratnavirājitabāhuḥ abhinīlavimalavilambamaṇikuṇḍalā mahāratnajālasaṃchannopaśobhitaśīrṣā siṃhamukhamaṇiratnakarṇacūḍakadhāraṇī cintārājamaṇiratnahārāvasaktakaṇṭhā sarvaratnajālasaṃchannaprabhojjvalitaśarīrā prāṇikoṭiniyutaśatasahasrapraṇatakāyā* (V 80.20–25; SI 102.14–19; D ga366v.4–7; C 1210).
11 *ahaṃ kulaputra, aśokakṣemadhvayasya bodhisattvavimokṣasya lābhinī. sāhaṃ kulaputra amoghadarśanā amoghaśravaṇā amoghaparyupāsanā amoghaikavāsasaṃvāsanā amoghānusmaraṇā. nāhaṃ kulaputra, anavaropitakuśalamūlānāṃ sattvānāṃ cakṣuṣa ābhāsam āgacchāmi darśanavijñaptyā, nāparigṛhītakalyāṇamitrāṇāṃ nāsamanvāhṛtasamyaksaṃbuddhānām. mama kulaputra sahadarśanena sattvā avaivartikā bhavanty anuttarāyāḥ samyaksaṃbodheḥ* (V 81.17–21; SI 103.23–104.3; D ga368r2–6; C 1210). SI 103.24 reads *bodhisattvasya vimokṣasya*. Manuscript A 55r.4 corroborates V's reading of *bodhisattvavimokṣasya.*
12 *kiyaccirotpāditaṃ tvayā ārye anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau cittam*? (V 81.28–29).
13 'I remember . . .' (*anusmarāmi*).
14 Weight and position indicate that Maitrāyaṇī does not hold a particularly high position within the spiritual hierarchy of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Sudhana's visit with her is only about 0.69 per cent of the total text (V 96–98), and her position as the eleventh *kalyāṇamitra* occurs 22 per cent of the way into the story.
15 *. . . abhinīlanetrām abhinīlakeśīṃ suvarṇavarṇacchavim* (V 96.21–22).
16 This passage indicates that Maitrāyaṇī's palace, like Ratnacūḍa's house discussed in Chapter 2, represents the *dharmadhātu*. By connecting this fabulous jewelled dwelling with the Dharma realm, the narrator reinforces the ontological relationship between wealth and this higher spiritual dimension.

17 Sudhana's visit to Prabhūtā, is only slightly longer than his visit to Maitrāyaṇī. This encounter constitutes about 1.1 per cent of the total text (V 105–109).
18 *acintyapuṇyavipākābhirnivṛttam* (V 105.16–17).
19 *. . . adrākṣīt prabhūtām upāsikāṃ ratnāsanopaviṣṭāṃ navāṃ daharāṃ taruṇīṃ prathamayauvanasamudgatām abhirūpāṃ prāsādikāṃ darśanīyāṃ paramaśubhavarṇapuṣkalatayā samanvāgatāṃ muktakeśīṃ nirābharaṇagātrām avadātavastranivasanām. sthāpayitvā buddhabodhisattvān na sa kaścit sattvas tad gṛham upasaṃkrāmati, yam asau nābhibhūya tiṣṭhati kāyena vā cittādhipatyena vā, tejasā vā, varṇena vā, śriyā vā. ye ca sattvāḥ prabhūtām upāsikāṃ paśyanti devā vā manuṣyā vā, teṣāṃ sarveṣāṃ prabhūtāyām upāsikāyāṃ śāstṛsaṃjñā bhavati* (V 105.17–23; SI 136.23–137.4; D a6r.4–6v.1; C 1232).
20 The Acalā section is slightly longer than the Prabhūtā section. The weight of this section is 1.4 per cent of the total text (V 131–136).
21 Notice that the external narrator does not distinguish here between male and female beauty. Acalā's beauty surpasses all beings, except (male) bodhisattvas of the tenth stage and (male) buddhas.
22 *na sa sattvaḥ sattvanikāye saṃvidyate daśadiśi loke yaḥ samartho >calām upāsikāṃ rāgacittena prekṣitum. na sa sattvaḥ sattvanikāye saṃvidyate daśadiśi loke yaḥ acalāyā upāsikāyāḥ sahadarśanena kleśo na vyupaśamaṃ gacchet* (V 132.26–29; SI 173.10–13; D a38r.3–4; C 1252). SI 173.12 inserts *samarthaḥ* after *yaḥ*. Both SI 173.12 and A 92v.4 have the plural *kleśā.* SI 173.13 reads *gacchayeuḥ*. This must be a misprint for *gaccheyuḥ* (plural optative) found at A 92v.4.
23 *nābhijānāmi kulapura tata upādāya etena cittotpādena jambudvīpaḥ paramāṇurajaḥsamaiḥ kalpair api kāmān paribhoktum, kaḥ punar vādo dvayadvayasamāpattyā* (V 134.28–29; SI 176.4–7; D a40r.7–40v.1; C 1254). Although both editions print *etena* (see SI 176.5), A 94r.3 could in my mind read *ekena*. Not only does this make more sense, but it is also supported by the Tibetan (D a40r.7), which uses *cig* ('one'). SI 176.5–6 reads: *jambudvīpa-* in compound with *paramāṇu.*
24 The narrator refers to Vasumitrā as a *bhagavatī*, the feminine form of the word *bhagavat*, meaning 'fortunate one, illustrious, divine, lord' (MW: 743; *PED*: 495). It is clear from the context that the lady Vasumitrā is a well trained and educated prostitute or courtesan of a type not uncommon in ancient India.
25 About this pair Paul and Wilson write, 'It seems that the nun and prostitute share a lack of a positive characteristic. They are not family women. The sphere of woman is the family, except for the prostitute and nun' (Paul 1985: 96).
26 The Siṃhavijṛmbhitā section is 1.4 per cent of the total text (V 148–153); the Vasumitrā section is 0.69 per cent (V 154–156).
27 *. . . siṃhavijṛmbhitāyā bhikṣuṇyā mahatā acintyarddhiprabhāvabalādhānena* (V 149.17).
28 *atha khalu sudhanaḥ śreṣṭhidārakaḥ imān evam apramāṇācintyaguṇasamuditān mahodyānavyūhān bodhisattvakarmavipākaparinispannān lokottaravipulakuśalamūlanirjātān acintyabuddhapūjopasthānaniṣyandasaṃbhavān sarvalokagatān avaśeṣakuśalamūlāsaṃhāryān māyāgatadharmasvabhāvanirvṛttān vimalavipulaśubhapuṇyavipākasaṃbhūtān siṃhavijṛmbhitāyā bhikṣuṇyāḥ pūrvasukṛtasucaritaniṣyandabalādhānasaṃbhūtān asādhāraṇān saśrāvakapratyekabuddhair asaṃhāryān sarvatīrthyaparapravādibhir anavamardyān sarvamārapathasamudācārair anavalokyān sarvabālapṛthagjanaiḥ samantād anuvilokayann adrākṣīt* (V 149.18–23; SI 195.2–9; D a56v.3–6; C 1266–1267).
29 See the *Visudhimagga* (Ñāṇamoli 1991: 373 ff.) for one mainstream Buddhist account, and Dayal (1932: 112 ff.), for these powers in Mahāyāna sources.
30 *. . . siṃhavijṛmbhitāyā bhikṣuṇyāḥ samantacakṣurupekṣāvatīpramukhāni sarvabuddhadharmanirdeśapramukhāni dharmadhātutalaprabhedapramukhāni sarvāvaraṇamaṇḍalavikiraṇapramukhāni sarvajagatkuśalacittasaṃbhavapramukhāni viśeṣavativyūhapramukhāni asaṅganayagarbhapramukhāni dharmadhātumaṇḍalapramukhāni*

cittakośapramukhāni samantarucitābhinirhāragarbhapramukhāni daśaprajñāpāramitāmukhāsaṃkhyeyaśatasahasrāṇy avakrāntāni. ye ca tat sūryaprabhaṃ mahodyānaṃ bodhisattvās tad anye vā sattvāḥ praviśanti siṃhavijṛmbhitāyā bhikṣuṇyā darśanāya dharmaśravaṇāya, sarve te siṃhavijṛmbhitāyā bhikṣuṇyāḥ prathamaṃ kuśalamūladharmasamudāneṣu niyojitā yāvad anuttarāyāḥ samyaksaṃbodher avivartyāḥ kṛtāḥ (V 152.2–9; SI 198.23–199.6; D a59v.3–7; C 1268–1269).

31 For a description of the ten perfections in relation to the ten stages, see the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* (Vaidya 1967). For a discussion of the perfections in Buddhist Sanskrit literature, see Dayal (1932: 165 ff.).

32 See, for example, Kamalaśila's *Bhāvanākrama* (Beyer 1974), and Atiśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa* in Sherburne (1983).

33 The important role of this character suggests a powerful female presence in monastic institutions at the time of the story's composition (see Chapter 7).

34 *yugamātraprekṣiṇaḥ*; literally, 'whose gaze is the measure of a yoke'.

35 *kim asya evaṃ śāntadāntendriyasya evaṃ saṃprajānasya evam abhrāntasya evam avikṣiptamānasasya evaṃ yugamātraprekṣiṇaḥ evaṃ vedanābhir aparyādattacittasya evam animittagrāhiṇaḥ sarvarūpagateṣu utkṣiptacakṣuṣaḥ evam avyagramānasasya gambhīraceṣṭasyābhirūpasya sāgarakalpasya akṣobhyānavalīnacittasya vasumitrayā bhāgavatyā kāryam? na hīdṛśā rāgaratā bhavanti, na viparyastacittāḥ. nedṛśānām aśubhasaṃjñā samudācarati. nedṛśāḥ kāmadāsā bhavanti. nedṛśāḥ strīvaśagā bhavanti. nedṛśā māragocare caranti. nedṛśā māraviṣayaṃ niṣevante. nedṛśāḥ kāmapaṅke saṃsīdanti. nedṛśā mārapāśair badhyante. nākāryakāriṇo bhavanti* (V 154.10–17; SI 202.1–9; D a62v.1–5; C 1270–1271). SI 202.6 reads *śubhasaṃjñā*. This reading is corroborated by A 108r.3. The Tibetan provides an entirely different reading: *'di lta bu dag ni sdug cing gtsang ba'i 'du shes yongs su rgyu ba med de* ('For such people, the conception of affliction and purity does not course'). The Tibetan reading suggests a Sanskrit archetype that read *aśubhaśubhasaṃjñā*. Are SI and A the result of a scribal eye-skip? Is Vaidya's reading an error, or has he emending the text based on the authority of the Baroda manuscript? Cleary's translation of the Chinese seems to support Vaidya's reading, 'you should not have any impure thoughts' (C 1271). *aśubhasaṃjñā* may be a reference to the meditation on foulness similar to the practice discussed in the *Visuddhimagga* (Ñāṇamoli 1991: 173 ff.), or a general reference to the foulness of the female form (see Chapter 2). The statement of the other townspeople that Sudhana wishes to produce beneficial cognition (*tvam śubhasaṃjñāṃ vikaritukāmaḥ*, V 154.20; see below), seems to be contrasted with *aśubhasaṃjñā*, which would support Vaidya's reading. An examination of more sources might clarify this textual quandary.

36 *sādhu sādhu kulaputra, sulabdhās te lābhāḥ, yas tvaṃ vasumitrāṃ bhāgavatīṃ paripraṣṭavyāṃ manyase. niyamena tvaṃ buddhatvaṃ prārthayase. niyamena tvaṃ sarvasattvapratiśaraṇam ātmānaṃ kartukāmaḥ. niyamena tvaṃ sarvasattvānāṃ rāgaśalyamuddhartukāmaḥ. niyamena tvaṃ śubhasaṃjñāṃ vikaritukāmaḥ* (V 154.18–20; SI 202.10–14; D a62v.6–7; C 1271).

37 See Willis (1992), for an example from Pāli literature.

38 *. . . abhirūpāṃ prāsādikāṃ darśanīyāṃ paramayā śubhavarṇapuṣkalatayā samanvāgatāṃ suvarṇavarṇacchavim abhinīlakeśīṃ suvibhaktasamāṅgapratyaṅgaśarīrāṃ sarvakāmadhātukadevamanuṣyātikrāntavarṇarūpasaṃsthānaśobhāṃ brahmātirekasvarāṃ . . .* (V 155.4–6; SI 203.5–8; D a63v.2–4; C 1271). SI 203.7 reads – *cchavitām*. Manuscript A 108v.4 corroborates V's reading.

39 *ye kecit sattvā manāntikam upasaṃkrāmanti, sarvāṃs tān aham atraiva virāgakoṭīgate asaṅgasarvajñatābhūmyabhimukhe bodhisattvavimokṣe pratiṣṭhāpayāmi* (V 156.4–7).

40 See Osto (forthcoming). For the development of Buddhist Tantra in India, see Snellgrove (1987). See also Isaacson (1998), Sanderson (1994) and Tribe (2000).

41 These encounters begin at 39.2 per cent and conclude at 68.9 per cent into the story. Also, their position before Sudhana's meeting with Gopā, the wife of the Buddha (the second-longest section in the story), add to their narrative significance.

42 Because this section is discussed in the previous chapter, I shall not discuss it again here.
43 . . . *kapilavastuno mahānagarasyordhvaṃ gaganatale vicitrānupamamaṇikūṭāgare sarvavaragandhapadmagarbhamahāratnasiṃhāsane niṣaṇṇām* (V 171.13–14).
44 . . . *iyam ihaiva mamānantaraṃ vairocanabodhimaṇḍe pradakṣiṇena pramuditanayanajagadvirocanā nāma rātridevatā prativasati* (V 185.14–15).
45 . . . *bhagavataḥ parṣanmaṇḍale puṣpagarbhasiṃhāsananiṣaṇṇāṃ* . . . (V 180.26–27).
46 *tathāgataparṣanmaṇḍalasamanantaraṃ* (V 202.20).
47 See V 219.19–20 and 230.29.
48 . . . *bhagavato vairocanasya pādamūle* . . . (V239.30).
49 See, for example, the *Hevajra Tantra*, where Hevajra and consort are surrounded by eight yoginīs (Snellgrove 1959). Tribe (2000: 225) suggests that visualization in the Caryā tantras was inspired by the *Gaṇḍavyūha*:

> This idea [that visualisation transforms the world to accord more closely to its actual nature] becomes prominent from the period of the Caryā tantras, which took the luminous, translucent, magical world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* as the measure for how awakened cognition would perceive the world.

Once again we see evidence of proto-Tantra in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. See Osto (forthcoming).
50 *dharmaśarīru mamātiviśuddhaṃ sarvatriyadhvasamantasthitānām* (V 177.7–8).
51 *kayo hi te dharmamaśarīragarbhaḥ cittam ca te jñānamayaṃ asaṅgam* (V 231.23–24).
52 *kiyacciraṃ saṃprasthitāsi devate anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau? kiyacciraṃ pratilabdhaś ca te >yaṃ vimokṣaḥ, yasya pratilambhāt tvam evaṃrūpayā sattvārthakriyayā pratyupasthitā?* (V 178.13–15).
53 *bhūtapūrvaṃ jinaputra atīte >dhvani sumeruparamāṇurajaḥsamānāṃ kalpāṇāṃ pareṇa praśāntaprabho nāma kalpo >bhūt pañcabuddha koṭīśataprabhavaḥ. tatra ratnaśrīsaṃbhavā nāma lokadhātur abhūt. tasyāṃ khalu punar lokadhātau ratnacandrapradīpaprabhā nāma madhyamā cāturdvīpakā. tasyāṃ padmaprabhā nāma rājadhānī. tatra rājadhānyāṃ sudharmatīrtho nāma rājābhūt dhārmiko dharmarājā cakravartī caturdvīpeśvaraḥ saptaratnasamanvāgataḥ* (V 178.16–20; SI 232.5–10; D a87v2–4; C 1291). SI 232.7 and A 123v.5 read *tasmin*, instead of the first *tasyāṃ*.
54 See, for example, the *Divyāvadāna* (Cowell and Neil 1886).
55 Cleary's translation states that he was Mañjuśrī (C 1324).
56 The final goddess visited by Sudhana is Sutejomaṇḍalaratiśrī (*km*#40), the goddess of the Lumbīni Grove. This encounter may be divided into three sections: first, the goddess teaches Sudhana about the ten bodhisattva-births (V 285.15–290.14; see also Gómez 1977), then she tells him about the miraculous events surrounding the birth of Vairocana (V 290.24–295.6) and finally she relates an *avadāna* about her previous life as a nurse of Vairocana when he was a bodhisattva (V 295.9–299.16). The primary significance of this encounter is the glorification of Vairocana's birth.
57 The Maitreya section occupies 11.7 per cent of the total text, or 50 pages in the Vaidya edition (V 368–418). See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion.
58 See Chapter 4 for this argument.
59 I use the capital 'B' here to indicate that this bodhisattva is the Buddha of our world realm, Śākyamuni (Vairocana) in a previous life.
60 *sarvabodhisattvasamādhisāgaranayavyavalokanaviṣaya* (V 305.22).
61 *abhirūpaḥ prāsādiko darśanīyaḥ dvātriṃśanmahāpuruṣalakṣaṇasamalaṃkṛtakāyaḥ* (V 309.23–24).
62 . . . *abhirūpā prāsādikā darśanīyā nātidīrghā nātihrasvā nātisthūlā nātikṛśā nātigaurā nātiśyāmā abhinīlanetrā abhinīlakeśī abhirāmavaktrā brahmasvarā madhurapriyavādinī* . . . (V 312.27–29; SI 404.10–12; D a236r.2–4; C 1408).

63 *strīratnametaddhi manuṣyaloke / prādurbabhūvottamaśīlaśuddhyā // na karmaṇo hyasti kṛtasya nāśaḥ / pūrve sucīrṇasya vipāka eṣaḥ //* (V 318.1–4; SI 408.15–16; D a239r.2; C 1412).
64 *sunīlakeśyutpalanīlanetrā / brahmasvarā kāñcanaśuddhavarṇā // āmuktamālābharaṇā suveśā / padmodbhavā śrīr iva nirmalābhā //* (V 318.5–8; SI 408.17–18; D a239r.2–3; C 1412). Read *suveṣa*. Tibetan (D a239r.3) reads *mchog cha lugs* ('best clothing').
65 *viśuddhagātrī samabhāgakāyā / saṃpūrṇagātrā suvibhaktadehā // suvarṇabimbaṃ maṇineva mṛṣṭaṃ / virocate sarvadiśo >vabhāsya //* (V 318.9–12; SI 408.19–20; D a239r.3–4; C 1412).
66 *gotrodbhavaścandanarājagandhaḥ / pravāti cāsyābhidiśaḥ spharitvā // rutaṃ ca divyaṃ madhuraṃ ruvatyā / gandho mukhādvāti yathotpalasya //* (V 318.13–16; SI 408.21–22; D a239r.4–5; C 1412). Read *gatro*. Tibetan (D a239r.4) reads *lus* ('body'). *pravāti* seems to be from *pru-*, in *parasmaipāda* (long *ā* from *metri causa*). Tibetan (D a239r.4) confirms this by translating the word with *'byung*. *abhidiśaḥ* seems to mean 'directions' (fem. acc. pl.). Tibetan (D a239r.4) reads *phyogs* ('direction').
67 *padmodbhaveyaṃ na hi jātivādaḥ // saṃdūṣaṇāṃarhati nirmalatvāt* (V 325.14–15).
68 This section is only 2.5 per cent of the total text (V 439–349).
69 Following Sudhana's visit with Māyā, he meets nine more good friends before his encounter with Maitreya (see Appendix A). The entire weight of these sections is only 4.1 per cent of the total text (V 350–367). These *kalyāṇamitra*s may be understood as 'transitional friends' who move the flow of narrative from the sacred sites of Buddhism back to the south in preparation for our hero's meeting with Maitreya. Thus, Sudhana's visit with Māyā functions as his last encounter at the *bodhimaṇḍa* and prepares the audience for the climax of the narrative.
70 According to the *Theragāthā* and its commentary, Māyā was reborn as a man in Tusita heaven! See Malalasekera (1995b: 609).
71 *dharmakāyaparamaśītībhāvopagatena* (V 343.30–31).
72 *sarvajñatāpuṇyopacitaśarīrām* (V 344.7).
73 *sarvakṣetrasāgaraparipariśuddhipraṇidhānasamanvāgatām* (V 344.16).
74 *anuttaradharmakāyaparipariśuddhām anantarūpakāyasaṃdarśanīṃ* (V 344.18).
75 *sarvabodhisattvajinajanetrīpraṇidhānaniryātām* (V 344.27).
76 *mahāpraṇidhānajñānamāyāgatavyūha* (V 345.5–6).
77 *yathā cāhaṃ kulaputra asyāṃ bhāgavatyāṃ cāturdvīpakāyāṃ jambudvīpe bodhisattvaṃ kukṣiṇā saṃpratīcchāmi, evaṃ trisahasramahāsāhasre lokadhātau sarvacaturdvīpakājambudvīpeṣu saṃpratīcchāmi anena ca vikurvitavyūhena. na cāyaṃ mama kāyo dvayībhavati nādvayibhavati, na caikatve saṃtiṣṭhate na bahutve, yathāpi nāma tadasyaiva mahāpraṇidhānajñānamāyāgatasya bodhisattvavimokṣasya subhāṣitatvāt. yathā cāhaṃ kulaputra asya bhagavato vairocanasya mātā abhūvam, tathā pūrvakāṇām api tathāgatānām anantamadhyānāṃ mātā abhūvam* (V346.20–25; SI 441.1–7; D a266v.7–267r.3; C 1437). SI 441.2 reads *-sahāsra* in compound with *lokadhātau*.
78 Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa (V 346.31–347.1).
79 *tathā sarveṣāṃ bhadrakalpikānām anāgatānāṃ tathāgatānāṃ janetrī bhaviṣyāmi* (V 347.1).
80 V 347.7–348.6. This list is not in Cleary's translation (see C 1437).
81 This transformation seems similar to the Catholic Church's development of Mariology (special thanks to my mother for pointing this out to me).

7 The Indian context

1 Gómez (1967: xxxiii–xxxvii) mentions eight: the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra*, the *Mahāyānāvatāra-śāstra*, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, the first *Bhāvanākrama*, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, and the *Subhāṣitasaṃgraha*. Of these works, Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

cite the *Gaṇḍavyūha* most often – 15 and 11 times respectively (including references in the commentary by Prajñākaramati). The majority of these are from the Maitreya section. In addition to textual references, we also learn something about the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in India from a letter dispatched to the emperor of China from an Indian king (Gómez 1967: xxvii). In 795, king Śubhakaradeva of Orissa sent his personal copy of the *sūtra* along with a letter to China as a gift to the emperor. Prajñā translated both the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and the letter into Chinese between 796 and 798. This letter indicates that, although the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was translated into Chinese as the final chapter of the *Avataṃsaka* by the fifth century, it circulated within India (at least in the eighth century) as an independent text. It also demonstrates, along with references to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in the commentarial literature such as Śāntideva's works, interest in the text within both royal and monastic circles during the seventh and eighth centuries.

2 Schopen (1975: 156) has challenged Conze's chronology, suggesting that the *Vajracchedikā* may be earlier. Nevertheless, several scholars accept Conze's assertion of the *Aṣṭa*'s antiquity, and draw conclusions about early Mahāyāna based on this. See especially Lancaster (1975); Rawlinson (1977); MacQueen (1981, 1982); and Kent (1982). For a different opinion see Vetter (1994, 2001).

3 See Williams (1989: 32); Harvey (1990: 95); Gethin (1998: 225).

4 See Conze (1975 [1951]: 153); Lamotte (1954: 378); Dutt (1958: 277); Hirakawa (1963: 85 ff.).

5 Conze (1975 [1951]: 120), Lamotte (1954: 378) and Dutt (1958: 278) all considered the Mahāsāṅghika school the starting point of the Mahāyāna; whereas Conze (1978: 3) and Dutt (1958: 284) thought the origins of the Mahāyāna lay in the south, Lamotte (1954: 389–395) argued in favour of the northwest.

6 Harrison (1995: 65) states,

> My hypothesis . . . is that some of the impetus for the early development of the Mahāyāna came from forest-dwelling monks. Far from being the products of an urban, lay, devotional movement, many Mahāyāna *sūtra*s give evidence of a hard-core ascetic attempt to return to the original inspiration of Buddhism, the search for Buddhahood or awakened cognition.

See also Nattier's recent translation of the *Ugraparipṛccha-sūtra* (2003).

7 For a return to the hypothesis of a lay origin of the Mahāyāna, see Vetter (1994).

8 See Harrison (1995: 68 ff.) in reference to Hirakawa (1963).

9 Of the extant versions of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s that survive in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese, less than 10 per cent have been edited and much less translated into modern languages. Within the Tibetan Kanjur there are approximately 350 Mahāyāna *sūtra*s. The Chinese Canon, which preserves multiple translations of texts made throughout the centuries, has many more. Given the vastness of the material and the philological acumen necessary to tackle it, one may safely say that we are still lifetimes away from acquiring even a general picture of the landscape.

10 See Harrison (1995: 56), for the use of this term.

11 This assumption seems to be behind much of the research done on 'early Mahāyāna'. For example, Nattier (2003: 45) states that the doctrinal position of the *Ugraparipṛccha* is 'primitive', and Pagel (1995: 3–4) refers to a number of 'advanced' *sūtra*s. For other applications of relative chronology, see Harrison (1987, 1995); Silk (1994); and Schopen (1999).

12 See Mitra (1882: 91–92); and Ehman (1977: 13–14).

13 However, as Walser (2005: 27) has recently pointed out, in Buddhabhadra's early fifth-century Chinese translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (T 279.687c9), Sudhana's hometown is called *juecheng* 覺城 (Skt *Bodhipura). Nevertheless, Prajñā's translation at the end of the eighth century suggests that 'Dhanyākara' was the name of the

hero's home, which indicates that there was the notion in India by this time at least that Sudhana was from the south.

14 See Afshar (1981: 9, 117–118, n. 13); Lamotte (1954: 384–385); Dutt (1970: 277, n. 2). Lamotte (Ibid.) states, 'de Dhanyākara . . . l'actuel Dharanikot, dans le district de Guntur'. Elsewhere, Lamotte writes, '. . . Dharanikota, earlier known as Dhānyakaṭaka' (Lamotte 1988: 344). More recently, Robert Knox (1992: 15), in his study of Amarāvatī, mentions that Dhānyakaṭaka is usually thought to be Dharaṇīkoṭa, although Bareau (1965: 21–82) argues for Vijayavada. Whether Dhānyakaṭaka is Dharaṇīkoṭa or Vijayavada makes little difference for the identification of Dhanyākara with Dhānyakaṭaka – both Dharaṇīkoṭa and Vijayavada are located in approximately the same area on the Kṛṣṇā River in Andhra.

15 The Prākritic forms, Dhaññakaṭaka and Dhanakaṭaka are found at Amarāvatī (*EI* XX: 9). The form Dhaṃñakaḍa is found on the Mayidavōlu copper-plate grant of the Pallava king Śivaskandavarman (*ibid.*: 9, n. 3).

16 See also Ray (1986) and Neelis (2001), for the relationship between Indian Buddhism and trade.

17 See Schopen (1997a: 238–257); Schopen (1979); and Dehejia (1992).

18 Although Willis's study of female patronage in Indian Buddhism is largely derivative and lacks a historically critical approach to its sources, she supports this statement with Pāli stories about wealthy female donors such as the laywoman Visākhā and the courtesan Ambapālī (Willis 1992: 48–49). Therefore, I find her point valid to the extent that we are able to accept the Pāli sources as historical evidence.

19 See Schopen (1997: 64).

20 See Sastri (1963: 96), as cited in Wayman and Wayman (1974: 2). The reference to Bodhisiri mentioned by Sastri may be found on the 'Second Apsidal Temple inscription F' transcribed and translated by Vogel in *EI* XX: 22–23. The inscription reads, 'a *caitya*-hall (*cetiya-gharaṃ*) . . . was caused to be made by the laywoman Bodhisiri (*kāritaṃ uvāsikāya Bodhisiriya*)' (*ibid.*).

21 While none of the inscriptions from the Middle Period referred to above actually mentions the Mahāyāna or use phrasing typical of the Mahāyāna as found from the fourth century onward (for details, see Schopen 1979), we know from the Chinese translations that the Mahāyāna as a literary movement was well underway during this time. The lack of specific references to the Mahāyāna in inscriptions may be due to issues of identity – Mahāyāna laypeople may have viewed themselves simply as Buddhists, whereas Mahāyāna monks would have identified themselves with their particular vinaya lineage.

22 For monasteries as places of care for the sick and dying see Schopen (2000: 95). For monasteries as banks, we have the monastic codes mentioned above that give detailed instructions on how to lend money on interest and written loan contracts. Monasteries also minted their own money – Schopen (1997: 18, n. 27) states, 'Evidence for the manufacture of coins at Buddhist monastic sites is both early and widespread'. See also following note.

23 During the Gupta period, 'Gold coins were donated to Buddhist monasteries with detailed instructions for the use of interest accruing on the investment of this capital. . . . The Buddhist monasteries retained their function as banks in this way' (Kulke and Rothermund 1997: 93).

24 For this view, see Gombrich (1990) and McMahan (1998).

25 There are no inscriptional records specifically mentioning the Mahāyāna in India until the fourth century. The possible exception to this is the second century CE, Amitābha inscription (Schopen 1987). Some have assumed that this lack of inscriptional evidence for the Mahāyāna may be due to its minority status at the time in India. For a recent discussion, see Walser (2005).

26 However, there may be some fragmentary manuscript evidence of Mahāyāna sources dating from this period in the recently discovered Gāndhārī manuscripts of the Schøyen collection.
27 Most likely the materials used were birch bark or palm leaf, reed pens and black ink. The British Library's Khāroṣṭhī manuscripts (the earliest Buddhist manuscripts from India so far discovered, dated to about the first century CE) are written on birch bark with reed pens and black ink (see Salomon 1999).
28 The script used would have been some type of Brāhmī. If the *Gaṇḍavyūha* were composed during the reign of the Ikṣvākus, the script used would have been an 'eastern Deccan style' (Salomon 1998: 38).
29 See Damsteegt (1978) and Salomon (1998: 90).
30 There are good reasons to believe that monks rather than nuns composed the text. Although nuns were active during the Middle Period, the vast majority of monastics in India were monks. Moreover, monks seem to have actively discriminated against nuns in India leading to the ultimate demise of the nuns' order (see Schopen 2004). Some internal evidence in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* for its composition by male monastic are the story's general androcentric orientation, the fact that Sudhana meets a number of monks at the start of the narrative (rather than nuns or laypeople), and that there is only one nun good friend mentioned in the story.
31 Of course the situation during this period is far from clear. Vetter (1994) argues for a possible lay origin to the *PraS*.
32 See the section on textual ontology in my Introduction.
33 This *sūtra* was translated into Chinese between 414 and 421 (Lamotte 1988: 348) – coincidentally at about the same time as the first complete translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in 420.
34 See Wayman and Wayman (1974: 1). The arguments used by the Waymans to place the text in the third century based on a type of relative chronology are very weak. The first is that the *Śrīmālā* alludes to a 'two-body' theory of the Buddha, and the second is that the *Laṅkāvatāra* cites the *Śrīmāla* and therefore comes after it (*ibid.*). Because it is far from clear whether the text does allude to a 'two-body' theory (the passage they cite is very vague), and no clear chronology exists for the development of the 'two-body' theory into the 'three-body' theory, the first argument may be discarded out of hand. The second argument immediately collapses when one considers the possible composite nature of the *Laṅkāvatāra* (see Lindtner 1982).
35 *api tv etā dārikā rātrau pradīpena buddhavacanam paṭhanti atra bhūrjena prayojanaṃ tailena masinā kalamayā tūlena* (Tatelman 2000: 41, n. 79). Tatelman's Sanskrit text is from Vaidya's edition of the *Divyāvadānam* (1959: 457.17–18). The *Divyāvadāna* was first edited by Cowell and Neil (1886).
36 For dates of the *Divyāvadāna* see Tatelman (2000: 8) and Warder (1980: 416).
37 Tatelman (2000: 12) maintains that the off-handed nature of this passage in the text lends historical authenticity to it. I tend to agree with his position.
38 Skilling (2004: 149) writes, 'Mahāyāna sūtras may be read as records of debates and negotiations, as attempts to resolve contradictions and tensions in Buddhist doctrine and practice. . . . Debates on the spiritual status of women are rehearsed in any number of sūtras.' As a moment in these debates, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* presents a very positive opinion of women's spiritual status.

8 Conclusion

1 . . . *pāpakāriṇām evaṃrūpaḥ karmavipāko >bhinirvartate*? (V 122.28).
2 For example, the metaphor of kingship is clearly present in the *Daśabhūmika* and *Akṣayamati*; both the *Śrimāladevī* and *Vimalakīrti* exalt its royal and wealthy characters; and the *Śrimāladevī* and *Mahāmegha* contain powerful female figures. Of

course, these are only a few examples from a corpus of hundreds of extant *sūtras* in the Chinese and Tibetan canons. However, I am confident that as more of this literature is studied many more examples will emerge, possibly exceeding in number the more ascetically orientated Mahāyāna texts.

3 There are many more examples, but this would take us beyond the scope of our current study. For some important studies, see Fontein (1967), Gómez and Woodward (1981), and Thakur (2006).

4 In this regard I should point out that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* includes four good friends who are *gṛhapati*s, or 'lords of the house'. Both Nattier (2003: 23) and Boucher (2007) have pointed out the high social status associated with this title and the prominence of characters with this designation in several Mahāyāna *sūtra*s. See also Harrison (1990: xxvii), who states that eight *gṛhapati*s take 'pride of place' in the *PraS*.

5 *āryagaṇḍavyūho mahāyānasūtraratnarājaḥ* (V 436.28).

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